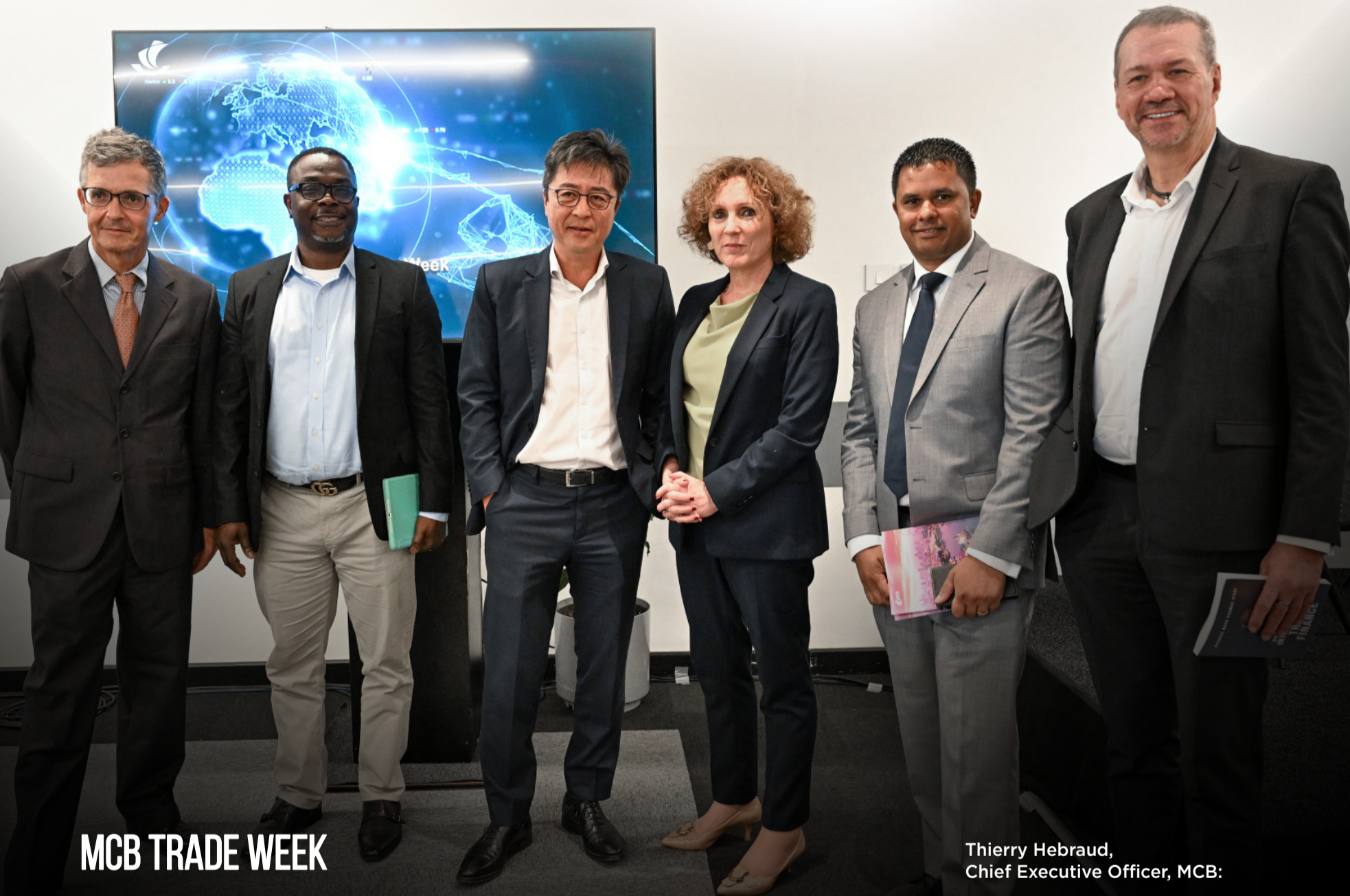


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MCB TRADE WEEK

MOVING UP THE VALUE CHAIN AS AFRICAN BUSINESSES

Thierry Hebraud,
Chief Executive Officer, MCB:

