



Farmer to Fashion

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TRIPARTITE TRADE

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COUNTRY PROFILE

MAURITIUS

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A note from the Executive Director

By: Belinda Edmonds

Welcome to this edition of Origin Africa magazine.

The first quarter of 2017 has been characterised by significant uncertainty. Much of our African cotton, textile and apparel industries output is exported, the United States and Europe being by far the most important destination for goods Made in Africa. Donald Trump has clearly signalled his intention to review almost all trade agreements while providing support to domestic (USA) manufacturers through the imposition of a Border Adjustment Tax (BAT). The European Union faces dual challenges of growing populism in several countries while the complicated and probably lengthy Brexit negotiations get underway. We have in past issues stressed the importance of developing domestic and regional markets in Africa to provide new and consistent opportunities for our producers. In this issue, Dr Francis Mangeni, Director of Trade Customs and Monetary Affairs, COMESA provides detailed insight and encourages private sector collaboration to bring the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement to fruition. Ensuring market diversity and continuity, at home and abroad, is critical to meeting the industrialisation and employment goals of most African countries.

We are also honoured to have highly esteemed authorities introduce us to Mauritius and Lesotho - countries that both have extensive experience and long histories in developing their textile and apparel industries, primarily through exports to the EU and USA, but now, as members of SADC, the South African market. Both countries provide clear examples of the importance of regional markets and how to optimise the benefit of trading with our neighbours.

Following the success of Origin Africa 2016, we are delighted to announce Origin Africa 2017 to be held during the last week of September in Mauritius. Based on feedback, and now in our 8th year, we have graduated from Africa's Premier Trade Event (Trade Fair with Seminars) to Africa's FIRST Convention for the cotton, textile and apparel industries. The 2 day conference will focus on the latest technologies, methodologies and best practices proven to increase output throughout the cotton, textile, apparel pipeline, without detracting from social and environmental responsibilities. Improving



productivity and remaining abreast of international developments in our industries is critical to the growth and sustainability of our industries. The Trade Fair will again show-case the diversity and volume of product available from the continent to buyers from all major markets. We learned during our 2016 event that “exhibitor to exhibitor” networking resulted in a significant amount of unexpected trade – opportunities to source raw materials (yarns and fabrics), trims, packaging and services including training and logistics within the region offer many benefits – flexibility, shorter lead-times, understanding of on the ground conditions, transfer of knowledge etc.

Outstanding talent and creativity is vested in our African designers and micro/small businesses. Growing these businesses into brands is seldom easy, but the growth of our fashion industry is inextricably linked with the development of these micro enterprises. ACTIF launched our Project Upscale competition at last year's Origin Africa event to identify and reward designers with the ambition and desire (and of course the talent) to Upscale. The growth and success of all our winners, in just 4 months is astounding - reading their stories brings optimism to an otherwise confusing and challenging world.

We hope that you will enjoy this edition of Origin Africa magazine and we look forward to seeing you in Mauritius for Origin Africa 2017. ■





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MAURITIUS

Mauritius positions itself as a strategic partner for trade.

By: Mr. Arvind Radhakrishna

Situated in the 'golden triangle' connecting Asia, Africa and Australia, Mauritius is the converging point of global nations – a place where one can feel the cosmopolitan pulse of the world. Denoted also as the “star and key” of the Indian Ocean, the small island has been a model as an innovative nation in the Sub-Saharan Africa region where quality has been touted as first rate. Mauritius has also been ranked first in different indexes, namely: in the 13th edition of World Economic Forum's Global Information Technology Report (GITR); in the United Nations e-Government Survey 2016; in the Africa Human Development Report 2016; 2016 Index of Economic Freedom amongst others.

Once dependent on sugar exports, the island has successfully diversified its economy towards a strong outsourcing and financial services sector, and an important tourism industry. Now Mauritius boasts one of Africa's highest per capita incomes. The industrialization evolution

has contributed in making the Textile and Apparel industry as one of the key contributor to GDP and has spearheaded the structural transformation of the Mauritian Economy to such an extent that it has acted as the engine of economic growth, attracting FDI from various countries, creating new employment opportunities, uplifting the social strata and strengthening the manufacturing base of the economy.

This achievement has been possible based on our strategy to increase market share in the US and European countries. We further want to penetrate new and emerging markets. Mauritius stands to take more share of the apparel market in Africa which will further boost the economic and social conditions of the country.

Today, Mauritius is working with world-leading brands like Calvin Klein, Gap, Mango, Topshop, Tommy Hilfiger, Zara, Guess, Marks & Spencer, Adidas, Levi's, amongst others. Mauritius has built over the years a solid world-wide reputation in the export of quality Knitwear, pullovers, T-shirts, Polo shirts, Shirts, Trousers, denim products in a competitive time-line. The Textile and Apparel industry is a flexible sector always adapting to latest smart technologies to be competitive. Mauritian manufacturers adhere to social and technical compliance norms and standards. We always strive for quality products.

Why source from Mauritius?

The new era of global competitive world implies faster delivery time of quality products. Therefore the production cycle should be efficient and effective with minimal disruptions risks including political instability or discontent workers, who can lead to strikes. Mauritius is seen as a model of stability and economic prosperity in the region. Hence these issues have not plagued the manufacturing sector in Mauritius.

What is more interesting is that Mauritius is known for its investment-friendly regulatory requirements within established



Arvind Radhakrishna

legal framework. The official language in Mauritius is English; the most frequently used international language which definitely improves the ease of communication for buyers. Furthermore, Mauritians are also at ease with French Language.

The World Bank ranked Mauritius first in Africa for 2016 in terms of ease of doing business there, and it was also ranked first in Africa in the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report for 2015.

Technological drive for quality products

State-of-the art infrastructure and forward-thinking manufacturing companies have contributed in making Mauritius an attractive option for innovation as the country upgrades its apparel production offering.

“Operators in Mauritius have invested in new technology to decrease production cycle times, costs and many companies are vertically integrated. Many Mauritian apparel and textile manufacturers are flexible with order quantities and add value via their contribution to the design of the products, meeting cross culture fashionable trends,” according to Enterprise Mauritius division manager Geerish Bucktowonsing.

“Today, certain companies can deliver samples in shorter time due to automated CAD [computer aided design] systems they

have invested in for patternmaking,” stated Mr. Bucktowonsing. *“Further to other investments like automated handling systems, some companies are also adopting lean manufacturing practices to better serve their clientele.”*

Moving vertically

Mauritius has a 40-year history of making Textile and Apparel and was once one of the largest producers of knitwear. Over those years, the country has evolved from its initial cut, make, trim capabilities to a vertically integrated manufacturing where value-added, sophisticated product such as technical garments.

The Textile and Apparel industry in Mauritius consists of facilities for spinning, knitting, weaving and finishing for dyed and printed fabrics, denim fabrics and for knit-to-shape items.

Investment in advanced production technologies, like computer aided design and manufacturing, printing services and automated dyeing systems, have positioned Mauritian manufacturers to supply a wide range of quality garments in a shorter time-frame.



“Operators in Mauritius have invested in new technology to decrease production cycle times, costs and many companies are vertically integrated.”

