

Continental Workshop on Trade and Gender 2018

“Working together for gender-sensitive implementation of the Agreement for the Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area: the role of regional economic communities”

16 December 2018, Cairo

The 2018 Continental Workshop on Trade and Gender, an annual event organized by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), will take place in Cairo on 16 December 2018, alongside the inaugural Intra-African Trade Fair, organized by the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) in collaboration with the African Union and hosted by Egypt.

In 2017, ECA embarked on a comparative assessment of the status of gender mainstreaming in trade at the level of regional economic communities (RECs), to identify success stories and challenges for incorporating gender considerations into trade policy. The 2017 Continental Workshop on Trade and Gender, which was held in Addis Ababa on 31 October 2017, served as a platform for RECs and gender experts to share related experiences. With the negotiations of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a backdrop, a question central to discussions was how gender considerations could be incorporated into the implementation of this milestone initiative. A particular point of interest was the role RECs could play to effectively support member States in this task. As a follow-up to that meeting, further data collection on gender mainstreaming good practices was carried out in the form of missions by representatives of ECA to several REC headquarters during 2018.

The 2018 Continental Workshop will present key findings of the study and a way forward for member States, RECs and their development partners in the gender-sensitive implementation of the AfCFTA agreement. Experts will discuss various topics, including the alignment of proposed measures with the current policy frameworks of RECs, comparative strengths and weaknesses, existing and potential partners, and collaboration opportunities for RECs.

The signing of the Agreement for the Establishment of AfCFTA in Kigali on 21 March 2018 marked the start of a new stage in the regional integration process. As member States move ahead with the ratification of the Agreement, it is expected that the development of national strategies in support of AfCFTA will also begin soon. It is therefore an opportune time to agree on the channels through which their partners can provide support, ensuring inclusive gains and reduction of gender inequalities on the continent through the Agreement.