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THE INSIGHT



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**US-Africa Trade
Forum Signals a
Shift Towards
Practical, Private
Sector-Led
Economic
Engagement**



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our regional newsletter, a platform dedicated to highlighting the evolving trade and investment landscape between the United States and Africa.

The U.S.-Africa Trade Commission, a nonprofit business organization, is actively working across the continent to strengthen commercial ties, promote tourism, and drive sustainable investment. Present in countries such as Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Egypt, The Gambia, Cameroon, Kenya, Angola, Senegal, Ethiopia, DRC, Botswana, Ghana, Zambia, and Côte d'Ivoire, the Commission is focused on bridging the information gap and facilitating meaningful engagement between the private sector and key stakeholders.

With innovation, technology sharing, and proactive advocacy at the heart of our mission, we are committed to fostering an environment where businesses thrive through collaboration, reciprocity, and informed policy frameworks. This newsletter captures the latest regional and global developments, showcases successful investment summits, and reflects our vision of being a vital link between Africa and international markets.

We look forward to keeping you informed through regular editions, as we continue championing a bold, inclusive, and forward-looking U.S.-Africa trade partnership.

US-Africa Trade Forum Signals a Shift Towards Practical, Private Sector-Led Economic Engagement



The US-Africa Trade Engagement Forum held in Harare on 10 April 2025 was not just another ceremonial gathering of businesspeople and diplomats; it marked a critical turning point in how Zimbabwe and Africa at large may begin to reshape their trade and investment relationships with the United States. While the event offered rich presentations, the deeper significance lies in the underlying shift of tone, from rhetoric to action, from government dependency to private sector initiative, and from theoretical trade frameworks to pragmatic opportunities.

The forum, hosted by the US-Africa Trade Commission, gathered a diverse and strategic blend of key stakeholders: diplomats, trade experts, financial institutions, investment agencies, and entrepreneurs. This mix sent a powerful message that successful trade relations require more than just state-to-state dialogue; they demand grassroots enterprise, technical expertise, and the active involvement of development finance institutions. Dr Davison. T Gomo, Chairman of the US-Africa Trade Commission, firmly established this tone in his address, calling for an end to over-reliance on government directives and encouraging the private sector to initiate policy dialogues grounded in real business challenges.

What stood out from the discussions was a recurring theme: Africa, and Zimbabwe in particular, must shift from being passive recipients of aid and trade preferences to becoming intentional, informed participants in the global trade ecosystem. Kudzai Magwenzi Zimtrade statistics officer, reinforced this reality with sobering statistics, Zimbabwe's exports to the U.S. fell by nearly 50% between 2023 and 2024, from \$120 million to just under \$70 million, due largely to production constraints. These numbers highlight a deeper issue: while access to international markets exists, local industries continue to grapple with underproduction, inefficiency, and lack of market readiness. Her call for a renewed focus on export-led growth and sustainability was not just timely but essential.

Equally striking was the contribution from Afreximbank, whose representative Dr V Mashoko showcased the bank's robust financial muscle and continental reach. Having disbursed over \$10 billion across Africa in strategic sectors like mining, transport, and agriculture, Afreximbank's role is clearly expanding from being a financial backer to becoming a development partner.

Its Africa Trade Centre project, currently under construction in Harare, illustrates this point. The green-certified development, featuring a hotel, conference centre, and office complex, is not just a property venture, it is a symbol of modern, sustainable Africa rising within Zimbabwe.

On the diplomatic front, the U.S. Ambassador, Pamela Tremont's remarks struck a balance between encouragement and realism. She highlighted America's long-standing investment in Zimbabwe and the recent reduction in U.S. tariffs under President Trump's administration.

However, her comments on corruption and the importance of ethical governance served as a gentle but pointed reminder that investment cannot thrive in murky waters. It was also telling that she called for more Zimbabwean trade delegations to explore opportunities in the U.S., signaling Washington's willingness to engage, but on the premise of proactive effort from African players.

Rwanda's contribution to the forum, delivered by Mr V Karangwa, offered a compelling case study. Emerging from genocide just three decades ago, Rwanda's rapid economic transformation is now benchmarked by many African countries. Karangwa's emphasis on automation, digital government systems, and anti-corruption reforms served as a model that Zimbabwe, and indeed the rest of Africa, might draw inspiration from. His presentation was not just tale of success; it was a challenge to embrace modernity, efficiency, and smart governance.

The forum was not short on visionaries either. Presentations by entrepreneurs like Wallace Zinyawu from Integrated Properties, and Mr A Kamhunga of Fairview Properties, showcased how private actors are already stepping in to drive economic transformation through construction, real estate, and outsourced services. Their enthusiasm underscored a quiet but powerful shift in Zimbabwe's investment climate, one being built on infrastructure, technology, and regional integration, rather than political promises alone.

