

African Free Trade Zone Agreement (AFTZ)

Countries Involved:

Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Swaziland, South Africa, Tanzania, United Republic Of, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe,

Area of Cooperation:

goods, energy, infrastructure

Signed at:

2008

The leaders of three African trading blocs signed an agreement to create a free trade zone of 26 countries with a GDP of an estimated \$624bn (£382.9bn).

It is hoped the deal will ease access to markets within the region and end problems arising from the fact several countries belong to multiple groups.

Summary:

The deal also aims to strengthen the bloc's bargaining power when negotiating international deals.

Analysts say the agreement will help intra-regional trade and boost growth.

The three blocs which struck the deal were the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa).

The agreement will also lend its backing to joint infrastructure and energy projects in the zone.