



Editor's Note, July 03, 2020

In a break from the usual format, this week's editorial comes in the form of [our new podcast](#), which looks at plans to start trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in early 2021.

The original date of July 01, 2020 has been pushed back due to the coronavirus, with initiative's lead official vowing to [press on with implementation](#) regardless of what happens with the pandemic.

On paper this is a major milestone for a plan aimed at nothing short of unifying the continent's 54 economies into a single, \$3tr market, in turn transforming intra-African trade.

The rapid transition from launch in early 2018, to ratification in 2019, and planned active trading by 2021, raises important questions about Africa's ability to execute on such an ambitious plan.

From underdeveloped infrastructure, to poor trade facilitation, patchy political will, and the region's first recession in decades - the AfCFTA faces steep obstacles.

With a less than stellar track record of implementation, how realistic is a meaningful boost in regional trade in 2021, and beyond?

The Nurmara team looks at some of the obstacles that will need to be overcome if the AfCFTA is to transform trade on the continent.

You can listen to the full discussion, which also includes our take on other interesting stories doing the rounds, on [Spotify](#) or [Apple Podcasts](#), or by clicking the image below.



This week's Picks

From The Continent

Administrators at struggling South African Airways hope to publish a revised restructuring plan for the carrier by July 7, part of ongoing government efforts to save the national airline. Planned cuts have pitted the government against unions in a long-running back and forth over what to do with South African Airways. More: [Reuters](#)

The African Union has estimated that the coronavirus pandemic has cost African economies almost \$55bn in lost tourism and travel revenue. This has raised concerns that booming investment into both sectors in recent years could drop. More: [Reuters](#)

THE WEEKLY STAT

71 %

The expected average debt-to-GDP ratio for sub-Saharan Africa by the end of 2020 according to credit rating agency Fitch, from 26% in 2012. More: [Reuters](#)

The Global Perspective

Former Irish president Mary Robinson is to head an independent investigation into alleged cronyism under the African Development Bank's current president, following U.S. criticism of an internal review process. The panel has four weeks to complete its review. **More:** [Bloomberg](#)

Japanese carmaker Nissan plans to launch seven new models in Africa in the next two years as part of a stronger focus on markets with high growth potential. The continent is the world's last untapped new car market, which has seen investment from major companies accelerate in recent years. **More:** [Reuters](#)