

AEZO NEWSLETTER N° 11 - 2021- 85 | SPECIAL EDITION



AFRICA ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION (AEZO) HOSTED THE 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING, IN ACCRA, ON THURSDAY NOVEMBER, 25<sup>TH</sup> 2021.

Organized under the theme: "Connecting African special economic zones to global value chains at the era of the African free trade area (AfCFTA)," the event was well attended by a number of African states. This year's meeting was held in partnership with Ghana Free Zones Authority (GFZA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat (AfCFTA). This year's edition brought together:

- +1500** ONLINE PARTICIPANTS
- +120** IN-PERSON PARTICIPANTS
- 22** INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS
- 10** VIP

WATCH THE REPLAY OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

EXECUTIVE KEYNOTES

**H.E. Mr. Kojo Oppong Nkrumah**  
 Minister for Investment  
 the Republic of GHANA

"This meeting is therefore being held at an opportune time to deliberate on the critical thematic areas of SEZs and AfCFTA, particularly how SEZs can leverage the operationalization of the AfCFTA to boost the industrialisation agenda of Africa. It is no doubt that SEZs play a major role in the economies of African states. Most African countries are using SEZs or Export Processing Zones (EPZs) as tools for economic development."

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

**H.E. Mrs. Carmen Ndao**  
 Minister in Charge of Investments and PPP promotion  
 the Republic of GABON

"As part of our process of diversification of the economy in the face of the predominance of the oil sector in the constitution of national wealth, Gabon has also embarked on the establishment of a network of special investment zones in order to ensure a certain resilience of its economy in the face of exogenous shocks due to the decline in our raw materials. This is how the Nkok special economic zone has been developed"

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

**Dr. Akinwumi Adesina**  
 President  
 African Development Bank

"The agricultural sector in Africa was badly hit by the coronavirus pandemic but is optimistic a number of strides will be made this year. "Farmers don't go to their farms, a lot of logistics were broken but now I think Africa is getting back on track. Last year we went down -1% to GDP. It is projected to go up by 3.4% this year. Hopefully, we should be ready to run for more agribusinesses."

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

**Mrs. Angela Paolini Elard**  
 Deputy Director General  
 the World Trade Organization - WTO

"A united Africa is a stronger Africa. If properly implemented, the AfCFTA will strengthen the bargaining power of Africa in international trade negotiations, something that many developing and least developed countries in the region feel they're currently lacking. A stronger Africa would result in a more inclusive process of trade liberalization."

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

**Dr. Ciyong Zou**  
 Managing Director  
 DFFPC-INDO

"The AfCFTA would "provide new opportunities for special economic zones as production centers to boost the intra African Trade and foster economic integration, in particular regional and global value chains".

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

**Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki**  
 CEO  
 AUDA - NEPAD

"Today, Africa seems resilient about building solid industrialization for the domestic supply chain or finding an appropriate mechanism to participate in the global value chains strategically Special Economic Zones can play a role in sustaining industrialization and Africa's integration into global trade."

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

**H.E. Dr. Michael Aaron Oquaye Jr**  
 CEO  
 Ghana Free Zones Authority (GFZA)

"As part of our process of diversification of the economy in the face of the predominance of the oil sector in the constitution of national wealth, Gabon has also embarked on the establishment of a network of special investment zones in order to ensure a certain resilience of its economy in the face of exogenous shocks due to the decline in our raw materials. This is how the Nkok special economic zone has been developed"

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

**Mr. Ahmed BENNIS**  
 Secretary General  
 African Economic Zones Organization

"The major challenge for African Economic Zones is not only to attract investors and join value chains, it is also to improve the share of value added created locally and promote positioning in global value chains. With the advent of the AfCFTA agreement, African Economic Zones must actively participate in improving logistics competitiveness and strengthening regional integration."

