

Exploring Africa's  
opportunities through  
trade, finance and  
innovation

# GTR AFRICA 2023 LONDON

#GTRAfrica

November 8, 2023  
Etc. venues County Hall, London, UK

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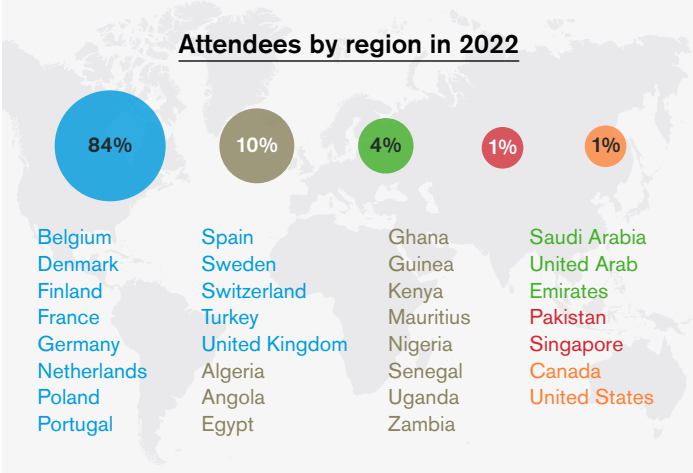
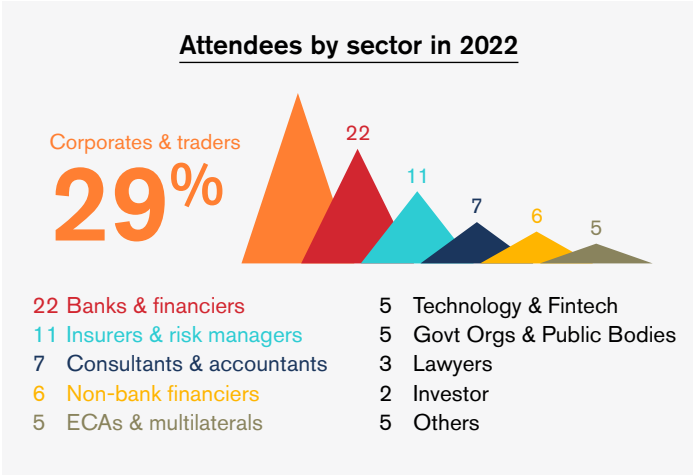
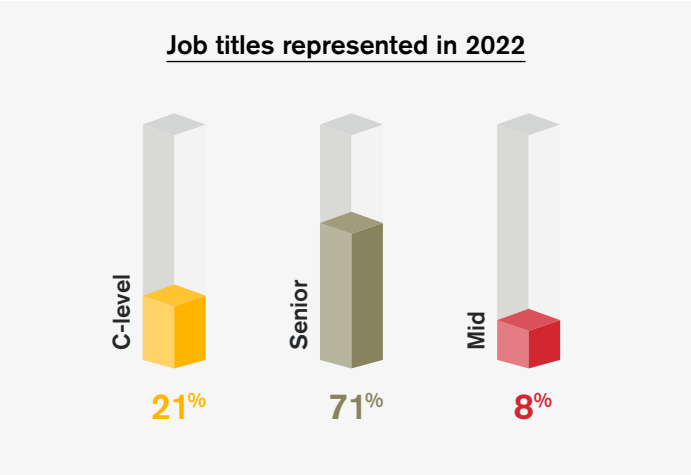
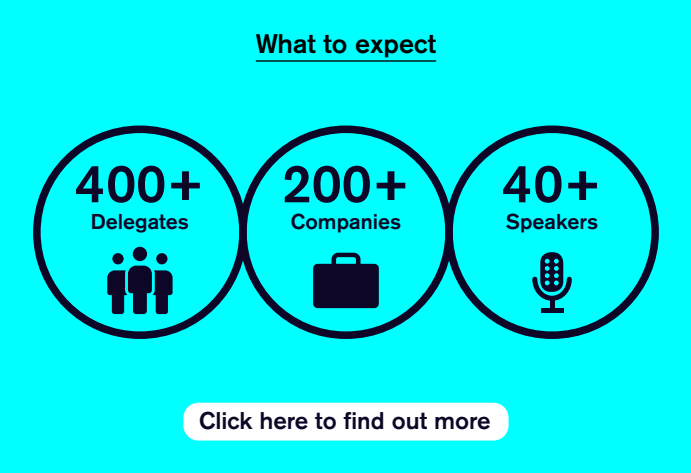
Taking place in London on November 8 and exploring the key trends and latest developments across the African and global landscape, GTR Africa 2023 London will welcome over 400 delegates from all corners of the trade, export and infrastructure finance market.

