

26<sup>th</sup> March 2025

53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the ARSO Monthly Webinar Series

Time: 2:00 – 4:00 (14:00 – 16:00) PM- EAST AFRICAN TIME.

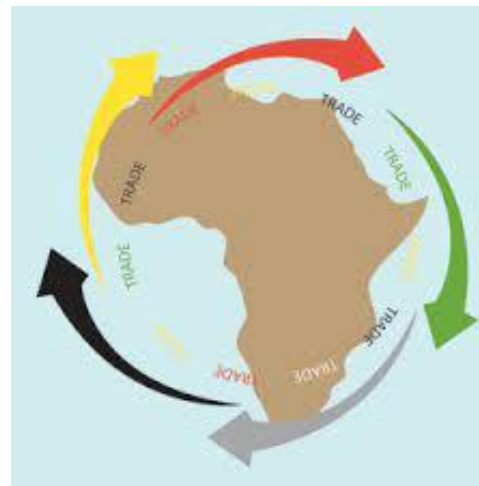
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**Theme: Africa's Strategic Commodities and Trade.**

**Topic: Role of standardisation in developing effective Regional Value Chains for Africa's Strategic Commodities and promotion of Intra-Africa Trade and Global Market Access.**

**Host: Dr. Hermogene Nsengimana, Secretary General ARSO**



# The Plenary/Panelists



Industrialization, with strong linkages to domestic economies, will help African countries achieve high growth rates, diversify their economies and reduce their exposure to external shocks associated with commodities trade.

African trade integration has long been constrained by deteriorating border and transportation systems, as well as a patchwork of unique legislation in dozens of markets. Governments frequently create trade barriers to protect their home markets from regional competition, making trading with close neighbours more expensive than trading with nations considerably further away.

According to UNCTAD's Economic Development in Africa Report 2019, intra-African exports made up 16.6% of all exports in 2017 compared to 68.1% in Europe, 59.4% in Asia, 55% in America, and 7% in Oceania.





**53<sup>rd</sup> ARSO Monthly Webinar on Africa's Strategic Commodities & Trade**

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025 from 1400 HRS EAT

Register Here - <https://tinyurl.com/africatradeorso>



53<sup>rd</sup> ARSO Monthly Webinar





**HOST**  
**Dr. Hermogene Nsengimana**  
Secretary General

**Panelists**

 **Emmanuel Kirwa, Assistant Monitoring & Evaluation Officer**

Africa Strategic Commodities: Leveraging the benefits of standards to facilitate intra-African Trade under the AfCFTA - The ARSO standardisation and Made-in-Africa Qualification criteria initiatives

 **Julia Spies - Chief, Trade and Market Intelligence, ITC**

Made by Africa: Creating Value through Integration-Accelerating Africa's productive transformation as a policy priority for Africa's Industrialisation and promotion of Intra African Trade - The 2022 AU/EU/ITC Value Chain Diagnostic study on strategic Africa priority sectors and opportunities within the AfCFTA

 **Komi Tsowou, Regional Advisor on AfCFTA, UNDP**

Made in Africa: why prioritising the development of regional value chains for key and strategic commodities for Africa is strategic for Africa's sustainable industrialisation and development and for boosting intra-African trade

 **Catherine Mwangi, Project Administrator, UNIDO & François Denner, Chief Technical Advisor, UNIDO**

Africa's strategic Commodities and why their Effective Regional Value Chains remain key in boosting Africa's industrial products, intra-Africa trade and exports in global trade - UNIDO's Initiatives in strengthening Africa's industrial transformation of Africa's Strategic Commodities and regional value chains through Quality Infrastructure












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## Africa's Commodity Trade Challenge

A key challenge for Africa as a region, for along time, under its industrialisation and integration Agenda, has been on how to move off an economic growth path built on commodity exports to a more sustainable developmental path and industrialisation based on production of high quality export-oriented products and enhanced intra-African trade, as many African economies still rely heavily on commodity production and exports, with minimal value addition and even fewer forward and backward linkages to other sectors of the economy.

UNCTAD in its Africa Economic Development Report, 2022, Rethinking the Foundations of Export Diversification in Africa Highlights that Forty-five (45) African economies are commodity dependent, which implies a heavy reliance of countries' exports on primary products, with highly volatile revenues due to the price boom and bust nature of the market and notes that the diversification of African economies is the most viable means to survive the vulnerabilities and commodity price volatility, often amplified by the adverse effects of shocks such as the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, the 2020 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic or the more recent geopolitical tensions in Eastern Europe (the 2022 war in Ukraine).

The emergence of **COVID-19**, as well, reiterated the risks of external dependence of most African economies and underscored, further, the need for Sustainable Production and Consumption in Africa, with greater focus on Africa's industrialisation, Manufacturing, and the competitiveness and value addition of the Made in Africa Products, Enterprises (SMEs) and regional value chains for increased intra-African Trade and Sustainable development, while highlighting the need for harnessing the Africa's Resources potential and export diversification, and the need to build a strong and resilient economy to withstand future shocks. In terms of resources, Africa has about 12% of the world's oil reserves, 42% of its gold, 80%–90% of chromium and platinum group metals, and 60% of arable land in addition to vast timber resources.



## Policy Initiatives

Transforming Africa from a raw materials exporter to a producer of market-competitive value-added products will therefore require the continent to integrate into regional and global value chains and promote horizontal and vertical diversification anchored in value addition, innovative approaches and local content development.

This state of Africa's Affairs and development strategy has drawn attention to the international Community, including the UN, which on 25 July 2016, adopted Resolution A/RES/70/293, which proclaimed the period 2016-2025 as the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III), which highlights the need for inclusive and sustainable industrialization to generate jobs, wealth and income for all, to eradicate absolute poverty, and thereby to achieve sustainable development.

This complements other key development initiatives, such as the African Union's (AU) **Agenda 2063**: The Africa we Want that recognises the centrality of industrialization and Africa's Resources in driving the continent's socio-economic structural transformation, **the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** that highlights the need for inclusive and sustainable industrialization in Sustainable Development Goal 9.



The recognition of the challenges and opportunities from Africa's commodity wealth has been reflected in different decisions of the African Union (AU), with all of them *appreciating need for Africa's transformation with a greater focus on Manufacturing, regional value chains development, prioritising Export diversification in key commodity sectors with a potential for Africa's sustainable growth:*

1. *the African Commodity Strategy - 2024,*
2. *The Arusha Declaration on African Commodities as well as other frameworks such as the:*
3. *Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), the Africa Mining Vision (AMV),*
4. *the Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa, (AIDA),*
5. *the Strategy for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA),*
6. *the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA),*

# The African Commodity Strategy

With the adoption of Agenda 2063 as the strategic framework to guide Africa's inclusive economic growth, the AU undertook to consolidate and guide the development of an Africa wide commodities strategy that will ensure a more coherent and collaborative process of African states developing, managing and benefiting from their natural resources and collectively positioning the continent to live up to its potential as an economic powerhouse.

