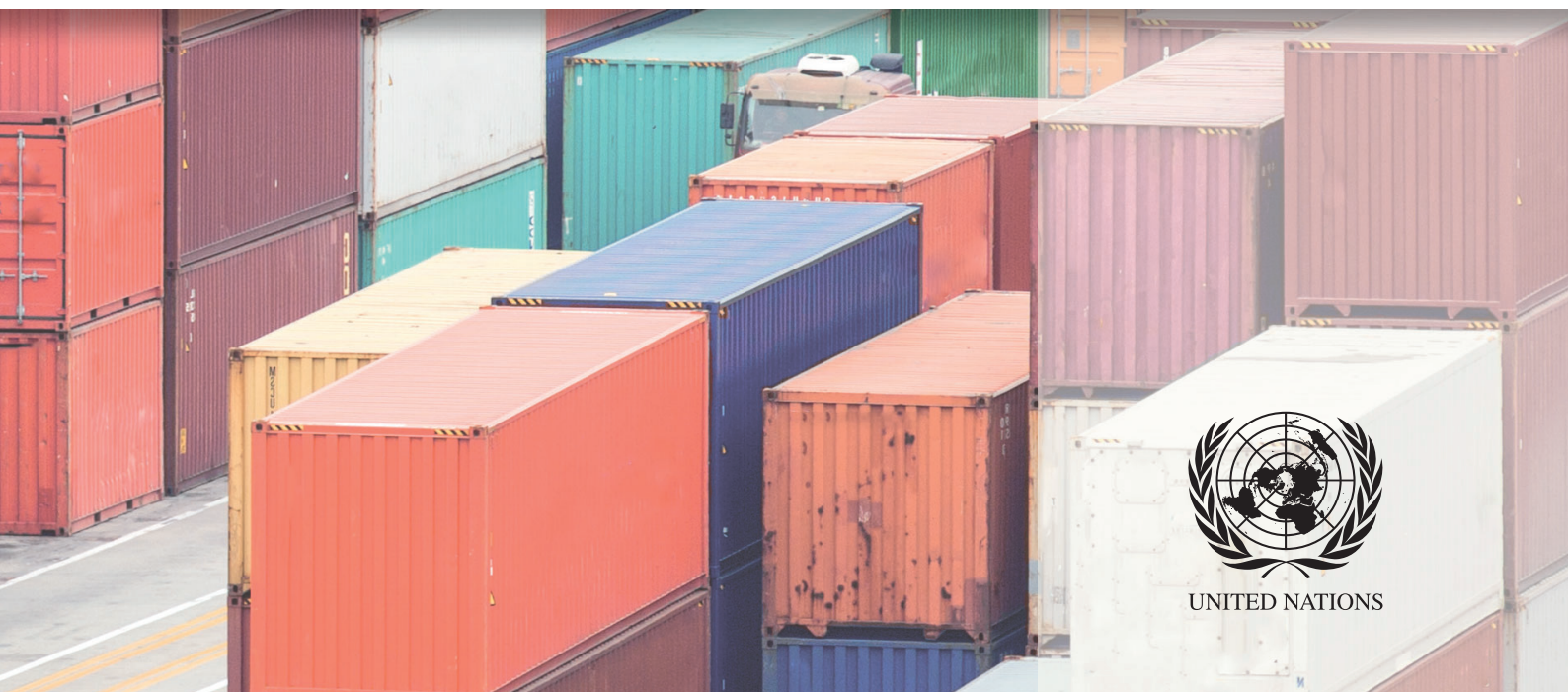
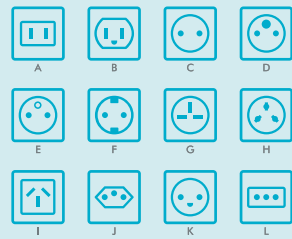
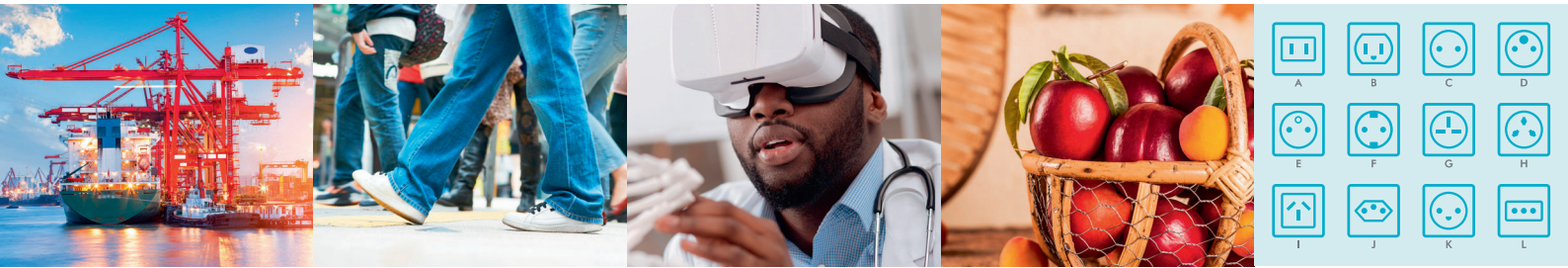