**“We’re an
African bank !”**

Dr. Rebecca Harding,
Independent Trade Economist

**“Everyone around the
world is searching for
solutions...”**

Shabnam Esmael, President, Mauritian
Association of Women Business Leaders

**“The future is in Africa.
The future is women. The
future is sustainability.”**

Aldo Sydonie, Head of Mauritian &
Regional Corporates, MCB

**“For established Mauritian
companies seeking growth,
the natural direction is Africa”**

Arnaud Levasseur, Team Leader,
Global Trade Solutions, MCB

**“We need to gear up,
learn more, and forge
more partnerships”**

MCB TRADE WEEK

Enabling African Trade Growth with a Sustainability Lens



MCB Group hosted the second edition of its Trade Week, which began in Seychelles on 29 April. This event, aimed at providing trade insights, business intelligence, and bespoke trade solutions to participants, took place across several locations: Seychelles and Mauritius. The theme, “*Enabling African Trade Growth with a Sustainability Lens*,” reflected MCB’s commitment to driving meaningful change in the African trade landscape as a key trade partner.

The event on 29 and 30 April in Seychelles featured two interactive trade workshops for MCB Seychelles clients, focusing on various techniques within supply chain finance with an emphasis on sustainable trade.

Arnaud Levasseur, Team Leader of the Global Trade Solutions at MCB, led an exclusive interactive workshop that focused on “Unlocking the value of your supply chain.” Targeting professionals and aspiring entrepreneurs in the tourism industry, this Masterclass provided valuable insights through real-world scenarios.

In the afternoon, attendees participated in a trade conference that highlighted some key drivers of global trade, future opportunities in African trade, and how sustainability could be integrated into supply chain financing. The objective of this Trade Week was to increase awareness of how African trade is vital for economic development.

Rebecca Harding, an independent trade economist, shared her perspective on the future African trade landscape over

the next 5-10 years, offering insights to help economic actors better align their strategies with the vast opportunities within African trade corridors.

During the event, MCB also launched its Global Trade Portal in Seychelles via trade.mcb.sc. This portal demonstrated the bank’s commitment to providing its clients with a platform to explore new markets for importing and exporting products and services worldwide. The platform included a database of over 1 million importers, 25,000 updated market reports, and more than 10,000 trade shows. Clients could also access information to manage their shipments and ensure compliance with rules and regulations in their countries or areas of interest.

Across Seychelles and Mauritius, this Trade Week event brought together international trade experts who shed light on crucial trade trends, the significant potential for African trade growth, and the imperative of incorporating sustainability into trade practices.

Arnaud Levasseur, Team Leader for Global Trade Solutions within MCB’s Corporate & Institutional Banking, commented, “*The second edition of our Trade Week event aimed to provide expert insights into current trends in trade, especially in light of geopolitical challenges and sustainability-related issues, among others. As businesses continue to navigate dynamic market landscapes, the efficiency and effectiveness of the supply chain become increasingly crucial. This event is a clear demonstration of MCB’s commitment to helping its clients grow and sustain their business for long-term success.*”

About the Speakers

DR REBECCA HARDING is a Senior Fellow of the British Foreign Policy Group, an Independent trade economist, a public speaker and digital and sustainable trade and supply chain specialist. With over 12 years of experience working independently with banks, non-banks, fintechs, and media outlets, she has provided trade and trade finance strategy advice, insights, and expertise.

ARNAUD LEVASSEUR is MCB’s in-house expert in supply chain finance, with over 17 years of expertise in the field. He has been a key speaker at various conferences, serving customers and internal stakeholders while overseeing complex cross-border trade and leading a dynamic global trade solutions team.

Bernard Jackson, Managing Director of MCB Seychelles, added, “*The Trade Week in Seychelles reaffirmed MCB Group’s ongoing commitment to providing its clients with a network of experts and in-house specialists to craft tailor-made trade finance solutions. We are confident that our clients will find value in the new Global Trade Portal via trade.mcb.sc and can leverage our Global Trade Solutions teams through our relationship managers to elevate their business to new heights with a focus on sustainability.*”



THIERRY HEBRAUD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE MAURITIUS COMMERCIAL BANK

“We’re an African bank !”

