

THE CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (CFTA) WHAT'S IN IT FOR ZAMBIA?

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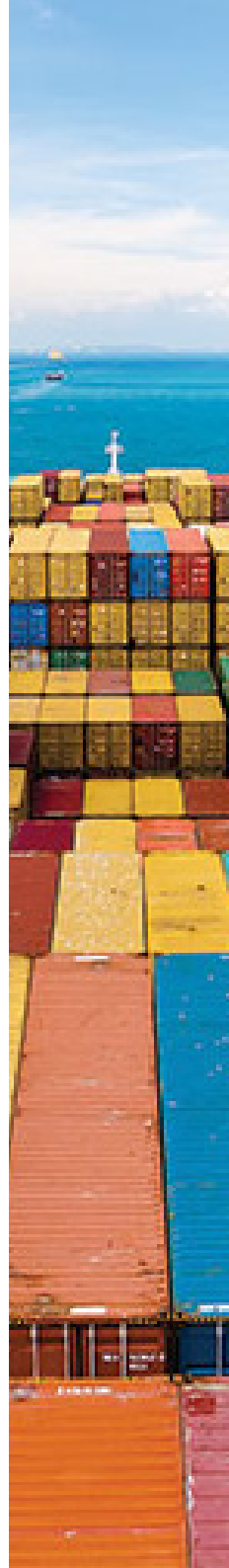
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ABBREVIATIONS

7NDP	Seventh National Development Plan
AU	African Union.
BIAT	Boosting Intra-Africa Trade
CFTA	Continental Free Trade Area
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community for West African States
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MRTA	Mega- Regional Trade Agreements
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
REIs	Regional Economic Integration
RISDP	Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
RoO	Rules of Origin
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement
SADC	Southern African Development Community.
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference for Trade and Development
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.
USA	United States of America





INTRODUCTION

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a flagship project of African Union Agenda 2063 and refers to a *continental geographic zone in which goods and services are to move with, no restrictions; among member states of the African Union (AU)*. The AfCFTA aims to boost Intra-African trade by providing a comprehensive and mutually beneficial trade agreements among the member states, covering trade in goods and services, investment, intellectual property rights and competition policy¹. The agreement has been signed by member states of the African Union, **bringing together 1.2 billion people with a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of more than US\$2 trillion**. The draft agreement commits countries to removing tariffs on 90 % of goods, with 10% of “sensitive items” to be phased in later. The agreement is also set with the aim of liberalising services and to tackle non-tariff barriers, which hinder trade between African countries.



1.2 BILLION
people with a combined Gross Domestic Product
(GDP) of more than
US\$2 TRILLION



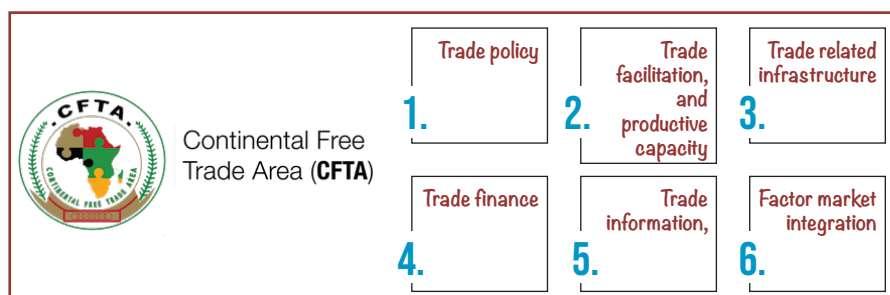
Source: <https://thawee.com/big-trillion-dollars/166166/>

1. African Union (2016). The 1st Meeting of the Continental Free Trade Area Negotiating Forum (CFTA--NF).

The (CFTA) intends to create a **single continental market for goods and services**, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Continental Customs Union and the African Customs Union. Through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation regimes and instruments across Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and across Africa in general; the CFTA aims to **expand intra African trade**. It further aims to **resolve the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships** and expedite the regional and continental integration processes. Through exploiting opportunities for scales of production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources; the CFTA further aims to **enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level**.²

BACKGROUND

The 18th ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2012, adopted a decision to establish a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by an indicative date of 2017. *The Summit also endorsed the Action Plan on Boosting Intra-Africa Trade (BIAT) which identifies clusters namely:*



The CFTA brings together **54 African countries** with a combined population of more than one billion people and a combined **Gross Domestic Product of more than US \$2trillion**.

