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Data Requirements for the Monitoring of the Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

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Background

- The African countries developed the regional long-term pan-African vision of Agenda 2063
- The Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years.
- It builds on, and seeks to accelerate the implementation of past and existing continental initiatives for growth and sustainable development.
- The Agenda 2063 envisions an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.
- Among others, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063.

About AfCFTA

- Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.394 (XVIII) to establish a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) and to endorse the Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) Action Plan was adopted on January 18, 2012.
- The Agreement establishing the AfCFTA was signed at the 10th Extraordinary Summit of AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Kigali, Rwanda on 21st March, 2018.
- AfCFTA is African's most ambitious integration initiative that seeks to create a single continental market for goods and services, promote intra-African trade across the RECs and support economic transformation of Africa in general.

Status of intra-African trade

- The status of intra-African trade is generally lower compared to the rest of the world
- The lack of up-to-date and reliable trade data and statistics has been recognized as one of the contributing factors to the low levels of official intra-African trade.
- Official intra-African trade was estimated at around 14% for imports and 18% for exports in 2017.
- Africa's share in global trade is still being recorded at as low as 3%.
- Between 2010 and 2016, Africa's share on world imports remained within the range (3.09%-3.36%) while exports were in the range (2.10%-3.46%)

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Trade Data and Monitoring AfCFTA

- It has now become common knowledge that data is the new oil to fuel any development agenda
- Lack of trade data is in itself a trade barrier
- The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process and impact of AfCFTA is critical for tracking progress
- Reliable and up-to-date data is key
- Consideration should be given to provide disaggregated trade data that is also comparable
- The market atmosphere of various products should also be made available for private sector players to make informed investment decisions
- Additionally, data on logistical and administrative requirements in various countries for trade should be made available