

Paving the way to increased intra-African trade

According to Minister of Trade and Industry, Rob Davies, the African continent is an "extremely important" market for South African business, especially those that trade in value-added products.



Minister Rob Davies with South Africa's ambassador to Egypt Vusi Mavimbela at the IATF South Africa National Pavilion.

Speaking at the launch of the South African pavilion in Cairo, Egypt during the Intra-Africa Trade Fair (IATF), Davies said the inaugural event provides a platform for sharing trade, investment and market information and enabling buyers and sellers, investors and countries to meet, discuss and conclude business deals.

According to the minister, the IATF is an excellent opportunity to position South Africa to grow the export volumes especially into the rest of the continent and to promote the export of goods and services; as well as exposing South African buyers to what the rest of the continent has to offer in advancing South African imports.

"When we look at trade with the continent from the South African point of view, there is an easy way of telling the big story. The story is that two-thirds of South Africa's trade are with the world, whilst a third of the trade is with the African continent. Of the latter, two-thirds comprise trade in value-added products," said Davies.

Davies added that even though total trade among African countries is still lower than those compared to other continents, he is still hopeful that platforms such IATF will pave the way to increase trade in Africa.

"We believe that during the course of the Intra-African Trade Fair, South African exhibitors will find trading partners with the Egyptian business community and hopefully with other African countries too. And I am also glad to see in particular that so many of these companies are here under the banner of the Export Councils because I think we realise that through

these councils, we are able to get our business people to export into other markets,” he said.

Egypt is South Africa’s largest trading partner in North Africa. Total trade between the two countries stood at R4 billion in 2017.

It is anticipated that the IATF will host at least 1,000 exhibitors from across Africa and beyond with more than 70,000 visitors, generating in excess of \$70 billion in trade deals.

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