Trading partners

Mauritius also enjoys preferential trade access to USA, EU and African countries. The country's main export markets are Europe and the U.S. In 2015, Mauritius exported 39 percent of its textiles and apparel to Europe (21 percent to the U.K.), and 24 percent to the U.S. market. "We want to increase our export of apparel products to Africa," stated Mr. Arvind Radhakrishna, CEO of Enterprise Mauritius.

To further facilitate trade, Mauritius recently launched the Speed-to-market Scheme, an air freight rebate initiative that would reduce costs to the European market by 40 percent.

Mauritius is also a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which became a free trade bloc in 2000, representing a market of more than 400 million people. Membership within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), has contributed in positioning Mauritius as a major supplier of garments to South Africa.

Compliance to international norms

The workforce in Mauritius is known for being savvy and peaceful. Mauritians are known to be bilingual; most are fluent in English and French language, which can ease communication.

"Our operators have over the last 40 years earned a good name

as a reliable sourcing destination, especially when it comes to adherence to international norms, workers welfare and on-time delivery," Bucktowonsing said.

Most manufacturers in Mauritius adhere to social compliance standards, some are adopting eco-friendly ways of production, becoming WRAP certified, Fair Trade certified, and most also meet technical compliance standards, including Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) regulations, and some meet organic standards, with Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) certifications.

Enterprise Mauritius

Enterprise Mauritius is the National Agency responsible for Export Promotion and Export development in Mauritius.

Mr. Arvind Radhakrishna explains that it is a great idea to host Origin Africa 2017 in Mauritius. It will be a good platform to showcase Mauritius 'savoir-faire' in the apparel sector. Mr. Arvind Radhakrishna furthermore stated that Africa is a major market potential for Mauritius apparel exports and we further want to increase the market share in Africa. As such through participation in Origin Africa 2017 our main goals will be market consolidation and expansion and to position Mauritius as a leading exporter of competitively priced, quality textile and apparel products. ■





**Enterprise
Mauritius**



PROUDLY PRESENTS



**We are delighted that MAURITIUS will host our
8th ORIGIN AFRICA Trade Event between
25th & 29th September 2017**

In response to the growing demand and to optimise the value and experience of our attendees, the event will comprise a 2 day conference and 3 day trade fair – Africa's 1st Convention for the cotton, textile and apparel sectors:

CONFERENCE: 25th and 26th September 2017

Enhancing Productivity – The Path to Sustainable Competitiveness

VENUE: Intercontinental Hotel, Balaclova, Mauritius.

The competitive markets of the cotton, textile and apparel industries demand that producers continually improve productivity, increase output and embrace technologies, methodologies and proven best practises. This 2 day conference will deliver access and exposure to the fast developing developments from seed technologies to supply chain management. It will encourage dialogue that points to practical, implementable solutions applicable to the African continent and designed to ensure environmentally and socially responsible growth and increased profitability for all sectors.

TRADE FAIR: 27th – 29th September 2017

Core to Couture

VENUE: Swami Vivekananda International Convention (SVICC), Pailles, Mauritius.

The Trade Fair showcases the volume and diversity of highly desirable African product to a wide range of regional and international buyers. International exhibitors present a wide range of technologies, services and products useful to African producers in their quest for expanded product range and improved services and skills.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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LESOTHO

Africa's Inspired Apparel Sourcing Hotspot

By: Senator Joshua Setipa - Lesotho's Minister for Trade & Industry



Unlike many other countries wanting to export textiles, apparel and footwear Lesotho does not have to prove itself.

Lesotho's garment export figures speak for themselves – in 2015 Lesotho exported more than US\$410m worth of apparel to the rest of the world. In 2016 Lesotho firms exported garments valued at US\$296m garments to the United States.

For more than three decades Lesotho garment manufacturers have proved themselves to be successful exporters of apparel. They have a strong record in exporting significant volumes of both knit and woven garments to the United States in terms of the African Growth & Opportunity Act (AGOA). Lesotho's value chain manufacturers are now busy cementing their position as a major supplier of textiles,

garments and footwear into the Southern African market place.

All Lesotho manufacturers fully understand the requirements of buyers – related to quality and on time delivery. They also, as does the Government of Lesotho, fully understand that they must abide by all of Lesotho's labour laws as non-compliance will result in potential buyers not even considering the country; worse still existing buyers will drop Lesotho from their sourcing radar.

While Lesotho is landlocked this has not been an impediment to Lesotho importing manufacturing inputs, and exporting finished products. The country is directly connected to the modern transport (road / rail / sea port) network of South Africa.



Textile, Apparel & Footwear Manufacturing in Lesotho

Lesotho's formal sector garment and footwear manufacturing industry established itself in the early 1980s. The initial wave of investment came from South African based firms who wanted to avoid anti-apartheid sanctions – Lesotho was used by these firms as a springboard to export apparel into Europe and the US. In the first half of the 1990s a wave of Taiwanese origin investments followed. Much of this investment took place as a consequence of the garment quotas imposed on many countries as a consequence of the multi-fibre arrangement (MFA).

With the introduction by the US of the African Growth & Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2000 a second wave of Taiwanese investment occurred. The AGOA opportunity also saw the development of a US\$140m spin-weave denim fabric mill. The next phase of value chain investment began in 2006 when a new wave of South African origin investors established apparel manufacturing operations in Lesotho – these investors wanted a low cost, logistically efficient, place in order to supply the South African fashion and workwear retail market place.



Lesotho Minister of Trade & Industry – Senator Joshua Setipa

Lesotho's Textile, Apparel & Footwear Value Chain Today

Lesotho's formal sector textile, apparel and footwear industry currently comprises 65 primary manufacturing firms that directly employ around 46 500 people. There are in Lesotho, like in many other sub-Saharan African economies, many smaller firms (employing <5 people) undertaking tailoring / bespoke garment, and footwear manufacturing.

Table 1: Lesotho's Larger Textile, Apparel & Footwear Firms & Employment

	FIRMS	JOB
TEXTILES		
Cotton / Cotton-blend Yarns Denim Fabrics	1	1 220
GARMENTS		
Knits	33	24 513
Jeans / Woven Bottoms	9	13 124
Industrial Workwear	6	4 696
Other Wovens	3	1 460
ADD-ON SERVICES & MANUFACTURERS		
Commission Garment Screen-printer	2	36
Commission Embroidery	2	50
Coat Hanger	1	35
Other (packaging; recycling; compliance)	6	97
FOOTWEAR		
Shoes	2	1 253
TOTAL	65	46 484

The entire value chain is located in two geographic areas. The largest cluster of firms (about three-quarters of value chain employment) is located in Lesotho's capital of Maseru. About 80km north of Maseru is the town of Maputsoe (and its associated industrial estate of Nyenye). The fact that all Lesotho firms are clustered in two areas provides an invisible advantage to the extent that firms often co-operate as a cluster – sharing equipment and expertise; it also makes the management of CMT orders easier. The areas where Lesotho's value chain investments are located are no more than 10km from the Lesotho–South African border (Maseru is near the South African rural town of Ladybrand; and Maputsoe is opposite the town of Ficksburg).

Most of the manufacturing firms are owned by foreigners. In many cases the foreign owners do not live in Lesotho, or nearby in South Africa's Free State province. They reside in places like Taiwan, and the South African cities of Durban and Cape Town. On a day-to-day basis most factory production is co-ordinated by foreign managers.

