

# **African Continental Free Trade Area: Challenges and Opportunities for Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

The Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) is being prepared by the Africa Union (AU) to take off in December 2017 for free trade in goods and services. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) will participate and drive the free trade area. The paper showed the features of the CFTA, the opportunities and challenges for SMEs in the CFTA and determined the level of awareness of CFTA among formally educated citizens. The study used document study with content analysis as well as primary data collected through convenience sampling in a Lagos suburb and analyzed with descriptive statistics. 65 respondents were targeted but 62 were used for analysis. The results showed that the decision to start the African CFTA was taken in 2012. The mechanism of its establishment is from AU member countries through the eight Regional Economic Communities. The SMEs in Nigeria serve as basis of industrialization. 67.74% of the respondents were not aware of the CFTA while 32.26% were aware. The SMEs will have the opportunities of introducing their product to foreign market and form regional value chain in production. Operational capacities supported by smart technology for monitoring goods in transit and at destinations and overcome of socio-cultural differences like language barrier in the targeted foreign market within the CFTA are required from businesses. Africa should increase the quantity of cross-border business infrastructure for CFTA. The AU should step up media campaign to create awareness of the CFTA among Africans.

## **Keywords**

Free Trade Area, Africa Continent, Awareness, Small and Medium Enterprise, Challenges, Opportunities, Nigeria

## **1. Introduction**

Since the late 50s when the wind of independent state started blowing across Africa, the continent began the promotion of developmental efforts in different dimensions of political, economical and social implications (Manelisi, Kornegay and Stephen 2000; Olympio, 2004). A common body to promote Africa quest for unity and development, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was formed in 1963 which later changed to Africa Union (AU) in 2001 for economic integration fashioned after the European Union (Olympio, 2004, UNCTAD, 2012). The action demonstrated Africa readiness to further strengthen and promote economic unity and prosperity. One developmental area is the match towards continental free trade area (CFTA); free, common

and single market area which was agreed in 2012 by the Africa Union to be operational in 2017 (AUC, 2016). A lot of human and material resources are being expended by the Union to actualizing the free trade area and businesses are expected to be major actors in making goods and services available for consumers.

Businesses in Africa and Nigeria in particular that will operate in the CFTA are in a terrain that is heterogeneous in nature. There are large scale firms and many small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) involving in product and service businesses in all sectors that include agriculture, mining, oil and gas and telecommunications. The businesses have specific peculiarities with different levels of financing,

capital base, management prowess, product range, human resource skills, research and development might, production and marketing strengths. These issues are the business internal environmental factors that determine the levels of strength and weakness of every business (Ituwe, 2005) and for the business to attain perpetuity, it must have advantageous mix of the factors at all times.

Also, in Nigeria and other African countries, businesses are taking advantage of globalization that embrace issues like, according to Ituwe (2005), world networked landscape, war against terrorism, financial crimes, protection of human rights and environment. They also strive to exploit industrial factors like competition, political: stable polity, economical, such as the financial system, social: social values, religion etc and technology: information technology future, design and development that directly and indirectly have bearing on business activities. There are contemporary problems such as power supply fluctuations and poor road network and transportation facilities as well as poor finance availability that are affecting businesses. Bearing in mind all the socio-political and economic problems bedeviling businesses (Punch Editorial, 2016; 1Voice Africa; 2014), one would wonder how investors, especially the SMEs would cope and contribute effectively in driving the African CFTA (ACFTA) for the benefit of all economic agents in the continent.

The paper aimed to achieve two objectives. First, to elucidate the salient features of the ACFTA and highlights the opportunities there-in for Nigeria SMEs and the likely challenges they are to confront upon the commencement of the free trade area. Second, sets out to determine the level of awareness of CFTA among formally educated adult citizens that either run or do not operate SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria. Lagos is used because it hosts most of the businesses in Nigeria and is the centre of entrepreneurial activities in West Africa.

