



## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### **AfroChampions Initiative will work side by side with the African Union to promote the African Continental Free Trade Area**

*AfroChampions Initiative commits USD 1 million on awareness-raising actions*

**Kigali, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018** - On the occasion of the AfCFTA Business Forum, the African Union and the AfroChampions Initiative have just released their roadmap for the promotion of the African Continental Free Trade Area. The AfroChampions Initiative thus becomes an official platform of exchange between the African private sector and the leaders of the African Union, and in particular its department in charge of Trade and Industry. As part of this roadmap, various awareness-raising and private sector consultation activities will be carried out by the AfroChampions Initiative, which announces that it has committed through its members a US\$ one million budget for this outreach and advocacy campaign.

This campaign will be structured around 4 projects:

1. **Enhancing public-private dialogue around the AfCFTA**, whose objective is to promote smooth and effective implementation across all the countries and economic actors of the continent. In this context, representatives of the African Union will participate in a series of sensitization meetings with local business communities starting the month of April 2018, to gather questions and concerns about the AfCFTA Agreement. These exchanges will focus on concrete topics of relevance to the private sector including tariffs and non-tariff barriers, rules of origin, free movement of labour and capital, customs clearance, mutual recognition and traceability of products.
2. **Research and knowledge sharing to support the African Union's public policies impacting business** The AfroChampions Initiative's research center, will share its extensive research work on intra-African investment, trade and African multinationals to inform and support the AU's interactions and policies.
3. **The promotion of intra-African trade and investment, in collaboration with Afreximbank.** The African Union Commission and the AfroChampions Initiative plan to work on organizing regular regional meetings to highlight major economic projects that could impact several countries simultaneously.
4. **Dialogue with civil society.** With the conviction that free movement of people is the key to a successful AfCFTA in the long term, the AfroChampions Initiative has just launched the AfricaPassportNow! Campaign, which consists of a citizens' online petition to Governments speed up the creation of a unique African passport accessible to every African.

*"The African Union and the AfroChampions Initiative both share the same mission of Africa's development,"* said His Excellency Mr. Albert Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and Industry, at the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. *"I believe our collaboration will yield concrete results. I look forward to working alongside these leaders who will bring their rich experience to make the free movement of goods, services and investments a reality and a chance for all Africans."*

*"At the AfroChampions Initiative, we're excited to see that both public and private decision-makers are aligned on the urgency of the continental free trade area.,"* said Ali Mufuruki, CEO of Infotech Investments group, and vice-chair of the AfroChampions Club Council for Eastern Africa. *"We represent*

*businesses and corporate leaders who are committed to working with Governments to make the AfCFTA an instrument of shared growth, capable of strengthening African know-how, creating regional value chains, and facilitating the deployment of African innovations all over the continent " .*

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## Notes to Editors

### About the AfCFTA

The main objectives of the AfCFTA are to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Customs Union. It will also expand intra-African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation and instruments across the RECs and across Africa in general. The AfCFTA is also expected to enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploitation of opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources. Under the leadership of the AfCFTA Leader, Mr Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger, the AfCFTA agreement has been finalised by African Union Ministers for Trade on December 4, 2017. It is expected to be signed and ratified by African Union member states throughout 2018, while discussions will continue on protocol and implementation processes until 2020.

### About the African Union and its Department for Trade and Industry

The vision of the African Union is that of: *"An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena."* To help achieving this vision on the economic front, the Department for Trade and industry, Under the leadership of Commissioner Albert Muchanga, leads on matters relating to intra-African economic integration, and notably the AfCFTA negotiations in collaboration with other departments in the AUC.

### About the AfroChampions Initiative

The AfroChampions Initiative is a public-private partnership designed to galvanize African resources and institutions to support the emergence and success of African private sector multinational champions in the regional and global spheres. The Initiative, driven by the AfroChampions Organization, was founded by the advisory firm Konfidants; and is Co-Chaired by President Thabo Mbeki and Mr. Aliko Dangote, President and CEO of Dangote Group. The Initiative is headquartered in Accra, Ghana, and works with regional and global partners and governments, with the support of other corporate and institutional partners including ADS Group, the Djondo Fellowship, Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library and Thabo Mbeki Foundation.

As a strategic platform within the Initiative, the AfroChampions Club, Chaired by Mr Aliko Dangote, seeks to work with African governments to support policies and public-sector innovations that drive African economic integration, regional economic clusters and value chains.

[www.afrochampions.com](http://www.afrochampions.com)

### About the AfricaPassportNow! Campaign

The petition for the quick creation of a unique African passport is directed to African nationals from the continent and the diaspora and has been launched by the AfroChampions Initiative, as part of its efforts to promote and accelerate Africa's economic integration.

Link to the petition: <http://africapassportnow.afrochampions.org/en/africa-passport-now/>

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