Hear from over 50 key experts as they dive into the most prominent topics of discussion including the many challenges faced across African trade finance lending, SME and corporate liquidity, export financing and sovereign debt, and the rapidly changing dynamics of a turbulent global economic landscape and emerging opportunities for African trade.

With over 3 hours of networking opportunities, including an evening networking reception, don't miss your chance to catch up with old friends and build those crucial new market connections at the UK's leading and unrivalled Africa-focused trade and export financing conference.

GTR looks forward to welcoming you!

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## Wednesday 8 November Morning plenary

09.00-09.05

### Chair's opening remarks

**Andrew Skipper**, Vice-Chair of the Royal Africa Society & Chief Executive Officer, Polymetis Professional Solutions

09.05-09.30

### Strategising infrastructure finance for energy and water in South Africa – a keynote from Minister Sihle Zikalala

The challenges facing South Africa's energy and water infrastructure systems are significant and well known, with the impact on trade and exports galvanising the attention of policymakers. This includes a series of ongoing management and financial reforms, including the division of energy utility Eskom, regulatory changes to encourage private investment, and the tapping of global credit for water and energy. With the market on the move and new solutions coming to the fore, how might policymakers and lenders prioritise reform and finance flows for South African infrastructure? How can SMEs and the construction sector seize new trade and business opportunities?

Joined by the esteemed Minister Sihle Zikalala, this opening keynote will navigate the strategic planning behind South Africa's infrastructure, from management reform and optimising water and energy assets, using alternative capital structures for grant, concessional and blended finance, to reducing private investment barriers for new transmission, generation and water infrastructure. With inflationary and debt pressures complicating financing, how new commercial models can de-risk South African credit and investment will be explored, including with global banks and DFIs. Opportunities for domestic construction and SME firms to benefit will also be discussed, enabling supply chains to engage with energy and water project funding and construction.

**Minister Sihle Zikalala**, Minister of Public Works & Infrastructure, Republic of South Africa

09.30-10.30

### Strategic planning and geopolitics in Sub-Saharan Africa: Critical minerals and the geoeconomic battleground

Trade and the flow of finance are quick to respond to global volatility, however for the raw material and mining markets of Sub-Saharan Africa, long-term growth is less impacted by global headwinds. As one of the world's most geostrategic locations for critical minerals, the rights to access, finance and trade with Africa's resources is an increasingly key priority. While the U.S. and Europe ready their footing with financial and political initiatives, other actors expand their access to deposits through finance and commerce deals, debt, and military aid.

In this interactive opening session, the audience will be joined by a panel of industry geoeconomic and geopolitical experts, dropped together in a flash point scenario: Mercenary groups have tipped the balance in a resource-rich African state, and the supply of cobalt and other critical minerals is now at risk to many nations and global supply chains. How will the audience respond? Decisions will be mediated through a selection of options, from leveraging tools like the AfCFTA to smooth trade, grow African capabilities in domestic resilience, to aid and finance strategies and cooperating on African geosecurity. With three rounds of voting and decision-making opportunities, the audience will dictate how the panel respond, and deliver resolutions that stabilise trade for African economies.

**Moderator: Dr Rebecca Harding**, Founder, Rebeccanomics Strategic Trade Advisory & Analytics

*Strategic panel:*

**Derryn Faure**, Head of Trade Finance Structuring, Syndication & Documentation, Investec

**Tracey Austin**, Sector Director Financial & Professional Services Department for Business and Trade Africa (DBT Africa)

**Ahanna Anaba**, Head of Sales – Digital Solutions & Partnerships, Finverity

*Regional Journalist:*

**Beverly Ochieng**, Senior Digital Journalist & Africa Specialist, BBC Monitoring

*Risk expert:*

**Dr Tim Clack**, Associate Professor of the School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford

10.30-11.05 Networking break

“London remains the global hub of trade and ECA financing for Africa and the GTR Africa London event proved itself, once again, to be front and centre.”