This paper is relevant on three grounds. There is need for Africa businesses especially in Nigeria, the largest economy in Africa, to get abreast with the CFTA in terms of opportunities and challenges to equip them for the free trade area. The paper adds to existing and growing literature on free trade area for Africa. It also exposes African political and economic leaders to areas of intervention in ensuring that the SMEs in Africa appropriately prepared and positioned for the free trade area. It also serves as source of information for big businesses that plan to or will operate across border know the opportunities and challenges involved especially in the CFTA.

The paper is structured in four sections. The second section deals with methodology and the third section covers results and discussion on CFTA, its features, advantages and disadvantages, Nigeria business terrain, the SMEs and other participants in the free trade area, the opportunities offered by the CFTA to the SMEs and the challenges ahead of them in the CFTA and the awareness of the CFTA among citizens in that order. Section 4 is the conclusion of the paper with recommendations.

## 2. Methods/Procedures

The study adopted document study of literature materials on CFTA by the AU. Also used were primary data obtained through administration of questionnaire and interview to a sample of 65 respondents selected by convenience sampling of formally educated adults in Ikorodu area, a sub-urban town in Lagos State, Nigeria. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information that is germane to the achievement of the objectives of the study. The variables of interest were educational level, ownership of SMEs, the sector of operation and awareness of the ACFTA by the respondents. The descriptive data from the documents were analyzed using content analysis and while descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data from the survey. Lagos is chosen because it is the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria and hub of West Africa and the state hosts more of the SMEs compared with any other state in Nigeria (NBS and SMEDAN, 2010). It is also important to establish the level of connection of small unit of a state in a country in Africa with the African Continental Free Trade Area.

## 3. Results/Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. CFTA of Africa

The idea of the ACFTA, according to the AUC (2016), was taken as a decision at the 18<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2012. As part of the decision, the free trade was to start in 2017 with an action plan called Boosting Intra-Africa Trade through seven bunches of trade policy, trade facilitation, productive capacity, trade related infrastructure, trade finance, trade information and factor market integration; and with targets to increase by 100% between 2012 and 2022. The CFTA will reduce to zero the distance between 54 African countries with total population of over 1 billion people and gross domestic product that is not less than US\$3.4 trillion (Tralac, 2016); making it to be the world's largest free trade area (Warford, 2016). Trade is pivotal to African economic integration because it has been an African continental instrument for unified effort of socio-economic and political development before the formation of OAU in 1963 (UNCTAD, 2016b). Africans will have the opportunity of trading together in goods, services, investment and intellectual property without barrier and the trade in goods will cover tariff liberalization, rules of origin, dispute resolution, trade facilitations and customs procedures (Acyl, 2016; UNCTAD, 2016b).

The negotiations for the CFTA started in June 2015 (AU, 2017) and have since continued. Out of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) within the continent (AUC, 2016), only three: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) had agreed in 2015 to quicken the process of actualizing the tripartite Free Trade Area through finalization of outstanding

issues (Adekoya, 2017). The other RECs lagging behind, as at February 2017, in the negotiation are Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

(African Union Commission, 2016 and UNECA, 2016). The RECs are expected to enhance regional economic integration among their member states and other states in the general African Economic Community. It is believed that once regional integration is achieved, it will catalyze the attainment of continental integration. Nigeria as a member of ECOWAS, is in the verge of furthering perfecting negotiation within her REC and at continental level. The African Union had agreed that trade negotiations for continental integration should be bottom-up through RECs (UNCTAD, 2016b) as intra-regional trade is key unit of trade strategies available for African countries. Others are strategic partnerships, sub-regional and regional integration, international trade arrangements, multilateral trade agreements and unilateral economic reforms (UNCTAD, 2016c)

The AUC (2016) and Region Refocus Third World Network-Africa (2016) indicated the main objectives of the CFTA as:

- i. "Create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Continental Customs Union and the African customs union.
- ii. Expand intra African trade through better harmonisation and coordination of trade liberalisation and facilitation regimes and instruments across RECs and across Africa in general.
- iii. Resolve the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships and expedite the regional and continental integration processes.
- iv. Enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploiting opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources."