The theme of this year’s Trade Week, *“Enabling African Trade Growth with a Sustainability Lens,”* underscores MCB’s commitment to sustainable trade practices. Before delving further, CEO Thierry Hebraud shared two significant achievements from this week. First, MCB was awarded the *“Best Eastern African Bank for Trade Finance”* by GTR, a well-respected organization in the trade sector. This award is a testament to MCB’s dedication to supporting trade across the African continent.

The second achievement is MCB’s certification as an *“Equal Salary Employer,”* the first African bank to receive this certification. This accomplishment reflects MCB’s long-standing commitment to gender pay equity, a cornerstone of its sustainability efforts. It’s a result of consistent work by MCB’s management and teams, demonstrating the bank’s engagement with social justice issues.

Returning to the broader theme of Trade Week, Thierry Hebraud explained why MCB is focused on Africa. *“We’re an African bank,”* he stated.

Over the past two decades, MCB has expanded beyond Mauritius, establishing a regional presence in the Indian Ocean, including Seychelles, Madagascar, the Maldives, Réunion, and Mozambique. About ten years ago, MCB extended its African footprint by focusing on the oil and gas sector. Although controversial, this sector plays a critical role in supporting Africa’s transition, as 600 million Africans still lack access to electricity. MCB’s support for oil and gas is part of the broader transition towards a more developed Africa.

However, MCB is also investing in renewable energy projects in Africa, highlighting its balanced approach to sustainability. Thierry Hebraud pointed out that if MCB were a European or North American bank, the strategy might be different. As an African bank, the focus is on supporting the continent’s unique needs.

Thierry Hebraud also highlighted the resilience of Africa amid global geopolitical challenges. While the world grapples with conflicts like the

Russia-Ukraine war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Africa remains focused on business, transformation, and growth. This resilience might be partly due to the exodus of many large international banks from the continent, creating opportunities for African banks like MCB to step in and bring their expertise.

MCB’s commitment to supporting African business growth is evident in its emphasis on intra-African trade and connections with international markets. Trade Week serves as a platform for exchanging ideas, exploring new developments, and engaging with stakeholders to find ways to work together for continued growth.

Thierry Hebraud concluded by emphasizing that the success of African trade depends on collaborative efforts. *“It’s crucial to have this exchange, to listen, and to work together to keep developing both intra-African and international trade,”* he said. With this approach, MCB aims to play a leading role in supporting African business and fostering sustainable growth.

Thierry Hebraud pointed out that if MCB were a European or North American bank, the strategy might be different. As an African bank, the focus is on supporting the continent’s unique needs.

ARNAUD LEVASSEUR, TEAM LEADER, GLOBAL TRADE SOLUTIONS, MCB

“We need to gear up, learn more, and forge more partnerships”



“
It’s about enabling African trade growth with a sustainability lens, as sustainability is a top priority for businesses worldwide.

”

What is the essence of the MCB Trade Week?

MCB Trade Week is all about promoting the significance of trade, particularly in the context of Africa. As an African bank, MCB focuses on strengthening African trade, and Trade Week serves as a platform to share key trends and foster partnerships. This year’s theme is about enabling African trade growth with a sustainability perspective, which aligns with global business priorities. The aim is to explore how sustainability can be integrated into African trade.

What are some key highlights from this edition of Trade Week?

The most striking aspect for me is the enthusiasm among our clients and entrepreneurs who view Africa with a positive outlook. Additionally, MCB’s internal teams are ready to capitalise on these opportunities and craft solutions to help clients reach new heights. What makes me most proud is the broader impact this has on our African brothers and sisters—by creating employment, providing education, and improving quality of life. These end beneficiaries are a key focus for us.

Sustainability has been a central theme at Trade Week. How do you connect trade with sustainability in more detail?

