



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

AfCFTA Agreement Gains & Challenges

AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA
CREATING ONE AFRICAN MARKET

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Introduction:

The evolving security, political, and economic landscape in Africa necessitates diligent cooperation and integration across the continent. Since its inception in 1963 as the Organization of African Unity, later transformed into the African Union, efforts have been made to foster regional unity. This culminated in the AfCFTA Agreement (AfCFTA), which came into effect in January 2021. Recognizing the importance of accelerating the adoption of AfCFTA, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights made several calls during its seventy-seventh regular session to encourage all stakeholders to strengthen their commitment. This aligns with the African Union's focus on accelerating the African Trade Agreement this year.

On the sidelines of its participation in the 77th session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha, Tanzania, and in line with its commitment to the right to development, especially on the African continent, Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights has launched this study. The study aims to examine African integration and its relationship to the AfCFTA Agreement, including an explanation of its nature, an assessment of its impact, an examination of the challenges in its implementation, and an outline of Maat's vision to activate the Agreement.

First: Overview of African Integration and Relationship to AfCFTA Agreement:

Cooperation policies among African countries have become more reliable and transparent since 1963 with the establishment of the Organization of African Unity, later transformed into the African Union. The continent has witnessed numerous initiatives and projects promoting African cooperation and integration, such as the economic communities in the West, East, Central, and Southern regions, as well as the Sahel and Sahara countries and the Intergovernmental Social Authority for Development (IGAD). The implications of this cooperation are evident through the seven ambitions of the 2063 Development Agenda, which aims to achieve sustainable development. These ambitions include increasing intra-African trade from 12% to 50% between 2013 and 2045, improving Africa's share in international trade from 2% to 12%, and achieving economic integration and unity. This involves establishing a continental free trade area

and financial institutions such as the African Investment Bank (AIB), African Stock Market, African Monetary Fund (AMF), and African Central Bank (ACB) by 2028.¹

Against this backdrop, the AfCFTA Agreement, which came into effect in 2019, represents a significant milestone in accelerating African development cooperation at all levels. It serves as a crucial step towards the establishment of pan-African institutions, including the African Economic Community, the Customs Union, the African Monetary Union, and the exploration of new horizons to connect African countries. The Agreement aims to facilitate the continent's integration into global economic institutions and enhance its negotiating power on the international stage.

Second: AfCFTA Agreement: Definition, Objectives, Development

A. Definition

AfCFTA is a free trade area covering almost the entire African continent; it includes 54 signatory countries, making it the largest free trade area in terms of the number of member states, and the largest in terms of population and geographic size, with more than 1.3 billion people across the African continent. It comes in second place after the World Trade Organization, and in addition, it is considered at the forefront of the main projects of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want; It would create a single market for goods and services across member states and deepen the economic integration of Africa, and in turn aims to remove trade barriers, enhance trade between African countries, enhance trade in value-added production across all service sectors in the African economy, establish regional value chains in Africa, enhance industrialization and create Job and investment opportunities, thus enhancing Africa's competitiveness in the medium to long term².

B. Objectives

Perhaps the reader of the AfCFTA Agreement will observe a wide range of trade development goals that bring together 8 overarching goals, concerned with issues of integration, freedom of movement of people and goods, even policies and industrial development, competitiveness, and comprehensive social and economic development,

¹ مركز فاروس للاستشارات والدراسات الاستراتيجية، دور مبادرة الحزام والطريق وتنمية أفريقيا 2063 في دعم التجارة البينية الأفريقية دراسة، 6 أبريل 2022،

<https://pharostudies.com/?p=9822>

² AfCFTA, Unpacking the African Continental Free Trade Agreement: The objectives of the AfCFTA, access date 17 October 2023,

<http://rb.gy/cxpdl>

Alongside these general goals, there are also 7 specific objectives including the seven protocols of the AfCFTA, namely trade in goods, trade in services, dispute settlement, competition, intellectual property, investment, and electronic commerce³.