The Free Trade Area (FTA) is an essential component and stage of economic integration (EI) which the RECs and AU are working towards achieving. The FTA ensures almost, if not complete, perfect mobility of portable production resources, especially tangible goods and it leads to achievement of custom union. The EI, in ascending order, begins with independent economy, preferential trade area, free trade area, customs union, common market, monetary union, fiscal union and political union (EconomicOnline, 2017). With the CFTA, Africa is at the third stage and it is hoped that once it is achieved in 2017, it will lead to the realization of customs union in line with its third objective for the accomplishment of EI and it will make many African countries to develop as, in history, few countries have developed economically without trade (Warford, 2016). It is noteworthy to mention that the European Union is already

implementing the last stage of economic integration (Afolabi, 1998). For African countries to benefit fully in EI, there must be deep level of economic integration among them (Mwasha, 2015).

### **3.2. Nigeria Business Terrain, the SMEs and Other Economic Agents for the CFT**

#### **3.2.1. Nigeria Business Landscape and SMEs**

The Nigeria business landscape is a mix of successes and challenges driven by mono-product economy within stable political environment. Historically, businesses thrive in Nigeria especially for finished products due to large population and diverse demographic features that favor consumption. There is high labor supply in excess of demand. Recently, due to recession resulting from dwindling oil revenue and foreign reserve to pay for huge import bills as well as wastages and leakages of financial resources, consumption has gone down with job losses and poor capacity utilization. Inflation rate is more than double between 2015 and 2017. Though telecommunication industry is large in terms of contribution to GDP, other service subsectors like air-travel, road transportation are dragging due to poor infrastructure like airport facilities and road network. The financial sector is being improved with the application of security features and smart information and communication technology (ICT) in banking. The SMEs and other economic agents along products value chains within the complex nature of domestic market are groaning under the recession. Government has, however, said that the economy will get out of recession better in 2017.

The Nigerian SMEs and micro enterprises are operating under domestic market complexities and uncertainties. Socio-political and economic terrain can change any time. Policy of government can also change anytime as most African economies do experience sudden change in policy and poor implementation of policies. The market system is predominantly traditional except for few city malls that started springing up within the last decade in major cities of the country. Power supply is not reliable with incessant power failure. Business can only survive with alternative and private energy source like power generator.

The SMEs are significant to the economy in many respects. They are spread across economic sectors and geographical zones contributing to GDP and employment. In spite of this, there are challenges and constraints confronting their operations and they need skills and re-skilling to grow their net worth. According to the National Policy on Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, their definitions are based on number of employee and the value of assets that excluded land and building. Medium enterprises are of ₦50M and less than ₦500M assets and employees of 50 to 199, small enterprises are those with assets of over ₦5M but less than ₦50M and employees of 10 to 49 while micro enterprises are those with assets less than ₦5M and workforce of less than 10. If there is an overlapping in these features, categorization of the enterprise will be based on the employment feature.

The following features of SMEs make them to be of significant component of market and economic development initiatives:

- i. Their production activities are labor intensive which means they apply high quantity of human resources thus promoting employment and reducing inequality in income distribution.
- ii. They promote entrepreneurship
- iii. They require low level of capital to start them
- iv. They are known for promoting technology development through local inventions, adaptations, adoptions and modifications.
- v. They serve as basis of and catalyze industrialization.
- vi. They lead to diversification of industry and enhance even development across the country.
- vii. They serve as pillar for increasing productive capacities and provide subcontracting services and linkages between micro and large enterprises.
- viii. They promote indigenous entrepreneurial capacities and abilities and business through expansion and diversification.

Other economic agents that will participate in the CFTA are consumers, large enterprises, governments and public institution. Governments of AU are gathering momentum to accomplish negotiations and sign agreements for the consummation of the CFTA. Large enterprise like the blue chips companies will take advantage of the single market to sell their products and services. Public institutions will be required to be more efficient in service delivery like in port administration to enhance flow of goods from countries with seaports to land-lock countries. Cross border security would have to be enhanced by the concerned public agencies in all countries in the CFTA. The consumers, which include households, workers, youths, old people, students, children and business, expect availability of goods at affordable prices at the right place and time. The low income level of an average African due to high poverty level may negatively impact on consumption level in the CFTA era. But this negative effect may be doused by the positive welfare effects of the CFTA.

