

#CNVERGE '25 CONCEPT NOTE

Theme: Rethinking Commodity Finance for Growth

Background & Rationale

Global demand for commodities continues to rise, driven by population growth, energy transitions, and the increasing need for raw materials in manufacturing and technology. For Africa — a continent endowed with over 30% of the world's mineral reserves (according to the UNEP's estimates), 8% of global oil production, and about 60% of the world's arable uncultivated land (according to the African Development Bank) — this presents a significant opportunity to harness commodity trade as a lever for industrialization, infrastructure development and economic transformation.

Yet, despite this potential, Africa remains heavily dependent on the export of unprocessed raw materials. According to the African Development Bank, commodities account for over 80% of Africa's total merchandise exports, but much of this trade is in low-value primary products. This overreliance exposes economies to global price volatility and limits the continent's ability to capture higher value along commodity value chains. Moreover, the infrastructure and financing gaps continue to constrain intra-African trade and limit access to global markets.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the continent contributes less than 3% of global trade, amounting to approximately \$1 trillion out of a global total exceeding \$30 trillion. If the continent is to grow its influence and secure a more equitable share of global commerce, this figure must rise significantly. The path forward lies in transforming how Africa trades — not just what it trades. This means moving beyond raw exports to value-added production, leveraging data and digital tools, and unlocking innovative financing mechanisms that can support trade across the entire commodity lifecycle.

In this context, **CNVERGE '25** will convene leaders and stakeholders from banking, trade finance, commodity trading, and policymaking sectors to reimagine the future of Africa's commodity trade and how it is financed. The conference will assess emerging trends and prospects, examine structural and regulatory risks, and explore innovative solutions to enhance local value addition; improve access to trade finance; and build a more resilient, integrated, competitive trade ecosystem.

Key Discussion Areas

- **Commodity Trade as a Catalyst for Africa's Economic Renewal**
As African economies rebound from global shocks, commodity trade offers a strategic lever for recovery. This session explores how targeted reforms and investments in the commodity sector can drive inclusive growth, job creation, and macroeconomic stability.
- **The Role of the Bank in Commodity Growth: The Case of GHIB**
Financial institutions play a critical role in enabling commodity trade. This session spotlights GHIB's approach to supporting commodity-linked growth through innovative financing, risk management, and strategic partnerships.
- **Exporting Data, Not Just Goods: The Emerging Role of Technology**
In the digital age, data is as valuable as the commodities themselves. This session explores how trade intelligence—through analytics, digital reporting, and transparency tools—can enhance creditworthiness and unlock better financing terms. From blockchain traceability to AI-driven logistics, innovation is reshaping how commodities are produced, traded, and financed. This session highlights cutting-edge technologies and business models that are transforming Africa's commodity landscape.

- **Intra-Africa Trade: The Way Out of the Tariff Conundrum and Into Alternative Markets**
With global markets becoming more protectionist, intra-African trade offers a vital alternative. Global demand for commodities is increasingly unpredictable. This session focuses on how African economies can build financial resilience against demand-side shocks, including trade wars and protectionist policies.
- **Reimagining the Commodity Value Chain Through Innovation in Financing**
Traditional financing tools often fall short in today's complex commodity markets. This session examines innovative financial instruments that support every stage of the commodity lifecycle—from pre-export to post-sale.
- **Embedding a Compliance Culture in Commodity Trade**
In today's global trade environment, regulatory compliance is a strategic imperative. As scrutiny from international regulators and financiers intensifies, African commodity traders must embed compliance into their core operations. This session explores practical steps to build resilient compliance frameworks that not only meet global standards but also enhance credibility, unlock financing, and ensure long-term sustainability.
- **When Trade Breaks Down: Claims, Recoveries, and Dispute Resolution**
Defaults and disputes are inevitable in cross-border trade. This practical session provides guidance on managing claims, enforcing rights across jurisdictions, and recovering value in complex commodity transactions.
- **Trade Frictions and Market Access Barriers**
African exporters face high non-tariff barriers, complex documentation, and quality standard issues, especially in global markets. Intra-African trade is also hindered by border inefficiencies and a lack of regulatory harmonization.

The GHIB Cocoa Experience: Financing Value from Bean to Bar

- **Commodity Financing – Our Work with Major Commodity Exporters**
For over two decades, GHIB has been a key partner to major commodity exporters in Africa, we have) provided collection services and have participated in Multi-Million Dollar syndicated facilities. Our experience here underscores the importance of reliable banking partnerships in enabling trade flows.
- **Value Chain Financing – Our Support to Africa Based Corporates**
GHIB has extensive experience in supporting value addition leading to increased margins for Africa based commodity exporters. This has been particularly successful with Corporates involved in Agri-commodities including Cocoa and Cashews. Critical aspects of this support have included export financing options. In one notable example GHIB's Banking has been a critical catalyst to grow a Ghanaian Cocoa processing start up into a major multinational. The firm now produces Cocoa liquor, butter, cake and other finished consumer products for markets around the globe. This partnership exemplifies how targeted financial interventions can move African corporates up the value chain and enhance participation in the global economy. our relationship with Niche Cocoa, one of Ghana's largest cocoa processors. By providing working capital and trade finance solutions, we have enabled Niche to expand its operations significantly. Today, Niche produces cocoa liquor, butter, cake, and finished consumer products for markets across the globe. This partnership exemplifies how targeted financial inter can move Africa up the value chain and enhance its participation in the global cocoa economy.



Format of the Sessions

CNVERGE '25 will feature a mix of engaging session formats designed to foster in-depth discussions and actionable insights:

- **Keynote Speeches:** Thought leaders and policymakers will provide strategic insights into Africa's commodity trade landscape.
- **Panel Discussions:** Experts from banking, trade, and regulatory bodies will explore trade finance, risks, and growth opportunities.
- **Fireside Chats:** One-on-one conversations with industry leaders on specific challenges and success stories.
- **Case Study Presentations:** Real-world examples of trade finance solutions and commodity market strategies.
- **Breakout Sessions:** Interactive workshops addressing key trade finance and commodity trade issues.
- **Networking Sessions:** Opportunities for stakeholders to connect, share insights, and explore business partnerships.

Expected Outcomes

CNVERGE '25 aims to deliver tangible outcomes, including:

- **Knowledge Exchange:** Disseminating best practices and innovative trade solutions.
- **Actionable Policy Recommendations:** Insights for governments and regulatory bodies to improve Africa's trade environment.
- **Enhanced Trade Finance Accessibility:** Strategies for improving liquidity and risk-sharing mechanisms.
- **Investment and Partnership Opportunities:** Connecting financiers, traders, and investors.
- **Business Development:** Enhancing our networking while originating transactions with new and existing partners.

So, Let's CNVERGE!

CNVERGE '25 seeks to drive actionable insights and foster collaborations that will strengthen Africa's position in global commodity markets. By convening key stakeholders, the conference will address challenges, identify growth opportunities, and explore how trade finance innovations can unlock Africa's full potential in the commodity sector. GHIB remains committed to shaping the future of African trade and development.