Exports & Imports

Lesotho has been a consistent volume (in both units and value) exporter of garments. In 2015 Lesotho's textile, apparel and footwear industry exported product worth about US\$440m. The largest category of items exported were knit garments valued at US\$255m; woven garments worth US\$157m; textiles worth more than US\$15m; and, footwear valued at about US\$13m. See Table 2.

Table 2: Lesotho's Textile, Apparel & Footwear Exports (in US\$)¹

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Textiles	8 638 663	8 388 260	11 583 792	16 839 834	18 853 143	>14 649 371 ²
Apparel	362 272 271	405 315 532	392 466 881	419 283 321	404 827 665	412 196 949
Footwear	26 955 305	30 481 106	31 454 641	27 337 461	18 111 463	12 707 888
Total	397 866 239	444 184 898	425 105 314	463 460 616	441 792 271	439 554 208

NOTE: In 2015 Lesotho also exported unwashed wool and mohair worth US\$27m.

In 2015 about 98% of all Lesotho made clothes was sent to the US (75% of garment exports) and to South Africa (23%). Canada, Australia and Mexico were relatively minor export destinations. See Table 3.

Table 3: Top 5 Export Destinations of Lesotho Made Apparel (in US\$, 2015)³

	HS61 (knit apparel)	HS62 (woven apparel)	Total HS61 + HS62
US	210 663 109	99 747 475	310 410 584
South Africa	40 743 795	51 874 875	92 618 670
Canada	2 618 829	2 659 295	5 278 124
Australia	102 849	1 545 601	1 648 450
Mexico	670 240	85 246	755 486

Lesotho exports to the United States comprise both knit and woven garments. See Table 4.

Table 4: Lesotho's Garment Exports to the United States (in US\$)⁴

	2014	2015	2016
Knit Garments	194,915,814	203,259,173	201,408,447
Woven Garments	95,553,677	96,427,546	94,231,425
Total	290,469,491	299,686,719	295,639,872

What is striking is how Lesotho garment manufacturers have tended, especially with regards the manufacture of knit garments, to concentrate on making garments that are constructed with fabrics made of man-made / synthetic fibre fabrics. As can be seen many of these kinds of garments – if they were to be made in places such as Vietnam, China, Bangladesh and India - would attract very high US customs duties (of up to 32%). By using AGOA these same Lesotho made garments enter the US free of duties – and they can be made with fabrics sourced from anywhere in the world. See Table 5.

Table 5: Lesotho's Top 5 Knit Garment Exports to the United States in 2016 (in US\$)⁵

HTS Number	Category	2016 (in US\$)	US Gen. Rate of Duty (%)	AGOA Duty Applied to Lesotho (%)
6104632006: Women's trousers and breeches, of synthetic fibers, containing 5% or more by weight of elastomeric yarn or rubber thread	648	59,688,063	28.2%	0%
6105202010: Men's shirts of man-made fibers, containing less than 23% of wool/fine animal hair	638	41,809,527	32%	0%
6110303053: Men's or boys' pullovers and similar articles of man-made fibers but not knit to shape, nesoi	638	25,953,308	32%	0%
6110303059: Women's or girls' pullovers and similar articles of man-made fibers but not knit to shape, nesoi	639	9,506,745	32%	0%
6104632030: Women's shorts of synthetic fibers, containing less than 23% of wool/fine animal hair	648	6,605,160	28.2%	0%

Lesotho exports of jeans to the United States are largely supported through the Formosa Textiles company's fully integrated spin / weave denim mill that is located in Maseru. This mill – which uses African grown and ginned cotton – has the capacity to make about 1.3 million yards of denim fabric per month – in 8 to 13oz ranges. See Table 6.

Table 6: Lesotho's Top 5 Woven Garment Exports to the United States in 2016 (in US\$)⁶

HTS Number	Category	2016 (in US\$)	US Gen. Rate of Duty (%)	AGOA Duty Applied to Lesotho (%)
6203424011: Men's blue denim trousers/breeches of cotton	347	33,727,194	16.6%	0%
6203424511: Men's blue denim trousers/breeches of cotton, nesoi	347	14,486,938	16.6%	0%
6203424036: Boys' blue denim trousers/breeches of cotton, nesoi	347	7,657,013	16.6%	0%
6203424536: Boys' blue denim trousers/breeches of cotton, nesoi	347	6,295,233	16.6%	0%
6204624041: Girls' blue denim trousers/breeches of cotton, nesoi	348	5,264,234	16.6%	0%

As a member of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU – comprising Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and South Africa) Lesotho made products enter South Africa (Africa's richest economy) free of any customs duties. Lesotho made textiles, apparel and footwear have duty free access to some of the world's leading markets: SADC Member States, the European Union (EU) Member States, European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Member States; and, Mercosur Member States (the South American trade bloc). As a Least Developed Country (LDC) Lesotho made textiles and apparel have duty and quota free market access, under Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) type programmes, to many of the world's richer economies, including: Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

The major domestic textile, apparel and footwear sales that occurs are of denim fabrics. The Nien Hsing owned Formosa Textiles typically sells between 60-70% of the fabrics it makes to three related Lesotho based companies; it also sells fabrics to small number of other Lesotho garment manufacturers;). There are two small workwear garment producers that focus exclusively on supply the local private sector.

South African enterprises bought US\$12.6m of mainly cotton / cotton blend yarns from Lesotho; while Swazi and Mauritian firms also bought significant volumes of textile yarns. South African retailers bought US\$12.6m (99.5% of Lesotho's total exports) worth of Lesotho made footwear.



WOOL & MOHAIR PROCESSING – OPPORTUNITY

Lesotho climate and topography make it an ideal place to raise sheep and mohair goats. All of the animal fibers are exported from Lesotho in unprocessed form – not even washed. In 2015 it was calculated that Lesotho exported US\$26.6 million worth of wool/mohair: US\$18.2 to South Africa; US\$6.9m to China; and US\$1.5 to India. There thus exists the significant opportunity to develop a wool/mohair trading operation in Lesotho supported by a wool washery.

Most of the inputs used to make Lesotho textiles, apparel and footwear products are imported into Lesotho. Cotton lint is imported from a number of Southern African states; synthetic yarns from the East. Fabrics and apparel trims mostly originate from South Africa and the East (mainly China and Vietnam). The few products that are made locally include: denim fabrics, packaging (corrugated boxes), and coat hangers (although licensing arrangements only allows coat hangers to be used in exports for garments destined for the US); and, some firms have their own in-house garment label printing.

GARMENT TRIMS AND VALUE ADD SERVICES – OPPORTUNITY

Most of the garment trims used to make Lesotho made garments are imported into Lesotho. There exists the possibility of establishing numerous businesses that would support the existing garment industry. For trim manufacturing (e.g. printed labels, zips, fasteners, buttons for jeans, etc); for packaging supplies (e.g. poly bags, coat hangers for the Southern African marketplace, sizars, paper price bar-codes, etc); and, for garment value add (e.g. commission sublimation printers, specialist wet/dry jeans finishing plants, garment dye facilities, etc). Lesotho is looking for suppliers that would be accredited to supply recognised apparel brands and retailers. Lesotho would encourage the formation of joint ventures, partnerships and franchise arrangements with local businesses own by Basotho businessmen.

