

An update on economic diversification in central Africa

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New-generation special economic zones in Africa must be built on regional value chains business model

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Focus

Accelerating sustainable development and unlocking the vast potential of blue resources in Central Africa with ECA's Blue Economy Assessment Toolkit

Central Africa has a much envied but insufficiently quantified blue economy potential. To turn it into a lever for sustainable economic development, experts from the continent called for the appropriation of the ECA's Blue Economy Valuation Toolkit (BEVTK), which provides a framework for assessing the economic, social and ecological contributions of aquatic resources, thereby supporting the development of data-driven policies and promoting the sustainable development of resources in this sector.

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The Figure



0.5% of GDP is the level of public investments allocated to research and development by countries of Central and East Africa, in contrast to the world average of 2.5% of GDP

Faced with the challenge of the dependence of African economies on a handful of sectors and raw materials on the one hand, and the weakness of productive capacities on the other, innovation will enable African companies to adopt more sophisticated technologies, helping them to move up the global value chain. Technological innovation should help reduce the volatility and vulnerability to shocks of African economies through diversification.

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AfCFTA Booklet

SROCA AT COM2025

« Connectivity, fluidity and productivity for a transformative AfCFTA » Jean Luc Mastaki

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#In5Minutes : AfCFTA progress in DRC and Cameroon

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Supporting the implementation of the AfCFTA in Central Africa, SRO-CA showcases its success stories

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Central Africa shares best practices for effective implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement

Ahead of the fifty-seventh session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (COM2025), the AfCFTA chief negotiators of Central African countries, national experts, economic operators and academics are calling for a new impetus for the sub-region based on the lessons learned from the Guided Trade Initiative.

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Cooperation & Coalition



ECA and UNCTAD join forces to build capacity of CAR's SMEs and boost their integration into regional value chains

The joint UNCTAD and ECA project aims to develop a data collection tool and a training program to help build the production and export capacities of Central African SMEs. By way of illustration, the project plans to improve the business environment through new-generation special economic zones to increase production capacity and provide a trade information platform to connect SMEs to markets and provide essential data such as prices, demand zones and supply chains.

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BASKET OF ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

ECA awarded for its contribution to promoting new-generation Special Economic Zones in Africa

On the sidelines of the 2024 African Special Economic Zones Annual Meeting 2024, the Economic Commission for Africa was awarded a prize for its contribution to the strategic positioning of special economic zones (SEZs) as a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable industrialization on the continent. In awarding the Prize, the African Economic Zones Organization (AEZO) and the African Union Commission recognize ECA's mandate of promoting Africa's structural transformation.

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Through capacity building for national experts, ECA supports the development of a tourism economy in Sao Tome and Principe

The Sao Tome and Principe government's vision for the future of tourism is clear: by 2030, the goal is to attract 60,000 tourists a year, with a budget of \$7,604,000 to ensure the plan's successful execution. To achieve this, the country plans to preserve natural areas, enhance the tourism experience and promote São Tomé and Príncipe as a leading tourist destination.

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ECA and partners advocate for a sustainable and inclusive mining value chain in the DRC

Rising global demand for minerals critical to the green energy transition and the manufacture of batteries for electric vehicles is putting even more pressure on producer countries such as the DRC. As an extension of its support to the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for the development of a regional value chain for batteries and electric vehicles, the Economic Commission for Africa and its partners strengthened the capacities of national stakeholders in the BEV project on the benefits of green and inclusive industrial policies.

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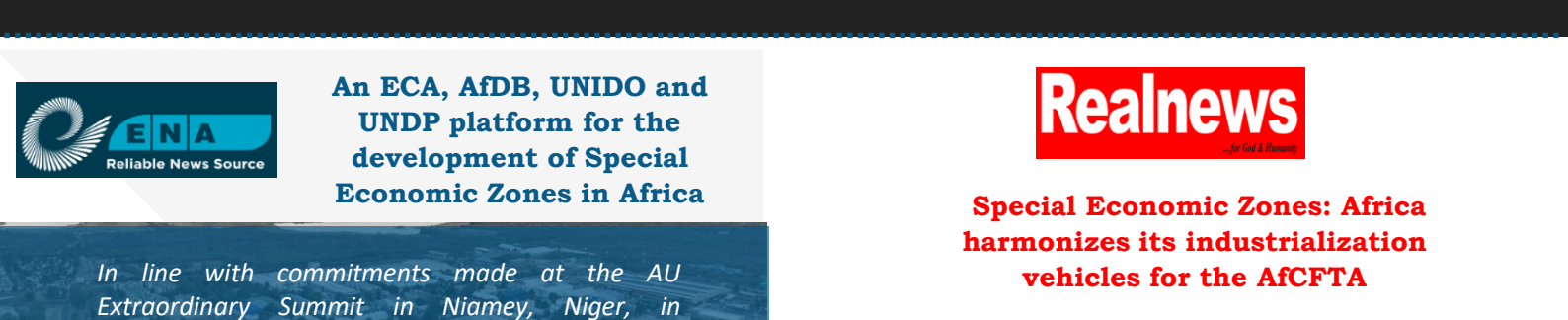
Mediametrics



