



SIDE EVENT

From ideas to action: public-private sector partnerships to foster digital industrialization and trade in Southern Africa

Background:

Sustainable Development Goal 9 is central to the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap, 2015–2063, adopted in 2015 at the Summit of Heads of State and Government of SADC, envisions this. It delineates *14 essential requirements* for harnessing industrialization as an engine of economic development and transformation for the SADC region.

Among them:

- i) Utilizing information and communications technology as a catalyst and enabler for industrial transformation of the region;
- ii) The need to establish a compact for industrialization, consisting of the Government, private sector, civil society, development partners and prospective investors;
- iii) The need to acknowledge the central role of the private sector, namely small and medium-sized enterprises, as the driver of industrialization.

Furthermore, the SADC Digital 2027 Agenda demonstrates the willingness of the Southern African region to harness digitalization as a means of enhancing trade and industrial competitiveness. The interface between trade and industry is key to unleashing socioeconomic transformation in Africa.

Objective:

This side event is aimed at generating constructive dialogue involving the public sector (Governments) and the private sector (entrepreneurs, investors and non-governmental organizations), as part of the SADC compact,

in analysing how digitalization can aid trade, industrial transformation and advancement of Sustainable Development Goal 9 in SADC.

Questions for discussions include:

- 1) What can the complementary roles of the public and private sectors be in addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities for industry and trade arising from digitalization?
- 2) What are the potential areas for public-private partnerships?
- 3) What should the key strategic elements of digital industrial policy and policies for digital entrepreneurship and trade in SADC be?

Expected outcome:

Establish a road map for the Southern African region on digitalization for industrialization and trade based on public-private partnerships and collaboration.

Target audience:

Officials of ministries of finance, planning and economic development, trade and industry, information and communications technology; regional economic communities, the private sector and representatives of non-governmental organizations; and members of national, regional and international organizations.

Venue and date: 21–22 March 2020, ECA, Addis Ababa

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