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

A MESSAGE FROM THE AFRICAN UNION

**H.E. Albert Muchanga**  
 Commissioner  
 Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining,  
 African Union Commission

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are the unique opportunity to leverage the AfCFTA, accelerate foreign investment, industrialization, and the development of regional value chains in Africa. "One of the AfCFTA objectives is the promotion of regional value chains and acceleration of industrial development in Africa... Allowing SEZ to operate under the AfCFTA will contribute to the increase of intra-African trade and the promotion of value chains. In our recent exchange with our domestic stakeholders and economic operators, we underscored that SEZ is a critical pillar of the AfCFTA implementation. The outcome of the negotiation about SEZ and these regulations that will be developed will enhance investment in Special Economic Zones".

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

**H.E. Mr. Wamkele Mene**  
 Secretary General  
 AfCFTA Secretariat

"It is important to call the key elements of the global value chains that are development, innovation and design, investment and production, supply chain, and marketing and retailing. The important matter of these elements is the way to create synergies between global value chains and regional and continental value chains. The key task is to make African SEZ contribute to increasing Africa's share of global trade while at the same time contributing to the improvement of intra-African trade".

WATCH THE FULL STATEMENT

REGIONAL VALUE CHAINS & SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES

**Moderator:** Mr. Preston Martin

**Panelists:**  
 Mr. Richard Bragg (Director General, Africa Development Bank)  
 Mr. Mohamed Ali (Secretary General of the African Free Trade Area Secretariat)  
 Mr. Tullio Rossi (Managing Director of Trade and Logistics, AUDA-NEPAD)  
 Dr. Abdoulaye Salyemane (Director of Trade, AUDA-NEPAD)  
 Dr. Beth Dunford (President & CEO, African Development Bank)  
 Mrs. Cecile Bidou (Secretary General, African Economic Zones Organization)

**PLENARY SESSION | REGIONAL VALUE CHAIN & SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES : OPERATIONALIZING THE AfCFTA**

Led by moderator Mr. Preston Martin, the co-founder of Adrianople Group, the plenary session presented an overview of the role of Special Economic Zones in increasing the share of value-added created locally and promoting value chain complementarity across the continent. The international experts panelists from the AfCFTA Secretariat, UNCTAD, UNECA, UNIDO, European Commission and the AIBD discussed the contribution of Global value chains and Special Economic Zones in supporting the inclusion of the AfCFTA implementation in the context of the issues and challenges of the 2021.

WATCH PLENARY SESSION FULL REPLAY

MEET THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC ZONES

**MEET THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC ZONES**

The session achieved a spotlight on the several African SEZs and shared inputs on their various achievements, and outlined challenges and opportunities for the African continents in supporting the implementation of the AfCFTA.

WATCH MEET THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC ZONES FULL REPLAY

**Moderator:** Mrs. Farah Hanouf

**Panelists:**  
 Mr. Abdoulaye Maliga (Secretary General, African Economic Zones Organization)  
 Mr. Ibrahim Khalil (Managing Director, Tanger Med Group)  
 Dr. Antonio Henriquez Silva (Secretary General, AUDA-NEPAD)  
 M. Euse Mendiola (Managing Director, AUDA-NEPAD)  
 Mr. Wessel Gerrits El Oen (Managing Director, AUDA-NEPAD)  
 Mr. Eusebio Mendes (Managing Director, AUDA-NEPAD)

EXPERT OUTLOOK & INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSIONS

**EXPERT OUTLOOK 1 | FOCUS REPORT ON SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES IN AFRICA**

The first expert outlook session was chaired by Mr. Bernardo Bruzzone, Africa regional editor of Oxford Business Group.

His presentation covered a report on the SEZs, focusing on the continent's special economic zones (SEZs), analyzing key data across a wide range of metrics such as trade volumes, business models, regulatory frameworks and access to finance.

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

**Mr. Bernardo Bruzzone**  
 Africa Regional Editor  
 Oxford Business Group

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 1 | FROM DESIGN TO ASSET MANAGEMENT OF SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE**

The first industrial prospect session brought experts from Tanger Med Engineering (TME) who provided guidance on technical challenges and comprehensive solutions that drive the development and the implementation of special economic zones. This session addressed key technical issues related to design, constructions, facility management and operations and started out by a short animation presented by the Managing Director of TME, Mr Nasser Tissellal.