### **3.2.2. Engagement of Educated Adults in SMEs and Their Awareness of CFTA in a Sub-urban Area of Lagos**

From Table 1, 54.84% of the respondents engage in or have at least a SME business while 45.16% do not operate any SMEs. The types of SMEs that the former engage in are shown in Table 2. Majority, 41.18%, of the 34 respondents that are into SMEs operate agricultural related enterprises, 17.65% in are wholesale and retail trade, 5.88% run transport business while 2.94%, 2.94, 5.88% and 11.77% have hospitality, communication, real estate and education businesses respectively. This result corroborate (NBS and SMEDAN, 2010) that reported higher number of owners and employees in agriculture, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade but lower for hospitality business, transport, storage, communication and health sector. The result

indicates the economic structure of the SMEs in a typical Nigerian and by extension, African locality. Storage and processing business lags behind other businesses in Nigeria and Africa; a reason why most agricultural products get spoilt and farmers often sell cheap in order not to lose entirely since there is no ready market for agricultural products. For the CFTA to boom, agricultural and allied industries must be revamped through both public and private sector initiatives and participation to take advantage of regional value chain (UNCRAD, 2016a).

### **3.2.3. Formal Education and Awareness of the African CFTA by Respondents**

Due to the significance of the CFTA for Africa socio-economic development and the various news reports on it, the paper examined its awareness level among the selected segment of adults in Ikorodu, a sub-urban area of Lagos. As shown in Table 3, the minimum educational qualification of the respondents is Senior Secondary School Certificate constituting 3.23% and none of them was aware of the CFTA. Irrespective of educational level of respondents, 32.26% were aware of the African CFTA while 67.74% were not aware of it; this group got to know about it through the administration of the survey questionnaire and interview. In the least, the survey had made some Africans in Nigeria to have the knowledge of the continents' FTA. From the 4, 24, 27, and 5 respondents with National Diploma or National Certificate of Education, Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate degrees, 3.23, 8.06, 16.13 and 4.84 per cents were aware while 3.23, 30.65, 27.42 and 3.23 per cents were not aware of the CFTA respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents were not aware of the CFTA.

Also, 50% of the 20 respondents that were aware of the ACFTA, operate SMEs. This implies that, it is most likely with national survey, that only a minor segment of the SMEs operators have the knowledge of the CFTA which is not good for the economic initiative. Nigeria being the most populous black nation and the centre of ECOWAS operation should have a large proportion of its citizens, especially those in SMEs, in the know of the CFTA. The respondent that were aware of the CFTA pointed out that it will boost income, generate more business and employment, boost migration within Africa and catalyze development.

### **3.3. Opportunities Offered by Africa CFTA for SMEs**

The free trade area upon taking off will present to business, a progressive period, in which the circumstances are right and good for business expansion and integration. The CFTA will offer to a business an era in which it can do and achieve business plans that penetrate larger market for profits. The SMEs proprietors can leverage on the CFTA, upon take off, to achieve business prosperity in the following specific areas.

- i. One benefit of CFTA is leading to increasing trade and consumer choice. SMEs that have business plans to introduce their products to foreign market can easily do so as goods are

freely moved within the continent. Business can develop and implement new business initiatives and products because large market is available that can easily be penetrated. This will boost the image, profit and shareholders wealth of the SMEs.

ii. The CFTA offers businesses no-barrier market access and single custom union and there is increased market size and share for goods. To take advantage of this, technology innovation of business will be facilitated and boosted among entrepreneurs to offer more goods and services at relatively reduced unit cost and a fixed cost spread over larger market area and customer base.

**Table 1.** Engagement of respondents in SMEs.

Feature	Frequency	Percentage
Operating an SME	34	54.84
Non-operating an SME	28	45.16
Total	62	100.00

Source: Computed from field survey data, 2017

**Table 2.** Sectors of respondents that operate SMEs.

Sector of operation	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture (Production & Processing)	14	41.18
Mining & Quarrying	1	2.94
Manufacturing (any product)	-	-
Construction	3	8.82
Wholesale and Retail Trade	6	17.65
Repair of Motor Vehicles and Household Goods	-	-
Hotel & Restaurants	1	2.94
Transport	2	5.88
Storage	-	-
Communications	1	2.94
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	2	5.88
Education	4	11.77
Health and Social Work	-	-
Other Community, Social and Personal Service Activities	-	-
Total	34	100.00

Source: Computed from field survey data, 2017.

