**Re-globalization: Better Trade for a Better World 10th – 12th September 2024**

*Digitilisation as a catalyst for inclusive trade*

**Deadline for submission: 14 June 2024**

1. **Full title of the session (in case proposal is selected, the title will be reflected in the printed and online versions of the programme)**

Africa is digital: how to ensure inclusive digital trade within the AfCFTA ?

1. **To which subtheme if your session most closely related?**

Digitalisation as a catalyst for inclusive trade in Africa

1. **Explain how your session related to the theme of this year’s Public Forum and provide a brief description of the session, including the objective(s) and relevant questions that will be addressed (max 200 words).**

The panel will examine the potential benefits of digitalization and e-commerce in enhancing market access and participation in trade for all relevant stakeholders, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises led and/or owned by marginalized populations, such as women and youth, within the context of the AfCFTA and its Protocol on Digital Trade. It will explore strategies for leveraging existing frameworks to address trade barriers and enhance inclusiveness through digitalization, and the importance of international collaboration in supporting the implementation of the AfCFTA and the Protocol.

Additionally, the session will highlight the relevance of human rights norms including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) as a framework to ensure businesses respect human rights in the digital sphere. Moreover, the role of other important initiatives will be highlighted, such as the World Trade Organization’s moratorium on the imposition of customs duties on e-commerce and its impact on developing countries.

Panellists will discuss key provisions of the Protocol that would support the expansion of inclusive digital trade in Africa, the main challenges that need to be addressed and opportunities in implementing an inclusive AfCFTA.

1. **Provide an abstract of your session (if selected, this abstract will be part of the public programme) (max 150 words).**

The Digital Trade Protocol under the AfCFTA was adopted in February 2024. It is a significant milestone for the governance of digital trade on the continent. This panel will explore the ways in which this Protocol encourages digitalization in trade and promotes a more inclusive and rights-based sustainable development. The panel will also discuss the application of the human rights norms including the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) to digital trade, emphasizing the protection of privacy and the inclusion of underrepresented stakeholders. Experts will offer insights on how digitalization can help overcome trade barriers, showcase successful digital trade initiatives and strategies for enhancing cooperation in support of an inclusive implementation of the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol. The discussion aims to highlight the potential of these frameworks to unlock new opportunities and advance sustainable development in Africa.

1. **Indicate the primary language that your session will be conducted in** 
   1. English
2. **Identify potential panellists for your session. Note that we will not accept more than 5 speakers (including the moderator), and that all speakers must be present in the room during the session.**
3. First name: Yvonne
4. Last name: Bartmann (Moderator)
5. Job title: Senior Programme Officer, Trade and Development
6. Organization: Friederich Eebrt Stiftung (FES)
7. Type of entity: Foundation
8. Country/territory: Germany
9. First name: Martine
10. Last name: Julsaint Kidane
11. Job title: Economic Affairs Officer, Capacity Building Section: UNCTAD
12. Type of entity: UN
13. Country/territory: Switzerland
14. First name: H.E. Kadra
15. Last name: Ahmed Hassan
16. Job title: Permanent Representative to the UN and WTO of Djibouti
17. Organization: Government of Djibouti
18. Type of entity: Government
19. Country/territory: Djibouti  
    1. First name: Ralph
    2. Last name: Oyini Mbouna
    3. Job title: Director of Digital Transformation and Services (CDTSO)
    4. Organization: Smart Africa Secretariat
    5. Type of entity: Other
    6. Country/territory: Rwanda

1. First name: Maria Andrea
2. Last name: Echazu Aguero
3. Job title: Human Rights Officer
4. Organization: OHCHR
5. Type of entity: UN
6. Country/territory: Argentina