It’s a complex topic, but ultimately, trade and sustainability are intrinsically linked. As Dr Rebecca Harding highlighted, promoting trade can drive economic development, which in turn supports sustainable development goals. Sustainability encompasses environmental (E), social (S), and governance (G) factors. The ‘S’ in this context refers to the social aspect. Our role is to emphasise the social dimension, ensuring that trade promotes broader social benefits.

A good example is to see how African businesses are integrating in their business model local production energy efficient equipment and supporting local economy in their trade.

How significant is Africa to the MCB Group’s strategy?

Africa is a core part of MCB’s strategic vision. As both our bank and group CEOs have noted, promoting African trade is central to our mission. While we’ve focused on

trade within Mauritius, the next phase for MCB involves expanding our support to clients across Africa in partnership with local banks. This aligns with our sustainability goals, fostering local economic development that brings ripple effects to the community.

MCB is already active in Africa. What challenges and opportunities do you face in expanding further?

Our experience so far has been both positive and challenging. Entrepreneurs face various hurdles, and we’re at an early stage in promoting African trade, often on a client-by-client basis. We participate in African conferences to increase MCB’s presence and collaborate with other African banks to reduce the trade finance gap.

However, there are challenges. For instance, some deals may carry risks that do not align with the bank’s risk appetite. We must act responsibly and cannot finance everything. That said, it’s an evolving journey. We need to bring the right partners to the table, learn from our clients, and tailor solutions to meet their needs. Ultimately, we are committed to supporting African trade and believe we’re on the right path. We need to gear up, learn more, and forge more partnerships.

DR REBECCA HARDING, SENIOR FELLOW OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY GROUP,
INDEPENDENT TRADE ECONOMIST, SUSTAINABLE TRADE AND SUPPLY CHAIN SPECIALIST

“Everyone around the world is searching for solutions...”



From your perspective, how relevant and important are initiatives like the MCB Trade Week?

Initiatives like the MCB Trade Week are incredibly significant in bringing together collaborative partners from various sectors—business, thought leadership, institutions, and financial services. The future of trade relies on these collaborations, especially if we aim to make trade sustainable. To achieve this, we need to approach trade in new and innovative ways, which is precisely what events like Trade Week aim to foster.

You mentioned that Africa should not be focused solely on prices but also on trade value. Could you elaborate on that?

In economics, we often discuss markets in terms of price. Africa, however, has a unique opportunity to redefine this approach because much of the continent remains underdeveloped. Rather than focusing solely on price, Africa can also consider value, encompassing sustainability and the social aspects of trade. This involves asking questions like: What are we doing for communities? How are we contributing to health, education, and job creation? This shift towards value creation is what makes Mauritius, as a financial centre, so crucial in leading this transformation.

You also mentioned changing the narrative and moving up the value chain for African businesses. Could you explain what you mean by that?

Of course. Traditionally, African businesses are often seen by the outside world as low-cost suppliers of commodities, operating with minimal regulation. This perception is not based on values, and Africa has the oppor-

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African businesses can move up the value chain, which means not just extracting resources but adding value through processing and creating higher-end products”

tunity to change this narrative. By focusing on value and sustainability, African businesses can move up the value chain, which means not just extracting resources but adding value through processing and creating higher-end products. This involves integrating more complex business services and fostering a broader range of economic activities. Events like the MCB Trade Week demonstrate that these changes are already happening within the African business community.

How can we make sustainability resilient?

Sustainability and resilience are closely related. Sustainability aims for long-term endurance, incorporating a social dimension, while resilience ensures systems can withstand challenges without breaking down. To achieve

resilience in sustainability, we need to ensure that our definitions and approaches to sustainability for African communities, businesses, and financial systems can endure the unique challenges the continent faces. This involves building solutions from the ground up, for Africa, by Africa.

The challenges in Africa are significant. Where do we begin?

