



BARAZA LA BIASHARA

A Roundtable with Africa's Captains of Industry



**Serie 1: Digital Trust in Trade – Infrastructure,
Data and the Politics of Access;**

Unlocking barriers to Kenya's competitiveness and
leveraging opportunities



Wednesday

26

November 2025



The Tribe
Hotel

Context and Rationale

Baraza la Biashara is TradeMark Africa's platform to convene the most influential CEOs to tackle trade barriers, shape solutions, and co-create the future of doing business in the countries where TMA operates.

In addition to being a networking event, it will also provide a space for candour, strategic dialogue and innovation, aligning public-private ambitions in a way that delivers results to businesses, in line with TMA's mission of faster clearance times, fewer barriers, lower costs, better margins. For example, 100 trade systems in public and private sector has cut average transaction costs by about 50%. (Independent evaluation 2024).



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(Independent evaluation 2024).

Hosted by TMA in partnership with its Board of Directors, led by its Chair and former Ethiopia Prime Minister, H.E Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, Baraza la Biashara will be an exclusive, closed-door dialogue series that flips the script, bringing private sector first, policy second. And we are starting with the issues that move the bottom line.

Objectives

01

Private sector as co-investors and co-creators

- Identify opportunities for co-investment, policy engagement, and joint programming between TMA and the private sector to inform programming in Strategy 3 that supports inclusive economic growth.
- Establish a continuous feedback mechanism to assess the impact of TMA's interventions on businesses, using insights to lobby continuous funding and political support. Position the private sector not merely as beneficiaries, but as co-designers of trade solutions.



02

Feedback-driven, insight-led programming

- Engage senior private sector leaders to uncover systemic barriers and enablers within the trade and investment environment and use these insights to design responsive, innovative programming structured around PPP model.



Serie 1:

Digital Trust in Trade – Infrastructure, Data and the Politics of Access

Introduction

The ASEAN Digital Integration Framework has facilitated a

12%

reduction in trade transaction costs across member countries.

(ASEAN, 2019)



Meanwhile Intra-Africa trade fell to

\$190bn

due to tariff barriers, border delays, tensions and political instability.

(World Bank, January 2025)



With this in mind, digitalisation of trade systems and processes is now more than ever needed if Africa is to successfully reduce barriers to intra-African trade and increase its share in the global trade. Kenya’s experience with the Trade Logistics Information Pipeline (TLIP), implemented in partnership with Kenya Revenue Authority, demonstrates that clearing goods can be achieved in hours, not days.



TLIP is a secure, integrated platform that enables the sharing of trade documents across systems in seconds, replacing days of delay with real-time visibility. Already being piloted between Kenya and the UK, TLIP has connected key players across the supply chain, from customs to shippers. It has helped reduce delays, cut paperwork, lower trade costs and improve risk management.

This shift is both about how digital trade will happen and who stands to benefit from it. As governments across Africa accelerate the digitisation of trade systems, the private sector faces new and urgent questions:

Who controls trade data?



Are digital systems truly interoperable across borders?



Can businesses trust government-run platforms with their commercially sensitive information?



The session will also open a broader conversation on **“No-Stop Border,”** raised at the Africa Trade Development Forum in Kigali in 2024 and one powered by digital technologies such as TLIP, e-certificates and cargo tracking systems, it envisions a future in which borders facilitate rather than frustrate trade.

Series Objectives



Demonstrate TLIP's capabilities and governance model, highlighting lessons for scaling digital trade solutions across Africa.



Facilitate open dialogue on data sovereignty, interoperability and the balance between public oversight and private sector needs.



Lay the groundwork for a CEO-led coalition to champion a "Trusted Digital Trade Framework" anchored in mutual accountability and system interoperability.



Expected Outcomes for Serie 1

01



At least five actionable recommendations distilled and submitted to TMA's Business Competitiveness teams. A curated set of insights from CEOs and digital trade leaders that reflects business priorities and risk perceptions, to be fed into TMA's programming and policy advocacy, particularly around digital trade systems and AfCFTA-aligned harmonisation efforts.

02



Draft a trusted digital trade framework – co designed and grounded in three pillars least of which is cross border payment systems interoperability. A working draft to be drafted within two months of the forum and endorsed by at least 3 CEO's for further development.

03



Secure partnership for iSOKO sustainability plan. Deepened engagement with influential CEOs and CIOs from sectors driving digitised trade (e.g., banking, telecoms, logistics, e-commerce), positioning TMA iSOKO as an African E-commerce platform of choice.

04



Use the Kenya-UK TLIP pilot to anchor a live demonstration and facilitate technical exchange on governance, interoperability, and scale potential.



Our Speakers



H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe

TradeMark Africa's Board Chair and the former Executive Prime Minister of Ethiopia

He is the second Executive Prime Minister of Ethiopia from August 2012 until April 2018 and previously occupied various government and regional positions including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (2010-12) and Chair, African Union (2013-14) among others.

