

New multisectoral mission of the Africa Development Club in Ivory Coast

Casablanca, 17 December 2021 - Attijariwafa bank group's Africa Development Club Ivory Coast and the Société Ivoirienne de Banque (SIB) organized a digital multisectoral mission on Thursday, 9 December in Abidjan on the theme **"African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) and Made In Ivory Coast production matters"**.

The plenary conferences, broadcast live from Abidjan, were held under the chairmanship of **Mr. Felix ANOBLE**, the Minister for the Promotion of SMEs, Handicrafts and Transformation of the Informal Sector of the Republic of Ivory Coast, in the presence of **Mr. Georges N'DIA COFFI**, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of SIB, and **Mr. Daouda COULIBALY**, General Manager of the holding company Attijari West Africa.

In his opening remarks, **Mr. Mohamed EL GHAZI**, General Manager of the SIB, noted the importance of the topic for the country's economy, taking into account the objectives of meeting domestic demand as well as those of meeting international standards in order to promote the export of Ivorian products. He also emphasized the commitment of the SIB in this endeavor, particularly in giving preference to manufacturers based in Ivory Coast.

This edition featured three highlights: two panel discussions facilitated by eminent figures, in addition to BtoB networking sessions, with more than 200 business leaders and economic players in Africa representing six countries of the continent (Gabon, Ivory Coast, Egypt, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia) who took part in this mission, an opportunity to identify effective partnership and investment opportunities between economic operators.

On this occasion, **Ms. Mouna KADIRI**, Director of the Africa Development Club (ADC), recalled that this multisectoral mission was the 31st of its kind for the Attijariwafa bank group on the continent since the creation of the ADC in 2016, but more importantly the 4th operation of the ADC in Ivory Coast and which is led by the SIB.

The purpose of this mission, according to Ms. Kadiri, is to offer companies, including Ivorian companies, the opportunity to establish partnerships and develop business opportunities between them, to connect Ivorian SMEs with others to boost intra-African trade, leveraging the growth opportunities offered by the free trade area.

Meanwhile, **Mr. Felix ANOBLE**, Minister for the Promotion of SMEs, Handicrafts and Transformation of the Informal Sector, expressed his delight in being able to participate in this great meeting that features Ivory Coast and its potential.

"Indeed, the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) offers businesses a major opportunity to expand by addressing a total of one billion potential customers," said Felix ANOBLE. In his opinion, this opportunity will certainly lead to major changes in the various economic fabrics of African countries, including that of Ivory Coast.

"Ivory Coast currently has the highest rate of intra-African trade, which stands at 24% compared to a general average of 7%", he revealed before adding that the development of the Made In Ivory Coast label is one of the key challenges, at a time when there are multiple uncertainties in the global economy, due to the persistence of the Covid-19 pandemic.



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The Minister also said that the ACFTA is a development driver for our continent because we are convinced that it is intra-African trade and not development aid that will contribute to the genuine and sustainable growth of our country.

The two sub-themes addressed during the conference were: "How does the ACFTA contribute to the growth of African businesses?" and "The Made In Ivory Coast in the ACFTA: State of play and growth models".

This event is the third initiative to be held in this format this year, after the one organized last April by the Africa Development Club Senegal, with CBAO and Crédit du Sénégal, and the one in Gabon last October, by the UGB bank.

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