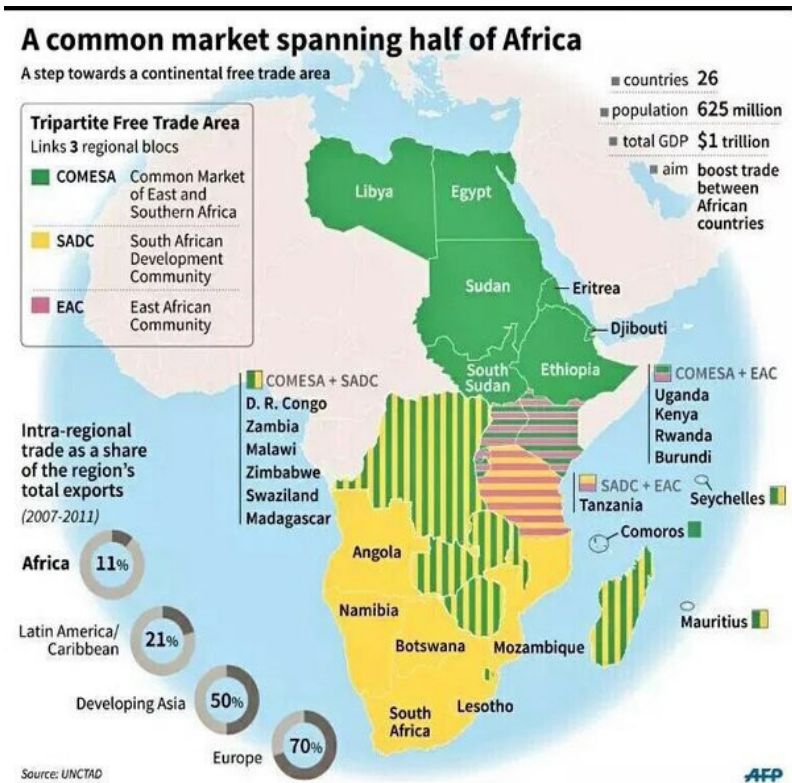


Gross Domestic Product

US\$2 TRILLION+

2. African Union. CFTA- Continental Free Trade Area. Objectives of the CFTA. From <https://au.int/en/ti/cfta/about> accessed 4th September, 2018.

Held on 21st March 2018 in Kigali Rwanda, was the 10th extraordinary summit of the AU assembly heads of state and government³ which also served as the signing ceremony of legal documents that was dedicated to the AfCFTA. Many African countries expressed their willingness of materializing the continental development agenda of the AfCFTA as enshrined in the Agenda 2063. Majority of the 50 African countries signed all the three legal instruments while some signed two and the others signed one of the three instruments and 44 African leaders signed an agreement to create the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Besides the agreement, which could make Africa the world's largest free trade zone, **44 nations signed the Kigali Declaration**, while 27 countries agreed to ease mobility of people across the continent by signing the protocol on movement of people across Africa. If ratified by each country, AfCFTA will become one of the world's largest trading blocs. But there was a glaring omission—Nigeria, Africa's largest economy and most populous country, as well as a host of others did not sign the agreement.



HOW CFTA WOULD BENEFIT AFRICAN COUNTRIES

According to UNCTAD, a UN body focusing on trade; in 2010 intra- African trade only made up 10.2 percent of Africa's total trade. CFTA aims to remove trade barriers in order to improve intra-African trade. To achieve this, the CFTA draft agreement commits countries to removing tariffs on 90 percent of goods with 10 percent of **“sensitive items”** to be phased in later. The agreement also liberalises services and aims to eliminate non-tariff barriers which hamper intra-African trade. According to a paper by Brenton⁴ non trade barriers limit access to necessary inputs; for instance limited access to inputs such as seeds and fertilisers in the agricultural sector. Non-tariff barriers such as lack of competition and unfavourable regulations may hinder access to inputs of production. Clear regulatory systems of inputs and outputs ensures reliable information about the quality of goods and services available.