In terms of general objectives, they are as follows:

1. Establishing a single market for goods and services, facilitated by the movement of people to deepen the economic integration of the African continent and in accordance with the African vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa outlined in Agenda 2063.
2. Establishing a liberal market for goods and services through successive rounds of negotiations.
3. Contributing to the movement of capital and natural persons and facilitating investments based on initiatives and developments in States Parties and regional economic communities.
4. Laying the foundation for the establishment of a continental customs union at a later stage.
5. Promoting and achieving sustainable and comprehensive social and economic development, gender equality and structural transformation of States Parties.
6. Enhancing the competitiveness of the economies of the party countries within the continent and the global market.
7. Promoting industrial development through diversification, regional value chain development, agricultural development and food security.
8. Solving multiple and overlapping membership challenges and accelerating regional and continental integration processes

In terms of the seven specific targets, they are as follows:

1. Gradual elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods.
2. Gradual liberalization of trade in services.
3. Cooperation in the fields of investment, intellectual property rights and competition policy.
4. Cooperation in all areas related to trade.
5. Cooperation in customs matters and implementation of trade facilitation measures.

³ AfCFTA, Purpose of the AfCFTA, Access date 17 October 202, <https://au-afcfta.org/purpose-the-afcfta/>

6. Establishing a mechanism to settle disputes related to their rights and obligations.
7. Establishing and maintaining an institutional framework for the implementation and management of the AfCFTA⁴.

C. Timetable

The AfCFTA Agreement took several years to create, with its origins in the 2012 19th session of the African Union. It was officially established in 2017 and signed by 44 out of the 55 member states of the African Union in 2018 during the tenth special session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. A table is available to review the timeline of the Agreement's creation process⁵.

Timetable for the establishment of the AfCFTA Agreement, Figure 1

Date	Event
January 2012	African Union's Assembly of Heads of State and Government held its 18th Ordinary Session and adopted a resolution to speed up the formation of the AfCFTA to promote intra-African trade.
January 2015	African Union launched its 50-year vision and action plan Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, which contains 7 aspirations on several themes in terms of development, and the Continental Free Trade Area is one of the key projects in the top ten countries. Annual implementation plan under the African Union Agenda 2063.
June 2015	During the 25th regular session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, discussions were initiated to create the AfCFTA. The first phase of the negotiations covered trade in goods and services. The second phase will focus on establishing policies for investment, intellectual property rights, and competition.
January 2018	African Union adopted the name the AfCFTA
March 2018	The tenth extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union was held; 44 out of 55 member states of the African Union signed the AfCFTA Agreement

⁴ AfCFTA, Purpose of the AfCFTA, Access date 17 October 202, <https://au-afcfta.org/purpose-the-afcfta/>

⁵ AfCFTA, Critical timelines in the AfCFTA establishment and negotiations: , 23 October 2023, <https://au-afcfta.org/about/>

Date	Event
May 2019	12th special Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union launched the operational phase of the AfCFTA.
May 30, 2019	AfCFTA Agreement entered into force following the twenty-second deposit of the instrument of ratification by the Sahrawi Republic on April 29, 2019.
February 2020	His Excellency Mr. Wamkele Mene was elected as the first Secretary-General of the AfCFTA (AfCFTA) and on 19 March 2020, Mr. Wamkele Mene was sworn in as the first Secretary-General of the AfCFTA at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
August 2020	Official handover and commissioning of the AfCFTA Secretariat building took place
January 1, 2021	Trading under the AfCFTA Agreement has begun, however, until recently no trade has taken place under the AfCFTA regime due to challenges in implementation such as completing negotiations on rules of origin.
October 2022	AfCFTA Trade Initiative is launched which drives AfCFTA preferential trade between eight member states Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania and Tunisia for 96 identified commodities.
December 2022	Excluding Eritrea, 54 of the 55 member states of the African Union, have signed the consolidated text of the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA and 44 of the 54 signatories have deposited 81.5% instruments of ratification of the AfCFTA Agreement.
February 2023	Out of the 54 countries that have signed the Convention, 46 of them have completed the process of depositing their ratification instruments, which means that they are now considered state parties to the Convention.
February 2023	36th Annual Summit of the African Union was held at the Union's headquarters in Addis Ababa; to accelerate the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement.
August 2023	Secretariat of the AfCFTA, under the auspices of the Republic of Zambia, launched the first conference bringing together young people from across the continent.

Although trading under the Agreement began on January 1, 2021, there are still ongoing negotiations to finalize all aspects of the Agreement. These negotiations were divided into three stages:

Phase 1: trade in goods and services and dispute settlement

The first phase of negotiations of the AfCFTA became legally binding on May 30, 2020. These negotiations cover various aspects such as the Protocol on Trade in Goods, the Protocol on Trade in Services and the Protocol on Dispute Settlement Rules and Procedures. However, there are still three key elements that have not been finalized in this first phase. These include schedules of preferential customs concessions; preferential rule of origin; and tables of specific commitments on the five priority service sectors: business, communications, finance, tourism, and transport. It is important to complete these negotiations before the AfCFTA can come into effect.