**G Buck**, GKB Ventures

“The GTR team was instrumental in guiding us through the planning process. Each team member demonstrated tremendous skill and conducted briefings in a professional manner. I was more than impressed with your team's ability to plan a conference of this magnitude with so many topics and such a diversified audience. Every detail was considered and every issue was addressed efficiently and confidently. Your team was guiding us every step of the way and remained front and center until the very end of the conference.

As a speaker, I have a been attending so many conferences but attending GTR is always a prestigious and special one.”

**S Jain**, Export Trading Group

## Wednesday 8 November Morning **Stream A** & **Stream B**

Select either **Stream A** or **Stream B**

### Stream A

11.05-11.50

#### Future-proofing trade finance in Africa and narrowing the credit gap for SMEs

That Africa continues to struggle in trade finance access is well known, with priorities for reducing the continent's trade finance gap an evolving mission. From the retreat of correspondent banking and bruised local capital markets, to the growth of regional digital solutions for the underbanked, across Africa banks and corporates are applying agility as they future-proof trade finance supply. How are financiers meeting the evolving needs of African SMEs and business and attempting to narrow the finance gap?

Panelists will consider next steps for overcoming operational challenges, from reducing FX volatility and ensuring local banks have adequate liquidity, to making capital readily deployable against future import and price shocks. With the risks around high inflation, interest rates and borrowing costs potentially receding in the year ahead, what this might mean for African lending and the cost of SME credit will be considered, as well as attracting inward global trade finance. How digitisation is helping reduce trade finance barriers will also be assessed, from widening avenues for credit access, to reducing onerous paperwork and borrowing conditions.

**Moderator: Geoffrey de Mowbray**, Vice President, British Exporters Association (BEA) & Chief Executive Officer, Dints

**Michelle Knowles**, Head of Trade & Working Capital Product, Absa Corporate and Investment Bank

**Lina Iyok**, Manager, Trade Finance, Factoring & Forfaiting, AfreximBank

**Ahanna Anaba**, Head of Sales – Digital Solutions & Partnerships, Finverity

**Bob Blower**, Chief Executive Officer, Clarency

**Rima Kalal**, Executive Director, Asset Distribution, Africa Trade Finance

11.50-12.35

#### The time is now – priorities for import substitution in Africa and seizing commodity opportunities

It is a critical paradox that although a large producer of global agricultural goods and endowed with extensive raw material deposits, Africa remains import dependant and struggles to achieve value-added trade. Recent exposure to global commodity volatility and food security risks have incensed policymakers, and by enabling Africa to fully leverage its soft commodities, self-sufficiency and domestic value-chains can both grow and enable new trade opportunities. What measures can financiers, large corporates, and small domestic firms take to develop capabilities for commodity processing and domestic self-sufficiency?

Debate will centre around initiatives to nurture domestic capacity, from measures to improve ease of doing business to constructing core infrastructure for import substitution. In tackling supply chain fragmentation, how regional and international banks, DFIs and corporates can better finance industrialisation will be assessed, including the development of African processing capacity for commodities, and exporting value-added instead of raw goods. With food security a heightened issue in recent years, discussion will also consider the role of large and local banks for unlocking working capital for Africa's agribusiness SMEs, and how barriers around sovereign debt can be overcome.

**Moderator: Kayode Oladipo**, Partner, Clifford Chance

**Olufemi Williams-Oyetayo**, Director, Director, Anglophone West & East Africa, Global Trade Finance, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC)

**Nick Earlam**, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Plexus Cotton

**Wahid Ben Tanfous**, Investment Manager, British International Investments

**Dr Amrita Saha**, Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies (IDS)

**Phil Skinner**, Managing Director, Global Execution Team, GuarantCo

12.35-13.40 Lunch

### Stream B

11.05-11.50

#### Status check: Progress on the AfCFTA and synergising infrastructure, trade, and digital expansion

The promises spearheaded by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) are that through integration of market principles and physical trade infrastructure, intra-African and cross-border trade can flourish, and enable significant economic growth. Trade on AfCFTA terms has so far been small, and likewise the development of infrastructure remains challenged by financing, risk, and delivery barriers. What steps must policymakers and financiers take to accelerate the integration of African trade economies, and the delivery of trade-enabling infrastructure?