Though there may be an initial loss of revenue income, the long-term welfare gain is significantly larger. A research paper by UNCTAD⁵ suggests that **elimination of all tariffs between African countries would take an annual US\$4.1bn out of the trading states' coffers, but would create an overall annual welfare gain of US\$16.1bn** in the long run. Short term integration and adjustment costs will be incurred in establishing the CFTA. These short term costs include loss in trade tariff revenue, local SME's vanishing in front of stronger competition, adjusting unemployment, required investment in infrastructure, political and regulatory reforms. Majority of the welfare benefits to be gained from further integration will only materialise in the long run. These include **lower import prices, efficient production, output increase, higher value-added jobs and exports and technological specialization.**⁶



African countries would take out an annual

US\$ 4.1 BILLION

create an overall **annual welfare** gain of

US\$16.1 BILLION 

3. African Union. Directorate of information and Communication. Press Release N. XX/2018

4. Brenton, P. (Ed.). (2012). Regulatory barriers to trade undermine Africa's potential in regional food trade. Africa Can Help Feed Africa. World Bank Publications.

5. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Paper No. 15. (2017). African Continental Free Trade Area: Challenges and Opportunities of Tariff Reductions.

6. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Paper No. 15. (2017). African Continental Free Trade Area: Challenges and Opportunities of Tariff Reductions.

With the CFTA in place, the continent can benefit from a single market for goods and services, having free movement of people and investments; which therefore paves the way for accelerating the establishment of the continental customs union and the **African customs union**. This in turn would bring about the spill over effects from countries that may develop new technologies and skills in response to the single continental market demands. The removal of barriers amongst the countries allows free flow of experts and skills.⁷

The establishment of CFTA could also **resolve the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships**. Countries belonging to many regional economic communities (RECs) face multiple financial obligations. Such countries must also cope with attending various meetings, policy decisions, instruments, procedures and schedules. The customs officials of such member countries have to cope with varying tariff reduction rates, RoO⁸, trade documentation and statistical nomenclatures. These varying considerations may undermine the effectiveness of customs officials' overall performance. The overlaps and multiple memberships may also affect the commitment of member countries and consequently the success of any Regional Trade Agreement (RTA). The CFTA can correct this by encompassing the other REIs and progressively harmonising and integrating their activities, in a similar fashion as ECOWAS playing an umbrella role for the sub-REIs in Western Africa.⁹

Furthermore, **Countries will benefit from enhanced competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level**. When a country has competitive companies within its sectors, the country itself is more likely to have a competitive advantage as a nation competing in a



large single market.

The OECD (2005) definition refers to competition as a country's ability to sell goods (under free and fair conditions) in global market while simultaneously maintaining and expanding the real incomes of its people over the long term. Thus as firms identify the single African market in which they now operate and how they must satisfy demand, the country as a whole

7. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Paper No. 15. (2017). African Continental Free Trade Area: Challenges and Opportunities of Tariff Reductions.
8. Rules of origin are the criteria needed to determine the national source of a product. Their importance is derived from the fact that duties and restrictions in several cases depend upon the source of imports.
9. Afesorgbor, S. K., & Bergeijk, P. A. (2014). Measuring Multi-Membership in Economic Integration and Its Trade Impact: A Comparative Study of ECOWAS and SADC. South African Journal of Economics, 82(4), 518-530.
10. Ščeułovs, D., & Gaile-Sarkane, E. (2010). Competitive advantage for small and medium enterprises. Business Management and Education, 1-10.