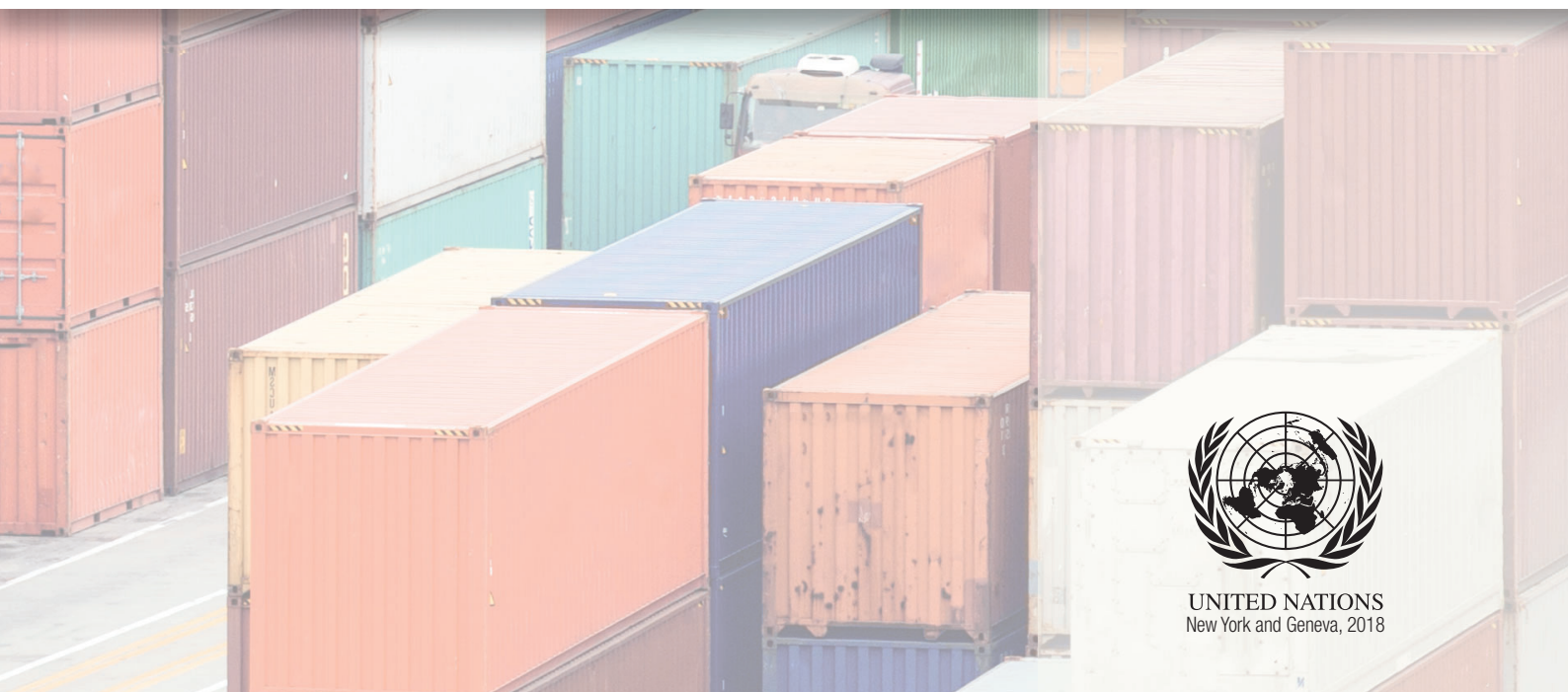
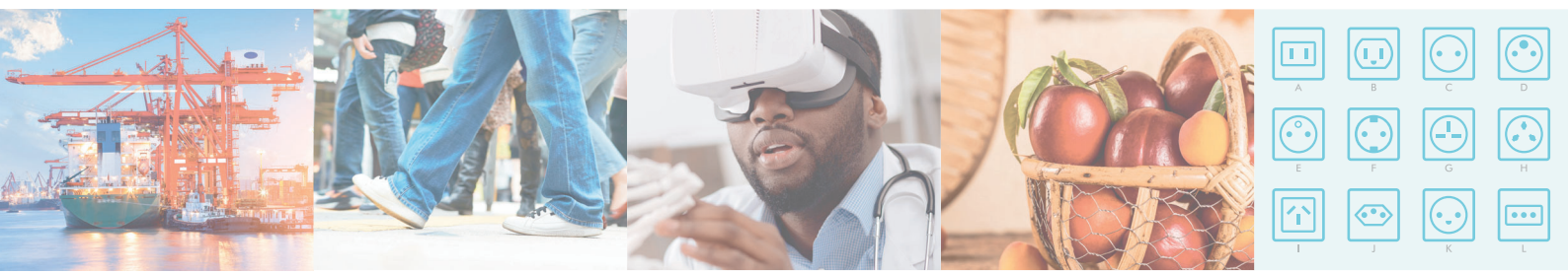


