



19-20 July 2021, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

GENERAL APPROACH OF THE CONFERENCE

In 2020, a working meeting was held between several Spanish organisations to prepare this upcoming meeting with the Federation of West African Chambers and its members. This meeting had several objectives, including: defining the Spanish position, learning about the new Horizon Africa strategy and proposing the topics to be addressed in order to facilitate exchanges between the Canary Islands and West Africa.

At the same time, several initiatives have been developed in the Canary Islands, financed with European funds, for the promotion of foreign trade and the facilitation of exchanges in the field of cooperation between the outermost regions and the surrounding third countries.

These activities form part of Spain's new foreign affairs priorities, which are reflected in the 3rd Africa Plan, the Foco 2023 action programme and the permanent initiatives developed from the Canary Islands, which are based on the Canary Islands Internationalisation Plan.

In this sense, and within the framework of the CONFIAFRICA and CUSTOMS initiatives of the programme financed by the FEDER funds of the INTERREG MAC 2014-2020 programme, the present meeting is proposed with the ultimate objective of promoting economic relations through trade facilitation.

The meeting aims to open a channel of communication between the Chambers of Commerce of the two regions (West Africa and the Canary Islands) to promote the understanding of the representatives of the private sector, as well as to facilitate trade and investment relations.

West Africa has experienced a trajectory of economic growth in recent years, although we are aware that the pandemic that we have recently experienced, due to COVID-19, has caused the region to go through a very strong crisis. For this reason, the consolidation of a single African market is a fundamental action that can help to recover the path to growth.

The Canary Islands, as a geostrategic enclave, aspires to have a privileged relationship with this area, which is why consolidating a privileged relationship with our partners in trade relations is fundamental.

The theme of the first day aims to promote the Canary Islands' status as an outermost region within the European Union and its proximity and connectivity with the countries of West Africa, which makes it the ideal channel for economic and trade relations between the two continents, Europe and Africa.

The second day will be devoted to issues such as logistics, transport and customs, with a clear focus on identifying aspects that could be improved in foreign trade procedures, as well as the possibility of taking advantage of regional customs integration processes and trade agreements such as the African Free Trade Agreement or the EU-ECOWAS Economic Partnership Agreements.