**Table 3.** Formal educational level of and awareness of the CFTA by respondents.

Highest Level of Education of respondents	Aware of African CFTA Frequency (%)	Not Aware of African CFTA Frequency (%)	Total (%)
Senior Secondary School Certificate	0 (0.00)	2 (3.23)	2(3.23)
National Diploma/National Certificate of Education	2 (3.23)	2 (3.23)	4 (6.45)
Bachelor's Degree	5 (8.06)	19 (30.65)	24 (38.71)
Master's Degree	10 (16.13)	17 (27.42)	27 (43.55)
Doctorate Degree	3 (4.84)	2 (3.23)	5 (8.07)
Total	20 (32.26)	42 (67.74)	62(100.00)

Source: Computed from field survey data, 2017.

iii. SMEs within a REC can partner in forming cross-border production chain by leveraging on their respective comparative advantage to produce goods and sell finished product outside their REC within the CFTA (EBRD, 2012). Since the SMEs within the REC are closer, one will produce a particular unfinished good for another SME to finish for the targeted market. The SME in each country within the REC produces each stage of the goods for which it has low opportunity cost of resource(s). This has been described as regional or global value chain by UNCTAD (2016a) in which two or more countries take part in a production network.

iv. The SMEs upon exporting successfully within the CFTA can leverage on the achievement and sell to the market outside Africa. Expansion of exports can be achieved by the SMEs that would have acquired capacity to do so over time in the continent with competitive advantage to export to any other continents.

v. SMEs get introduced to strategies of adjusting to different business climates with cultures, customs, social and religion values that are very often different from their base country. Entrepreneurs can adjust to the new environment, cautiously import acceptable foreign environmental values to their country of origin and introduce their country values to the foreign markets within the CFTA that will be acceptable there if such adds to business bottom line.

vi. Though the services market is subjected to more

regulations and protection than the goods market in many countries, the SMEs in the sector will have the chance of taking their businesses to other countries as the CFTA leads to liberalization of service markets.

### 3.4. Challenges for SMEs with Respect to the Africa CFTA

i. Necessity to develop flexible multiple supply chains, with each targeted at meeting the needs of specific markets backed by capacities, capabilities and talents developed and acquired locally or from foreign land: The CFTA is an enlarged market to be served by SMEs and big companies. The business will be required to have supply resources that meet its target customer at the right time, place quality, quantity and competitive price. To achieve this, the business may apply the use of local partners outside its base country as authorized dealer of its goods, direct sales which is possible upon successful penetration and establishment of presence in the cross-border market, overtime establish operational base for production, transportation and logistics in the foreign market and establish multiple foreign operational outfits in many countries (Kim and Wright, 2013) within the CFTA. These four approaches can equally be the stages through which a financially successful business can pass through periodically in the free trade area.

ii. The SMEs that will serve the CFTA will, over time,

shift from relying more on local partners and supply chain relationships. At the outset, local partners will be the best for businesses. But with time, for successful businesses to succeed more and meet customers' needs, they will be required to have operational facilities in place for production and distribution of goods and services in the foreign market within the CFTA.

iii. The SMEs will have to step up enterprise management technologies that are usually limitedly apply in Africa. Technology is a dynamic feature of business that changes with time. Every stage of management has specific technologies and the use of technology, though improves efficiency and profitability, can be expensive. SMEs in the CFTA era will be forced to adopt the application of ICT for supervision, a management function, which enlarges the span of control across border. Without the application of technologies, supervising, coordinating, communicating and controlling of production facilities and supply chains that are spread across many countries will be very difficult and meeting targets will be less than realistic.

iv. Owners of business will exact more pressure on the managers to meet new and higher financial targets in taking advantage of the CFTA. With the knowledge and awareness of CFTA as expanded market for business, owners of businesses will bring pressure to bear on their employees to take and sell products across the borders for more profits, enhancement of shareholders wealth and goodwill of governments and people of the continent who will see the business as partner in the progress of the CFTA. This definitely will be expected as businesses try to outsmart each other in the cross-border trade.