African industrial products may have increased competitiveness through harnessing the economies of scale of a continental wide market. Small African Countries, having access to this large market, will no longer be restricted to producing their traditional products. Better policies and human resources could make them the focus of new manufacturing operations that serve larger markets. Additionally, in the long run, increased competition due to trade liberalizations provides incentives for domestic firms to operate more efficiently. As firms are faced with competitive pressures, they are forced to use their resources efficiently, implement new technologies and innovate in order to survive under the new conditions.¹¹

The CFTA may result in increased food security through reduction to barriers on trade in agricultural products. Export restrictions, in particular, decrease food security as farmers may not be able to secure higher prices in neighbouring markets. This may provide incentives for them to shift to producing other crops or reduce output, creating losses to the economy as a whole.¹² This suggests that when a country lifts these restrictions, as would be the case with the CFTA; countries can benefit from the easy access of inputs of agricultural products. This in turn contributes to increased food security.

The CFTA may result in increased rate of diversification and transformation of Africa's economy and the continent's ability to supply its import needs from its own resources.¹³ As the continent operates as a single market, it can obtain import needs from its own resources. Moreover, as the continent develops its infrastructure to support the single market, employment can be provided for its people and development of engineering services can be fostered. Moving away from dependence on raw materials; it also allows the continent's economies to diversify. The associated technological development, combined with appropriate industrial policies, will lead to the creation of new industries.

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11. United Nations Conference for Trade and Development Research Paper No. 15. (2017). African Continental Free Trade Area: Challenges and Opportunities of Tariff Reductions
 12. Brenton, P. (Ed.). (2012). Regulatory barriers to trade undermine Africa's potential in regional food trade. Africa Can Help Feed Africa. World Bank Publications.
 13. African Union. Directorate of information and Communication. Press Release N. XX/2018.



WHAT DOES THE SEVENTH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN COMMIT TO UNDER REGIONAL TRADE?

Opportunities for diversification in the production of Zambian products and exports can be created through improved access to regional and international markets. Under the first strategy, the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) consents to improve trade facilitation through efficient, transparent and predictable trade facilitation. Under this strategy, it also aims to support trade facilitation through implementation of legal and regulatory reforms.¹⁴

The second strategy is to secure access to export markets. This involves securing markets and addressing barriers to market entry through negotiations at bilateral, regional and multilateral level. In addition, institutional support to both producers and exporters will be critical to maximise benefits from existing and new markets. During the Plan period, Zambia will consolidate trade relations with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Angola, to increase exports into these markets.¹⁵

Following this, the third strategy is to enhance the competitiveness of Zambian products. Local exporters and local producers as well as local industries within the country must be safe guarded in order to enhance competitiveness of Zambian Citizens. This must be done by ensuring competitiveness of Zambian products by enhancing the quality of the products and removal of nontrade barriers to ensure fair competition both in domestic and foreign markets. Additional emphasis has been placed on ensuring that consumers' welfare as well as local producers' welfare is protected.¹⁶

The fourth strategy entails improving logistics management. In corporation with the private sector, the Government will facilitate provision and improvement of logistical infrastructure and services to support both domestic and international trade, such as **warehousing, storage, laboratory facilities and testing equipment** as well as **ICT infrastructure at points of entry**. Promoting international cooperation is the fifth strategy under the 7NDP.¹⁷ This involves the positioning of Zambia in such a way that regional and international relations to advance national interests, such as accessing markets in the region and internationally; are improved. This will be done through enhancing international cooperation.

14. Zambia Seventh National Development Plan 2017-2021 (2017).

15. Zambia Seventh National Development Plan 2017-2021 (2017).

16. Zambia Seventh National Development Plan 2017-2021 (2017).

17. Zambia Seventh National Development Plan 2017-2021 (2017).

In addition, through the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) the Government commits to foster the integration of global and regional development agendas like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), Agenda 2063 and other progressive protocols under SADC¹⁸, COMESA¹⁹, African Union and United Nations. The sixth strategy is to promote economic diplomacy. The Zambian Government intends to advance economic diplomacy²⁰ by identifying and utilising Zambian missions abroad. This strategy will focus on countries of strategic trade and investment importance for the Zambia. Appropriate structures will be instituted to comprehensively undertake economic intelligence. Thus further establishing effective linkages between Zambia's key institutions that support the economic diversification and foreign private investment.