The African Commodity Strategy is one of the flagship projects under the African Union (AU)'s Agenda 2063. It is also an integral component for the successful outcomes of the Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) Action Plan and envisions a commodity-led industrialisation aimed at developing Africa's commodities as a driver for achieving the structural, social and economic transformation of the continent.

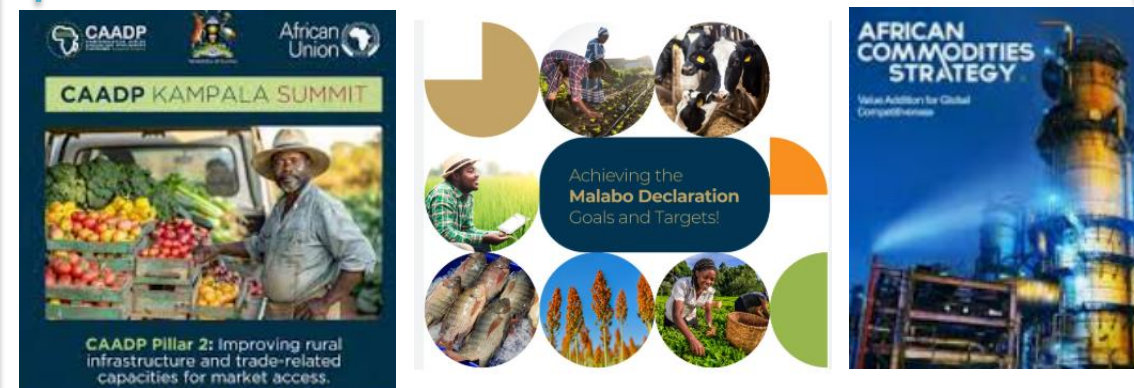
The strategy aims to identify, formulate and drive the implementation of policies and programmes that will enable African countries to add value, extract higher rents from their commodities, integrate into global value chains and promote vertical and horizontal diversification anchored in value addition and local content development.

To achieve these objectives, in its formulation, the Commodities Strategy addresses several key issues including:

- Reviewing the state of play for high-priority commodities sectors in Africa, namely agriculture, mining, and energy; including the examination of current trends and outlooks, to identify sector-specific opportunities and how to address any existing challenges.
- Addressing Commodity Price Volatility which continues to be a critical feature of international commodity markets and thus creates challenges for macroeconomic management and exposes developing countries to greater macroeconomic uncertainty.
- Driving Commodity based Industrialisation which can serve as a launching pad for long term diversification in new non commodity sectors, if well supported by robust industrial policies. These goals are achievable given that Africa boasts significant human and natural resources that can be used to promote industrialisation and structural economic transformation through value addition strategies in all sectors.

With Africa's growing, predominantly young, skilled and urbanising population, as well as the continent's endowments in many natural resources, including plentiful land and fertile soils, oil and minerals, commodities can play a crucial role in the drive to industrialisation. However, a key challenge for African countries is to ensure the design and implementation of effective policies that promote industrialisation and economic and structural transformation. **The Commodities Strategy is therefore of paramount importance in assisting Africa realise the full benefits from its natural resources for the betterment of its people..**

January 2025: African Union 10-year CAADP Strategy and Action Plan, and the Kampala CAADP Declaration on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa, which will be implemented from 2026 to 2035.



## Africa's Commodities Strategy; Value Addition for Global Competitiveness

The African Commodities Strategy will ensure that the continent takes a stand and becomes a significant player in global trade by addressing some of the activities of transnational corporations which have been fragmenting their production processes, so as to efficiently exploit different countries' comparative advantages along (regional, subsequently global) value chains, forming a global division of labour.

The objectives of the strategy are to find strategic measures to address price volatility and to use Africa's wealth of natural resources and absolute advantage in the commodities market to ensure that Africa's commodities are used for its industrialisation.

## Opportunities under the AfCFTA for Africa's Commodities transformation

The AfCFTA which came into force on 30 May 2019, with an operational phase launched on 7th July 2019, and commencement of real trade on 1st January 2021 with the Guided Trade Initiative initiated in October 2022, and currently having been ratified by 48 of the 54 signatories (38 of which are ARSO members), has been structured to boost intra-African trade and regional value chains, which over the years has suffered three major categories of obstacles, namely, **(i) weak productive capacities and limited economic diversification, which constricts the range of intermediate and final goods that can be traded and potentially inhibits the fuller development of regional value chains; (ii) tariff-related trade costs, associated with the slow implementation of the tariff liberalization schedules underpinning free trade agreements; and (iii) high non-tariff-related trade costs that hamper the competitiveness of firms and economies in Africa. (African Union, 2013).**

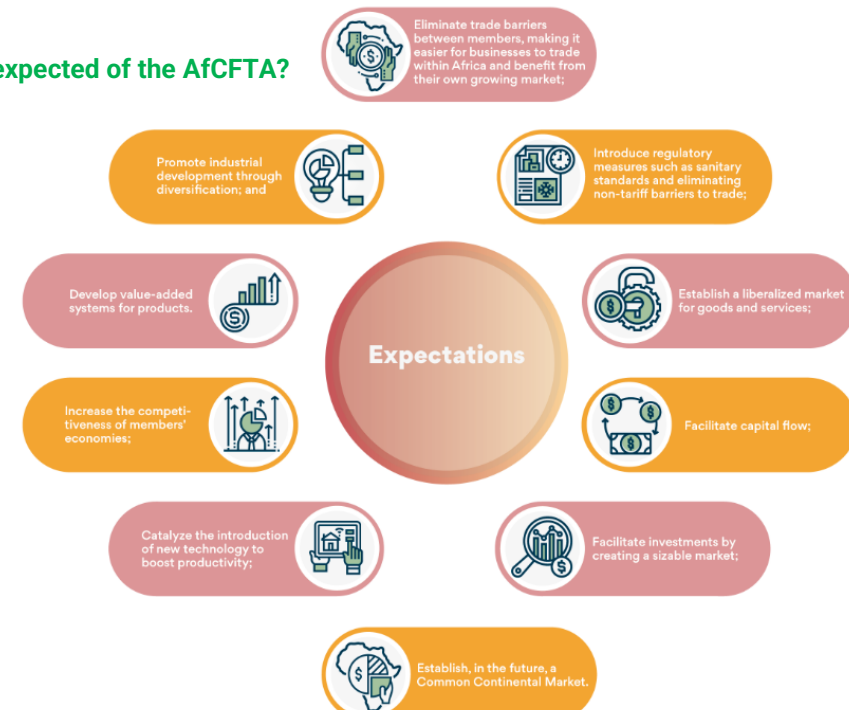
1. The AfCFTA is poised to contribute significantly to increased competitiveness of Africa's industrial products and economies through harnessing the economies of scale of a large continental market;
2. Promote industrial development and transformation of Africa's economy through increased rate of diversification and value-added systems/regional value chains for products;
3. Eliminate trade barriers between members, making it easier for businesses to trade within Africa and benefit from their own growing market and in away,
4. promote the continent's ability to supply its import needs from its own resources and better integration of the continent into the global economy. (Experts (Mevel, Simon and Karingi, Stephen - 2012, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi - 2016, Henri J. Nkuepo, 2012, Cheong, Jansen and Peters (2013)).

