

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

AfCFTA Secretariat and All Africa Intellectual Property Summit Partner to Advance Intellectual Property for Africa's Trade and Economic Transformation

*7th All Africa Intellectual Property Summit to convene policymakers,
businesses, innovators and creators in Nairobi from 11–13 November 2026*

Accra, Ghana / Abuja, Nigeria, 25, September 2026 – The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat and the All Africa Intellectual Property Summit have announced a strategic partnership to strengthen the role of intellectual property in advancing intra-African trade, industrialisation, innovation and Africa's creative economy.

The partnership comes at an important stage in the development of Africa's continental intellectual property framework. In February 2026, the 39th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union approved eight of the nine Annexes under the AfCFTA Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights, marking significant progress in the development of the AfCFTA intellectual property ecosystem.

The adopted Annexes cover Utility Models; Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Cultural Expressions and Genetic Resources; Plant Variety Protection; Patents; Marks; Industrial Designs; Geographical Indications; and Copyright and Related Rights.

Against this backdrop, the partnership will support the 7th All Africa Intellectual Property Summit, taking place from 11–13 November 2026 in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme "Mainstreaming Intellectual Property for Africa's Trade, Industrial & Creative Economy Transformation." The AfCFTA Secretariat has confirmed its strategic partnership and participation in the Summit.

The Summit will bring together policymakers, intellectual property institutions and practitioners, the private sector, innovators, creators, academia, investors, financial institutions and development partners to examine how intellectual property can be more effectively integrated into Africa's trade, industrial and economic transformation.

Through the partnership, the AfCFTA Secretariat will contribute the continental trade and integration perspective to relevant policy and technical discussions, including dialogue on implementation of the AfCFTA Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights and the role of intellectual property in supporting inclusive economic development.

The AfCFTA intellectual property framework seeks to strengthen the environment in which African businesses, innovators and creators can protect and derive greater commercial value

from their innovations, brands, creative works and other intangible assets. Intellectual property can support business competitiveness, strengthen brand value, facilitate commercialisation and expand opportunities for investment, finance, partnerships and access to markets.

“The adoption of eight Annexes to the AfCFTA Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights represents an important step in building a continental framework that supports African innovation, creativity and enterprise. The task before us is to translate this framework into practical opportunities for African businesses, innovators and creators. This partnership provides an important platform to strengthen the connection between intellectual property, trade, investment and industrialisation as we continue building an integrated African market.”- H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General, AfCFTA Secretariat.

The three-day Summit will combine high-level policy dialogue, technical discussions and private sector engagement. Discussions will focus on implementation of the AfCFTA intellectual property framework, intellectual property commercialisation, innovation and technology transfer, creative industries, industrial transformation and opportunities for African businesses to use intellectual property strategically to support growth and market expansion.

The programme will also draw from the Call for Papers, to bring research and policy perspectives into the Summit discussions, as well as the Innovation Pavilion, which will showcase African creativity, innovation, intellectual assets and businesses while providing opportunities for engagement among innovators, investors, institutions and potential commercial partners.

The Summit is further expected to adopt the Nairobi Declaration on Intellectual Property and Africa’s Economic Transformation, outlining the AfCFTA IP Regime as strategic priorities for strengthening the integration of intellectual property into Africa’s trade and industrial development agenda.

“Our partnership with the AfCFTA Secretariat comes at an important moment for Africa’s intellectual property landscape. As the continent advances implementation of the AfCFTA intellectual property framework, the Summit provides an opportunity to bring policy, business, innovation and creativity together and examine how intellectual property can generate tangible economic value. We look forward to welcoming stakeholders from across Africa and beyond to Nairobi to contribute to this important conversation.”- Mr. Sand Mba Kalu, Chairman, All Africa Intellectual Property Summit.

The AfCFTA Secretariat and the All Africa Intellectual Property Summit invite stakeholders from across Africa and beyond to participate in the Summit and contribute to discussions on the future of intellectual property within Africa’s increasingly integrated market.

Participants will have the opportunity to engage in policy and technical discussions, connect with stakeholders from across Africa’s intellectual property ecosystem, explore opportunities for collaboration and commercialisation, and contribute to discussions on translating Africa’s

evolving intellectual property framework into practical opportunities for businesses, innovators and creators.

The 7th All Africa Intellectual Property Summit will take place from 11–13 November 2026 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Register to Attend

Registration for the Summit is available online.

[Register for the 7th All Africa Intellectual Property Summit](#)

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About the AfCFTA

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, the African Union's long-term development strategy. The Agreement establishing the AfCFTA entered into force on 30 May 2019 and brings together the 55 Member States of the African Union in a single market of about 1.4 billion people with a combined GDP of approximately US\$3.4 trillion. The AfCFTA is the largest free trade area in the world by number of participating countries. The AfCFTA Secretariat, based in Accra, Ghana, and led by Secretary-General H.E. Wamkele Mene, coordinates implementation of the Agreement in cooperation with State Parties, the Regional Economic Communities and continental institutions.

About All Africa IP Summit

The All Africa Intellectual Property (IP) Summit is a premier Pan-African multi-stakeholder platform dedicated to advancing the role of intellectual property in driving Africa's economic transformation, innovation ecosystem, and global competitiveness.

The Summit is convened by the Africa Intellectual Property Centre, an initiative established in 2019 by the International Trade and Research Centre (ITRC), a public policy, research, and engagement think tank headquartered in Abuja, Nigeria. The Africa IP Centre was created to strengthen the institutional capacity of intellectual property systems across the continent and to promote the effective utilisation of intellectual property as a tool for socio-economic development.

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