Let's start with the beginning. Right now, everyone around the world is searching for solutions, and Africa has a lot at stake. The challenges are such that Africa could falter without effective collaboration. Regional trade organisations like the African Continental Free Trade Area and others across Africa are not yet working together as efficiently as they could. To address these challenges, the private sector, business community, and financial services need to find ways to amplify sustainability efforts to ensure they are resilient and cannot be easily broken down.

Mauritius, despite being a small island, has the MCB as a bank expanding into regions like Africa. How do you assess this move from your professional experience?

Starting small is often the best approach, and Mauritius is an ideal place to begin. The MCB's expansion into regions like Africa is a significant move, reflecting the importance of trade and finance. Trade and finance are the backbone of global commerce, and smaller countries like Mauritius can have a considerable impact with the right strategy. This expansion demonstrates how small beginnings can lead to significant outcomes, emphasizing the potential for growth and influence.

MARK BADMUS, CEO, LEAD CONSULTANT, AMB GLOBAL TRADE FINANCE CONSULTANTS

“When you focus on sustainability from an African perspective, you emphasize people and humanity”



How was it beneficial for you to participate in this second edition of MCB Trade Week?

I was part of the inaugural Trade Week last year, and I was really hoping it would continue because it's such a laudable idea. The knowledge-sharing aspect is invaluable; what you don't know can limit you. If you have a platform where information is freely shared, you can make more informed decisions as a client. This is especially important in trade, where the risks of venturing into the unknown without adequate knowledge are high. The second edition of Trade Week is even better—more participants, a wider scope, and, importantly, a focus on sustainability tailored to African needs. This emphasis on sustainability is crucial, offering a unique opportunity to transform the African narrative.

The word “sustainability” has come up repeatedly during this Trade Week. How do you connect trade and sustainability in the African context?

That's a great question. Sustainability and trade in the African context are inherently complementary. When you focus on sustainability from an African perspective, you emphasize people and humanity. At the end of the day, trade is about people—machines and trees don't trade. So when trade is conducted sustainably, it creates a better world, improving lives and contributing to a

happier society. For a long time, the concept of sustainability was misunderstood, but the narrative is changing. Sustainability and trade are linked in a way that, if trade is done sustainably, it positively impacts people's lives and the environment, making the world a better place. Africa, with its strong focus on family and community, is naturally inclined towards a people-oriented approach to trade.

What are the current opportunities and challenges in Africa, and how might we provide solutions?

That's an interesting question. As I mentioned during the panel session, any opportunity without challenges isn't a real opportunity. Challenges are what drive us to find solutions. In Africa, the biggest opportunity is the chance to create something new and impactful. However, there's often a misconception that you need to start big, which can lead to paralysis and inaction. Instead, we should view challenges as stepping stones towards solutions. The key is to take small steps; each small action builds towards a larger push. Africa's challenges are well-documented, from trading among ourselves to travelling within the continent, but focusing on solutions is essential. It's about shifting from a problem-focused mindset to a solution-oriented approach, with each step moving us closer to overcoming the challenges.

How can a bank like MCB become an important actor in promoting sustainability?

MCB has the capacity to lead the way in sustainability. It's not about size but the quality and impact of the work. MCB, as an African bank with international recognition, is uniquely positioned to guide the conversation. It can set an example by demonstrating that business as usual is not sufficient, and that collaboration and partnership are key to success. MCB should approach sustainability with a focus on thought leadership, showing other African banks and businesses that this approach leads to greater impact and longevity. By doing so, MCB can inspire other “sleeping giants” in Africa to follow suit.

We should prioritize collaboration over competition. Competition has not really helped Africa because we are people-oriented. We need to collaborate. We need to know that if we work together, it's much better than to work alone. By partnering with strategic stakeholders and maintaining strong leadership, MCB can continue its positive momentum. The bank has already made significant strides, being recognised for its work in East African trade finance. By maintaining this momentum and fostering the right partnerships, MCB can continue to play a pivotal role in Africa's economic growth and in reducing poverty through sustainable trade practices.

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ALDO SYDONIE, HEAD OF MAURITIUS AND REGIONAL CORPORATES, MCB

“For established Mauritian companies seeking growth, the natural direction is Africa”



What are the key takeaways from the MCB Trade Week?

