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1712 Working Group News on Trade – December 2017

1. Continental free trade area agreement to be signed in March 2018

African Heads of State are set to sign the Agreement establishing the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) in March 2018. When signed, the CFTA is going to be the biggest trade agreement bringing together 55 African countries second to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The CFTA will be a market of about 1.3 billion people. The liberalisation of trade among the 55 countries is expected to lead to a predictable environment for investment, industrialisation and value addition. The Protocol on Trade in Goods includes: Tariff Concessions, Rules of Origin, Customs Cooperation, Trade Facilitation, Non-Tariff Barriers, Technical Barriers to Trade, Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Measures, Trade Remedies and Transit Trade.

[Read more](#)

2. Free Trade Agreements, a poison for the Climate!

Free Trade Agreements that guarantee the free movement of capital, goods and services have priority over the protection of the environment and the fight against climate change. Even worse, environmental measures are often seen as arbitrary discrimination on trade. The WTO Agreements are not able to respond to the challenges of climate change. And trade and investment liberalization policies weaken environmental standards, making commercial law a superior right to environmental law and climate challenge. [Read more](#)

3. Fair Trade With Europe Should Depend On Quality African Exports

The EPAs are ongoing negotiations expected to create a free trade area between the European Union and African countries. Most of the African countries have been indifferent to the EPAs arguing that it does not offer enough protection for local industries against goods imported from Europe. African states should consider ratifying agreements that include technological factors that improve the quality of their exports. If the agreement includes technological transfers, then this can lead to economic transformation. Free trade with Europe or any developed region, without technological transfers is harmful for the evolution of less competitive economies in Africa. [Read more](#)

4. Partnership on Geographical Indicators to boost rural development

The Protection and Promotion of Geographical Indications (GI) aimed to create awareness on the benefits that can be derived from the effective protection and use of GIs in South African and EU for the development of small-scale, local and rural economies, particularly in the agro-food sector, and for enhancing export opportunities and boosting international Geographical Indications favour consumers, who are more informed on what they buy, boost economies and defend local producers. [Read more](#)