



**THE AMERICAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE SOUTH AFRICA**

AmCham Trade and Investment Forum Report

Date: 16 April 2024

Venue: Welwitchia Auditorium

Sponsored by: RMB

The AmCham Trade and Investment Forum convened on 16 April 2024 at the Welwitchia Auditorium, a gathering proudly sponsored by RMB, a distinguished member of the Chamber. The event attracted over 37 esteemed members from various sectors of the business community. The primary focus of the forum was to explore the complexities of two significant trade agreements: the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). The discussions aimed to uncover the interconnections between these agreements, while also shedding light on the plethora of opportunities and challenges they present to businesses.

Speakers:

1. **Dr. Golden Mahove**, Technical Director for the USAID Africa Trade Initiative (ATI)
2. **Caroline Rheeder**, Associate Director at Deloitte and Chair of the AmCham Trade and Investment Forum
3. **Dr. Rutendo Hwindingwi**, CEO of Tribe Africa Advisory and Vice Chair of the AmCham Trade and Investment Forum (Moderator)

The forum commenced with a warm welcome from Dr. Rutendo Hwindingwi, who not only set the stage for the day's discussions but also introduced the esteemed panel of speakers. Caroline Rheeder, as the Chair of the forum, provided a comprehensive overview of the forum's objectives. These objectives encompassed serving as a platform for examining the pressing trade needs within the community, discussing matters of broad interest such as AGOA and AfCFTA, and actively engaging with governmental bodies and trade promotional agencies to advocate for the interests of the Chamber's members and the broader business community.

Discussion Highlights:

- Caroline Rheeder initiated the discussion by elucidating strategies for leveraging the AGOA and AfCFTA agreements. She emphasized the critical role of collaboration between the public and private sectors in addressing non-tariff barriers and maximizing the benefits of these agreements.
- Dr. Golden Mahove, in his capacity as the Technical Director for the USAID Africa Trade Initiative, provided valuable insights into AGOA's significance for the African continent. He underscored South Africa's pivotal role as the leading beneficiary of

AGOA and elucidated on the interconnectedness between AGOA and AfCFTA. Dr. Mahove also highlighted the potential opportunities for enhancing and expanding AGOA's impact, emphasizing the importance of raising awareness about these agreements among businesses.

- Attendees actively participated in a dynamic Q&A session, where topics ranging from the digital transformation of SMEs to the flow of information in the context of trade were discussed and debated.

Closing Remarks: Dr. Rutendo Hwindingwi concluded the forum by expressing sincere gratitude to the speakers, attendees, and the sponsor, RMB, for their invaluable contributions to the day's discussions. A heartfelt vote of thanks was extended to RMB, the speakers, and all participants for their active engagement and commitment to advancing trade and investment in the region. Following the formal proceedings, attendees were invited to partake in networking opportunities over a convivial lunch.

In summary, the AmCham Trade and Investment Forum provided a comprehensive platform for stakeholders to delve into the intricacies of AGOA and AfCFTA. It facilitated robust discussions, knowledge sharing, and networking, thereby fostering greater collaboration and understanding among participants. As businesses navigate the evolving landscape of international trade, forums such as these play a pivotal role in shaping informed strategies and driving collective growth and prosperity.