

African women identified as the core of the AfCFTA agenda

intranet.uneca.org/ecanews/african-women-identified-core-afcfta-agenda



Kigali, 28 February 2022 (ECA) - Women are key players in the realisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) according to discussions on the sidelines of the 8th session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) in Kigali, Rwanda.

The session entitled: 'AfCFTA as a vehicle for gender equality towards agendas 2030 and 2063' shed light on the significance of the AfCFTA in achieving gender equality towards achieving SDG 5 and Agenda 2063 in Africa; discussed the challenges and prospects for utilizing the opportunities presented by trade and AfCFTA towards gender equality in the realisation of SDG 5 and Agenda 2063.

The session also shed light on the importance of gender responsive policy and legislations to create an enabling environment to implement AfCFTA successfully, and to materialize the Agenda 2063 aspirations.

During the meeting, Rwandan Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Jeanette Bayisenge, explained that although her country has achieved great success in women's rights, there are still many challenges. The AfCFTA, therefore, "has great potential to be a solution through gender sensitive implementation."

Mama Keita, Director of ECA's Sub-Regional Office for East Africa, noted that "African women-owned businesses contribute to 60% of gross domestic product. Women can only fully engage in trade if they live lives of self-determination. It is up to us to remove barriers in the development of the continent and offer opportunities and measure success through the eyes of women and youth."

On his part, ECA's Deputy Executive Secretary, Antonio Pedro, explained that the AfCFTA is dependent on investment in gender equality. He underscored the importance of "tackling the obstacles women face in participating in the economy, to reduce inequality between men and women."

The event took place on the sidelines of the eighth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD), organized by ECA and the government of Rwanda in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and other entities of the United Nations Systems. ARFSD 2022 will be held from March 3 to March 5 on the theme "Building forward better: A green, inclusive and resilient Africa poised to achieve the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.'