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

Globally, countries are concluding **Mega-Regional Trade Agreements (MRTAs)**, thus reshaping and changing the global trading landscape in the process. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will allow Africa to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the rest of the world.²¹ If the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) is successfully implemented, there are opportunities to address regional infrastructure challenges and link Zambia to international markets.²² Free movement of capital provides opportunities for both individuals and companies to benefit. It enables integrated, open, competitive and efficient African financial markets and services. For companies there may be opportunities to benefit from higher investment returns from other African countries. Additionally, low tariffs allow consumers to have access to cheaper products and producers to better enter other African markets. Firms will have access to cheaper raw materials and intermediate goods from other African countries which will reduce their cost of production.²³

In order to benefit from the integration of markets, African economies must undergo transition that involves the reallocation of economic resources to areas where their use is effective. This may result in short run adjustment costs.²⁴ After trade liberalization countries may experience falling trade revenue shrinkage of certain sectors and temporary unemployment as resources are shifted during this period. Moreover, insufficient financial and institutional capacity of countries may have adverse effects on labor force and small

18. Southern African Development Community.

19. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

20. Zambia Seventh National Development Plan 2017-2021 (2017).

21. African Union. Directorate of Information and Communication. Press Release N. XX/2018

22. Zambia Association of Manufacturers (ZAM). (2018). Presentation on "the Continental Free Trade Area".

23. Centre for Trade Policy and Analysis (CTPD). (2018). Presentation on "How the CFTA can create trade opportunities and raise standards of living"

24. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. (2017). The Continental Free trade area: Human Rights Perspective.

enterprises. Hence, the benefits of free trade area may not be shared equally. For many developing countries a lack of labor mobility between sectors is a key challenge. Support programmes, such as aid for trade and infrastructure investments, could be considered to help the most affected countries, in particular least-developed, landlocked and small economies.

Another challenge to be more likely faced by African countries could be the cost of transporting goods within the continent. African countries can solve this problem by becoming better connected through treaties, road networks as well as railway networks.²⁵ The Zambian Government is heading in the right direction as it has embarked on an ambitious programme of infrastructure development.

A free trade area must have Rules of Origin (RoO), that is, criteria for sorting out which products are actually produced within the region and should therefore be given FTA treatment such as not paying customs duties²⁶. Creation of AfCFTA is likely to encounter some challenges regarding negotiations on Rules of Origin. Much as the current African Regional Economic Communities (REC) have been in existence for some time, bottlenecks have been encountered regarding Rules of Origin (RoO). Some RECS are still reviewing Rules of Origin on some commodities. There are dissimilarities between the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Rules of Origin (RoO) - Africa's case is not unique though as there is an absence of an agreed global set of rules (or parameters) guiding the design of rules of origin²⁷. The design of rules of origin depends on trade negotiations and often times influenced by certain political and economic factors.

Africa should refrain from adopting EU or US approaches to Rules of Origin (RoO). The simpler and less restrictive the better. It is feasible to have AfCFTA rules of origin if the negotiations take the approach of across-the-board thresholds or general rules for conferring origin. In COMESA for instance, any good can qualify for FTA treatment if the value of inputs from within the region accounts for 35 percent of total value of the good; or the value of inputs from outside the region does not exceed 60 percent of the total value of the good²⁸.

25. Atkin, D., & Donaldson, D. (2015). Who's Getting Globalized? The Size and Implications of Intra-national Trade Costs (No. w21439). National Bureau of Economic Research.

26. Draper, P., Chikura, C., & Krogman, H. (2016). Can Rules of Origin in Sub-Saharan Africa be Harmonized? A Political Economy Exploration (German Development Institute No. 1)

27. Mangeni, F. (2017, August) CFTA Negotiations – The end game. tralac (Trade Law Centre). Retrieved from <https://www.tralac.org/news/article/11995-cfta-negotiations-the-end-game.html>

28. Mangeni, F. (2017, August) CFTA Negotiations – The end game. tralac (Trade Law Centre). Retrieved from <https://www.tralac.org/news/article/11995-cfta-negotiations-the-end-game.html>

However, if the Rules of Origin negotiations take the approach of producing product-specific or list rules, that is, specifying a working and processing required for every single product for it to qualify for FTA treatment; it will definitely be impossible to have Rules of Origin for the AfCFTA in good time.