Manufacturing inputs that are used for sales of products outside of SACU can be imported under rebate of customs duties (i.e. zero tariffs). Goods imported into Lesotho for further processing into finished goods which are then sold in the Southern African customs unions generally attract the following customs tariffs; although a limited range of manufacturing inputs can be imported into Lesotho free of customs duties which, after value add manufacturing, can then be sold into SACU free of customs duties. See Table 7.

Table 7: SACU's Typical MFN Ad Valorem Customs Tariffs

	SACU's MFN Customs Duties
Yarns	15%
Fabrics	22%
Footwear Components	20%
Apparel	45%
Made-up Textiles	30%
Footwear	30%

The fact that the apparel customs tariffs for the South Africa (part of SACU) are very high – and the fact that Lesotho has duty free access to the South African economy creates the potential for Lesotho based manufactures to supply South Africa's very large apparel retailers. The fact that Lesotho is geographically situated in the very centre of South Africa gives its manufacturers easy access to the country's main commercial centers – Johannesburg/Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town. Duty rebates on specific fabrics designated “short supply”, - primarily certain woven shirting and home textiles fabrics, allow manufactures to import such fabrics free of any Customs Duty.

Logistics

While Lesotho is landlocked it is able to access the road, rail and port logistics of South Africa. Most of Lesotho exports are logistics fortunate enough to be imported through the port of Durban (570km away from Maseru). Durban is Africa's busiest port; and has more sailings to the United States, Europe and China than any other port in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Wages & Working Conditions

Unlike many other low cost producers located elsewhere in the world Lesotho is not a Third World sweatshop, nor is it an environmental wasteland. Lesotho is conscious that one of the advantages it enjoys is that international clothing brands and major retailers do not want to be associated with a country where firms do not respect worker and trade union rights, or which damage the environment.

Lesotho's labour laws enshrine all aspects of the international labour Organisations core conventions (no child / forced labour, non-discrimination, freedom of association). The laws are rigorously enforced – if they were not Lesotho would not have pedigree garment retailers/brands of accrediting apparel manufacturing units in Lesotho

(e.g. Gap Inc, Levis Strauss, VF Corporation, The Childrens' Place, etc). Already six of Lesotho's largest AGOA focussed knit garment manufacturers have proactively sought and won Worldwide Responsible Accredited Protection (WRAP) certification.

With effect from 1 April 2016 the minimum wage earned by a general worker engaged in Lesotho's textile, apparel and footwear manufacturing industry in Lesotho was M1 157.00; a skilled sewing machinist, with more than 12 months' service with the same employer M1 361.00 per month. While workers' wages may be considered to be relatively high compared with other manufacturing destinations within Africa – this is off-set by the experience (and therefore productivity) of properly supervised Lesotho garment worker. ■

1. Source: COMTRADE Data Base (accessed on 22 December 2016).

2. No trade data exists for Swaziland-Lesotho trade. Formosa exports large volumes of cotton / cotton blend yarns to Swaziland.

3. Source: COMTRADE Data Base (accessed on 22 December 2016).

4. Source: US International Trade Commission (USITC) (accessed on 10 February 2017).

5. IBID.

6. IBID.



The Tripartite Free Trade Area - realism one year on

By Francis Mangeni

Together with parts of South East Asia, Africa is considered the last frontline of the fight to conquer poverty in the world. The global community has mobilized for this effort a supportive public opinion and resources including in the framework of the millennium development goals of 2000 to 2015 and now the sustainable development goals of 2016 to 2030. There is a good foundation to build on going forward. Following two decades of high economic growth rates of about 5%, the economic potential of Africa remains promising. According to the September 2016 publication of Mckinsey Global Institute, entitled Lions on the Move 2.0, African companies grow faster and are more profitable than their peers worldwide, and 400 of them have annual revenues exceeding \$1 billion. Consumers and businesses already spend about \$4 Trillion annually, and household consumption is projected to grow from current levels to about \$2.1 trillion by 2025. While there are some serious financing gaps, for instance over \$90 billion is needed annually for infrastructure development, domestic resource mobilization as well as stopping illicit financial outflows estimated at \$50 billion annually, have been identified as credible promising sources of revenue to finance African development. Other fundamental initiatives in Africa have been to create enabling environments for trade, investment, industrialization and overall

social economic structural transformation, to improve political and economic governance, to build infrastructure covering surface and air transportation as well as energy and information and communication technologies, and to undertake policy reforms at the national and regional levels. At the regional level, economic integration has been the overarching development strategy, pursued at the continental and at the regional levels.

Covering 26 out of the 54 African countries, with a combined GDP of \$1.3 Trillion, the Tripartite Free Trade Area launched on 10 June 2015 marks a turning point in the political and economic history of Africa. For Africa's strategists, the job of creating a Continental Free Trade Area is half done. This is why Africa irresistibly launched negotiations for the Continental Free Trade Area on 15 June 2015 a mere five days later. The negotiation of the Tripartite Free Trade Area overlapped with thinking about the Continental Free Trade Area, in such a direct manner through the intergovernmental processes that the two initiatives can be considered as a continuation. The Tripartite provided quite some learning for the continental process.

Amidst lingering doubts about the Africa Rising narrative and whether indeed Africa has reached a take-off stage in its development trajectory as Charles Robertson et al in their 2012 book *The Fastest Billion* would have us believe, the launch of the Tripartite in 2015 was an enormous signal that Africa is working together and committed to its common vision for a large single continental market to promote trade and investment. Adopted in 1991, the continental integration template aims to progressively achieve an African Economic Community by 2028, with the possibility of fast-tracking the process. This longstanding strategy which addresses the diminutive size of African economies by providing operators with economies of scale, is as much alive today as in the heydays of political pan-Africanism in the 1960s, the platform for the energy and resources for the struggles of the time for political freedom. In this sense then, the sheer geographical and economic size of the Tripartite Free Trade Area, by covering half of Africa, goes down in history as a milestone in African political and economic history alongside the formation of the Organisation for African Unity in 1963 and the African Union in 2000.

Building on theories of economic integration over the years, Africa has evolved its own unique approach that is grounded in its development challenges. Rather than constructing a theory based on efficient use of deployed resources and that presumes full employment, Africa has come up with what is called a developmental approach to regional integration, which equally prioritizes industrial and infrastructure development as market integration. A free market without products to trade is quite unhelpful in addressing the development challenges of job creation; and without infrastructure it would be near impossible to move products and people around, and the costs of production would be prohibitive. Economic integration in Africa is therefore based on the three pillars of market integration to create free trade areas that facilitate trade and investment, industrial development to create products and employment, and infrastructure development. Just as the private sector have a key role as the engine for job creation and development, so do governments. Victoria Bateman in her book entitled *Markets and Growth in Early Modern Europe*, has looked at evidence from modern Europe and going back to Babylonia and

A critical observation to make is therefore that the Tripartite Initiative is not purely a free trade agreement, rather it is a development agreement.

The Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement represents an unequivocal political message that formulation and adoption of a single trade regulatory regime is feasible in economic integration in Africa; in this case covering half of Africa in geographical and economic terms. The Agreement has detailed annexes setting out the rules and norms on customs, technical and health standards, safeguards, removal of unnecessary trade barriers, settlement of disputes about the meaning and application of the Agreements, and how to determine goods produced in the region. Such a single trade regime reduces regulatory and compliance complexity and costs for both government and economic operators, which contributes to facilitation of trade and investment. It can be added in the same breath that the Agreement is complemented with robust programs for industrial and infrastructure development. The free trade area will yield economies of scale and goodwill among governments for collaboration, which enable critical levels of investment and industrialization, as well as cross-border infrastructure projects for transportation and energy as well as telecommunications, drawing on public and private investments. The tripartite industrial development program focuses on agro-processing, chemical and minerals value chains.

A critical observation to make is therefore that the Tripartite Initiative is not purely a free trade agreement, rather it is a development agreement.

concluded that markets by themselves have not been the source of economic growth contrary to conventional wisdom, but rather that governments have provided the overall framework for markets to prosper, and that markets have collapsed where there has been no government.

Negotiating the Tripartite came with a number of challenges. It was a time and resource intensive exercise, involving national and regional preparations. Differences of opinion among the countries on fundamental issues such as the type of rules of origin to adopt, the level of ambition for market opening, and the pace or frequency of negotiation sessions, had to be addressed. The final positions were half-way houses and therefore unsatisfactory to either side in some key respects. On rules of origin for instance, the chapters on textiles are still being consulted on and product specific rules have not been negotiated and concluded. On the market access front however, some countries were able to undertake quite generous liberalization but on condition of reciprocity in order to deal with free riding. Throughout the negotiations, it often appeared as though what the political leaders expected to be easy was technically overwhelming. The Tripartite FTA was in the end launched one year late after the three-year road map could not be met; even then with a number of outstanding issues that were set down as a built-in agenda for more



work subsequently. Unfinished work include critical areas such as tariff offers and rules of origin.

The Tripartite initiative is nevertheless important in at least five important ways. It fast-tracks and inspires African continental integration to build a harmonized or at least coordinated regional regulatory policy environment, which in turn can contribute to the public goods of peace and goodwill among governments and the people. Notwithstanding Brexit, the European Union has demonstrated that economic integration can turn sworn enemies into allies and economic partners for over a generation so far, the longest period of continuous peace in modern European history. Fortunately, integration in Africa has not been designed to create the sort of humongous bureaucracy in Brussels and remains fully an intergovernmental process driven by the countries. The Tripartite initiative will catalyze the social economic structural transformation of Africa through its developmental approach to economic integration, in this way addressing some of the critical developmental challenges of job creation for the youth bulge and urbanization. The Tripartite will provide market opportunities that support technological leapfrogging and innovation. A cursory look around Africa will show how it has transformed beyond recognition even just over the last two decades through telecommunication, banking, education, health and energy technologies. One can mention as some key examples the mobile telephone revolution in the remotest areas and a vibrant banking sector in rural areas facilitated by mobile money transfers starting with Kenya and spreading to much of Africa and indeed recently to Afghanistan. This aspect is fundamental as going back to the stone age, it is technological improvement and innovation that has marked busts and epochs of social economic transformation. Lastly, the Tripartite will provide key lessons for economic integration in Africa and inspire new generations of integrationists, provided the institutional memory is not lost and relevant capabilities are continuously built in government, the private sector and the academia.

It will soon be two years after the launch of the Tripartite Free Trade Area. The Agreement hasn't entered force, as none of the 18 countries that signed it has ratified it; 14 ratifications are required for the Agreement to enter force. The political will and initiative to do the act of ratification at the national level seems needs to be forthcoming. Negotiations on rules of origin are still on-going, with 59 out of the 97 chapters now completed. Trade in products for which there are no rules of origin will not benefit from the Tripartite FTA advantages of not being charged customs duties. While tariff negotiations have been undertaken and there is some indication of the broad outlines of the liberalization, only two countries have turned their offers in Tariffs in a manner that would enable customs authorities to know which customs duties to charge on imports from other tripartite countries. This can be an easy exercise that customs authorities can run as a computer program, but it requires legislation to give it the force of law. And finally, a number of three important

annexes still have to be cleaned up by the lawyers (these are on rules of origin, trade remedies, and dispute settlement).

Ministers are scheduled to meet mid this year 2017. In the build-up to this meeting, it is possible address these sticking issues. This requires political, technical and private sector leadership. The question for governments is: to integrate or to perish, that is the question. And the question for the private sector is: do you believe in and see the benefits of the Tripartite Free Trade Area? If so, see if your government can act accordingly.

Francis Mangeni has been Director of Trade and Customs of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (www.comesa.int) for seven years now. His work involves assisting policy formulation for and following up on implementation of regional economic integration programs. He has taught on postgraduate and under graduate courses in Uganda at the Law Development Centre, Makerere University, and Uganda Martyrs University Nkozi; and at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He has worked and consulted extensively on the multilateral trade system and African economic integration. His work has assisted Africa's trade negotiators at the World Trade Organization and in a number of African regional integration arrangements. His work has assisted also trade and investment policy formulation and implementation at the national level. He was Advisor to the Minister of Commerce and Industry of the Government of Malawi; Senior Economist at the Permanent Delegation of the African Union to the United Nations and other International Organization based in Geneva; and Regional Trade Policy Advisor at the Commission of the African Union. He has been consultant for various international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Labor Organization, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the South Centre, the East African Community, and the Southern African Development Community. Dr Mangeni hold a doctorate from the London School of Economics and Political Science in International Economic Law.

Based on a forthcoming book by Francis Mangeni and Calestous Juma, *Trading Power - Economic Integration in Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 2018. ■



The Luxury of Fibre

By: Arthur Malan-Murison

I have always believed it's important to sometimes in our busy modern lives, take a moment to stop, and "smell the roses" – as they say - and appreciate what natural luxury and living beauty we possess amongst us.

With the future always having its eye focused on technology and the creation of new luxury goods, thanks to its support and development, to likes of 3D printing and new artificial fabrication, it is important, I think, that we know the anatomy, history and future of the "original" luxury fibres that have graced international designer catwalk collections for years.

It's been centuries that luxury fibres such as Silk, Angora, Alpaca, Wool, Cashmere and Mohair, to name a few, that are all most commonly produced in third world countries have provided not only a main source of export and income for themselves, but ultimately created

the "luxury fibres" of the first world countries and the coyness of the wealthy.

Firstly we need to understand the actual meaning of "fibre"... What is "fibre" actually? In a nutshell, it's the "hair-like" materials that transform into "thread", and used to create the foundation from which yarn and fabric are made.

Then secondly, what is the meaning of "Luxury"? In true essence it's a state of great comfort or elegance, especially when involving great expense.

This being noted, there are many luxury fabrics being created to produce and supply an endless list of designer names, herewith a breakdown of a few of these fibres.



