



SLNBCC

Sierra Leone Netherlands Business & Culture Council

Sierra Leone Covid-19 Status, Oct 27, 2020

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|------------------------|
| Confirmed cases: 2,350 |
| Recovery: 1,790 |
| Death: 74 |

Source: <https://mohs.gov.sl/>

DEAR READERS,

As restrictions are being eased and businesses are gradually reopening, we are encouraging you and the entire membership of SLNBCC to please be cautious and follow all the appropriate procedures that will help prevent us from Covid-19.

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Africa's Continental Free Trade to Commence January 1st 2021



In 2012, the African Union's 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopted a decision to establish a Continental Free Trade Agreement. The suggested period for the commencement of the proposed idea was set for 2017. However, things did not materialize by the set date.

The occasion also saw the initiation of, Action Plan to Boost Intra-Africa Trade (BIAT). The framework identifies seven priorities areas and they include trade policy, trade facilitation, productive capacity, trade-related infrastructure, trade finance, trade information, and factor market integration.

In March 2018, the Agreement that Establishes the African Continental Free Trade Area was signed by African Union Heads of State in a meeting held in Kigali Rwanda. The implementation phase of the initiative was slated for the 1st of July 2020 but due to the covid-19, that process was put on hold.

According to the AU, the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) will create the largest free trade area in the world. As of now, 54 of the 55 countries in the continent have ratified the agreement with Eritria yet to be part of it. The pact will link 1.2 billion people with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) valued at US\$3 trillion.

The World Bank Group praised the agreement and cited the potential of the agreement to lift about 30 million people out of extreme poverty. With all its required policy reforms and trade facilitation measures in place, the established trading block is set to become bring lots of opportunities to the continent.

The commissioning of the trading block secretariats took place on the 17th of October in Accra Ghana. It was at that event the delayed commencement of free trading was set for the 1st of January 2021. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the current AU Commission chairperson stated that, while the operationalization of the Secretariat was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the same pandemic has also magnified the urgent need for speed to accelerate economic integration on the Continent.

Despite the devastating effects of COVID-19 on African economies, AfCFTA Secretary-General Wamkele Mene said an opportunity exists to establish robust supply and value chains for Africa as well as diversify the continent's productive capacity, particularly from the overreliance on the export of primary commodities. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) will create a single market for goods and services and a customs union with free movement of capital and business travellers.

Ghana's Minister for Trade and Industry Alan Kyerematen listed the benefits of a free trade area in Africa, including the increasing by up to 52% of intra-African trade by 2022, consolidating currently fragmented markets, economies of scale, value addition to Africa's natural resources and economic diversification.

He further mentions that the establishment of a Free Trade Area for Africa is the first major building block for the African Economic Community, after which, it is expected to transition into a Customs Union before reaching its ultimate goal. Africa's prosperity depends largely on intra-African trade therefore, increase in trade is the surest way to deepen regional integration in the continent.

By Kemurl Fofanah [SLNBCC]

A Dutch Guide for Starting a Business in Sierra Leone



The Sierra Leone Netherlands Business and Culture Council (SLNBCC) promotes trade and bilateral relations between Sierra Leone and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Aside from promoting trade and business, SLNBCC strives to create a fair, credible and reliable business interaction between individuals and companies of these two nations.

The sole purpose of this article is to inform future or current companies and individuals with interest in starting a business in Sierra Leone about the possible pitfalls. There have been some instances where individuals or companies were proved to be unauthentic, having a well-designed and structured internet presence but failing to have a credible offline presence after investigation.

When starting a business in Sierra Leone, it is best advised to seek information from the appropriate Embassy or Consulate. In addition to providing you with the relevant information, they could also connect you to their trusted network. This point cannot be emphasized enough when you reach out to the embassy or representative, you are letting them know from the beginning and thus, they could guide you better.

