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Concept Note for:

Africa Diplomacy and Business Summit

Theme:

**“Diplomacy as a tool for achieving the
Africa Continental Free Trade Area”**

6TH-8TH JULY 2022
ACCRA-GHANA

CONCEPT NOTE

Africa Diplomacy and Business Summit

1.0 BACKGROUND

The concept of regional integration is not new; it has been intense since the 1960s when many African countries gained political independence from the colonial masters (Leshoele, 2020). In essence, there were two blocs that had diverse views on how to integrate Africa and the pace through which this was to be achieved. The first bloc was the Casablanca one under the leadership of Dr Kwame Nkrumah, and the second was the Monrovia bloc led by Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first President of Nigeria. The former argued for a wholesale and once-off comprehensive political and economic unification of Africa, from Cape to Cairo, the Horn of Africa to the West of Africa. The latter insisted that Nkrumah's approach was not feasible; therefore, a gradualist and more cautious approach was necessary, first by forming regional economic communities, then later an African Economic Community, with a politically integrated Africa emerging as the last step. The Monrovia bloc won the debate. The central focus of this concept is that almost all of these regional integration efforts and agreements (from the Lagos Plan of Action 1980, the Abuja Treaty 1991, the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) 2015, and now the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) 2018, focused on trade and economic integration.

Over the 11 year period (2006–2016) only three countries – Egypt, South Africa and Morocco accounted for 55.5 percent of Africa's exports; and five countries – Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, Egypt and Algeria accounted for 55 percent of Africa's imports (Ayoki, 2018). The implication is that conditions facing those countries will continue to influence Africa's services landscape. Second, infrastructural constraints, including low rates of access to the Internet and poor connectivity have hindered the participation of African economies in the most dynamic segment of services trade leading to high export concentration (in very few sectors such as transport, tourism and travel-related services) heightening its vulnerability to external shocks. Third, with less than 10 percent of the value of services produced in most countries entering into the economy's export basket, growth in services sector will continue to have very limited

influence on the world market (share in global service exports). Reforms and programmes aimed at reducing trade barriers and cost of trading across borders (raised by inefficient transport, border management, and logistics, poorly designed technical regulations and standards, licensing requirements and process, among others) would not only create opportunities to directly expand services exports, but would also promote the development of competitive value chains of production across the region

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) rejects classical, neoclassical, and Marxist trade theories, appealing, instead, to non-aligned pan-Africanism (Obeng-Odoom, 2000). It advocates continental free trade to overcome the lingering effects of slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism. Indeed, only true free trade can definitively decolonise global trade. To achieve its aspirations, AfCFTA and AU member countries will need to harness the power of diplomacy for intra Africa and intercontinental trade bearing in mind good diplomatic relations within Africa and beyond promise to be a good step towards achieving the aspirations of the continent.

In diplomacy, a large volume of transactions between states goes through bilateral channels associated with traditional diplomacy (Akindele, 1976). Consequently, each African state has established its network of formal contacts with those members of the international community it considers friendly and who similarly reciprocate this gesture of goodwill. Indeed, a noticeable worldwide trend in the last decade has been to diversify and increase such diplomatic contacts based on the increasing complexity and interdependence of the contemporary international system. However, bilateral relations between states, pervasive as they are, by no means constitute the totality of channels of international transactions. Diplomacy has over time influenced trade and economic activities worldwide.

Increased globalisation has played a crucial role in shaping recent trends and concerns in the economic diplomacy of African states (Mudida, 2012). African states are increasingly interested in becoming relevant actors in the global economy. The economic diplomacy of African states is principally diplomacy of development targeted at enhancing the quality of life of the citizens of Africa. Economic diplomacy at bilateral and multilateral levels is helping to articulate the critical concerns of African states. This diplomacy in contemporary years has been defined by

the engagement of African states with non-traditional allies such as China, India and Brazil and a strong impetus towards greater economic integration within Africa. The new economic growth of African states spurred a much bigger middle class. The unearthing of new natural resources has helped create tremendous economic interest in Africa by Western and non-Western states that have engaged African governments to further their interests in economic diplomacy.

Within the ambits of the work of (Mudida, 2012), diplomacy as a trade tool will harness continental resources toward achieving the goals of AfCFTA and those of other continents in furtherance of mutual benefits for Africa and the world. An increasing trade relationship through diplomacy and other means seem to be one that will hold the key to the achievements of the aspirations of the AfCFTA.

2.0 ABOUT THE CONVENER

The Sundolous Advanced Leadership Training (SALT) Institute is a tertiary institution founded in 2003, accredited by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission and affiliated to the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA).