Silk



Silk is a natural protein fibre containing about 70-75% of actual fibre fibroin secreted from two salivary glands in the head of the silkworm larva, and about 25-30% sericin, a gum which cements the two filaments together. Silk of the finest quality is obtained from the unwound filament of the silkworm cocoon. To obtain lower grades of silk, broken or waste filaments and damaged cocoons are retained, treated to remove the sericin, and combed. This is then processed into yarn, marketed as spun silk, which is inferior in character to the reeled product and much cheaper. Low grade silk is made from damaged cocoons that were spoiled by emerging moths used for breeding stock. Filaments from the coarse outer portion of the cocoon, which is removed by brushing before reeling, and the inner portion of the cocoon, which remains after reeling the raw silk, are mixed with silk from damaged cocoons to make low grade silk. Silk has a high natural lustre and sheen of a white or cream color. It has a reputation as a luxurious and sensuous fabric, retains its shape, drapes well, caresses the figure, and shimmers with a luster all its own. Silk is naturally hypoallergenic, yet is still breathable; it absorbs moisture and reduces humidity, which makes it cool in the summer and warm in the winter. While silk is one of the strongest fibre at 2.6 to 4.8 grams per denier, it can be weakened by perspiration, deodorants and sunlight. Silk is absorbent so it dyes easily, but some dye colors tend to bleed and fade in water and during stain removal procedures. Sunlight will fade silk items and turn white silk garments yellow.

Angora

Typically when we talk about Angora, we refer to Angora Rabbit Hair, while the fibres from the Angora Goat are more commonly known as Mohair. There are 4 different Angora rabbit breeds, namely, English, French, Satin and Giant. Angora wool harvested from these rabbits are lightweight, silky, fine, and very soft. It is 7 times warmer than wool, and is ideal for baby clothes, winter underwear, sweaters and mittens. As only a small amount of wool can be harvested from these adorable creatures, angora is often combined with other fibres to minimize the high cost of this luxurious fibre.



Alpaca

Yarns made from the fibres of these animals are very soft, lustrous, lightweight and warm. Alpaca is often used for the manufacture of warm, luxurious apparel. The down hairs of the Llama will produce a soft yarn also suitable for the manufacture of apparel. Camel hair is from the extremely soft and fine fur from the undercoat of the camel. Camel's hair can be used alone but is most often combined with fine wool for over-coating, top-coating, sportswear and sports hosiery. Vicuna is the world's most valuable fibre. Vicuna is small and wild and belongs to the Camel family. It yields the finest animal fibre in the world. This fibre is rare and very expensive.



Cashmere

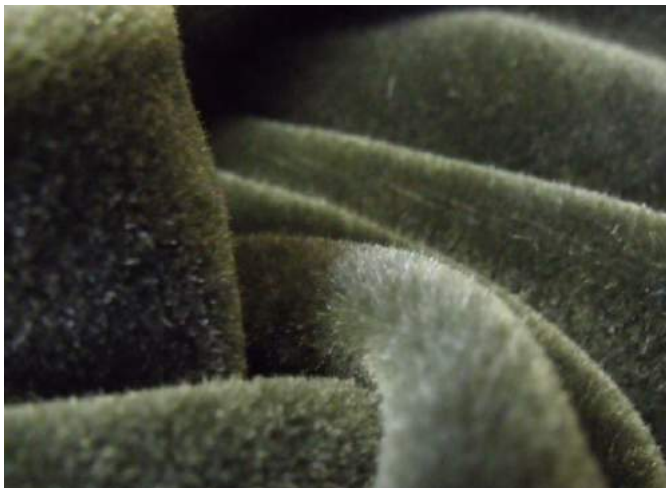
Cashmere, also known as the fibre of kings, is produced from the fine, soft undercoat of hair of the Kashmir goat. Sixty percent of the world's supply of cashmere is produced in China, Mongolia and Tibet, and the remainder from Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Australia and New Zealand. Cashmere yarn is extremely soft, lightweight, yet very warm. It is very luxurious and possesses excellent drape. As each Kashmir goat is capable of producing an average of only 4-6 ounces of under-down per year, Cashmere is hence very expensive.

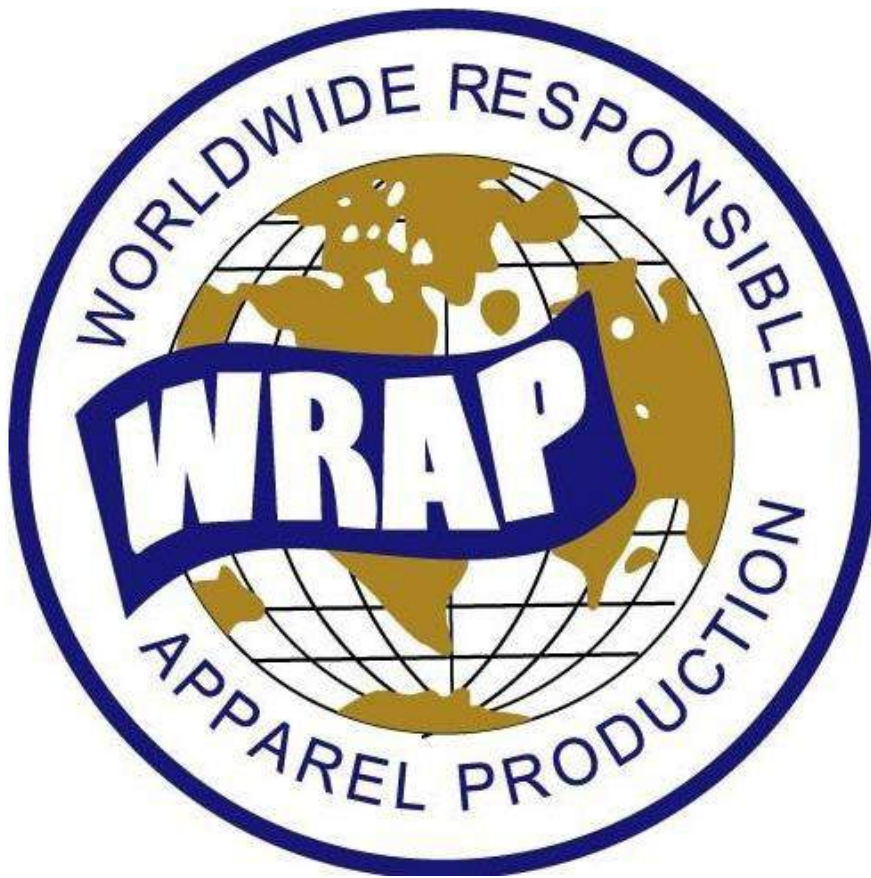


Mohair



Made from the hairs of the Angora goat, mohair is durable, warm, extremely lightweight, and lustrous with a soft hand. It is the most resilient natural textile fibre, and is often combined with other fibres in the production of apparel and home fashion items. The finest grade of mohair is Kid Mohair, obtained from the first shearing of a young angora goat. Kid Mohair possesses the unique feature of natural wicking properties that takes perspiration away from the skin, preventing bacterial build up and odor. ■





Over the Horizon:

A look at the trends shaping social compliance and what it means for Africa.

By: Clay Hickson, WRAP Vice President of Strategy and Business Development & Russell Jowell, WRAP Communications Manager

During the closing years of the 20th century, the world spent a lot of time wondering what life would be like in the fast-approaching 21st century. Would we have flying cars? Would another planet be colonized? Would we finally have cures for many of the deadly diseases long considered incurable? While many of these things have not yet come to pass, what is true is that our world has advanced in unimaginable ways since dawn of the new millennium. While the social compliance industry itself was still relatively young at that time, there were many who were wondering what the future would hold for the nascent industry and how it would shape the greater businesses that it served. In this article, we're going to look at some of the trends shaping the global social compliance industry and what they mean for Africa going forward.