v. There will be need for businesses to develop multiple and alternative strategies and approaches to expand rather than one-size-fits-all approach. A local business may be getting it right with a single strategy but going cross-border will definitely require changing strategies to meet the foreign market demands and cope with competition. The SMEs, to cope in the CFTA, would have to be ready to evolve business alternative strategies for expansion across the border.

vi. It will be required of business to develop operational capacities backed by smart technology to serve and support cross-border operations. Business across the border demands that the entrepreneur have financial and human capacities to serve the expanded market. For cross-border supply chain network to be efficient and effective, financial investment must be done on transportation and storage facilities with staff that have the know-how of managing and monitoring goods in transit and at various destination points and sales channels. For effectiveness and time saving, monitoring can be done electronically through the internet and ICT.

vii. Sourcing for human resources with the qualities required for cross border trade which include talent, global mindset and cross-cultural communications in terms of language (Goh and Sullivan, 2010): Africa is multi lingua in nature. Each country has a number of local languages and general official language ranging from French to English and in some cases Portuguese. There are also cross-border

cultural differences in terms of social values and customs. A business that must succeed in the CFTA would have to engage human resources that have the physical, psychological and cultural qualities that fit appropriately in the foreign market. For instance, a Nigerian business that is selling across the Lagos-Abidjan Corridor must have staff that understand and can speak both English and French.

viii. Necessity to adopt flexible and responsive global best practices where and when possible regardless of world standardization and established efficiency. African locally manufactured products are to be sold in the CFTA instead of products imported from other continents. Businesses must be done in line with acceptable fluid global standards on quality, packaging and delivery otherwise African consumers that have been used to imported goods from the western world and Asian tigers would not patronized the African goods and cross-border trade of African goods within the continent will not be achieved significantly. This is necessary because the continent controls a relatively small fragment of global output and only 3.2% of world's export (UNCTAD, 2016c).

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The CFTA is a good initiative of the African Union billed to take off in the last quarter of 2017 upon completion of tripartite negotiations and agreements. Businesses like the SMEs will have opportunity to expand and consumers will have more choice of goods and service. Presently indigenous big businesses have established presence in multiple African countries. CFTA will provide an era in which SMEs will have windows of doing more business within Africa as they serve as pillar for growing productive capacities and offer subcontracting services and linkages between enterprises. Due to increased market size, competition among businesses will be boosted at both industrial and enterprise levels as business take advantage of opportunities for scale production, continental free market access and more efficient reallocation of resources. The CFTA brings other opportunities and challenges to the SMEs. As business will have the chance of spreading to other countries, they will have to contend with the huge financial and human capacities requirements to operate cross-border. The load of evolving alternative and dynamic business strategies to enter and establish in the foreign markets will be there for entrepreneurs to carry. For SMEs to play significant roles in the CFTA, the paper recommends that SMEs should step up local sourcing of raw materials to reduce cost, importation time and overcome the current problem of the difficulty in obtaining foreign exchange for importation of material inputs. Also, the SMEs should be ready to adopt local and/or technology improvements to produce and support the larger volume of goods that will be demanded in the CFTA at lesser unit cost which will be higher with manual labor for which they are known for. Improved and smart technology is equally required for vertical integration in the value chain of the products for the CFTA and to make the goods competitive against imported goods on which Africans depends. SMEs

should improve on their loan capital worthiness, in terms of better operational and financial records, which may be required for expansion. Governments in the CFTA should increase the quality and quantity of cross-border business infrastructure to facilitate production, distribution, sales, research and development of goods and services. The AU should step up campaign jingles in a various local media in all member countries to create awareness for the CFTA among Africans and consider factors that can lead to the exit of a member from the single market arrangement like the 'Brexit' and guide against them in the on-going negotiations and agreements. Nigeria and other African countries should encourage the creation of processing and storage facilities for agricultural products for SMEs to fully participate and benefit from the CFTA and for the CFTA to impact positively on Africans.

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