We must collaborate with our partners and clients to find solutions for Africa by Africa. These solutions must be sustainable; there's no other option. The next phase of the century must be sustainable, with African countries working together to achieve this goal. The word that came up repeatedly during the Trade Week was 'sustainability'.

How do you connect trade with sustainability?

Sustainability and trade are intertwined. It involves producing goods with a low carbon footprint. We need to source materials sustainably, manufacture and convert them with minimal environmental impact, and ensure that the final product has the lowest carbon footprint possible. At the same time, we must incorporate the social aspect of sustainability into the equation.

An example I like is a Mauritian merchant company operating in Madagascar. Rather than bringing in a lot of capital-intensive equipment and dominating the market, they chose a more sustainable approach. They invested in local production, involving the community in grow-

“**The role of MCB is to support clients through highs and lows, as we've done for the past 185 years.**”

ing maize, which is then used to feed poultry. This is a great example of sustainable business practices within Africa, for Africa.

Given the focus on Africa, how important is the continent for MCB and for expats?

Africa is of great significance to us. First, Mauritius is part of Africa, and our clients here are experiencing

growth and transition. To ensure a sustainable growth trajectory, Africa is the most logical market for them to expand into. Several large conglomerates are well-established in Mauritius, and Africa is the natural direction for their further growth. Though there are risks, there are also considerable opportunities. As Mauritian companies, they may be more accepted in Africa than European or American firms. MCB's role is to support these clients through highs and lows, as we have done for the past 185 years. We're not just about individual deals; we're partners for the long haul, committed to these companies' success.

When discussing Africa, we often hear about the challenges and obstacles for entrepreneurs. Does MCB face similar challenges?

Yes, there are significant challenges in Africa. For instance, there are relatively few banks that meet international standards. When we work with clients to confirm a letter of credit, we need to ensure that the bank we're partnering with is credit-worthy. This is where our market knowledge and experience come into play. We've been building relationships with other banks in Africa for many years, giving us the insight needed to navigate these challenges.



DRISHTY RAMDENE, CEO DE LA MAURITIUS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

“La Trade Week met en perspective les défis et les solutions pour augmenter le commerce avec le continent africain”

SPECIAL ISSUE MCB TRADE WEEK

Les intervenants de la Trade Week organisée par la Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB) ont mis beaucoup d'accent sur la nécessité de se tourner vers l'Afrique et la région. Comment voyez-vous cette initiative ?

C'est une initiative extrêmement louable. Les chiffres relatifs au commerce ont évolué entre Maurice et l'Afrique.

L'Afrique du Sud, par exemple, est aujourd'hui un de nos premiers marchés d'exportation. Il y a aussi de nouveaux produits qui vont sur les nouveaux marchés africains comme la Tanzanie, la Zambie, la Namibie entre autres. Donc, ce sujet en tant que tel est extrêmement important et pertinent en ce moment.

La Trade Week est extrêmement intéressante parce qu'elle prend en considération non seulement les potentiels mais elle met aussi en perspective les défis et les solutions pour augmenter le commerce avec le continent africain. Des études récentes démontrent que si nous arrivons à diminuer de manière conséquente les barrières tarifaires, le commerce avec l'Afrique pourrait augmenter de 53 % dans le court terme. C'est un chiffre extrêmement important pour un pays comme Maurice qui cherche à diversifier, et à consolider ses exportations. Du coup, il y a plusieurs problématiques qui doivent être discutées, notamment en termes de financement, de lignes de crédit, de trade funding mais aussi des chaînes d'approvisionnement qui sont plus soutenables.

Nous avons aussi une réalité en termes de schéma économique, notamment les coûts de production, la disponibilité de main-d'œuvre, la logistique où une schématisation optimale des chaînes de valeur est extrêmement importante. Donc, il s'agit de voir comment les différents pays africains et les différentes chaînes de logistique pourraient travailler ensemble de sorte à améliorer les coûts et l'accès des produits sur le continent africain, et tout cela dans une synergie autour de la durabilité.