Regional Integration and Non-Tariff Measures in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)





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United Nations publication issued by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

UNCTAD/DITC/TAB/2018/1

FOREWORD

Regional integration presents unique opportunities to drive Africa's transformation and development. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is among the major African Regional Economic Communities that has been shaping the evolution of regional integration in Western Africa. From better crisis prevention and management, financial and macroeconomic integration, to free movement of people, the list of achievements by ECOWAS is long since its formation in 1975.

Today, the establishment of a functioning common market is among ECOWAS' top priorities. The ECOWAS Treaty states that the common market should be ensured through "... liberalization of trade among Member States by [...] removing non-tariff barriers to establish a free trade area at the community level [...] and] the removal, among Member States, of obstacles to the free movement of [...] goods".

Although tariffs have been widely reduced, effective market access and integration also requires addressing non-tariff measures (NTMs). NTMs are policy measures other than tariffs that can potentially hinder trade. They refer to regulations whose primary objective is to protect health and the environment such as Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures or Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs) but which directly or indirectly distort trade.

This study provides an institutional overview of NTMs and an assessment of its impacts on regional integration in West Africa. It is part of a global initiative titled the "Global Transparency in Trade Initiative" jointly implemented by the Bank, UNCTAD, ITC and the World Bank to improve transparency in and access to trade data. ECOWAS was the first region in Africa in which the partners systematically mapped, collected, organized and analyzed all NTM data, including non-tariff barriers and behind-the-border regulations such as SPS measures and TBTs. The report utilizes innovative methods to assess regulatory convergence and evaluate the impact of NTMs from an economic, legal and institutional perspective. From the analysis, clear policy recommendations are identified for policy makers in ECOWAS and their development partners.

Today, diverse stakeholders use the database for various reasons. For example, traders use it to identify the import and export regulations that they must comply with. Policymakers and negotiators use it to streamline and negotiate NTMs while researchers make use of the data to assess the impact of NTMs on trade and sustainable development. It is the expectation of the Bank and UNCTAD that by facilitating access to information on NTMs, the report shall assist ECOWAS member States in their efforts to boost trade and economic integration.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared in close collaboration between the African Development Bank and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development under the general guidance of Jean-Guy Afrika and Ralf Peters. Christian Knebel, Ralf Peters, Mesut Saygili and David Vanzetti wrote chapter 2. Françoise Guei wrote chapters 3 and 4. Samuel Munyaneza, Fabien Dumesnil, Guillermo Abramowitz provided inputs and worked on non-tariff measures data collection in ECOWAS, led by Samuel Munyaneza. Narmin Khalilova and Kolawole Sofola also provided useful contributions.

Financial support by the Nigeria Technical Cooperation Fund (NTCF) for data collection and preparing this report is gratefully acknowledged.

This publication has been produced jointly with the African Development Bank.



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