The AfCFTA aims at expanding intra African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation regimes and instruments across RECs and across Africa in general and enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploiting opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources.

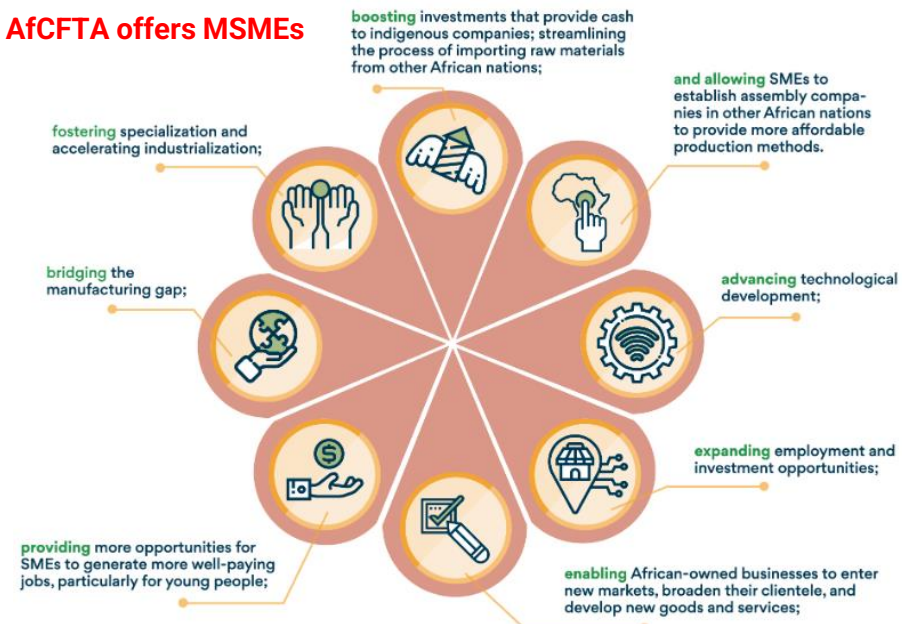
As the largest single free Trade area in the world, AfCFTA, which is prioritizing the production of value-added goods and services that are "Made in Africa, could stimulate intra-African trade by up to USD 35 billion per year, with UNECA predicting that the AfCFTA has the potential to increase intra-African trade by 52.3% by eliminating import duties, and to double the trade if non-tariff barriers, especially the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTS – via harmonised standards and conformity Assessment) are also reduced (UNECA 2018).

<https://www.macmap.org/en/learn/afcfta>

### What is expected of the AfCFTA?



### What AfCFTA offers MSMEs



## Call for prioritisation of African Regional Value Chains and standards harmonisation in Key Priority Sectors and for Strategic commodities,

The African Industrialisation policies, including the AfCFTA **calls for industrialisation strategies with strong linkages to domestic economies with strong regional value chains and competitive made in Africa products** to help African countries achieve high growth rates, diversify their economies and reduce their exposure to external shocks.

Whereas the integration into global value chains (GVCs) and international trade offers emerging economies an opportunity to add more value within their local industries, drive employment and raise incomes (OECD, 2012a) and often hailed as a key pathway to sustainable industrialisation in Africa, **the challenge of complying with the regulatory requirements remains a challenge for Africa**, especially for the small scale and informal producers, which in turn are the engine of sustainable development in Africa (Sturgeon & Memedovic, 2010),

For this many experts (UNCTAD 2016, The Economic Report on Africa (ECA, 2015)) continue to **advocate for establishment of regional value chains, with effective Quality Infrastructure, to trigger sustainable industrialisation and intra-African trade with quantitative spillovers including enterprise/business formalisation/professionalisation and cultural dimension of manufacturing production.**



AfDB



UNECA

- The AfDB President, Akinwumi Adesina, in an exclusive report on [Trade begins at home](http://www.theafricareport.com/East-Horn-Africa/trade-begins-at-home.html) (<http://www.theafricareport.com/East-Horn-Africa/trade-begins-at-home.html>, May 9, 2016), highlighted that, given the volatility of commodity prices, the continent needs to stop focusing its economic activity on the export of raw materials to foreign markets, and advocates for integration of African Economies with value addition and export oriented production and strong regional value chains in priority sectors like in agricultural sector (and others such as Pharmaceuticals, Textile and Leather, Mining)
- Mr. Lopes Carlos Former UNECA Chief Executive Officer, while participating in a Panel on Meeting Standards, Winning Markets: Trading through Value Chains, at the UNIDO General Conference in Lima on 30 November 2013, highlights the need for effective regional value chains with harmonised regulatory framework, noting that the participation of African countries in global value chains is undermined, not by tariffs, but non-tariff barriers in the form of standards requirements or rules of origin, calling for the collaboration between ARSO and UNECA in the Development of Regional value Chains and the associated regulatory Framework, including standards and Conformity Assessment procedures, to enhance productivity and intra-African trade.

## ARSO UNECA Study of priority sector for standards harmonisation

**UNECA and ARSO** carried out a study from January 2019 – August 2019 aimed at identifying priority African value chains and products to enhance African standards harmonisation for the promotion of Africa's industrial development and intra-African trade, and with the findings of the study further informing the prioritisation of African standards harmonization by ARSO.

The study (carried in six African regional economic communities AMU, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS and SADC) identified potential value chains and priorities for standards harmonisation using a framework consisting of a number of different techniques, including, **first**, the identification of most commonly traded goods; **second**, the estimation of the potential export basket; and, **third**, the review of regional economic community industrialisation priorities and harmonised standards catalogue:

➤ **The study recommended that continental standards harmonization process should be based on value chain priorities that are common across regional economic communities and that offer potential for strong forward and backward linkages which according to the potential export basket analysis, include mineral oils, precious stones, iron and steel and Agro processing (tea, sugar, coffee, vegetables, cereals, beverages and spirits), with the existing standards harmonization catalogues of the various regional economic communities offering a basis for identifying priority products for standards harmonization at the continental level. This also include the need to prioritize products (Portland cement, fish, milk and milk products, fruits and fruit juices, edible oils such as palm oils, and cereals, including rice, wheat, maize and sorghum) in which at least two regionals economic communities have a comparative advantage and for which standards already exist in at least two such communities.**

The study underscored the fact that:

- i. large proportion of African trade takes place with the rest of the world, and for all the African regional economic communities, more than 60 per cent of exports are destined for markets outside the continent, and more than 80 per cent of imports originate from outside the continent;
- ii. exports are constrained by non-tariff trade costs, which may sometimes include costs related to complex and unharmonized standards and technical requirements;
- iii. Africa has a more diversified comparative advantage within Africa than with the rest of the world.