Les produits africains seraient mieux lotis sur le plan de l'équité s'ils pouvaient atteindre les « rules of origin » pour pouvoir entrer dans certains marchés sans « custom duty » ou une diminution de « custom duty ». Ce sont des concepts essentiels.

La Trade Week de la MCB va dans ce sens. Au niveau de la MCCI, nous avons des discussions très étroites avec les différentes parties prenantes, publiques et privées, notamment avec la MCB, afin de pouvoir ficeler, analyser et entrer dans les détails de ces potentiels.

Je saisis l'occasion pour inviter vos lecteurs à visiter le site web de la MCCI, où nous avons publié l'Export Insight, qui donne des perspectives très intéressantes sur le potentiel d'export vers l'Afrique, les différents pays concernés, les différents marchés, les différents produits.

80% des profits de la MCB émanent des opérations régionales et externes. Comment la MCCI voit-elle cette démarche ?

Très louable et très intéressante. Je crois sincèrement que, de manière générale, toutes les activités que nous faisons aujourd'hui demandent du financement et les banques jouent un rôle majeur sur le plan financier, certes, mais aussi sur celui du ralliement des opérateurs.

Deuxièmement, il ne faut pas oublier que le secteur financier et le secteur bancaire de Maurice sont extrêmement importants. Nous avons non seulement l'opportunité mais aussi le potentiel d'étendre les opérations de ces banques dans la région.

Tout ce qui est commerce offre aujourd'hui une perspective nouvelle pour les banques et je pense que c'est une initiative très intéressante que les banques entrent dans ce schéma. Nous avons déjà approché plusieurs banques, nous travaillons avec eux pour partager des informations de commerce et de logistique. Les banques pourraient se concentrer sur tout ce qui est lignes de crédit, assurances de crédit, lignes de crédit pour les



procédures de risque, la plateforme de facilité financière et non financière pour les traités. Donc, tous ces différents schémas sont très intéressants pour les banques, qui pourraient aussi jouer un rôle de facilitateur.

Les banques mauriciennes ont une capacité de financement et une connaissance extrêmement solide. Elles travaillent non seulement en Afrique, elles ont également prouvé pouvoir travailler avec des pays européens. Nos banques ont la capacité de faire de la compétition et de se positionner dans ces nouveaux marchés comme un 'firepower' pour ouvrir les portes.

Sur le plan du commerce, je crois fermement que le ralliement des opérateurs d'exportation, du commerce, les institutions comme la nôtre mais aussi les agences gouvernementales et les banques doivent travailler ensemble pour avoir ce 'firepower', pour faciliter la visibilité des commerces en Afrique.

Nos banques ont la capacité de se positionner dans ces nouveaux marchés comme un 'firepower'

SHABNAM ESMAEL, PRESIDENT, MAURITIAN ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN BUSINESS LEADERS

“The future is in Africa. The future is women. The future is sustainability.”



How was your experience participating in MCB Trade Week?

One phrase really resonated with me: “The future is in Africa. The future is women. The future is sustainability.” It captures the spirit of our times. When we talk about women, we mean integrating both women and men. It’s about more than just gender; it’s about a shared journey. Women are stepping out of traditional roles. I have two companies—one in security technology and the other in waste management. Not typical ‘feminine’ sectors, but they have a broader purpose. The focus is on the impact we can have when we all work together.

Regarding Africa, Mauritius plays a strategic role as a hub between Asia and Africa. We’re bilingual—French and English—which makes us attractive to Europe and Asia. And from Africa’s perspective, there’s a certain admiration for what we’ve achieved in terms of development. This positioning as a bridge between continents gives us a unique advantage, though there’s still a long road ahead. Africa is the future because it’s where resources and opportunities lie. But progress has to start with the strong countries, like Rwanda and Kenya, which are leading the way in terms of development. Madagascar, my country of origin, is also evolving. This underscores the need for strategic partnerships and human-focused development.

The word “sustainability” has come up frequently. How do you relate it to trade in the African context?