There has no doubt been an uptick in global interest in African sourcing recently. Over the last 5 years or so, price pressures in East Asia and security pressures in South Asia have prompted many apparel and textile companies to search for new, more favorable sourcing destinations, and for many, this search has led them to Africa. Fueling the African interests of many of these companies is the perception that the continent represents a proverbial “clean slate,” a chance to build a new global sourcing base using the compliance lessons learned from other major sourcing destinations, like challenges around building safety and working hours, as a guide for success in Africa. Obviously, social compliance organizations, like Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP), have a major role to play in this effort as well. Recognizing this, we at WRAP have been proactive in taking a leadership role to help develop safe, lawful, and ethical manufacturing across all of Africa. Our social compliance awareness missions to Africa have taken us to every corner of the continent, from North to South and East to West, and we have formed constructive relationships with multiple stakeholder groups including the East, West and Southern African Trade and Investment Hubs supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and individual government groups. Our senior managers frequently visit the continent to attend trade shows and conferences, like Origin Africa, and share information about social compliance and how it can help African manufacturers build a more sustainable industry. We also regularly visit with individual factories throughout the continent to educate them on how to build socially compliant practices into their work and how this can make them more globally competitive. The recent 10-year renewal of the U.S. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trade preference program has no doubt encouraged many African production facilities and building a solid social compliance foundation in Africa now will help all African manufacturers become competitive as sourcing from the continent grows regardless of what future international trade agreements may come into effect.

As mentioned previously, the social compliance community is just that, a community. Since the industry's beginnings some 20 years



Clay Hickson

ago, this community has grown to include dozens of inspection, certification, and standard-setting bodies that all offer legitimate yet varying paths to the single goal of safer, more ethical supply chains. While the origins of these initiatives are as varied as the initiatives themselves, what's also true is that they all are operating in a common arena. Furthermore, while some companies still utilize a single-provider approach to social compliance, whether it be their own in-house operation or with an outside group like WRAP, many more have come to use a “hybrid” approach utilizing several inspection methods and accepting numerous certifications. The obvious outcome here is that all of these varying initiatives will collaborate to create greater consistency and better results for all. Convergence in various forms has already impacted the social compliance industry and will only continue to do so going forward. We've already seen two notable manifestations of this in the Alliance and the Accord in Bangladesh, both groups which brought together hundreds of global apparel industry stakeholders to work for better building safety in one of the world's top apparel supplying countries and whose government is also working on creating a successor to the two groups when their initial mandates expire next year. Two other notable examples are the Social and Labor Convergence Project, which is seeking to develop a “simple, unified and effective industry-wide assessment framework” to create a common audit tool for the





social compliance industry, and the Association of Professional Social Compliance Auditors (APSCA), which launched last year as an effort to “enhance the professionalism and credibility of the individuals and organizations performing independent social compliance audits.” Collaboration within social compliance has already proven that it can advance us further than any group could do alone and this trend will only continue in the years to come.

The other area that will see unprecedented growth and change within social compliance is in technology. Objective information and data are the heartbeat of the social compliance world. Just as collaborating on audit data frameworks and auditor accountability processes will help move our industry forward, so too will developments that help those very auditors collect their necessary data in more efficient ways. Some technology experts say that traditional desktop, and laptop, computers may be all but extinct by 2020 thanks to the rapid development of tablets and other mobile devices. This has opened up the very exciting possibility of not only completely paperless audits, but also real-time audits where an on-site inspector can provide data, even in the form of live video, right from the factory floor. The other benefit provided by paperless audits is the ability to collect, and later analyze, quantities of audit data that would not otherwise have been possible. One of the most popular pages on WRAP’s website is an interactive world map that provides real-time data about currently certified factories, including their location, certification level, and expiration date. Several similar factory mapping projects are also in the works around the world. We at WRAP are also embarking on a major overhaul of our own internal database system that will allow us to analyze inspection data to better identify trends, and perhaps more importantly, better prepare for whatever the future of our field may throw our way.

The social compliance industry is one that has no doubt come of age. In the approximately 20 years of its existence, it has both clearly defined itself and carved out an essential role in the greater supply chain realm. Now, as the industry moves into the next phase of its life, it will do so in a world that demands it keep pace with the rapid rate of societal change that has become the new norm of our time.

Headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, USA, with regional offices in Hong Kong, SAR, and Dhaka, Bangladesh, full-time staff in India and Southeast Asia (Thailand and Vietnam), and for Latin America, WRAP is an independent, objective, non-profit team of global social compliance experts dedicated to promoting safe, lawful, humane, and ethical manufacturing around the world through certification and education. To learn more about WRAP, please visit www.wrapcompliance.org. ■

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Project Upscale

By: Arthur Malan-Murison

The inaugural Project UPSCALE competition took place during the 2016 ORIGIN AFRICA event in Antananarivo, Madagascar. This exciting competition was designed to encourage micro and small creative industries to expand their business and to help self-employed become employers.

Judging was based on a combination of business history, presentation, communication, and understanding of trends, as well as the creativity, range and product quality of each collection.

We showcase the winners on the next pages and are so encouraged by their successes, that we now launch – “ORIGIN AFRICA UPSCALE” – nurturing our small businesses is not a “project” - it’s an ongoing commitment.

We will again host the competition during our ORIGIN AFRICA Mauritius 2017 trade show, but will add a suite of trainings and workshops specifically designed for this audience on the days immediately prior to the event. We also plan to host a fashion show during the opening day Gala dinner, for which ORIGIN AFRICA UPSCALE entrants will be eligible.

To further support ORIGIN AFRICA UPSCALE, we very proudly introduce our new and ongoing ambassadors to our “UPSCALE” brand. Ebele Udoh from Nigeria, Akinyi Odongo from Kenya and Joyce Chimanye from Zimbabwe.

These remarkable designers will share with you their experiences, successes, challenges and growth. Their story’s and contact details are on our ORIGIN AFRICA website, be sure to visit www.originafrica.org



PROJECT-UPSCALE WINNER 2016 - ROBIN ZOE



Specializing in fine, hand-smocked children's clothing and beachwear accessories, ROBIN ZOE MADAGASCAR was founded in 1995.

We are proud of the creativity and originality of our Malagasy Artercraft and our abilities to achieve client's wishes. All of our products are made by our experienced team of hard working craftsmen. We take great pride not only in the outstanding quality of our products but also in the environment in which they are made. Every product that bears our name was made ethically and in a socially responsible way.

We have experimented with the European market where the our outstanding quality of our products were rewarded by the trophy of quality in Spain. Now we are looking for opportunities with the American market, - our new goal"

From it's inception in a small facility, ROBIN ZOE has gone on to become a modern company without losing the charm of tradition

and handmade manufacturing. Our signature line of detailed hand-smocked garments with original motifs often alludes to the appropriate seasons or of nature and wildlife. They capture the joy of childhood at its best.

