

# INVITATION

AfCTA ONLINE SEMINAR SERIES | 5 March 2021 | 10:00-12:30



## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

The ideal of a thriving Africa, where the material and social conditions of life of its various peoples are not dependent on external assistance, effectively depends on the development of a sustainable and equitable continental economy, based on intra-continental trade in manufactures and services. This Pan-African approach to development on the continent is the essence of Nkrumah's assertion dating back to the late 1950s, and presently the basic rationale of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA), an initiative of the Africa Union that advances the objective of continental economic integration. This is important for a continent which at present heavily relies on primary production and is vulnerable to numerous external shocks, to the detriment of human wellbeing.

In this context, there are concerns around the pace, depth and breadth of continental economic integration. The postponing of the implementation of AfCFTA from April 2020 to January 2021 is unfortunate given that the AfCFTA tacitly seeks to reduce vulnerabilities linked inter alia to economic, health-linked and environmental shocks. There are different approaches to the envisaged integration i.e. a spectrum ranging from the gradualist linear approaches to the 'big push' approaches, all seeking to break the underdevelopment "trap." As we move to implement the AfCTA, we also need to again reflect on alternative appropriate economic development models for the continent and discuss their respective policy implications. Interrogating both the implementation of the AfCTA and different development models are important for informing the realisation of Agenda 2063.

Join us in this inaugural seminar series on the AfCTA, jointly organised by the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) in the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Tshwane University of Technology's Institute for Economic Research on Innovation (IERI). In this seminar, the panelists, discussants and audience will interrogate four issues, namely:

1. The prospects for viable economic integration in Africa: **Prof Mario Scerri**, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Economic Research on Innovation (IERI), TUT.
2. What goods and services can initiate greater intra-Africa trade? **Dr Nkhisang Moeti**, President, Moeti Practicum Institute, Botswana.
3. Off the beaten track: a new economic development orthodoxy for Africa? **Prof Francis Nwonwu** Director - Research and Development Consulting (Pty), Pretoria and Honorary Research Fellow, Human Science Research Council (HSRC), Pretoria.
4. Tackling the present and future global crises without compromising the Africa development agenda. **Dr Michael Ehis Odijie**, Research Fellow, University College London.

### DISCUSSANT:

**Prof Busani Moyo**, College of Economic and Management Sciences. School of Economic and Financial Sciences. Department: Economics. University of South Africa

**Dr Mamello Nchake**, Senior Research Fellow: Trade Industry and Private Sector Development. Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis

**Dr Precious N. Ndlovu**, Senior Lecturer Mercantile and Labour Law Department, Faculty of Law. University of the Western Cape

### CHAIR:

**Dr Vuyo Mjimba**, Chief Research Specialist HSRC-AISA

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*This seminar series is funded by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI). The views and opinions expressed therein as well as findings and statements of the seminar series do not necessarily represent the views of the DSI. Please also note that this seminar may be recorded and published on the HSRC podcast channel.*

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