Zambia has become prone to global and regional risks which have the potential to negatively impact the country's socio-economic development. The greater the level of integration or interdependence among countries, the greater the potential for a number of risks, such as **political turmoil, migration, trade imbalances, illicit trade, infectious diseases** and the **effects of climate change**. One of the potential challenges from free movement of people may include **increase of human trafficking** and **smuggling of illegal products**.²⁹ **External shocks arising from financial integration and fluctuating commodity prices** have been adversely affecting Zambia's growth parameters. Other risks of concern include **terrorism, cyber-crime** and **digital misinformation**. Arising from this, Zambia faces different effects brought about by regional and global integration. Going forward, the country has to harness the positives of global and regional integration as well as manage the potential risks.³⁰



HOW ZAMBIA CAN POSITION HERSELF TO GET THE BEST DEALS

Zambia must prepare for the various potential challenges that she may face. In order to prepare for the potential increase of migration, various policies may be developed. These policies must be set up in such a way that Zambian citizens are protected from loss of employment; and that immigration of skilled labour is encouraged to ensure that the benefits of these skills are harnessed. Skilled labor allows the country to be efficient in its production and also its ability to develop advanced technological systems and equipment within the country. Zambia also needs to focus on strengthening the facilitation of movement of capital.³¹

As the region becomes a large single market, competition is likely to increase for Zambian producers in particular. It is essential for Zambian producers and businesses to be able to

29. Zambia Association of Manufacturers. (2018). Presentation on "the Continental Free Trade Area".

30. Zambia Seventh National Development Plan. (2017)

31. United Nations Conference for Trade and Development Research Paper No. 15. (2017). African Continental Free Trade Area: Challenges and Opportunities of Tariff Reductions

survive in this very competitive market. Research on the potential demands of products that Zambia may have comparative advantage in should be carried out to ensure necessary targeting is done. This will give Zambia an advantage as it services varying customers in different countries. Cost benefit analysis of the best means of business must be undertaken to ensure efficiency and to benefit from economies of scale. Zambia must also invest in technology and equipment which improve the productivity.

Zambia can also mobilize domestic resources in such a way that it can survive the potential short term losses that come with developing the CFTA. In this way the country may not incur a lot of costs despite the reduction in tariff revenue. The removal of trade barriers is likely to bring about foreign direct investment and more multinational companies that need to be regulated. The issue of cross-border tax avoidance may arise as a result of this. Zambia may avoid this by endorsing a global common reporting standards for Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) which allows easier access to financial information to the residence country.³²

Support must be provided for small scale producers to avoid crowding out by a market run by the private sector. Small scale producers may adapt to the post-CFTA market through enhanced technical, managerial and financial skills and meet industry standards. The Government may assist in investment of these attributes.³³

Zambia's priorities in its trading arrangements is currently focused on interventions that promote value addition, diversification and job and wealth creation.³⁴ In order to achieve this Zambia has recently developed an **export strategy that is focused on ensuring beneficiation for the domestic industry and manufacturing products** that will be able to meet the demands of the CFTA countries

32. Junquera-Varela, R. F., Verhoeven, M., Shukla, G. P., Haven, B., & Moreno-Dodson, B. (2017). Strengthening Domestic Resource Mobilization: Moving from Theory to Practice in Low-and Middle-Income Countries. World Bank Publications.

33. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. (2017). The Continental Free trade area: Human Rights Perspective

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Government through the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry should build capacity of Zambian firms to compete in the continental market. Manufacturing industries will need to be strategically considered by promoting value addition, as this is the sure way Zambia can benefit. In view of this, Government must implement strategic policies to encourage investment in the manufacturing sector. Special focus should be given to Industrial policy, Trade policy and other policies related to cost and ease of doing business.
2. Government must prioritize sectors where Zambia has comparative advantage and build domestic production capacity e.g. Agro-processing and Mining.
3. There is need to increase sensitization on the CFTA and promote building consensus and understanding the impact of Zambia joining. This would also adequately equip businesses and manufacturers to strategically position themselves and benefit from CFTA.
4. There is need to identify products that will be floated on the CFTA market.

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Unlocking Zambia's Potential

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