Phase 2: competition policy, intellectual property rights, and investment

The Phase Two negotiations relate to the Competition Policy Protocol, the Intellectual Property Rights Protocol and the Investment Protocol, but the December 2020 deadline for the Phase Two negotiations was postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak. The new deadline was: December 31, 2021, although it has not yet been completed.

Phase 3: e-commerce

The final stage of the AfCFTA negotiations concerns the e-commerce protocol. Negotiations will begin immediately after the second phase⁶.

Third: Development Gains of AfCFTA Agreement

The facts of the continent indicate that it has been a long way to achieve African cooperation and integration, with a huge package of opportunities and gains in addition to a large package of challenges. In terms of opportunities and gains, perhaps the model that most embodies the process of African cooperation and integration began with the

⁶ AfCFTA, The development of the AfCFTA: Where are we now?, access date 23 October 2023, <http://rb.gy/ewki1>

entry into the African Continental Trade Area Agreement in 2019, with the growing and ambitious opportunities, which can be presented as follows:

A. Creating a Unified Market for Goods and Services

The Agreement aims to integrate all African countries into the second largest free trade zone in the world and a market, that includes 55 African countries with a market of 1.4 billion consumers, a gross domestic product of 3.4 trillion dollars, and a trade volume of 340.0 billion dollars annually, and at an increasing rate in the volume of intra-regional trade between 15%: 26% between 2020 and 2045 respectively.⁷

B. Increasing Industrial Exports

The Agreement stimulates industrialization and production structure, thus increasing the continent's exports, especially manufactured goods, particularly textiles, ready-made clothing, chemicals, and food industries. It is expected to reach 32% by 2035, with intra-regional exports growing by 109%.

C. Promoting Intra-African Trade

The Agreement aims to enhance bilateral trade by \$35 billion annually and reduce imports by \$10 billion annually while enhancing agricultural and industrial exports.

D. Increasing Continental Trade

The Agreement aims to reach 60% of continental trade exchange by 2034 through a gradual elimination of all customs tariffs by eliminating customs tariffs on 90% of goods over a period of five years (ten years for the least developed countries) and canceling customs tariffs on these goods over a period of 10 years to 13 years for least developed countries and the remaining 3% of tariff lines are excluded from liberalization, but the value of these goods cannot exceed 10% of total intra-African imports.⁸

E. Ensuring Not Lagging Behind

The Agreement prepares to position women and youth as engines of economic growth on the continent. The AfCFTA therefore focuses on addressing issues that limit the full

⁷ WORLD ECONOMIC forum, AfCFTA: A New Era for Global Business and Investment in Africa, 18 January 2023, <http://rb.gy/zihlb>
⁸ الهيئة العامة للاستعلامات، معلومات الوزراء يستعرض أهم مراحل إنشاء منطقة التجارة الحرة القارية الإفريقية، 31 يوليو 2023، <http://rb.gy/z70ky>

participation of women and youth in trade on the continent and beyond and also works in close collaboration with States Parties and Regional Economic Communities to build on existing initiatives, ensuring not lagging behind.

F. Conflict Settlement

The parties to the Agreement reached an agreed legal framework and procedures to harmoniously resolve disputes when they arise. In this regard, the AFCFTA, together with accredited bodies, has established a dispute settlement mechanism for the speedy resolution of the conflict⁹.

G. Increasing Africa's Exports

The Agreement suggests that African exports could increase by up to 32% by 2035, with intra-African exports growing by 109%, particularly in the manufactured goods sectors. All countries in Africa will witness an increase in intra-African trade, including Tunisia 165%, Cameroon 144%, Ghana 132%, Tanzania 126%, and South Africa 61%.¹⁰

H. Reducing Trade Deficit

The Agreement promises to reduce the continent's trade deficit with the rest of the world by 51% while enhancing intra-African trade by about 33%, increasing the continent's exports by \$560 billion, and increasing internal exports between the continent's countries by 81% and to other countries by 19%.¹¹

I. Increasing Foreign Investments

Africa is likely to witness an increase in foreign direct investment by between 111% and 159%, according to estimates by the UN Conference on Trade and Development and the World Bank.¹²

