



Webinar: Digital Disruption in Africa - Mapping Innovations for the AfCFTA in Post-Covid Times

28 January 2021, 10h – 12h (GMT+2)

The COVID19 pandemic has highlighted the impact that digital innovations can have in resolving some of the most critical global challenges. Digital solutions have been the lifeblood that has helped many businesses and economies stay afloat in these times of crisis. In Africa the use of digital solutions is nothing new, indeed the continent is recognised for its utilisation of mobile-based payment systems including M-Pesa and many other innovations. Digital solutions have also been hailed by the African Union (AU) and other international bodies as critical for Africa’s development and growth.

As the world pivots into the digital economy, trends are showing that digital innovations will continue to play a key catalytic role in supporting not only post-pandemic recovery, but also sustainable growth and prosperity benefiting Africa and helping to support the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Across many economies in Africa, digitisation has been used to leapfrog over traditional banking and landline telecoms infrastructure, helping businesses to innovate and scale up operations.

A recent SAIIA study titled “Digital Disruption in Africa – Mapping Innovations for the African Free Trade Area in Post COVID Times” (authored by Dr Alastair Tempest and Ms Michelle Chivunga) affirms that the rise in ecommerce particularly with the onset of COVID, signals a strong foundation upon which to leverage the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) to support digitised inter-regional trade, large scale industrialisation and creation of a vibrant African economy. An economy that creates more jobs and opportunities for Africans to thrive on the continent.

The aim of this virtual conference is to discuss opportunities that exist to take advantage of digital innovations particularly emergent tech solutions to help the implementation of the AfCFTA. The high-level panellists will explore the impacts of Covid19, digital disruption and how these dynamics impact on the aspirations of the AfCFTA. The conference offers a deep dive into the emerging technologies that are playing a role in supporting the transition post-Covid and well placed to help spearhead the implementation of the AfCFTA.

Draft Programme: Digital Disruption in Africa - Mapping Innovations for the AfCFTA in Post-Covid Times

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| Time | Agenda Item |
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| 10h00 – 10h15 | Welcoming and Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, Chief Executive, SAIIA |
| Session 1: High-level overview of the importance of the AfCFTA and the role emerging technology can play in driving forward Africa - Digital Disruption, COVID and the Formation of the AfCFTA (Policy Considerations) | |
| 10h15 – 11h10 | Opening Remarks and Moderator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jamie MacLeod, Trade Policy Fellow of the Africa Trade Policy Centre, UNECA Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memory Dube, Regional Integration and Trade Policy Specialist, African Development Bank Michelle Chivunga, Founder & CEO, Global Policy House Jean-Bertrand Azapmo, Regional Trade Adviser, Office of the AU Commissioner for Trade and Industry Q&A |
| Session 2: Digital Disruption, COVID and the Formation of the AfCFTA (Business Considerations) | |
| 11h10 – 11h55 | Moderator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drs Alastair Tempest, Chief Executive Officer, Ecommerce Forum South Africa Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Stuart, Economist and Policy Analyst, Tralac Mzuzukile Soni, CEO and Founder, BrownSense Yvonne Kagondu, Kenya Community Coordinator, Paxful Q&A |
| Closing Session | |
| 11h55 – 12h00 | Closing Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, Chief Executive, SAIIA |