The typical agricultural value chain



Source: A.T. Kearney analysis

Table 41: Summary of communities' priority value chains in Africa

AMU	COMESA	EAC	ECCAS	ECOWAS	SADC
Fish processing	Agroprocessing, including vegetables, tea, sugar	Agroprocessing including vegetables, tea, cereals, beverages and spirits	Agroprocessing including dairy, coffee, tea, cereals, cocoa, beverages and spirits,	Agroprocessing including fruits and nuts, coffee and tea, edible oils, cereals, beverages and vinegar	Agroprocessing including fruits and nuts, sugar, beverages and spirits
Edible oils					
Cement	Minerals beneficiation including copper, cobalt, nickel, etc	Cement	Mineral oils	Mineral fuels	Mineral fuels
Minerals beneficiation		Precious stones	Wood and wood products	Essential oils	Precious stones
Fertilizer	Wood and wood products	Mineral oils	Precious stones	Cotton	Iron steel
Textiles	Mineral oils	Iron and steel	Iron and steel	Precious stones	Automobile
Iron and steel	Cotton and textiles	Creative economy	Automobile	Ships and boats*	
Automobile	Iron and steel		Ships and boats*		
	Precious stones				
	Creative economy				



**Standards provide the bridge between the industry and the Markets as Standards and technical regulations define what can (or cannot) be exchanged, and outline the procedures under which such exchanges are or are not permissible.**

## ARSO UNECA Study of priority sector for standards harmonisation the International Trade Centre (ITC) Africa's Value Chain Diagnostic Study

The EU and AU commissioned ITC carried out an Africa's Value Chain Diagnostic Study to identify strategic Africa priority sectors, with high potential for sustainable value chain development in Africa and the bottlenecks preventing businesses from fully realising this potential.

Under the report, [Made by Africa: Creating Value through Integration](#), the study identified 94 value chains with high potential for sustainable development, with each value chain linking to at least five African countries from different regions, with four sectors emerging as especially promising, including for small businesses, which make up 90% of companies and more than half of jobs worldwide: **pharmaceuticals, baby food, cotton clothing and automotives**. The value chain diagnostic study has two pillars: the quantitative pillar and qualitative pillar.

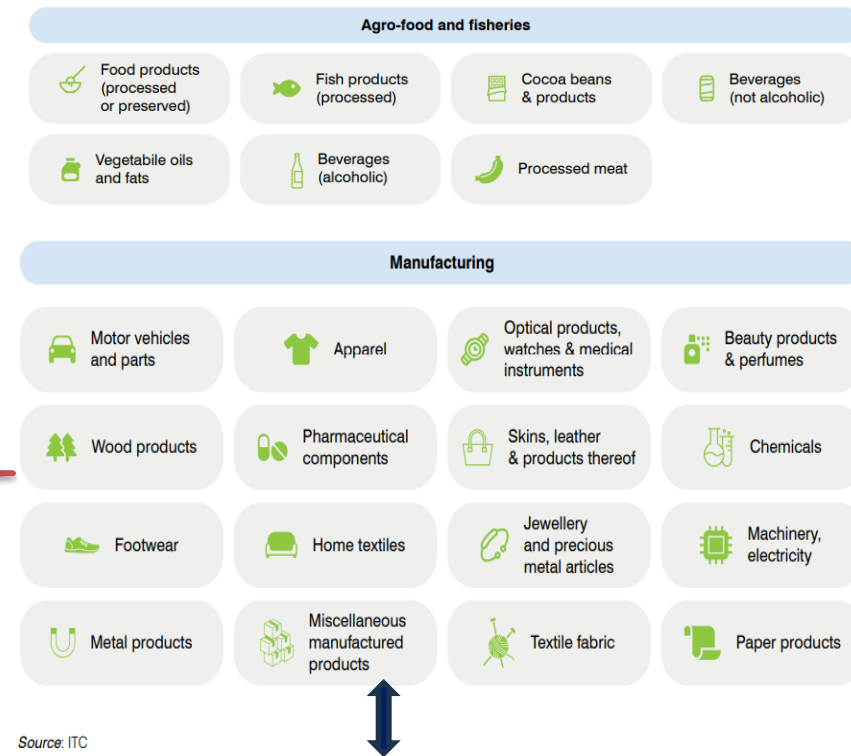
1. The quantitative pillar identifies feasible and promising value chains based on an analysis of comparative advantages and other supply, demand, market access, and strategic factors. The quantitative assessment begins by classifying 5,353 products at the 6-digit level of the Harmonized System (HS) into inputs and outputs.
2. The qualitative pillar zooms into a subset of the most promising value chains and surveys companies and other stakeholders about their needs.

Products are considered outputs if they are processed and non-intermediate goods, and inputs in all other cases. Next, sector-level input-output tables are used to identify the relative importance of each input used in the production of a given output. This step enables the identification of 415 different value chains, which are then evaluated based on revealed comparative advantage.

- For a value chain to be retained in the analysis, the African region and at least five African countries from at least two different regional economic communities must have a revealed comparative advantage in the major inputs, outputs, or both inputs and outputs. Value chains with no revealed comparative advantage, or a revealed comparative advantage in minor inputs only, are excluded from the analysis. This process narrows the pool of feasible value chains to 92.
- Consultations with EU and AUC stakeholders and sector experts, and feedback collected through an online questionnaire, highlighted additional value chains, such as cars and pharmaceuticals, which are important for political and strategic reasons. These consultations increased the pool of feasible value chains to 94.

## Made by Africa 94 value chains to boost intra-African trade

Figure 2 Sectors with most promising value chains



**The 2017 G7 leaders' renewed policymakers' commitment to the implementation of standards as a policy instruments of choice for the global economy, supply chains and across all jurisdictions and with the associated declaration of the G20 to support Africa's industrialisation.**

## Stakeholders Initiatives

For UNIDO, the Africa's Commodity Strategy, is also in the context of **UNIDO's role in the implementation Strategies for the third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III - 2016-2026)**, which was proclaimed, as per the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/70/293, declaring 2016-2025 as the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III), on 25 July 2016.

This is for the continent's Transformation journey towards shaping a sustainable social, political and economic transformation process anchored on a broad-based and inclusive industrialisation trajectory and which firmly anchors Africa on a path towards inclusive and sustainable industrial development as a key element for furthering value addition, economic diversification and job creation and **enhancing the continent's capacity to deliver on Agenda 2063, and by extension the AfCFTA goals and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

The architecture of **the joint roadmap for IDDA III implementation developed by UNIDO underscored standardisation as a key pillar** and built on the experience gained during the first Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA I) (1980-1990), and the second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA II) (1993-2002) and **focuses on Prioritizing sectors that have high potential for growth** and which can meaningfully contribute to Africa's sustainable development and Strengthening and enabling business environment **that includes having appropriate policies, infrastructure (Quality Infrastructure)**, knowledge and skills, financing, technologies.