New generation Special Economic Zones: a lever for genuine industrialisation in Central Africa

Experts from across Africa, meeting in Douala on behalf of the ECA and its partners (AU, AfDB, UNIDO, UNDP), are calling for the development of NGSEZs through a business model that promotes the regional value chain approach, and are inviting the RECs to define standard-setting framework tools.

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An ECA, AfDB, UNIDO and UNDP platform for the development of Special Economic Zones in Africa

In line with commitments made at the AU Extraordinary Summit in Niamey, Niger, in November 2022, these partners invite governments, RECs and the private sector to adopt a single blueprint for the development of regional value chains.

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Realnews

Special Economic Zones: Africa harmonizes its industrialization vehicles for the AfCFTA

The urgent need for a coalition of governments, RECs, financiers, development partners and the private sector to put in place an effective policy capable of accelerating the operationalization of SEZs in Africa, as they are a key instrument for inclusive, sustainable industrialization and economic diversification.

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Towards innovative ways of accelerating the operationalization of Special Economic Zones in Central Africa

Jean Luc Mastaki, Director of the ECA Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa, discusses with Thami Ngubeni.

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THE HABARI NETWORK

Special Economic Zones as Catalysts for the Development of Regional Value Chains within the AfCFTA Framework

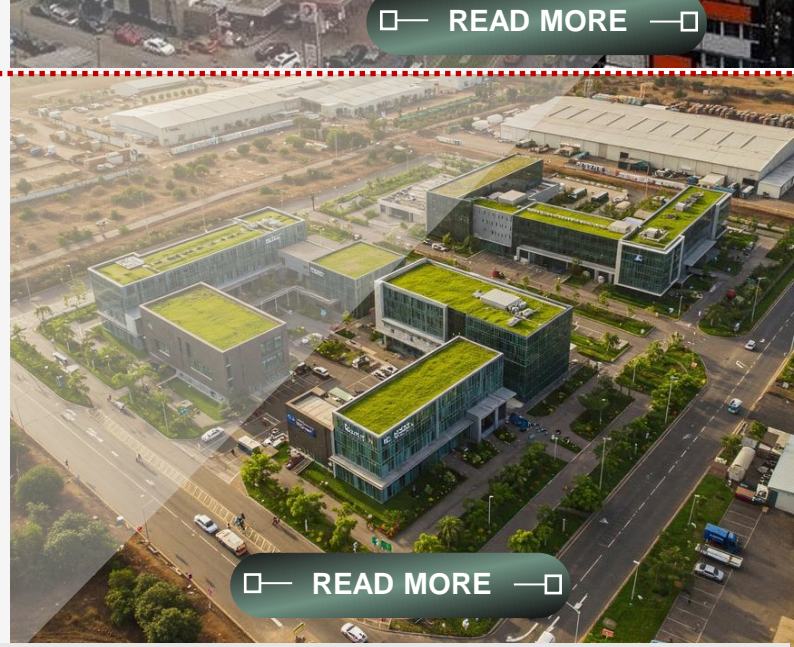
Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have surged into the spotlight, sparking vital discussions about their potential to reshape Africa's economic landscape. Their role as catalysts for regional value chains within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was a key focus at the Economic Commission for Africa's Symposium held in Douala, January 2025.



ECA, partners hold conclave for harmonized development of Special Economic Zones

Central Africa is committed to reducing its vulnerability to exogenous shocks, of which inflation and debt overhang and fiscal imbalance are the faces. To remedy this, the States and the Regional Economic Communities have defined subregional and national import-substitution strategies.

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