Discussion will examine the latest progress on AfCFTA domestication, the next stages of protocol agreements, and what actions are needed to see cross-border trade on AfCFTA rules take flight. How this might evolve the appetite for trade financiers and de-risk African lending will be considered, and help narrow the SME trade finance gap. Likewise panelists will explore financing needs for physical infrastructure like roads, ports and logistics, and how project finance from banks, DFIs and ECAs can be fine-tuned to enable the AfCFTA. Lastly an update on digital solutions to cross-border trade payments will be considered, with a number of innovations taking flight, including the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System, and Central Bank Digital Currencies, for which some pilots are currently underway.

**Moderator: Simon Cook**, Partner, Sullivan & Worcester UK

**Bolaji Sofoluwe**, Managing Director, ETK Group

**Geoffrey White**, Chief Executive Officer, Agility Africa

**Patrick Gutmann**, Managing Director, Group Corporate Affairs, Onafriq

**Fatma Bao**, Head of Export Finance, Colas

**Ashvin Deena**, Head of Global & International Corporates, Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB) Group

11.50-12.35

#### Fireside chat: a stock take on emerging trade, political and financing trends across Francophone Africa

In recent years the Sahel region has been marked by a rising tide of political and economic instability, with finance and trade risk widening across some markets, and the footprint of outside mercenary groups in others. Francophone Africa has often been at the helm of this volatility, and despite the growth of risk premiums across some of its nations, trade and business opportunities remain a bright spot for traders and lenders to engage with and foster.

In this fireside chat, experts in the field will examine the breadth of market change across the francophone region. Debate will focus on the spectre of political and military upheaval, implications for risk, sovereign debt and lender appetite, and opportunities for dovetailing with longer-term increases in global commodity demand. With francophone emerging as a key location for resource activity, discussion will consider steps that financiers can take to de-risk activity for export financing, and grow long-term ECA engagement across the Sahel. As the region boasts some of Africa's most dynamic trade and SME potential, the options for European lenders and corporates to reduce domestic trade finance barriers, and deliver solutions to currency and liquidity issues will be considered.

**Nabil Frik**, Managing Director, Africa, Middle-East & Indian Ocean, British Arab Commercial Bank (BACB) *in conversation with* **Tedd George**, Chief Narrative Officer, Kleos Advisory UK

12.35-13.40 Lunch

## Wednesday 8 November Afternoon **Stream A** & **Stream B**

Select either **Stream A** or **Stream B**

### Stream A

13.40-14.25

#### Africa's sovereign debt balancing act – restructuring, exogenous shocks, and growing climate finance

Although inflationary and currency pressures may recede in the coming months, the build-up of Africa's public and external debt stock, coupled with forthcoming Eurobond and Chinese credit repayments, present fresh debt and restructuring challenges.

Recent defaults and protracted restructuring deals are cautionary tales, while other sovereigns are setting the benchmark for creditor negotiations. How should African economies strategise looming debt repayments in the years ahead? What can sovereigns do to keep domestic and global borrowing channels open and fund long-term climate investments?

The panel will take stock on key threats to African sovereign debt like weak supplies of foreign currency and rising political risk, how these trends might develop and impact repayments in the medium-term, and whether recent examples of creditor restructuring represent a replicable model for African debt management. Discussion will also examine how the market for commercial and multilateral funding and debt forgiveness might evolve, as lenders seek to balance support for debt distressed sovereigns while limiting exposure risk. As financing climate initiatives rises in urgency, what international lenders can do to provide credit for African resilience-building will be analysed, while minimising debt unsustainability and the retreat of development finance.

**Moderator: Gabriel Buck**, Managing Director, GKB Ventures

**Inal Henry**, Director, Reagalnfra Capital

**Sujithav Sarangi**, Executive Director, Structured Export Finance, Standard Chartered

**John Lentaigne**, Head of Credit & Political Risk, Tysers

**Olov Hemström**, Global Head of Energy, Transport and Infrastructure, Business Sweden

14.25-15.10

#### ECA reform and the 'gentleman's agreement' – how can the West remain competitive on the continent?

Galvanised by competition and heightened geopolitical pressures, ECAs in the West are increasingly looking to reform and replant their footprint across Africa. Earlier this year the OECD Arrangement signalled a string of updates to its conditions on clean energy project tenor, repayments and insurance, however their potential for increasing competition with other players on the continent is uncertain. In a market of amplified inflation and debt risk, how might reform be best used to dampen risk and unlock African infrastructure and energy development, and what does the future of ECA competition on the continent look like?