J. Reducing Poverty

The Agreement promises to save at least 90 million people from extreme poverty by 2035, stimulate greater wage gains for women (10.5%) than for men (9.9%), and increase

⁹ AFCFTA, Who We Are, access date 23 October 2023, <https://au-afcfta.org/who-we-are/>

¹⁰ البنك الدولي، اتفاق التجارة الحرة قد يساعد على انتشار نحو 50 مليون أفريقي من دائرة الفقر المدقع، 30 يونيو 2022، <http://rb.gy/qeiwi>
¹¹ الهيئة العامة للاستعلامات، معلومات الوزراء يستعرض أهم مراحل إنشاء منطقة التجارة الحرة القارية الإفريقية، 31 يوليو 2023، <http://rb.gy/z70ky>
¹² الهيئة العامة للاستعلامات، معلومات الوزراء يستعرض أهم مراحل إنشاء منطقة التجارة الحرة القارية الإفريقية، 31 يوليو 2023، <http://rb.gy/z70ky>

wages for both skilled and unskilled workers – 10.3% for unskilled workers and 9.8% for skilled workers.¹³

H. Boosting Africa's Income

The Agreement promises to boost Africa's income by \$450 billion, an increase of 7%, while adding \$76 billion to the income of the rest of the world by 2035.¹⁴

I. Strengthening the Economic Situation

The Agreement promises to expand the size of the African economy to US\$29 trillion by 2050, raise Africa's projected GDP between US\$28 billion and US\$44 billion after full implementation in 2040, and generate combined consumer and business spending of US\$6.7 trillion by 2030¹⁵.

J. Creating New Job Opportunities

The free trade zone promises to increase employment opportunities and reduce unemployment, as it promises about 18 million new jobs, with 2.5% of workers on the continent moving to new industries, and an increase in the wages of female workers by 11.2%.¹⁶

Fourth: Development Gains from Egypt's Free Trade Agreement

Developments in establishing the AfCFTA Agreement indicate that Egyptian policies have made many strenuous efforts aimed at activating the AfCFTA Agreement as one of the requirements of African integration. Egypt topped the list of the first countries to sign and ratify the Agreement, and the list of the first eight countries to begin working within the Agreement, alongside Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Tunisia, and hosted the signing ceremony of the free trade Agreement between the three largest countries. African trading entities: COMESA, East African Community, and Southern African Development Community in June 2015 and the first trade deal under the umbrella of the African Free Trade Agreement was concluded on October 7, 2022. Perhaps those who examine Egyptian contexts in 2023 will realize the

¹³ القاهرة الإخبارية، ما العوائد الاقتصادية من احتمالات تفعيل الاتحاد الإفريقي لاتفاقية التجارة الحرة؟، 19 فبراير 2023، <http://rb.gy/2vu7u>

¹⁴ UN, Africa's free trade on track, more efforts needed, 6 January 2023, <http://rb.gy/pb5oc>

¹⁵ Research CHFDI, Breaking Down The AfCFTA: What You Need To Know About Africa's Latest Trade Initiative, 7 March 2023, <http://rb.gy/bfc9h>

¹⁶ الهيئة العامة للاستعلامات، معلومات الوزراء يستعرض أهم مراحل إنشاء منطقة التجارة الحرة القارية الإفريقية، 31 يوليو 2023، <http://rb.gy/z70ky>

extent of the commitment of the Egyptian political leadership, which participated in the fifth mid-year coordination summit of the African Union, the regional economic communities, regional mechanisms and member states under the slogan “Accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA in February 2023”, to confirm its support for the Kenyan President’s endeavor to activate the free trade Agreement, not to mention its issuance of Egyptian Presidential Resolution No. 212 Of 2023 regarding approval of the publication of lists of customs reductions and annexes to the AfCFTA.

In this context, it is worth noting that Egypt, through its efforts to activate the AfCFTA Agreement, aims to achieve many development gains, including the following:

1. Opening a wide and diverse market for Egyptian exports, which aim to reach about \$100 billion and increasing Egyptian trade surpluses with African countries.
2. Reducing the production cost of Egyptian products, by providing the opportunity to get raw materials and primary goods from African countries without tariffs or with a lower customs tariff.
3. Opening major opportunities for investment cooperation, especially in light of the establishment of the Investment Risk Guarantee Fund in Africa.
4. Providing an opportunity for the Egyptian presence in a number of larger countries and with better facilities until all of Africa runs out of goods manufactured in Egypt.
5. Allowing Egypt to enter into large partnerships and investments with bloc countries and great freedom for the movement of capital and individuals for their goals, including what reflects positively on providing more job opportunities for the youth of Egypt and Africa.
6. Providing the most important potential food products for the Egyptian market, including copper options, the most prominent of which are black tea, then sesame seeds, then cotton, then food supplies, seed seeds, cocoa, and coffee.
7. Increasing Egyptian export opportunities to Middle Eastern countries. The most prominent products proposed for Egypt to introduce to these countries are sugar, plastic, paper, wood production, and export opportunities to southern African countries, which are exports concerned with fertilizers and plastic for the

manufacture of chemicals, perfumes, paper, and the production of foods, vegetables, and ceramics.¹⁷

Fourth: Challenges of activating the African Free Trade Area Agreement

The African continent and its economic, security, and development realities dictate more challenges and difficulties hindering the activation of the Free Trade Area Agreement on the African continent. These difficulties range from differences in size, degrees of economic growth, economic diversity, income inequality, conflicts, and insufficient infrastructure, and the slow adoption of technology threatening the implementation of the Convention in some countries.

In terms of challenges, we can note the following:

1. High costs of intra-regional trade; The intra-African trade costs are still about 50% higher than in East Asia and the highest cost between the region in any developing region. So, it has caused the continent's integration with the rest of the world to be faster than its intra-regional integration¹⁸.
2. The African continent has the lowest level of intra-regional trade in the world, with a rate of less than 18%, compared to rates in Latin America, Asia, and Europe, estimated at 22%, 50%, and 70%, respectively¹⁹.
3. Africa's share in total world trade is low; It does not exceed three percent, which prevented it from achieving its full economic potential, a situation that is not commensurate with the enormous resources that Africa abounds in oil, gold, diamonds, other minerals, and agricultural products of all kinds
4. Weak financing capabilities. On the African continent, cooperation between the countries of the continent can advance the process of strengthening the financial sectors in Africa to enhance local capabilities through financing sustainable, micro, small, medium, and large projects and industrial, agricultural, and urban development projects. Its needs are estimated at an additional \$432 billion to achieve economic recovery in 2022-2023.

¹⁷ مركز المعلومات ودعم اتخاذ القرار، التكتلات الإفريقية ومنطقة التجارة الحرة: فرص مصر وسياسات دعم وجودها الإفريقي، 31 أغسطس 2023، <https://www.idsc.gov.eg/Article/details/8819>

¹⁸ The world Bank, The Role of Trade in Ending Poverty, access date 13 September 2023, <http://rb.gy/i0q4h>

¹⁹WORLD, African Free Trade Area can herald \$12 billion growth for the continent's automotive industry, 4 April 2023, <http://rb.gy/8zb4f>

5. Financing crises and debt rates. The economic cost was estimated to be an increase in debt as a percentage of GDP from 40% to 70%, and only 4 African countries were exposed to debt distress to 17 countries that will be exposed to it in 2022²⁰.
6. Fragility of infrastructure. The African continent's infrastructure is still suffering from a decline at all levels, especially in terms of financing. By the end of 2022, The African Development Bank estimated the African continent's financing gap for infrastructure at about \$100 billion at all levels of infrastructure for transportation, energy, health, education, and technology. Statistics indicate that Africa loses 2% of its gross domestic product annually due to poor infrastructure.
7. The continued security fragility and lack of peace; The African continent witnessed more than 30 armed conflicts in 2020, compared to 27 in 2019 and 25 in 2021, especially in Ethiopia, the Democratic Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Niger, and the spread of the terrorist phenomenon and the spread of rebel movements such as the Democratic Congo, estimated at 120 rebel groups, and the number of classified countries increased. It is considered unfree from 14 to 25 years between 2008 and 2023.
8. Climate change continues to intensify. Africa is the continent most severely affected by climate change, and the continent will be particularly vulnerable due to its limited adaptive capacity. The context indicates that they cannot adapt and address climate action alone. The continent loses \$7 to \$15 billion annually due to climate change, which is expected to rise to \$50 billion by 2050. Africa includes 5 million people displaced due to climate change. Africa receives only 3% of the total global climate financing estimated at approximately \$18 billion annually, while its climate financing needs are estimated at approximately \$125 billion annually²¹.
9. Deterioration of ecosystems. On the African continent, loss of forest cover, biodiversity, and land degradation remain high and widespread due to deforestation for agriculture, pastoralism, and climate change. Land degradation affects 46% of Africa's land and 65% of its population, costing the region US\$9.3 billion annually²².

