



## Transforming African Fashion to Transform Africa The African Union and the AfroChampions Initiative place African Fashion Value Chain on top of Policy Agenda

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - February 11, 2019** - The Pan-African Fashion Initiative (PAFI) was officially launched today in Addis-Ababa, on the sidelines of the African Union's Heads of State Summit, under the aegis of the African Union, and with the collaboration of the AfroChampions Initiative. African Heads of State, First ladies, national experts, cotton producers, textile, cosmetics or accessories manufacturers, designers and creators: many people responded to the call of the African Union, whose trade experts now want to define with all the actors involved a long-term roadmap to support of African fashion.

Indeed, if fully developed - from the production of raw materials to textiles and accessories - the fashion industry would offer the African continent a net gain in prosperity of 25%. The number one priority to achieve this goal is to help the actors in this industry to move upmarket. Training, certification of inputs and products, quality and traceability, investments in infrastructure, systematization of copyrights on processes, protection of traditional knowledge, appellation of origins and emerging industrial clusters: many ideas and recommendations are already on the table after the first exchanges.

*"In order to progress, the African fashion industry needs to be structured,"* said His Excellency Amb. Albert Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and Industry of the African Union. *"And by moving the fashion industry forward, we will be able to move forward on many other strategic projects for our continent, such as industrial parks, the Pan-African payment system, transport corridors, improved procedures for customs clearance and goods tracking. With the PAFI Initiative, we have a wonderful opportunity to boost intra-African trade - in raw materials as well as in finished products -, thereby demonstrating how the African Continental Free Trade Area can positively transform the daily lives of African fashion operators "*, he emphasized.

Co-chair of the Executive Committee of the AfroChampions Initiative, Mr. Edem Adzogenu stressed how *"African designs and designs increasingly inspire the greatest international fashion houses"*. According to him, *"it is time to transform this cultural influence into an instrument of growth for the benefit of Africa and its youth. We must support our talents, throughout the value chain, give them the means to deploy their creativity and their know-how, help them to expand their market both outside and inside the continent. It is a challenge that we will be happy to address, working with the African Union and all the partners who have expressed interest in this project"*.

*"If we fully develop the fashion value chain it will result in a 25% increase in welfare across Africa. Exports could triple in less than a decade. African fashion is an incredible opportunity to create a growth driver globally!"*, highlighted Dr Frannie Léautier, Chief Operating Officer at the Trade and Development Bank, a key party associated to the project. *"Let's change African mindsets and transform whole value chains from 'fertilizer to fashion' and 'fashion to finance'"*, she added.

Parties interested in the PAFI initiative to date include the International organization of La Francophonie (OIF), renowned financial institutions, such as the Trade and Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the Africa50 Fund, and Afreximbank, as well as several private operators, including the Office Chérifien des Phosphates, the Egyptian group Cleopatra, AeTrade or the African Fashion Federation. All will meet again in July 2019 for the General Assembly of the African Union where the African Fashion roadmap should be presented.

### **About the African Union Commission and its Department for Trade and Industry**

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is one of the portfolios of the African Union Commission that contributes to make Africa a more integrated trading bloc and a significant and competitive trading partner in the global economy. The objectives of the Department are to:

- Establish and assist the functioning of free trade area in the Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
- Prepare the best conditions of dialogue and informed decision making by the AU RECs, Member States and other key stakeholders;
- Contribute to the establishment of an African Common Market and promote inter and Intra-African Trade;
- Expand Africa's market share in international trade;
- Initiate and promote measures that can promote the structural transformation of African economics through a self-sustained industrialization process;
- Promote common industrial policies and Monitor, Review, Coordinate, Evaluate and Report on RECs and Member States commitments to implement the Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) Action Plan and establish the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) ;
- Harmonize industrial policies within and between RECs and monitor the implementation of AU decisions by RECs, Member States and Strategic Partners.

**Website:** [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) - **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanUnionCommission> - **Twitter:** [https://twitter.com/\\_AfricanUnion](https://twitter.com/_AfricanUnion) - **YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/AUCommission>

### **About the AfroChampions Initiative**

The AfroChampions Initiative is a public-private partnership designed to galvanize African resources and institutions to drive further Africa's economic integration; as a consequence, the Initiative supports the emergence and success of African corporate champions, which have a critical role in integrating African markets and accelerating the transformation of the continent. The Initiative was founded by the advisory firm Konfidants; and is Co-Chaired by President Thabo Mbeki and Mr. Aliko Dangote, President and CEO of Dangote Group. The Initiative is headquartered in Accra, Ghana, and works with regional and global partners and governments, with the support of other corporate and institutional partners including ADS Group, the Djondo Fellowship, Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library and Thabo Mbeki Foundation. As a strategic platform within the Initiative, the AfroChampions Club, chaired by Mr Aliko Dangote, seeks to work with African governments to support policies and public-sector innovations that drive African economic integration, regional economic clusters and value chains.

**Website:** [www.afrochampions.com](http://www.afrochampions.com)

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