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

**EXPERT OUTLOOK 2 | SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES SUPPORTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

The second expert outlook session was chaired by Prof. Hafsa El Bekri, Professor of International Economics at EuroMed University.

Her presentation covered the SEZs Regional Integration and focused on how African Special Economic Zones can contribute in improving intra-African trade, economic inclusion, and regional integration.

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 1 | FROM DESIGN TO ASSET MANAGEMENT OF SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE**

Mr Ayoub Rmili, Director of Infrastructure, Industry and Logistics at Tanger Med Engineering (TME), joined along by declaring that in order to ensure the compliance of the infrastructure to be achieved with our objectives, with our rules and also cost effective activities, there are important steps to materialize this project and allow it to be pursued.

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

**Mr. Nasser Tissellal**  
 Managing Director  
 Tanger Med Engineering

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 2 | DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE ON SPECIAL AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PROCESSING ZONES (SAPZs) IN AFRICA**

"Some of the principles are linked to legal, regulatory and institutional framework, to ensure strong legal regulatory, institutional framework for SEZs, we need to anticipate early what regulations and certification do we need for SAPZs, there is also a need to strategically integrate SAPZs into national development plans. Governments must resist temptation to corrupt and politicize zones. Long term and strong government commitment is crucial for the success of the zones. The infrastructure in SAPZs in general, power, gas, roads, ports, and telecom are key constraints and governments and developers need a PPP approach to solve the constraints"

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 2 | DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE ON SPECIAL AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PROCESSING ZONES (SAPZs) IN AFRICA**

"It is important for member states of AfCFTA to advocate for the right policy frameworks to promote SEZ development in their countries...The connection between SEZs, AfCFTA and global value chains are important in harnessing the benefits under the AfCFTA."

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 3 | SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES ACCELERATING AFRICA'S INDUSTRIALIZATION**

Mrs Yvonne Chileshe highlighted the feature Special Economic Zones have in Secretariat of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) as a tool to promote industrialization. She clarified how investment and transformation in the OACPS's Agriculture sector is a new approach to its Group support for the Development of Agriculture Value Chains.

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 2 | DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE ON SPECIAL AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PROCESSING ZONES (SAPZs) IN AFRICA**

**Mrs. Atsuko Toda**  
 Director, Agriculture Finance & Rural Infrastructure Development Dept., AIBD

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 3 | SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES ACCELERATING AFRICA'S INDUSTRIALIZATION**

The session also presented an opportunity for UNIDO to showcase the support for numerous SEZ studies, as well as pre-feasibility and feasibility analyses. Starting off with Mr. Stefan Kratsch's presentation which showed the SEZ management and regulations that included operators that support SEZ in various ways.

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 3 | SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES ACCELERATING AFRICA'S INDUSTRIALIZATION**

Mr Jean-Paul Gauthier emphasized SEZ priorities critical issue, that determines which production and consumption markets the zones are being established to serve, both within and outside the country.

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 3 | SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES ACCELERATING AFRICA'S INDUSTRIALIZATION**

**Mr. Jean-Paul Gauthier**  
 Senior Industrial Parks Advisor  
 UNIDO

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 3 | SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES ACCELERATING AFRICA'S INDUSTRIALIZATION**

**Mrs. Yvonne Semba Chileshe**  
 Expert Commodities and Value Chain Development  
 OACPS

**INDUSTRIAL PROSPECT SESSION 3 | SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES ACCELERATING AFRICA'S INDUSTRIALIZATION**

**Mr. Stefan Kratsch**  
 Investment & Technology Promotion Division  
 Department of Digitalization, Technology & Innovation  
 UNIDO

BEST-OF VIDEO

**AEZO 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**  
 NOV 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2021 | ACCRA, GHANA

Check out the best-of video and major highlights of the Africa Economic Zones Organization 6th Annual Meeting held on November 25th, 2021, at the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat in Accra - Ghana under the theme "Connecting African Special Economic Zones to Global Value Chains at the era of the African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)". This year's edition brought together 120 delegates who attended the event in person and more than 1500 participants followed live-streaming channels. Additionally, more than 54 African SEZs, Investment Promotion Agencies and government authorities have been represented.