➤ **Currently UNIDO is implementing a project on "Supporting quality and regulatory infrastructure, value chain-specific quality infrastructure services and quality culture promotion in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States".**

**For UNDP,** to address the Africa's industrialisation Agenda, **the UNDP has established the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa (RSCA) as one of five UNDP Regional Service Centres in the world,** developing high-quality knowledge and policy for UNDP in Africa, situated in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,

It acts as the organization's main interface with regional and continental bodies such as the African Union and Regional Economic Communities and serves 46 Country Offices in sub-Saharan Africa. The Centre also implements a continent-wide Regional Programme supporting Africa's transformation agenda, and currently the AfCFTA Goals, by:

- 1. enhancing inclusive and sustainable growth,**
- 2. widening political participation and giving everyone a voice, and**
- 3. developing responsive institutions which deliver desired services and promote inclusive processes of state-society dialogue.**

# Strategic Role of ARSO

Many authors describe standards as instruments for value chain management and administration (governance).

- For Africa, Heterogeneity of standards and Conformity Assessment regimes, developed by different countries and regions make trade within value chains contentious and costly (OECD and WTO 2012). **But these difficulties can be circumvented through harmonization of national standards into international or regional ones (OECD, WTO, and UNCTAD 2013).**
- Standards that are harmonized in a regional agreement increase trade flows between the partners (Chen and Mattoo (2008)), as harmonised African standards, like harmonised International are specifications with global consensus and increase the openness of economies and governance of Value Chains, as the supply and demand of the concerned goods and services are as large as possible and economies of scale can be exploited (Blind 2004), hence the need for harmonised standards in Africa priority sectors.
- **Globally relevant harmonised standards make it easier for many companies' (particularly small and medium enterprises) to get their products across national boundaries around the world and in respective value chains..**

ARSO, is an intergovernmental Organisation established by the Organization of African Unity (OAU, currently African Union (AU)) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in 1977, with a mandate to harmonise African Standards and conformity assessment procedures in order to reduce Technical Barriers to Trade in Africa, thus promoting intra-African and international Trade, and with the drive, as per its 2022 – 2027 Strategic plan, to:

- Increase the Harmonisation and implementation of African Standards and relevant international standards as per the AfCFTA Annex 6 and SPS Annex 7, in various Priority Sectors for Africa.
- Strengthen the Conformity Assessment, including Mutual Recognition Arrangements, to serve the interest of African industries, farmers, producers and consumers;
- Promote the alignment of African Sustainability policies to the UN SDGs 2030 universal sustainability agenda;
- Facilitate Quality Culture in Africa with increased focus on strengthening Quality Infrastructure and common regulatory Framework in Africa as per the adopted African Union African Quality Policy (AQP), African Continental Technical Regulation Framework (ACTReF), and the need for aligning the Quality Policies at the National and Regional levels, and
- increase cooperation and partnership for the implementation of the ARSO Programmes.

Harmonized African Standards by Category

Technical Harmonization Committee	No. of standards published	Products (Goods)	Services	Tests, analysis, sampling	Codes, glossaries, units
THC 01, Basic and General Standards	145	65	5	28	47
THC 02, Agriculture and Food Products	429	196	20	113	100
THC 03, Building and Civil Engineering	294	88	6	174	26
THC 04, Mechanical Engineering and Metallurgy	109	68	0	35	6
THC 05, Chemistry and Chemical Engineering	107	39	0	52	16
THC 06, Electrotechnology	60	30	0	7	23
THC 07, Leather and Textile Products	244	115	4	97	28
THC 08, Transport and Communications	161	106	23	20	12
THC 09, Environmental Management	40	12	2	7	19
THC 10, Energy and Natural Resources	0	0	0	0	0
THC 11, Quality Management	6	0	0	0	6
THC 12, Services	105	1	83	0	21
THC 13, Traditional and Complementary Medicine	20	14	0	1	5
THC 14, Healthcare Technology	366	170	13	78	105
THC 15, Household Goods and Services	0	0	0	0	0
Conformity Assessment Committee	68	0	0	0	68
Consumer Committee	16	0	0	0	16
Specialized Working Groups	1	0	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2171</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>498</b>

So far, ARSO has harmonised and published 2171 (18% of this anticipation) African Standards, including International Standards, under 15 priority Sectors (including Agriculture, Automotive, Pharmaceuticals, Textile and Leather) and 97 Technical Committees, with African Experts, nominated from member States.

ARSO has also developed a **Made in Africa Qualification Criteria guideline** that addresses the challenges associated with Africa Products **Quality and Safety; Rules of Origin** and **Intellectual properties** challenges

- The criteria address the challenge of the need to recognise and build trust in Made by Africa and the related need to Invest in a continental quality framework and conformity assessment infrastructure that is reliable and accessible, including to MSMEs.

The document is currently being considered for adoption by the African Union.

## Objective of the Webinar

The main objective of this webinar is to strategically create awareness on the strategic potential of the Africa's Strategic Commodities, the Made in Africa Products and the Regional Trade Value Chains in promoting Africa's Industrialisation and sustainable Development as well as intra-African Trade and Africa's participation in the global value Chains and to provide a platform for engagement and discussions with Policy Makers, the Standardisation Community and Regulators, Traders and Manufactures and all Stakeholders, while highlighting the challenges and strategic policy initiatives and the role of standardisation and Quality Infrastructure.

## Specific Objectives

1. To facilitate better Understanding of Africa's Strategic Commodities and their potential in promoting Intra-African Trade and industrialisation.
2. To facilitate a better understanding on the need for Africa's Regional Value Chains to boost Africa's industrialisation.
3. To facilitate better understanding of the current position of Intra-African Trade and the challenges.
4. To facilitate better understanding of the current Trading trends in Africa, including the trade in primary products/Commodities, and the associated the challenges and risks.
5. To facilitate a better understanding of the role of Standardisation and effective quality Infrastructure in harnessing the potentials of Africa's strategic commodities and regional value chains.
6. To create awareness on various Initiatives by the African leadership, Organisations and Strategic Partners (AU, UNECA, UNDP, ITC, UNIDO) in harnessing the potential of Africa's Strategic commodities and regional Value Chains.
7. To motivate Governments, Stakeholders, and Policy makers, NSBs and the Private sector to work together and consult to ensure good regulatory Frameworks, Policy Frameworks and Strategies for Africa's Strategic Commodities and Regional Value Chains.



Dr Hermogene  
Nsengimana.