The panel will examine discussion from a global geostrategic background, looking at how recent ECA reform might widen coverage in high-risk markets, compete for influence with longer tenors, and whether reform goes far enough to compete against lenders outside the OECD Arrangement. Navigating emerging debt and political risk challenges, discussion will take stock on the current appetite among ECAs and banks for African lending, and how insurance and reinsurance might evolve and help narrow gaps in export finance and ECA-backed commercial loans. With energy infrastructure development a priority for African and ECA-origin nations, the session will also consider how lenders are balancing fossil fuel and clean energy project support, and how risk and the cost of lending might diverge as ESG compliance contrasts with African development needs.

**Moderator: Chris Mitman**, Head of Export & Agency Finance, Investec Bank

**Aymeric Perrin-Guinot**, Senior Transactor, Export Credit Agency Finance, Rand Merchant Bank

**Ram Shalita**, Chief Executive Officer, Partner, Bluebird Finance & Projects

**Fabrizio Mazza**, Managing Director & Global Public Agency Leader, Credit Specialties, Marsh

**Kjell Forsberg**, Deputy Director Large Corporates, Head of Strategic Relations & Business Development, EKN

**Emma Thomas**, Co-Head, Global Business Origination, Africa, Americas & EECAN, UK Export Finance (UKEF)

15.10-15.40 Networking break

### Stream B

13.40-14.25

#### Emerging flashpoints – how the CPRI market is helping clients seize trade opportunities in Africa

The disruption and averse economic conditions of the last few years have accelerated the demand for trade credit and political risk insurance in Africa, with service providers on the frontline against heightening threats like the funding gap, debt distress, and political instability. With many brokers and underwriters becoming accustomed to market volatility and the needs and risks of their clients, what do CPRI leaders see as emerging pressure points for African trade and insurance support? Where and how can capacity be stepped up to de-risk activity and seize fresh opportunities for business?

Discussion will consider flashpoints across Africa and how these might evolve, from non-payment and illiquidity risk and potential downtrends in inflation, to the growth of debt distressed sovereigns and trade credit insurance demand. With the trade finance gap an enduring issue, how brokers and insurers can minimise credit risk to clients will be considered, and ensure business seize emerging trade opportunities and de-risk growth areas like the energy transition. As geopolitical threats in Africa rise from both domestic and global security fallout, the panel will examine how capacity for political risk coverage might expand, and how support stepped up to protect businesses from sovereign collapse and conflict spillover.

**Moderator: Sekete Mokgehele**, Co-Head, Africa Infrastructure Finance, NedBank CIB

**Jonathan Lofts**, Assistant Director, BPL Global

**Adrian Jones**, Manager, Credit Risk, Trade & Export Finance, Boskalis

**Michael Creighton**, Executive Director, Credit & Political Risks, WTW

**Patricia Rodrigues**, Associate Director, Africa, Global Risk Analysis, Control Risks

**Alex Clarke**, Underwriter, Political & Financial Risks, AEGIS London

14.25-15.10

#### African fintech and long-term priorities for investment and digitising credit services and infrastructure

Much like other sectors the African fintech market experienced a retracement of finance and venture capital in 2022, however prospects for growth and inward investment remain high in the long-term. The continent's fintech industry benefits from strong green shoots, from a mature payment and mobile money market, entrepreneurial business sector keen to digitise, to banks looking to overcome trade and credit barriers for clients. With strong synergies on digitisation shared across the continent's financiers, fintechs and corporates, what measures must stakeholders set in the years ahead to expand Africa's digital success story, and deliver digital solutions to Africa's trade finance barriers?

Panelists will consider the impact of financing volatility on Africa's fintech ecosystem, with perspectives on the future appetite of financiers and how experts see the long-term trajectory for investment. With trade and logistical infrastructure a key barrier for African trade growth, how finance might be better leveraged to unlock trade system digitisation will also be considered. As trade finance access remains an enduring issue, progress in the digital democratisation of African credit will be discussed, including how document and compliance barriers between banks and borrowers can be reduced, and cross-border and global platforms for credit and payments expanded to African businesses.

