

National Bar Association and AfCFTA Secretariat Forge Groundbreaking Alliance to Advance Trade and Economic Justice

Historic Memorandum of Understanding Positions NBA as a Strategic Partner in Strengthening Legal Frameworks and Investment Opportunities Across the Continent

ACCRA, GHANA, April 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On April 5, 2025, the [National Bar Association \(NBA\)](#)—the nation's largest and oldest organization representing African American legal professionals—made history by signing a transformative [Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\)](#) with the [African Continental Free Trade Area \(AfCFTA\)](#) Secretariat, establishing

a bold new chapter in cross-continental legal and economic collaboration. This landmark agreement deepened the NBA's commitment to supporting the implementation of the AfCFTA through legal capacity building, investment governance, and meaningful engagement with the diaspora.

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The signing ceremony, held in Accra, Ghana, convened legal practitioners, policy leaders, ambassadors, and trade experts committed to expanding Africa's legal infrastructure in support of intra-African trade and U.S.-Africa business partnerships. The ceremony was followed by a reception sponsored by the Adomi Advisory Group PLLC at Bridgeview Resort in Akosombo, Ghana.

“This landmark agreement underscores our shared

conviction that strong legal institutions are the backbone of sustainable trade and economic growth,” said Wiley S. Adams, President of the National Bar Association. “By partnering with the



NBA President Wiley S. Adams and Secretary General Wamkele Mene

AfCFTA Secretariat, the NBA is advancing its global mission to promote justice, strengthen economic ties, and empower communities across Africa and the diaspora. We extend our sincere gratitude to Secretary-General Wamkele Mene for his visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to building bridges through legal collaboration."

Barbara A. Simmons, Chair of the NBA's International Law Section and Co-Chair of the AfCFTA Initiative, added: "This is more than a symbolic gesture—this is a substantive partnership that will shape how legal and trade professionals across the diaspora engage in Africa's transformation and growth. The NBA International Law Section is proud to stand at the forefront of this historic moment, bringing strategic insight, legal expertise, and an unwavering commitment to building a stronger, more connected global community."



MoU Signing Ceremony



NBA President Wiley S. Adams signs MoU

The NBA's AfCFTA Initiative was launched to foster meaningful collaboration between African and American legal experts, build legal capacity, and help ensure that the benefits of the AfCFTA are equitably distributed—particularly among women, youth, and marginalized communities.

Johanna LeBlanc, Co-Chair of the NBA AfCFTA Initiative and former Chief Foreign Policy Advisor to the NBA, emphasized:

This MoU reflects a vision we have long pursued—to bridge African and American legal systems for mutual prosperity. I am confident that this partnership will empower the legal community to serve as a catalyst for sustainable economic growth and rule-based trade integration across Africa. The AfCFTA is a transformative force, with the potential to boost Africa's collective GDP by nearly \$3 trillion and lift over 30 million people out of extreme poverty, according to the World Bank. At a time when many nations are turning inward, this collaboration stands out as a timely and strategic step forward—accelerating AfCFTA's implementation and positioning Africa as a central player in the global economy.

Rebekah Ratliff, 1st Vice Chair of the NBA's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Section praised the agreement's emphasis on legal frameworks and peaceful resolution mechanisms. She said, "Legal certainty and access to fair dispute settlement mechanisms are cornerstones of successful trade regimes. The ADR Section is eager to contribute toward building capacity in Africa's dispute resolution space and to promote peaceful, efficient resolution of cross-border investment conflicts."

During the visit, the delegation held high-level meetings with Ghana's Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Dr. Dominic Akuritinga Ayine, as well as Justices of the Court of Appeals, including Justice Denis Dominic Ajei Adjei, Justice Christopher Archer, Justice Kwaku Tawia Ackah Bofo, Justice Ernest Owusu Dapaah, and Justice Jennifer Abena Dadzie. The delegation also engaged with the leadership of the American Chamber of Commerce – Ghana to explore legal and commercial synergies in advancing AfCFTA implementation. Additional meetings were held with Ambassador Erieka Bennett from the Diaspora African Forum (DAF) and officials from the Office of Diaspora Affairs to discuss avenues for deepening diaspora engagement in the AfCFTA framework.

The NBA and the AfCFTA Secretariat will begin rolling out joint programs in the coming months, including legal symposia and training workshops.

This partnership marks a pivotal step toward strengthening the legal architecture underpinning the AfCFTA—the world's largest free trade area by number of participating countries—and expanding meaningful legal engagement between Africa and its global diaspora.

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About the National Bar Association: The National Bar Association was founded in 1925 and is the nation's oldest and largest national network of predominantly African American attorneys and judges. The NBA represents the interests of over 67,000 lawyers, judges, law professors, and law students.

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