**HOST**

**Dr. Nsengimana is the Secretary General of the African Organisation for Standardisation, ARSO, since 2012.**

**Dr. Nsengimana holds a PhD in Analytical and environmental chemistry from the School of Chemistry, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, and a Post-doctoral Studies from the Witwatersrand University and University of Botswana.**

**Dr Hermogene Nsengimana began his Career with ARSO in 2012 as the Secretary General.**

**Steering ARSO to fulfil its Mandate of harmonizing Standards and Conformity Assessment to reduce Technical Barriers to Trade and promote Intra-African and global Trade, Dr. Nsengimana has demonstrated higher success at all key programmes of the Organisation, given his thorough understanding of the challenges of Technical Barriers to Trade issues in Africa and in World Trading systems, based on his wide knowledge of the World Trade Organisation TBTs Agreement (WTO TBT Agreement).**

**Beyond his more than 20 years of service to Africa, many of which in leadership positions, and with a long standing and clear track record with ability for delivery of results, Dr. Hermogene's specific areas of Expertise is Corporate Governance; Strategic Planning and Execution; Team Management and mentorship; Programmes Monitoring, implementation and evaluation; Trade and Economic Policy analysis and implementation, with a bias towards African Economic and Trade Policy Agenda. He has in-depth knowledge of Quality Infrastructure, with a deep grasp of its major components (Standardisation, Conformity Assessment, Metrology and Accreditation) and their interplay and how each affects trade and economies of nations of the world.**

**“Africa Strategic Commodities: Leveraging the benefits of standards to facilitate intra- African Trade under the AfCFTA – The ARSO standardisation and Made-in-Africa Qualification criteria initiatives”.**

**Mr. Emmanuel Kirwa - Assistant M&E Officer, ARSO**

**Emmanuel Kirwa is the, Information Resource, M&E assistant Officer at the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO), where he plays a key role in guiding the technical committees in compliance with Standards Harmonisation Procedures while they develop standards and Conformity Assessment within the continent, that support trade and industrialization.**

**He has over 15 years of experience working at the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO), With experience of delivering and supporting trade in Africa through data analysis and cooperation projects and programs in standards Harmonization for growth of business with special appreciation in technological advancement and data precision.**

**Mr. Kirwa, also, has extensive analytical knowledge, systems analysis and design for enhanced collaboration, consensus building among stakeholders in the development, harmonization and adoption of standards on the continent.**

**Mr. Kirwa is versed with Project Management Using Prince 2.**



**Mr. Emmanuel  
Kirwa  
ARSO.**

**Panelist**

**“Made by Africa : Creating Value through Integration: Accelerating Africa’s productive transformation as a policy priority for Africa’s Industrialisation and promotion of Intra African Trade – The 2022 AU/EU/ITC Value Chain Diagnostic study on strategic Africa priority sectors and opportunities within the AfCFTA”.**

**Julia Spies - Chief of ITC’s Trade and Market Intelligence section, ITC.**

**Julia Spies is the Chief of ITC’s Trade and Market Intelligence section. As such, she is responsible for the suite of ITC’s trade intelligence tools, analytical reports, such as the AUC-EU-ITC flagship report “Made by Africa”, and related capacity building programmes.**

**Julia holds a PhD in Economics, and has worked in think tanks in Germany, Italy and the UK before joining the ITC in 2012. Her research has been published in peer-reviewed academic journals. She is a German national, fluent in English, Spanish and French.**



**Julia Spies  
ITC**

**Panelist.**

**"Made in Africa: why prioritising the development of regional value chains for key and strategic commodities for Africa is strategic for Africa's sustainable industrialisation and development and for boosting intra-African trade".**

**Komi Tsowou - Regional Advisor on AfCFTA/Regional Service Centre for Africa, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa.**

**Komi Tsowou is the Senior Advisor on Trade for the UNDP Africa Bureau, leading and advising on the UNDP portfolio on the African Continental Free Trade Area at both the continental and country levels.**

**He advises public and private actors on trade and investments and leads development programmes across Africa and beyond, focusing on issues ranging from trade, industrialization and value chain development.**

**Before joining UNDP, Komi served in various positions at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva.**



**Komi Tsowou**

**UNDP Regional Bureau  
for Africa.**

**Panelist.**

**“Africa’s strategic Commodities and why their Effective Regional Value Chains remain key in boosting Africa’s industrial products, intra-Africa trade and exports in global trade – UNIDO’s Initiatives in strengthening Africa’s industrial transformation of Africa’s Strategic Commodities and regional value chains through Quality Infrastructure”” .**

**Ms. Catherine Mwangi - Development Economist , UNIDO**

**Ms. Catherine Mwangi is a Development Economist working at the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) where she focuses on industrial development projects in Sub-Saharan Africa.**

**She is currently a Project Administrator involved in technical cooperation projects with a specific focus on the contribution and development of Quality Infrastructure and related services in the context of domestic and global trade, in relation to the aspirations of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Her professional career of over 7 years spans working for various Diplomatic Missions, private sector and the United Nations system.**

**Hailing from Kenya, Catherine holds a Master’s degree in International Relations with a focus on Development Studies and a Bachelor’s degree in Economics and Statistics. She is passionate about supporting the engagement of youth and women in sustainable development matters.**



**Catherine Mwangi  
UNIDO.**

**Panelist**

**“Africa’s strategic Commodities and why their Effective Regional Value Chains remain key in boosting Africa’s industrial products, intra-Africa trade and exports in global trade – UNIDO’s Initiatives in strengthening Africa’s industrial transformation of Africa’s Strategic Commodities and regional value chains through Quality Infrastructure””.**

**Francois Denner - Chief Technical Advisor, UNIDO.**



**Francois Denner  
UNIDO**

**Panelist.**

Francois Denner serves as a Chief Technical Advisor to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and with specific focus on the contribution and development of quality infrastructure and related services in the context of domestic and global trade, and specifically in relation to the provisions of the World Trade Organisation agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

His professional career of more than 30 years started as a metrologist in the domain of Optical Radiometry and eventually being appointed as the head of the then National Metrology Laboratory of South Africa (now known as the National Metrology Institute of South Africa – NMI SA).

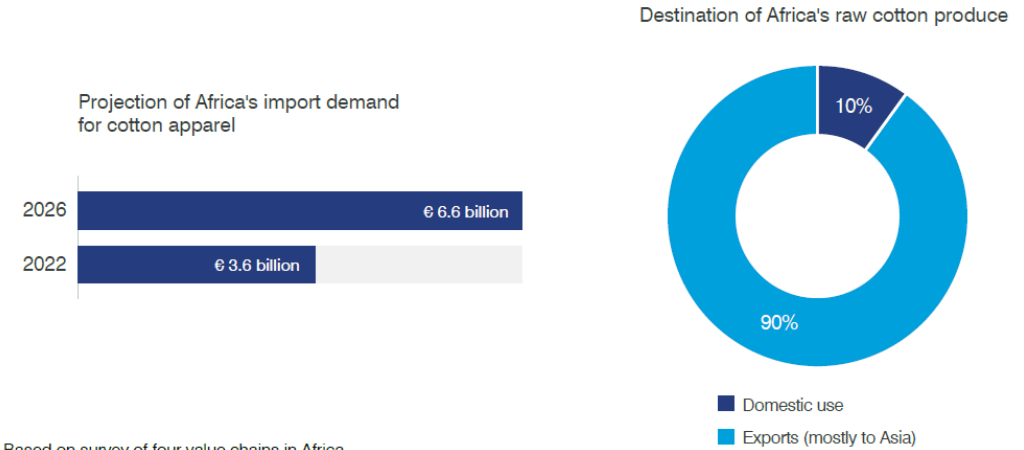
He then joined the South African Department of Trade and Industry as Chief Director for Advanced Manufacturing with focus on industrial development and industrial policy, including aspects such as industrial competitiveness of advanced manufacturing sectors, technology transfer, trade facilitation and importantly the contribution of technical infrastructure (standardization, quality assurance, accreditation and metrology).