When you need information about investing in a particular sector in Sierra Leone or you need local partners, your case could be easily forwarded to SLNBCC. In a sense, you are creating a web of trust and it would be easier to hold people accountable if things go wrong. If you indecently contact a company without having the company verified, then you are putting yourselves at great risk. If the business goes well then you are safe, but if in turn it does not, then there comes the tussle. Stay on the safe side and contact the designated authorities.

Doing business in Sierra Leone is not like doing business in the Netherlands. The mistake you can make as a company is by shutting potential partners down because they do not have a website or the current website that they have is substandard. Technology in Sierra Leone is still at an infancy stage and businesses in this country can be fully operational without having a website. This is more so when a large percentage of their clientele are Sierra Leoneans. Even when they do have a website, it could also be a basic website and what you see there is not the end-all and be all of the company. The companies with professional websites are either international companies or they are seeking or already have international partners or clientele. The

downside of this though, is that a company could use their website as a bait to lure in foreign companies, and whatever is advertised on the website is a mere façade. The best advice in such a scenario is to have a company verified and this could only be done when you contact the embassy.

Always remember to do these three things:

- **Consult the Dutch Embassy, or in the case of Sierra Leone where there is no Embassy, contact the SLNBCC: they have your interest at heart**
- **Websites should not be used as the only yardstick to measure the authenticity of a company**
- **Thoroughly verify a company**

Memuna Bayoh (SLNBCC)

World Bank confirms an economic downturn in Sub-Saharan Africa



Driven by the economic fallout of the COVID-19 global pandemic, growth in Sub-Saharan Africa is predicted to fall to -3.3% in 2020, pushing the region into its first recession in 25 years, according to the latest regional economic analysis *Africa's Pulse: Charting the Road to Recovery*.

The pandemic could also drive up to 40 million people into extreme poverty in Africa in 2020, erasing at least five years of progress in fighting poverty.

With over a million reported COVID cases across the continent, the pandemic is still not under control in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some governments, notably Senegal and Mauritius, have acted rapidly to reduce the spread of infections; however successful containment measures come with a high economic cost, as has been seen across the globe.

Albert Zeufack, a Cameroonian national, is the World Bank's Africa Region Chief Economist.

"The road to recovery may be long, and it may be steep, but prioritizing policy actions and investments that address the challenge of creating more, better and inclusive jobs will pave the way for a faster, stronger and inclusive recovery for African countries".

Nigeria's real GDP contracted by 6.1% year-on-year in the second quarter of 2020—the worst result in more than a decade. South Africa, operating under severe containment measures, saw its real GDP contracted by 17.1% year-on-year in the second quarter of 2020. Angola, Sub-Saharan Africa's second-largest oil producer after Nigeria, saw its economy contract by 1.8% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2020.

The decline in growth has been stronger among metals exporters where real GDP is expected to contract by 6%, partly reflecting the large drop in output in South Africa. Among oil exporters, after expanding by 1.5% in 2019, real GDP is projected to fall by more than 4% in 2020, owing to contractions in Angola and Nigeria.

In contrast, for non-resource-intensive countries, the decline in growth in 2020 is expected to be moderate, on average. In several non-resource-intensive countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, and Kenya, growth is expected to slow substantially, but remain positive, owing to their more diversified economies.

Meanwhile, the tourism-dependent economies, especially those of Cabo Verde, Mauritius and Seychelles, experienced a sharp contraction as exceptionally weak international tourism severely impacted the service sector.

The substantial downturn in economic activity will cost the region at least \$115 million in output losses this year. Gross domestic product per capita growth is expected to contract by nearly 6.0%, in part caused by lower domestic consumption and investment brought on by containment measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Hafez Ghanem, World Bank Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa. “Although the pandemic is not over and the persistence and spread of the virus is uncertain, African governments have started putting in place policies and programs to support an inclusive and sustainable post-pandemic recovery. Countries are putting in place policies and programs that help create jobs and accelerate the economic transformation to reduce the economic impact of the pandemic now, and build the capabilities needed to ensure inclusive economic growth in the future.”