After leaving office, Desalegn co-founded and is the chairperson of Hailemariam & Roman Foundation that focuses on mother and child healthcare, prevention of non-communicable diseases, nutrition and climate smart agriculture and conservation-based ecotourism. He also serves as board member and chairperson of AGRA, International Crisis Group (ICG), The Brenthurst Foundation among others.

H.E. holds a master's degree in water and environmental engineering from Tampere University of Technology in Finland and a master's in Organisational Leadership from Azusa Pacific University in California.



Hon. Ndiritu Muriithi

Chairperson, Kenya Revenue Authority

Appointed in late 2024, Hon. Ndiritu Muriithi brings a "service-first" approach to the Kenya Revenue Authority, balancing revenue mobilisation with business facilitation. An economist and former Governor of Laikipia County (2017-2022), he implemented the "Smart Towns Initiative" and launched Kenya's first county infrastructure bond.

As Assistant Minister for Industrialisation, he was a key figure in reforms that improved Kenya's "Ease of Doing Business" ranking.



Ms. Jane Karuku

Group MD & CEO, East African Breweries Limited

Jane Karuku oversees East African Breweries Limited operations across Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Appointed Group MD in January 2021, she previously led the subsidiary Kenya Breweries Limited (2015-2020) and served as President of AGRA (2012-2014). She was instrumental in establishing the Ksh 15 billion Kisumu brewery.

Karuku chairs the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) and the Kenya Vision 2030 Delivery Board.



Dr. Julius Kipngetich

Group CEO, Jubilee Holdings Limited

Currently leading the region's largest insurance group, Dr Kipngetich is a specialist in organisational restructuring. He served as Director of the Kenya Wildlife Service (2004–2012), transforming it from a loss-making parastatal into a profitable entity. His previous roles include COO of Equity Group Holdings and CEO of Uchumi Supermarkets.

He sits on the boards of the Kenya Tourism Board and the Sovereign Group.



Flora Mutahi

Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Melvin Marsh International Ltd

Flora Mutahi is a distinguished entrepreneur and corporate leader renowned for her pioneering contributions to Kenya's business landscape. She is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Melvin Marsh International Ltd, the company behind Kenya's first and leading flavoured tea brand, Melvins Tea, through which she has redefined the local tea industry with innovation and excellence.

Flora holds the distinction of being the first female Chairperson of both the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), where she championed industrial policy reforms and private sector competitiveness.

Her governance experience spans multiple sectors, including financial services, insurance, manufacturing, regulatory bodies, and the United Nations Global Compact. Under her leadership, Melvin Marsh International has consistently ranked among Kenya's Top 100 Mid-Sized Companies and earned the Top 100 FiRe Award and Superbrands recognition.

Flora holds an MBA from the University of Cape Town, a B.Sc. in Finance and Accounts (UK), and advanced certifications in executive coaching and marketing. In 2025, she was named among Forbes' 50 Over 50 Global List for impactful leadership.



Mr. Patrick Obath

Chairperson, Trade Catalyst Africa

As Chair of Trade Catalyst Africa—TMA's commercial investment arm—Patrick Obath focuses on unlocking private capital for trade infrastructure. He is the Vice Chair of the ICC World Council and former Managing Director of Kenya Shell. His role is to provide the investor's perspective, focusing on the cost of doing business and the commercial viability of regulatory reform.



Ms. Celestine Munda

Board Member, TradeMark Africa

A distinguished governance and financial expert with a 30-year career spanning assurance, consulting, and institutional reform. Celestine is a former Senior Partner at Ernst & Young (EY). She is celebrated for her transition from technical auditing to high-level boardroom strategy, specialising in consumer products, oil & gas, and the public sector.

Programme of Events



Date:
Wednesday, 26 November 2025



Time:
0700 hrs - 0840 hrs

Time	Activity	Responsible
7:00 - 7:15 am	Arrival, Networking and Breakfast	TMA
7:15 - 7:20 am	Master of Ceremony	Erick Sirali
7:20 - 7:30 am	Opening Remarks	H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe
7:30 - 7:40 am	Contextual Framing	Patrick Obath
7:40 - 8:20 am	High Level Panel Discussion	Moderator: ◦ H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Chair of the Board at TradeMark Africa. Panellists: ◦ Hon. Ndiritu Muriithi, Chairperson, Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) ◦ Jane Karuku, Group MD & CEO, East African Breweries Limited (EABL) and Chairperson of Kenya Association of Manufacturers. ◦ Dr Julius Kipngetich, Group CEO, Jubilee Holdings Limited ◦ Flora Mutahi, Founder & CEO, Melvin Marsh International Ltd
8:20 - 8:30 am	Open Floor Discussion	H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Chair of the Board at TradeMark Africa
8:30 - 8:40 am	Mandate Presentation	Celestine Munda
8:40 am	Guests depart at their own pleasure	TMA



For further information, please contact:

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