Francois has been working since 2016 as an advisor and consultant to UNIDO and holds a Masters degree in Development Studies (Economics) and a Bachelors degree in Electronic Engineering.

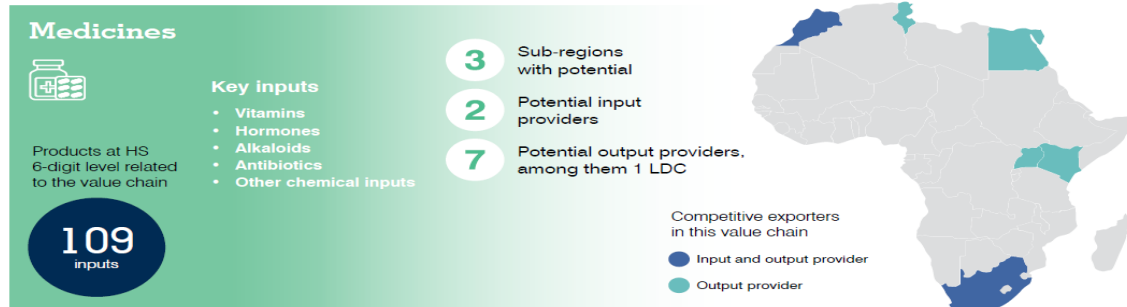
# “Plenary Session – Question and Answer session”

1. Chart box questions
2. Comments and clarifications
3. Raised hands – responses
4. Panellists one second/Minute take-aways recommendation on the webinar, theme, title and discussions.
1. End of the session.

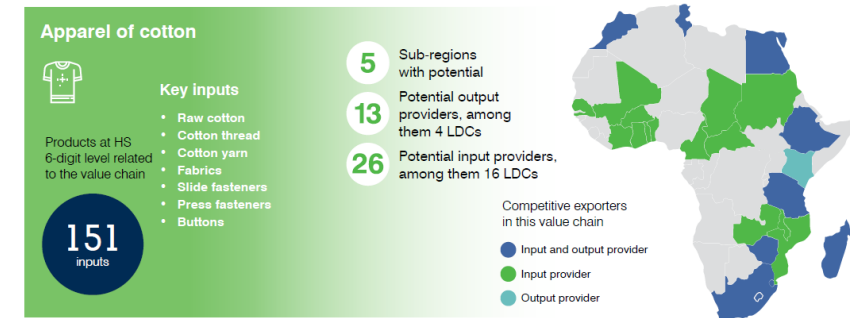
Figure 19 Cotton apparel import value to rise 84% by 2026



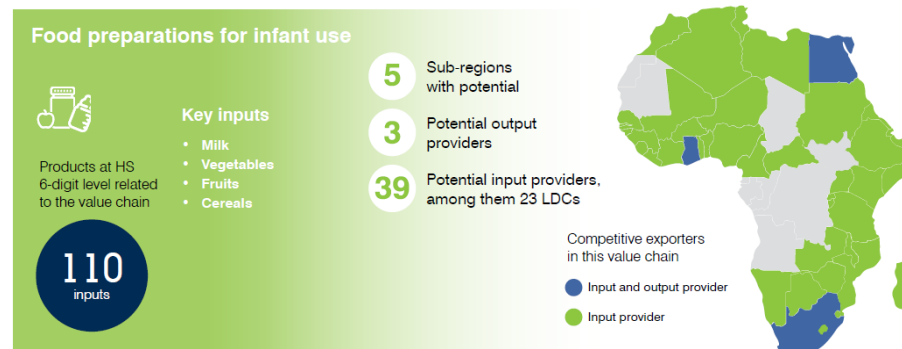
Note: Based on survey of four value chains in Africa.  
Source: ITC



Note: The map shows potential providers of inputs that have comparative advantage or an export potential of more than \$10 million



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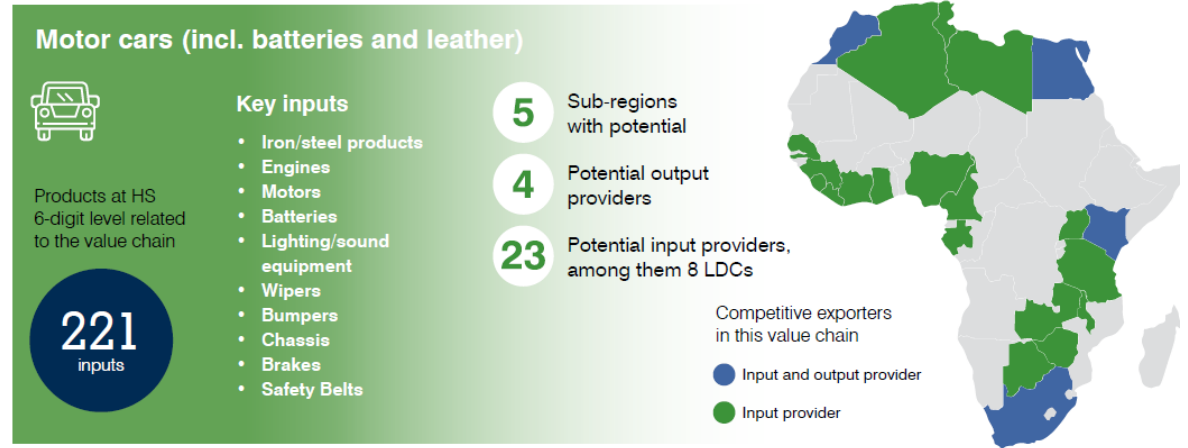
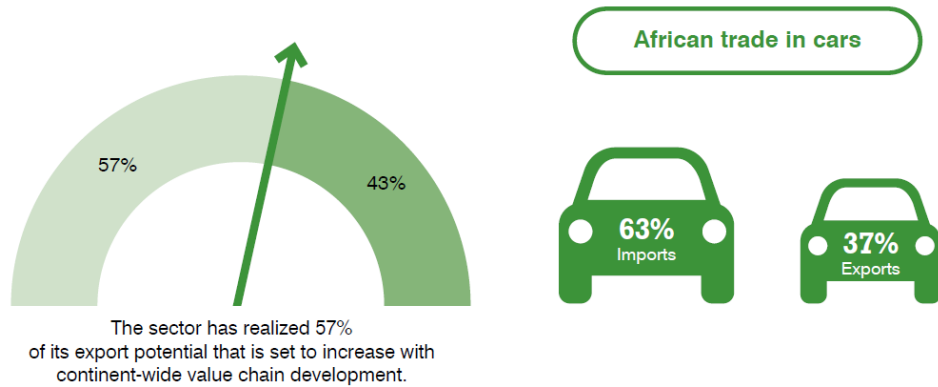


Note: The map shows potential providers of inputs that have comparative advantage or an export potential of more than \$10 million

# Impact

1. Increased Intra-African and Global Trade
2. Effective Regional Value Chains
3. Increased Africa's industrial products and industrialisation.
4. Necessary Government policies and regulations to facilitate the harnessing of the Africa's Strategic Commodities.
5. Increased support to the standardisation and Quality infrastructure to support the competitiveness of the Commodities, value Chains and the SMEs.