Located in Accra, Ghana and with affiliates across the African continent, SALT Institute runs Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in Leadership & Management and International Relations & Diplomacy.

The Institute is committed to raising, training, and developing servant leaders for business and public life in Africa as well as the global marketplace.

The SALT Institute model is to train and develop leaders who will be able to:

- Lay new foundations in leadership based on godly principles for African peoples and the nations;

- Mobilise human resources and build coalitions from available human resources to provide the best possible governance;
- Translate God’s plan for their nations into reality by planned implementation;
- Understand what will transform African nations economically, socially, and politically;
- Interpret national crises correctly, work out solutions and implement recommendations accurately;
- Handle the intrigues of governance and leadership without losing personal integrity; and
- Become channels through which righteousness and justice can flow to impact people and politics.

3.0 CONFERENCE THEME AND SUB-THEMES

3.1 Main Theme

“Diplomacy as a tool for achieving the Africa Continental Free Trade Area.”

3.2 Sub-themes

- i. Emerging trade models post COVID-19
- ii. Africa and trans-global trade and investments – historical and current trends
- iii. Strengthening Intra Africa trade
- iv. Global diplomacy within the framework of trade
- v. Cultural diplomacy within the framework of African trade
- vi. Resolving language barriers in trade across the African continent

4.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

- i. To highlight the emerging trade models post COVID-19
- ii. To contribute to the conversation on Africa and trans-global trade and investments; drawing from historical and current happenings in the field of trade and investments
- iii. To contribute to the conversation on strengthening Intra Africa trade
- iv. To highlight good practices on global diplomacy within the framework of trade
- v. To contribute to the conversations on cultural diplomacy within the framework of African trade
- vi. To proffer solutions to the language barriers inhibiting the growth of trade across the African continent.

5.0 PARTICIPANTS

The conference is anticipated to draw participants from trade and diplomatic institutions, universities, government agencies, business persons and students interested in trade and diplomacy across the world.

6.0 METHODOLOGY

The conference shall take the forms of plenary sessions, paper presentations and working groups. The plenary shall be open to all participants to exchange ideas and experiences.

The working groups shall discuss specific issues raised in the paper presentations to formulate documents to be adopted by the participants at the end of the conference.

7.0 EXPECTED RESULTS

- i. Participants should have gained insights into the emerging trade models post COVID-19

- ii. Participants would have shared knowledge on the conversation on Africa and trans-global trade and investments; drawing from historical and current happenings in the field of trade and investments
- iii. Participants would have benefitted from the conversation on strengthening Intra Africa trade
- iv. Practices on global diplomacy within the framework of trade would have been shared.
- v. There would have been an understanding of the rudiments of cultural diplomacy within the framework of African trade

8.0 ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

There shall be a central organising committee. The composition shall be drawn from officials related to the SALT Institute and any co-opted member with the following responsibilities:

- i. Have oversight responsibility for the organization of the conference;
- ii. Mobilisation of participants for the conference;
- iii. International publicity;
- iv. Sending invitations;
- v. Resource persons etc.
- vi. Lodging and feeding of all participants;
- vii. Internal transportation;
- viii. Local publicity;
- ix. Technical facilities including meeting places, interpreters and translators (Arabic/French/English);
- x. Special program around events;
- xi. Consular services.

8.1 Membership of the Committee

- i. AMBASSADOR ELIZABETH ADJEI..... CHAIRPERSON
- ii. AMBASSADOR DR. KODZO ALABO..... MEMBER
- iii. DR. MUSA DUBE..... MEMBER
- iv. DR. FRED AWAAH..... MEMBER
- v. DR. FATIMA ALABO..... MEMBER
- vi. DR. REUBEN COFFIE..... MEMBER
- vii. MR. ERNEST ORTSIN..... MEMBER
- viii. MR. MICHAEL ARMAH..... MEMBER
- ix. MRS. LORNA MAGARA.....MEMBER

9.0 FOLLOW UP

A follow-up committee shall be constituted upon the dissolution of the summit. The Committee shall comprise members of the International Organizing Committee and two co-opted members of the Local Organizing Committee to be responsible for follow-up.

Specifically, the follow-up committee shall;

- i. Ensure that all resolutions/ declarations and publications born out of the summit are developed, printed and distributed to all the necessary institutions and persons.
- ii. Prepare for the hosting of the next conference

10.0 CONCURRENT ACTIVITIES

There will be concurrent activities that shall precede and end the summit. Eligibility to participate in these additional activities shall be captured in the letters of invitation.

The activities shall be;

1. The Africa Diplomacy and Business Fair.
2. The maiden SALT Institute Diplomacy and Business Awards aimed at awarding key stakeholders in Global Diplomacy and Business.

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