Sustainability, especially from an African perspective, involves much more than just environmental concerns. It’s about people and humanity. Trade, ultimately, is about people—machines don’t trade, people do. When we focus on sustainability, we create a better world by considering how our actions affect communities, education, and women’s conditions. Sustainability and trade are complementary in this context. If you trade in a sustainable way, it has a positive impact on society, making the world a better place. Africa is a land of opportunity, but with that comes a set of challenges.

What are the constraints and opportunities for business in Africa?

Africa can be intimidating due to logistical and safety concerns. Doing business can be complicated, with containers getting stuck or payment in unstable currencies. Logistical issues, like a delayed container, can cause significant disruptions. And in terms of currency, transactions often require dollars or euros, which adds to the cost. But if we only focus on the constraints, we’ll never

Africa today is viewed by the world with heart-eyed emojis because it represents so much potential. This is where a lot is happening, and it’s an opportunity for business growth and social development.

do anything.

The key is to find ways to address these constraints while also identifying opportunities. We should focus on specific markets, countries, or sectors. The Mauritian Association of Women Business Leaders has a saying, “Alone, we are invisible; together, we are invincible.” This speaks to the need for collaboration and partnerships, particularly when entering new markets. It’s safer to start small and then build on that foundation.



MCB invited stakeholders to share their insights and experience of the African Market.

The necessity for collaborative strategies to unlock Africa's trading potential

At the Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB) Trade Week, a seminal event was convened with the ambitious aim of bolstering trade ties and advancing sustainable development across Africa. Far from being a mere symposium, this assembly marked a significant juncture where diverse stakeholders engaged in strategic discourse, setting the stage for a future in which Mauritius-Africa trade and investment not only thrive but do so on a sustainable and inclusive basis.

Central to the Trade Week was a roundtable discussion that epitomised MCB's pivotal role in steering Mauritius towards a more engaged African strategy, highlighting the nation's dedication to acting as a propellant for growth and cooperation throughout the continent. This year's theme, "Enabling African Trade Growth with a Sustainable Lens," steered conversations towards dissecting the complexities and tapping into the latent opportunities within the African market. The urgency for collective strategic action to capitalise on these opportunities was a focal point, emphasising mutual benefits.

The roundtable elucidated the imperative for nuanced trade and investment strategies across Africa's diverse landscape, comprising 54 countries with distinct narratives and economic conditions. The deliberations underscored the necessity for bespoke strategies and emphasised the critical role of collaborative efforts among banks, the private sector, and government entities in crafting initiatives tailored to the continent's varied needs.

MCB's strategic approach has been characterised by selectivity, concentrating on sectors where it possesses deep expertise to ensure that its trade initiatives and investments are both impactful and sustainable. This methodology not only acknowledges the substantial revenue derived from African markets but also reaffirms MCB's commitment to the Mauritian economy.

A noteworthy aspect of the Trade Week was a session



Students will have the possibility to apply for internships at MCB and work with the GTS team

dedicated to university student training, underlining MCB's conviction in education and capacity building as foundational elements for understanding African market dynamics. This initiative is pivotal for equipping future leaders with the requisite insights to adeptly navigate the continent's challenges and opportunities. Students will have the possibility to apply for internships at MCB and work with the GTS team.

The discussions consistently highlighted the necessity for collaborative strategies to unlock Africa's trading potential, with Mauritius positioned as a vital conduit between Africa and the global arena, leveraging its strategic and financial infrastructure for the continental benefit.

By advocating for a confluence of strengths from various sectors, Mauritius is acknowledged as playing a crucial role in fostering sustainable trade growth that is mutually advantageous.

The outcomes of the MCB Trade Week roundtable serve as a compelling mobilisation for Mauritius and its African counterparts towards cultivating strategic alliances, focusing on capacity enhancement, and adopting a differentiated approach to trade and investment. These measures pave the way for a prosperous future for Africa and Mauritius, heralding the initiation of a flourishing, sustainable trade ecosystem. Stakeholders are now tasked with fostering this groundwork into a dynamic matrix of growth and opportunity across Africa and Mauritius.

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