

African alliance to strengthen economic corridors

The Economic Commission for Africa, through the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) is holding a meeting in collaboration with the Walvis Bay Corridor Group and other Corridor management Institutions (CMI) to establish the African Corridor Management Alliance. The Alliance is expected to coordinate the sharing of best practices and other strategies in support of the development and management of economic corridors on the Continent.



Image by 123RF

Held against the backdrop of promoting corridors as vehicles for economic transformation and boosting intra-African trade, the inaugural meeting in Walvis Bay, Namibia will also map out a strategy for the new organisation.

In his welcoming address, Willem Goeiemann, permanent secretary of Works and Transport of Namibia said, “The process of establishing ACMA is a major milestone in defining Corridor Management Institutions’ performance and prospects in the integrated management of economic corridors through enhanced investment in infrastructure. With effective management, economic corridors will improve physical connectivity between the Corridor States, thereby enhancing access to markets, while expanding economies of scale for value chain.”

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Stephen Karingi, director of the Capacity Development Division of ECA, in his opening statement highlighted the potential for ACMA to contribute to regional integration and intra-African trade particularly in the area of trade facilitation. He stressed that the establishment of ACMA is timely in view of the 2017 deadline for the conclusion of negotiations to establish the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA).

David Luke, coordinator of the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) drew attention to ECA’s historic role in helping to create specialised institutions to enhance economic integration on the Continent.

“The African Regional Standards Organization and the African Alliance for Electronic Commerce are examples of ECA’s contribution to institution building in this regard,” he said. He expressed the hope that the establishment of ACMA as an umbrella organisation can become a channel through which ECA’s engagement with the CMLs can be further strengthened.

For his part, Johnny Smith, chief executive officer of the Walvis Bay Corridor Group and interim chairperson of ACMA, noted that through ACMA, CMLs would identify the necessary conditions that should be realised for corridor development initiatives to play a catalytic role in bringing together trade, infrastructure, spatial initiatives, industrial development and other economic activities to foster market integration in the Continent.

The meeting, which is hosted by the Walvis Corridor Group, brought together heads of several CMLs, representatives from the ECA, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Agency, the African-Export-Import bank (Afrexim Bank) and various other economic integration stakeholders.

Among the most prominent CMLs on the continent, are: the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor; the Northern Corridor that links Mombasa to Kigali and Kampala; the Walvis Bay Corridor with routes to seven southern African countries; and the Maputo Corridor connecting Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa.

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