



MEDIA PACK

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The confluence of the environment including climate change , agriculture and cross-border trade in the context of AfCFTA

The multiple crises facing Africa call for active efforts in addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities they offer. In the midst of these crises, agriculture still remains the backbone of the continent guaranteeing food security and the supply of raw materials. It is an important lever in the trade basket of many countries. Successful agriculture requires unfettered access to land. Land endowments contribute to shaping comparative advantage in food and agriculture.

Global land systems are increasingly shaped by international trade of agricultural products. Trade ensures food security and helps countries overcome constraints in land, meeting their food requirements in terms of quantity and diversity. Globally, trade can result in land savings, if production takes place in regions with relatively more efficient land use. However, trade can generate negative environmental externalities, as production for exports can result in pollution, biodiversity loss and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, negative environmental impacts often depend on local conditions and are more pronounced in poorly regulated settings. Restricted and inefficient access to land will impact negatively on trade and prevent trade from efficiently allocating the production of food and agricultural products, and also reinforce environmental degradation and pervasive exogenous challenges like climate change on the agriculture and trade system.

Through their bilateral and multilateral commitments African countries envisage a path towards viable solutions. Among them are options which include nature-based solutions that have land and land use dimensions. At the same time, these countries have negotiated, signed and ratified the AfCFTA, and are in the process of implementing it, with the objective of optimizing the intra-African trade in agriculture, agro-foods, as well as other manufactured products. The diversification and industrialisation that the AfCFTA may catalyze will require the use of natural resources with land inclusive, the development of hard and soft infrastructure, especially those that relate to transportation and energy. The latter calls for investments on land, as well as effective and sustainable land use policies. This thematic area of the conference will explore how African countries can pursue the dual objectives of meeting their commitments in the context of realizing their nationally determined contributions, and also implement the AfCFTA, with its promise of industrialisation that demands investments in infrastructure, especially energy.