Figure 18 Nearly half of the sector's potential remains unrealized



Note: The map shows potential providers of inputs that have comparative advantage or an export potential of more than \$10 million

## ARSO Brief

**54<sup>th</sup> Session: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 , Co-hosted with Egypt/EOS**

**Theme: Tourism and sustainable development**

**Topic: Harnessing Tourism for Economic Development and Growth in Africa and Fostering Sustainable Tourism for Improved Livelihoods and the role of Standardisation and Government Policies.**



**Dr. Eng. Khaled Hassan Soufi, Chairman, EOS/Egypt/  
ISO President –Elect, 2025-2027.**

## Discussions

1. Leveraging the potential of Tourism as a key pillar for Africa's sustainable development: Opportunities, Challenges and policy perceptions.
2. Tourism as an Economic Development Tool: National policy initiatives for the Competitiveness of Tourism.
3. Sustainability as a key factor in Climate Resilience tourism and competitiveness: A global analysis.
4. Reinventing Africa's Tourism Industry and liberalizing Travel for a Borderless Africa through an Africa's Common Passport – The Agenda 2063 opportunities.



Ms. Mai Hassan.

Moderator



[Tanzania Hosts the 31<sup>st</sup> ARSO General Assembly Events/ the 2025 ARSO week, in Zanzibar, Golden Tulip Hotel, Airport](#)

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, through the Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS) is scheduled to Host the 31st ARSO GA Events , including the Annual African Day of Standardisation Forum and the Made in Africa Expo (Made in Tanzania) on 23rd – 27th June 2025 under the Theme: **“Accelerating Fair and Just Trade in Africa under the African Continental Free Trade Area through an African Coherent Regulatory Framework and Harmonised standards”**.

The Theme is based on the AU 2025 declared theme **“Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations”**, and officially launched by Heads of State and Government during the 38<sup>th</sup> AU Summit held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2025, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



## ARSO in Brief – The ARSO Webinar Themes and Dates for 2025

The ARSO 2024 Webinar themes
<p><b>51<sup>st</sup> Session</b> 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025 co-hosted with the Kingdom of Morocco/IMANOR <b>Theme:</b> The Halal industry, Trade and Standardisation <b>Topic:</b> Halal Standards and Their Contributions to the Growth of Halal Economy and potential for Intra-African Trade under the AfCFTA.</p>
<p><b>52<sup>nd</sup> Session</b> 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 <b>Theme:</b> The Necessity and Impact of Testing in Conformity Assessment for sustainable development. <b>Topic:</b> Evolving Needs for Testing of products in Trade, Industry and Society and the role of in Sustainable development.</p>
<p><b>53<sup>rd</sup> Session:</b> 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025 <b>Theme:</b> Africa's Strategic Commodities and Trade <b>Topic:</b> Role of standardisation in developing effective Regional Value Chains for Africa's Strategic Commodities and promotion of Intra-Africa Trade and Global Market Access.</p>
<p><b>54<sup>th</sup> Session</b> 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025, Co-hosted with EOS/Egypt <b>Theme:</b> Tourism and sustainable development <b>Topic:</b> Harnessing Tourism for Economic Development and Growth in Africa and Fostering Sustainable Tourism for Improved Livelihoods and the role of Standardisation and Government Policies.</p>
<p><b>55<sup>th</sup> Session.</b> 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025 <b>Theme:</b> The AfCFTA Opportunities for Africa <b>Topic:</b> Making the AfCFTA work for Africa through effective policies and strategies for exports, diversification, industrialization, and value chain development.</p>
<p><b>56<sup>th</sup> Session:</b> 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 <b>Theme:</b> The power of Africa's Mineral Resources for sustainable development <b>Topic:</b> Africa's development needs and the potential of the Mineral sector for Africa's sustainable development and the Role of Standardisation.</p>
<p><b>57<sup>th</sup> Session:</b> 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2025 <b>Theme:</b> Intra-African Trade and the Made in Africa <b>Topic:</b> Promoting the African sustainable manufacturing and trade through competitive Made in Africa Products and the role of standardisation.</p>
<p><b>58<sup>th</sup> Session:</b> 27<sup>th</sup> August 2025 <b>Theme:</b> Regulatory environment for Electricity Markets in Africa <b>Topic:</b> Facilitating intra-African Trade in Electricity through regional power pools and electricity markets – the potentials, opportunities, challenges and role of electrotechnical Standards.</p>
<p><b>59<sup>th</sup> Session:</b> 28<sup>th</sup> September 2025 <b>Theme:</b> E-mobility for the African economies and Trade : <b>Topic:</b> Africa's electric promise: Positive implications of E-mobility transformative' shift and the role of Standardisation and Government Regulatory Policies to Leverage its huge potential.</p>
<p><b>60<sup>th</sup> Session:</b> 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2025 <b>Theme:</b> Smart Africa: Implementing Smart Cities for Industrialisation, Sustainable development and transformation of the global economy. <b>Topic:</b> Benefits and Relevance of Smart Cities: Making urbanisation and Smart Sustainable Cities a powerful driver of economic development and social mobility in Africa and the role of standards and regulatory frameworks in promoting Sustainable Urban Development.</p>
<p><b>61<sup>st</sup> Session</b> 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025: Co-hosted with EOS/ Zimbabwe <b>Theme:</b> Climate Change and Sustainable trade <b>Topic:</b> Influencing sustainable production and trade through Sustainability Standards and certification.</p>

**In a nutshell, Standards provide the bridge between the industry and the Markets as Standards and technical regulations define what can (or cannot) be exchanged, and outline the procedures under which such exchanges are or are not permissible. Standards and their compliant systems remain crucial to facilitating market access, manufacturing through ensuring the economies of scale (efficiency and effectiveness in utilization of resources), exposure to competition, innovations, and the diffusion and transfer of technological knowledge, facilitating Fitness for purpose, Interchangeability, Variety reduction, Compatibility, Guarding against factors that affect the health and safety of consumers, and above all removal of trade barriers and increased market access through harmonized regulatory frameworks and mutual recognition arrangements.**

Thank you

Merci

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For more information

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[www.arso.org](http://www.arso.org)