Additional contributions from key Zimbabwean stakeholders also underscored the country's appetite for meaningful reform and private-sector driven growth. Mr Tapindwa Chipunza from ZIDA (accompanied by Judith Mbetu) shared that their organisation's mandate is to facilitate investment in the country by consolidating opportunities and taking them to the market. "We have worked with the US Ambassador who even comes to our offices a number of times," he noted. "We are trying to benchmark how others have done it, for example Rwanda.

We have been working on how best we can optimise the investment journey as mandated by the government."

The Chief Operating Officer at Omni Contact, Mr Otis Makahamadze, a business process outsourcing company, also highlighted Zimbabwe's human capital potential. "We export talent we have in Zimbabwe to get a mutual win-win for our country and the rest of the world," he said, adding that they have previously engaged with the US Ambassador.

Mr A Kamhunga of Fair View Properties spoke with optimism, stating, "I'm excited to see developments in the country. There are currently projects worth approximately \$3 billion in Zimbabwe. Our company provides infrastructure development. We are not replicating what we did in the past but are trying to do better."

As the event wrapped up with appreciation tokens and light refreshments, the mood in the room was clear. This was not a forum for ticking diplomatic boxes or issuing lofty declarations. It was an arena for forging real partnerships, asking tough questions, and challenging outdated approaches. In this sense, the 2025 US-Africa Trade Engagement Forum may be remembered not just for its content, but for its tone, practical, grounded, and forward-looking. Ultimately, the forum served as both a mirror and a map. It reflected where Zimbabwe stands today, rich in potential, but constrained by systemic inefficiencies. And it provided a possible roadmap: a future shaped by informed trade policies, regional collaboration, business-friendly environments, and a decisive shift toward value-added production. The question now is whether stakeholders, especially in Zimbabwe, will seize this momentum and convert it into tangible economic gains.

Because if the message of the forum is anything to go by, the time for talk is over.
Africa must trade smart, and act now.

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USA and Africa

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- B2B meetings
- Investment Summit
- Industry tours
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Bridging Continents: US-Africa Trade Outlook Brightens as Ethiopian Airlines and US-Africa Trade Commission Sign Strategic MOU

IN A MAJOR stride towards strengthening commercial and economic ties between the United States and Africa, Ethiopian Airlines and the US-Africa Trade Commission have signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) set to redefine trade dynamics between the two regions.

This agreement is more than a formality, it marks a strategic pivot with far-reaching implications across the trade and investment landscape. At a time when global markets are seeking new trade corridors and resilient supply chains, this partnership introduces a bold and timely solution.

US businesses will now benefit from greater access to African markets, facilitated by competitive air cargo and passenger rates offered through Ethiopian Airlines, Africa's most connected carrier. The airline's logistical expertise, extensive route network, and consistent performance create a solid backbone for transcontinental commerce. On the African side, exporters, particularly small and medium enterprises, are expected to enjoy reduced costs and improved delivery timelines, boosting their competitiveness in the global arena.

With logistics challenges often cited as a key barrier to trade on the continent, this agreement is poised to significantly lower those hurdles, enabling a smoother and more reliable movement of goods and services. Moreover, the MOU is anticipated to catalyze a wave of investments from US-based firms, opening avenues in manufacturing, infrastructure, agribusiness, and other critical sectors. With more predictable logistics and improved access to markets, the confidence to invest in Africa is set to grow, complementing the continent's aspirations for economic transformation and job creation. Equally important is the potential for meaningful collaboration through joint ventures, knowledge exchange, and innovation-driven partnerships.

As both regions seek to position themselves within a changing global economy, this agreement offers a shared platform for long-term cooperation and growth. The partnership also carries significant weight in supporting Africa's broader development goals, including the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), with Ethiopian Airlines playing a central role in promoting intra-African trade and integration. Tourism, often described as a sleeping giant in Africa, is another area set to benefit.

Leveraging the airline's global connectivity and marketing strength, the partnership aims to boost tourism flows from the United States, showcasing Africa's cultural richness, heritage sites,

Leveraging the airline's global connectivity and marketing strength, the partnership aims to boost tourism flows from the United States, showcasing Africa's cultural richness, heritage sites, and natural beauty. This not only supports local economies but also strengthens cultural diplomacy and people-to-people exchange.



AFREXIMBANK'S iconic US\$80 million trade centre is fast taking shape as it rises stoically out of a patch of Zimbabwe's indigenous munhondo woodland in central Harare's avenues area, cementing its green building status and redefining Harare's city architecture.

Set to boost economic growth and development, the Harare Afreximbank Africa Trade Centre (HAATC) is expected to have a significant impact on Zimbabwe's economy by creating new opportunities for businesses, investors, and stakeholders.