Several countries, including South Africa, Nigeria, and Ethiopia, have already begun implementing long-needed reforms in energy and telecommunications spurred by the current crisis, and 25% of African firms have accelerated the use of digital technology and increased investments in digital solutions.

By mid-September, 46 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa had put in place 166 social protection measures—with social assistance representing 84% of these measures. Social protection programs have proven to be a critical tool to mitigate the social impact of the pandemic.

“As COVID-19 continues to put substantial pressure on Western and Central African economies, it is important for policymakers to create the infrastructure necessary for rapid recovery,” said Ousmane Diagana, World Bank Vice President for Western and Central Africa. “Strong policies create the critical cornerstone for sustained, inclusive recovery and improved resilience to shocks.”

The World Bank Group, one of the largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries, is taking broad, fast action to help developing countries strengthen their pandemic response.

“We are supporting public health interventions, working to ensure the flow of critical supplies and equipment, and helping the private sector continue to operate and sustain jobs. We will be deploying up to \$160 billion in financial support over 15 months to help more than 100 countries protect the poor and vulnerable, support businesses, and bolster economic recovery. This includes \$50 billion of new IDA resources through grants and highly concessional loans,” says the World Bank.

Source: (<https://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Africas-Pulse-Vol-22-October-2020.pdf>)

Procurement Notices

Bid Summary: General Procurement Notice for Sierra Leone Threshold Program



Funded by: Millennium Challenge Account (MCA)

Bid deadline: 31 December 2020

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Bid Summary: General Request for Proposals for Conducting a Feasibility Assessment and Producing A Road Map For Developing A Social Registry

Funded by: United Nation (UN)

Bid deadline: 9 November 2020

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Bid Summary: Digitisation of Government Payments in the Mano River Union (DIGIGOV)

Funded by: African Development Bank (AfDB)

Bid deadline: 14 December 2020

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Bid Summary: Request for Proposal for Action Research - A Whole School Approach To Prevent School-Related Gender-Based Violence: Minimum Standards And Monitoring Framework In Sierra Leone

Funded by: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Bid deadline: 5 November 2020

For full/more procurement's notices, visit:

<https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice>

<https://www.nppa.gov.sl/>

<https://www.sl.undp.org/content/sierraleone/en/home/procurement.htm>

<https://www.biddetail.com/global-tenders/sierra-leone-tenders>

How to Protect Yourself from covid-19

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. Please consult with your health care provider about additional steps you may be able to take to protect yourself.



Clean your hands often



Cover Coughs and Sneezes

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Avoid close contact



Stay home if you're sick

- **Stay home** if you are sick, and only go out when you need to get medical care.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick
- Put **distance between yourself and other people** if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.



and disinfect

Wear a facemask if you are sick



Clean

- **If you are sick:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room.
- **If you are NOT sick:** You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

SOURCES:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/.html>
2. http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/misinformation_related_to_the_2019_coronavirus_pandemic



COLOFON

Credits

This newsletter is written and edited by Kemurl Fofanah for the SLNBCC. All articles are written by SLNBCC staff, or shared from news sources with correct references.

Feedback

Do you have any comments, suggestions or remarks on this newsletter? Feel free to contact us at any time. Please send an email to memunabayoh@gmail.com or binta@gnbcc.net. Also, we are looking for more press releases from our members. If you have anything you would like to share with our extensive network, our monthly newsletter provides the perfect platform to do so.

Membership

If you are interested in becoming an SLNBCC Member, please contact Binta Jalloh directly through binta@gnbcc.net or by calling **+232(0)78381007**.

www.slnbcc.com

www.facebook.com/slnbcc

Thank you for reading our newsletter, the SLNBCC team: Binta Jalloh, Kemurl Fofanah, and Memuna Bayoh