²⁰ الاتحاد الأفريقي، جانحة كوفيد -19 وانعدام الأمن وعدم الاستقرار والتنمية الاجتماعية والاقتصادية للقارة من بين أمور أخرى، محور مناقشات الدورة العادية الأربعون للمجلس التنفيذي للاتحاد الأفريقي <https://bit.ly/3j03G7A>

²¹ البنك الأفريقي للتنمية، تقرير جديد يُظهر الحاجة إلى مزيد من الإجراءات إذا أرادت أفريقيا تحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة وخطة 2063، <https://www.afdb.org/ar/akhbar-wa-ahdath/balaghat-sahafyah/57440>

²² ECA, Climate finance: nearly US\$3 trillion needed to implement Africa's NDCs, 4 September 2023, <http://rb.gy/8vlu2>

10. Challenges of the payment system. Most African currencies are not usable outside their countries. But efforts are now underway to solve this dilemma by using a payment system that suits everyone in cooperation with Afrexim Bank²³.
11. The challenge of trade exchange with foreign companies. These companies obtain African natural resources with unequal returns, corrupt the ruling elites, and support the practice of authoritarian or sham democratic rule. Some companies may contribute to igniting armed conflicts, such as what is happening in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to steal their resources

Fifth: Maat's Vision to Activate the African Free Trade Area Agreement

After monitoring the facts of the African Free Trade Area Agreement, extrapolating its historical and temporal developments, and analyzing and evaluating its gains on the African continent and the Egyptian contexts, Maat presents its vision for activating the African Free Trade Area through a set of recommendations, which require the following:

- 1) African governments activate their commitments on the gradual elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers, progressive liberalization of trade in services, cooperation in investment, intellectual property rights and competition policy, cooperation in all trade-related areas, cooperation in customs matters, and the implementation of trade facilitation measures.
- 2) Governments implement the obligations contained in the various protocols of the AfCFTA and their annexes, which are the responsibility of the state parties. This process will begin once all outstanding issues on the negotiating table are agreed upon.
- 3) Establish AfCFTA national entities with a broad membership that reflects a broad range of stakeholders and interests and operate within the AfCFTA country strategy structure to ensure policy coherence and effective localization of the AfCFTA.
- 4) African governments join hands to improve intra-African trade by removing non-trade barriers such as border controls and developing national implementation strategies to activate this and other objectives in the Agreement.

²³ مركز الجزيرة، اتفاقية منطقة التجارة الحرة: الفرص والأمال، تاريخ الوصول 17 أكتوبر 2023، <https://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/article/5494>

- 5) Develop balanced domestic legal and policy frameworks in line with AfCFTA commitments and recognize the role of their governments in implementing the AfCFTA at national levels.
- 6) Establishing a compensation fund for the AfCFTA would ensure equitable sharing of benefits derived from the Agreement and short-term financial support.
- 7) Activate appropriate social dialogue in AfCFTA operations and include topics of youth employment, gender equality, decent jobs, sustainability, and democratic participation in the AfCFTA.
- 8) Data collection and information exchange: Baseline data can help prove the negative or positive consequences of the AfCFTA and address the glaring absence of reliable baseline data and impact studies of the AfCFTA to prevent its profound and negative impacts from spreading.
- 9) Expanding the powers of the African Free Trade Area Agreement to include defending a large proportion of the workforce active in the informal sector by simplifying trade systems by providing simplified customs documents, a common list of goods eligible for duty-free status, and assistance in completing customs procedures.
- 10) Design and implement gender-sensitive policies targeting complementary measures to achieve the objectives of the AfCFTA, conduct a gender analysis of the impacts of the AfCFTA, and include specific proposals that address potential effects on women in advocacy campaigns and increase female employment opportunities in decent jobs with Providing adequate protection and health and safety measures.
- 11) Develop a general framework for a popular campaign to raise awareness about the African Free Trade Agreement in African countries and facilitate the movement of individuals across member states in the region to strengthen industries on the continent.
- 12) Call multilateral financing institutions to reconsider the criteria and conditions that qualify countries, including African ones, to obtain soft loans available to low- and middle-income countries in light of the increasing burdens of debt service. African governments should promote plans to increase the private sector's contribution to sustainable development, employment, and intra-regional trade.