**Moderator: Michael Vrontamitis**, Deputy-Chair, World Trade Board

**Morgan Lépinoy**, Managing Director, Global Head of Trade Facilitation, Viatrans SA

**Funmi Dele-Giwa**, General Counsel & Head,

Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC), Onafriq

**Toyosi Ariyo**, Founder & Chief Executive Officer,

Diaspora World

15.10-15.40 Networking break

## Wednesday 8 November Afternoon plenary

15.40-16.25

### Deepening trade and financing ties – new opportunities for UK-Africa trade flows

Since its exit from the European Union the UK has made trade diversification a key priority, with opportunities to dovetail Africa's burgeoning role in global trade a key vector for UK-Africa trade flows. While unique opportunities across each region reflect the dynamism of African trade potential, much work remains to reduce bottlenecks between both sides, from addressing UK-Africa trade policy barriers, to reversing the longer-term retreat in trade volume and financing. What steps can UK policymakers, firms and financiers take to support and expand UK-Africa trade channels, and what more can be done to build on success stories, and deepen economic cooperation through trade and export finance?

The panel will consider priorities for elevating UK-Africa FTAs and boosting trade opportunities, from reducing trade barriers for key export sectors, deepening UK-Africa supply chain connectivity, to encouraging more inward commercial trade finance flows and smoother capital liquidity access for African SMEs. Discussion will also examine the UK's widening engagement with francophone Africa and steps to deepen the emerging success story, from identifying growth opportunities for export finance across infrastructure and agribusiness sectors, to how commercial ties with local markets are being de-risked across West and Central Africa.

**Moderator: Natalia Andrew**, Head of Multinationals & Financial Institutions, Zenith Bank (UK)

**Sally Jones**, UK Trade Strategy & Brexit Leader, EY

**Joe Collins**, Chief Executive Officer, RoofTG Africa Middle East & Managing Director, African Supplies

**Kevin Shakespeare**, Director of Strategic Projects, Institute of Export & International Trade

**Madiha Aslam**, Director, Structured Finance, Innovo Projects

16.25-17.10

### Setting standards for African trade finance, and striking the balance between ESG goals and development needs

The pressures fueling Africa's trade finance gap are multiple, and as adoption of ESG criteria picks up steam across global banks and corporates, concerns over ESG standards and their implications on African credit grow. With most African trade fulfilled by MSMEs and necessitating the use of trade financing, industry experts increasingly call for a 'just transition', and a sensible approach to ESG that is compatible with African needs. How are African banks and financiers progressing in pursuit of a fair framework for African trade finance, and the incorporation of social and environmental metrics that aid and do not inhibit development?

This panel will be led by members of the ITFA Africa Regional Committee, who after publishing last year's White Paper on sustainable trade finance in Africa, will examine progress on a model for African trade finance lending. Discussion will examine the linkages between African trade and achieving SDGs, and how global banks can enable both social and environmental development through Africa-centric standards. The role of Africa's local and regional banks as an essential bridge will also be discussed, enabling domestic SMEs to access liquidity from international markets, as well as aiding the sustainability performance of borrowers. With rising debt levels a barrier to credit, the panel will consider how financing for environmental goals can look beyond sovereign limits, including the balance of concessional, grant and aid based funding, and how financiers can enable this.

**Moderator: Tedd George**, Chief Narrative Officer, Kleos Advisory UK

**Duarte Pedreira**, Head of International Development Organisations & Trade Finance, Crown Agents Bank

**George Wilson**, Head of Institutional Trade Finance, Investec

**Anne-Marie Woolley**, Chief Executive Officer, Africa Global Trade Finance

17.10-17.15

### Charity partner closing remarks

**Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow**, Founder, Mary's Meals

17.15-17.20

### Chair's closing remarks

**Andrew Skipper**, Vice Chair of the Royal Africa Society & Chief Executive Officer, Polymetis Professional Solutions

### Followed by evening networking reception

**"The conference is absolutely amazing and provided a phenomenal opportunity to meet key industry leaders."**

**D Sawyer**, Rand Merchant Bank

**"Fulfilling content & good to catch up with people in the trade finance community."**

**A Plumbly**, BPL Global

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