"ANAKA Beachwear accessories" is a lifestyle collection providing diverse and fashion forward resort beachwear looks to women of all ages. The ANAKA collection is meticulously and intricately hand craft by our team of skilled artisans and provides a unique range of colorful bags. We work with 3 villages who provide us with the raw material. They're encouraged with the work we give them however, we would like to help them become more independent by providing them with education, craft skills, and so forth.

Today the global phenomenon of return to nature and authentic materials makes Madagascar amongst all countries, one with high potential outreach.



FIRST RUNNER UP - KATUNGULU MWENDWA DESIGN



Katungulu Mwendwa was born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya, aware that Kenya as well as other African cities rapid economic development may lead to the death of its traditional cultures. She hopes that by referencing these cultures in contemporized designs while promoting her collections as extensions of these cultures, this may popularize and create more awareness of them to safeguard their longevity. By experimenting with modern techniques, innovative fabrics and traditional methods, Katungulu Mwendwa designs can be described as timeless, transcendent, and pragmatic wear that can be worn in all seasons.

The Spring/ Summer 2017 collection named “Work in Progress” is an amalgamation of Dogon architecture, sisal skirts, androgyny, explorations of self identity with a touch of joie de vivre that is transcendent of the designer’s life.

Katungulu Mwendwa collaborated with a women’s group in Makueni, working with ethical dying practices and traditional hand looming methods to create a signature cotton fabric that has been paired with the softest Kenyan lamb leather, silk crêpe and fluid cottons to create the collection.



SECOND RUNNER UP - KEEXS - JIDE IPAYE



KEEXS is the first innovative and social footwear Brand in Africa. The brand is focused on the design and manufacturing of Urban and Athleisure type footwear. KEEXS products are unisex and draws design inspirations from its African Roots ranging from influential and iconic figures, Culture, Arts, Music and socioeconomic issues.

The KEEXS brand has been featured on numerous platforms ranging from The African Fashion week Nigeria, Heineken Lagos Fashion Week, eNCA news, TV5Monde and CNN African Voices as well as the second runner up in the Project upscale 2016 competition at Origin Africa Madagascar.

KEEXS future plans are basically to grow their brand and retail partnerships and operations across Africa and eventually the rest of the continent. ■



Nigerian government allocates N51bn to garment industry

Content Courtesy of: Fibre to Fashion

The Government of Nigeria has allocated N51 billion (\$162.034 million) in this year's budget for development of the country's garment and textile industry. The budget allocation is part of the Nigerian government's efforts to promote the garment and textile sector to create jobs, diversify its economy, and to increase the use of 'Made in Nigeria' clothing.

"The ministry has allotted over N51bn in the 2017 budget just to promote our garment industry, because we know it is an area where we have to get it right. And so, out of the six special economic zones, three will be for textiles," minister of state for industry, trade and investment, Aisha Abubakar said at the opening session of a workshop organised by the Bank of Industry (BoI) for garment operators in Abuja.

The minister said that the government understands the importance of the garment sector in creating jobs and reducing poverty. She added that the government was working hard to support the industry through massive investment in infrastructure, which would help bring down the price of cotton, according to Nigerian media reports.

Waheed Olagunju, acting managing director of BoI, said the bank has set up a N1 billion (\$3.177 million) fund for the textile sector. Loans are given out from this fund at nine per cent interest rate and payable between three to five years, with a moratorium period of six to 12 months. ■



ORIGIN AFRICA - 2016

Antananarivo, Madagascar

ORIGIN AFRICA is ACTIF's platform to promote the African cotton, textile, apparel and associated industries.

Hosted in a different country each year, and continually evolving, the annual ORIGIN AFRICA Trade Event is the "Go To" event you cannot afford to miss..

The ORIGIN AFRICA 2016, 7th Trade Show which took place from the 3rd - 5th November, 2016 at the Forello Centre in Antananarivo, Madagascar, turned out a huge success with over 140 exhibitors.





We look forward to welcoming you to Origin Africa Mauritius 2017.
Africa's first convention for the cotton, textile, apparel and fashion sectors.
Conference: 25 and 26 September - Intercontinental Hotel.
Trade Fair: 27-29 September - SVICC



AFRICAN COTTON TEXTILE & APPAREL FEDERATION

ACTIF is a regional trade body formed in June 2005 by the cotton, textile and apparel sectors from across sub-Saharan Africa to create a unified and recognized voice in both regional and global trade affairs. ACTIF's mandate is to bring the disparate needs of the cotton, textile and apparel sectors into cohesive and consensus driven positions at regional and international trade and development forums.

ACTIF's role as the voice of the African Farmer to Fashion value chain continues to grow and ACTIF is well recognized nationally, regionally and internationally.

Our Vision is that of an integrated cotton, textile and apparel industry that effectively competes on the world market.

Our Mission is to develop and deliver services that enhance our Members competitiveness in the world market.

Primary Activities include:

- Lobbying for Beneficial Trade Arrangements
- Facilitating Trade
- Encouraging Investment
- Showcasing African cotton, textile & apparel via our Origin Africa brand.

Welcome:

We invite you to add your voice, skills and knowledge to our African initiative - www.actifafrica.com.



ORIGIN AFRICA

Origin Africa is ACTIF's platform to promote African cotton, textile and apparel value chains through ongoing initiatives dedicated to:

- improving trade in and with Africa, and
- to raise awareness of Africa as a place to do business, and, as an increasingly important sourcing destination for international textile and apparel products.

We collaborate with African producers, designers, small businesses and national organizations to provide information about and increased visibility for our Members and the African cotton, textile and apparel sectors. International partners, buyers and a wide range of experts support this initiative by providing up to date information on specific topics.

The Origin Africa platform compliments ACTIF's efforts in promoting regional value chains, building business linkages and increasing trade and investment across the region.

News, views, analysis and opinions are presented in our quarterly magazine while our annual Trade Event brings together stakeholders from across Africa and the world.

MAGAZINE

Origin Africa Magazine is produced bi-annually, distribution is exclusively digital.

DISTRIBUTION

Origin Africa Magazine is digitally distributed to over 4,000 strategic contacts many of whom are Apex associations in the cotton, textile and apparel sectors across Africa and globally for onward distribution to their individual companies. In addition, the Magazine is promoted on our active social media platform including twitter and Facebook.

TRADE EVENT

Now in its 8th year, The Origin Africa Trade Event, is widely recognized as Africa's Premier trade event for the cotton, textiles and apparel industries of Africa. Our 2015 event, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and our 2016 event in Antananarivo, Madagascar, each brought together exhibitors from over 25 countries and a strong contingent of international buyers and sourcing experts from major international retailers, brands and wholesalers.

The Trade Fair showcases the products, services and skills of a wide variety of exhibitors while informative and topical seminars stimulate discussion. Side events generate networking acclaimed networking and relationship building opportunities.

2017 Venue: In line with our Pan African vision and mandate the event is usually hosted in a different African country each year and will in 2017, be held Mauritius. In response to public demand, Origin Africa 2017 graduates to full Convention status.

CONFERENCE

Enhancing Productivity the Path to Sustainable Competitiveness.

Date: 25th and 26th September 2017

TRADE FAIR

Date: 27th to 29th September 2017

Core to Couture.

Regular press releases will be released up until, during and after the event.

For Press Invitation, Accreditation or any further information please contact Press@Originafrica.org.