To be managed by leading real estate consultancy firm, Integrated Properties (IntPro), the soon to be commissioned HAATC is an iconic mixed-use business facility in the heart of Harare city, spanning 31 256 m² and offering grade "A" commercial office space, a world-class hotel, conference and exhibition centre. The HAATC shall offer integrated trade facilitation, information, and finance services.

IntPro will be responsible for this massive facility's operation and maintenance, which will include proactive, preventive and corrective maintenance of the modern building's mechanical, electrical and plumbing infrastructure, among other services such as soft and janitorial services – including housekeeping, facade and general cleaning, pest control, waste management, landscape maintenance, catering service and general services.

The HAATC, a Green Building with a focus on sustainability, was designed and is being constructed with sustainability in mind, incorporating green building technology and practices.

The iconic centre, a giant symbol of Zimbabwe's commitment to environmental stewardship, is set to boost Zimbabwe's economy, creating new opportunities for businesses, investors, and stakeholders. The centre will enhance the country's trade and financial services sector, contributing to economic growth and development.



For more information on office space to lease at the HAATC, contact Integrated Properties on infor@intpro.co.zw or call or whatsapp +263778765564



Could President Trump's Tariffs Be the Catalyst for Africa's Trade Repositioning?

President Donald Trump's introduction of a 10% baseline tariff on all imports—along with even steeper tariffs targeting major economies, has triggered tremors across the global trade system. But could this aggressive shift in U.S. trade policy serve as a rare opening for African economies, particularly those in Eastern and Southern Africa, to recalibrate their global trade engagement?

As larger economies turn inward and recalibrate their alliances, is Africa ready to speak with one voice, strengthen its value chains, and offer stability in a volatile trade environment? Perhaps the question is not whether this opportunity exists, but whether the region will recognise it on time.

Although Africa is not a direct target of these measures, the continent finds itself affected by the broader consequences: rerouted supply chains, unsettled markets, and shifting investor priorities. In the wake of this disruption, does an opportunity not emerge for Africa to step forward—not as a passive observer, but as a deliberate alternative?

Could this be the right moment for African governments to accelerate economic reforms, promote local manufacturing, and attract new investments as firms seek tariff-free production zones? Shouldn't this be the time to double down on regional integration efforts under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and create a unified, competitive internal market?

Investors avoiding high-tariff regions may soon look to Africa's young workforce, abundant resources, and improving infrastructure. But are African nations prepared to position themselves as credible destinations for such redirected capital flows? Is there enough urgency to improve trade facilitation, policy coherence, and investment climate competitiveness?

You are Invited!

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Theme: "Unlocking Zimbabwe's Future: Investing in Growth and Development"

Date: 16 – 17 July 2025

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ZIMBABWE INVESTMENT FORUM



**THEME: "UNLOCKING ZIMBABWE'S FUTURE:
INVESTING IN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT"**

Venue: Golden Conifer
DATE: 16 – 17 July 2025

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS
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High-level networking
Expert insights
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Ndola Chamber Seals Strategic Trade Pact with U.S.-Africa Trade Commission, Opening New Chapter in Regional Economic Diplomacy

In a significant move to broaden international economic engagement and unlock new avenues for trade and investment, the Ndola & District Chamber of Commerce and Industry has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S.-Africa Trade Commission. This milestone partnership signals a new chapter in regional economic diplomacy, positioning Ndola as a gateway for enhanced commercial collaboration between African enterprises and the United States.

The U.S.-Africa Trade Commission is recognized for its pivotal role in fostering cross-continental business networks. By organizing trade summits, expos, and delegations, the Commission facilitates meaningful dialogue and exploration of emerging market opportunities. Through this collaboration, the Ndola Chamber aims to leverage this global platform to connect its business community with American investors, entrepreneurs, and development-focused partners.

The MOU outlines a framework grounded in shared economic goals—promoting trade, tourism, and investment while encouraging corporate governance and responsible business practices. At its core, the partnership supports advocacy for good corporate governance, fosters public-private partnerships in project development, and creates a business resource base to identify and pursue investment opportunities within Africa. Furthermore, it enables Zambian businesses to participate in high-level international trade exhibitions and collaborative forums hosted alongside global partners. By aligning with the U.S.-Africa Trade Commission, the Chamber also ensures its members gain access to a strategic network of business delegations, enabling them to share experiences, build partnerships, and explore new markets with confidence.

The Ndola & District Chamber of Commerce and Industry has extended heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Nkumbula for his visionary leadership in actualizing this partnership and to the entire team at the U.S.-Africa Trade Commission for their commitment and readiness to foster impactful collaborations. This MOU represents more than just a formal agreement—it is a forward-facing commitment to unlocking shared prosperity, advancing trade diplomacy, and elevating African businesses onto the global stage.

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For more information, partnership inquiries, or to explore upcoming trade opportunities, please contact the U.S.-Africa

Trade Commission: Website: www.usafricatrade.org Email:

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