



DEAL ME IN: Rethinking U.S. Trade and Investment in Post-COVID Africa

Thank you to those who joined us for [our webinar](#), **DEAL ME IN: Rethinking U.S. Trade and Investment in Post-COVID Africa**, on February 17, 2021. Below please find key takeaways for consideration:

Eric Reading (Abt Division Vice President, International Development), explained that Abt leverages public sector support to broker private sector trade and investment deals that wouldn't otherwise happen, through the prism of inclusion and lasting impact.

Robert Skidmore (Chief of the Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness Section, International Trade Centre) outlined four pillars of the New Normal for doing business with the US and Africa: *resilient*, *digital*, *inclusive*, and *sustainable*. He also pointed to reasons for optimism, including the first African director general of the World Trade Organization, the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the US pan-agency Prosper Africa initiative.

Ezekiel Odiogo (Head, Private Sector Operations, Africa Investment Forum, African Development Bank) addressed new and outstanding challenges in the current environment, including risk asymmetry on Africa's investment opportunities, and a dearth of curated pipeline of bankable deals. Even so, Africa's infrastructure remains a \$90 billion annual investment opportunity, and the AfCFTA is a game-changer, opening a \$3.4 trillion intraregional market.

Paloma Schackert (Co-Founder and CEO of Ethical Apparel Africa) said her company has taken advantage of West Africa's unique value proposition for US buyers – duty-free, competitive labor cost, vertical integration potential, *and* proximity to market. She has developed a “model factory” leveraging digital technology with de-risking co-investment from USAID Trade Hub to generate millions in export and hundreds of jobs, mainly for women.

Wilson Kutegeka (CEO and Founder of ClinicMaster International) explained how he has leveraged public and private funding—including a partnership with Mt. Sinai Hospital in the US—to expand his health information management system to more than 120 facilities across East Africa. COVID-19 forced the company to modify its in-person support strategy to migrate more operations to the cloud.

Pamela Bates (Partner, Securitas Global Risk Solutions) parsed how trade credit insurance and political risk insurance can accelerate investment in emerging markets like much of Africa. As the policy environment improves for US-Africa business and investments, de-risking products are an essential element to accelerate transactions.