A platform for trading and investment opportunities

The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) in partnership with the Seychelles government is holding an Investment Forum and Exhibition at the Savoy Resort & Spa, Beau Vallon, as part of the bank’s annual general meeting of shareholders which is being held in Seychelles this year.

Some 50 companies are exhibiting their products and services to over 500 delegates from various countries around the world, mainly African ones. The exhibition, which will run until tomorrow, is being held under the theme ‘Blue growth and investment opportunities in Seychelles’. Blue growth is referring to the Blue economy. Seychelles is pressing forward as the country has built a global reputation as a pioneer of the Blue economy concept, where economic growth and development is geared towards the wise, long-term management of marine spaces, resources and the environment.

As for the investment forum, held yesterday, it reflected three key sectors – the Blue economy, the future of financial services and focus on regional trade relations. These topics were elaborated on through panel discussions. They are key areas for the Seychelles as the country seeks to broaden its economic base and forge partnerships with stakeholders from the region. The event therefore served as a platform for trading and investment opportunities.

The Minister for Finance, Trade and the Blue Economy Jean-Paul Adam gave an overview of the forum after the panel discussions.

Present at the opening ceremony were the Minister for Investment, Entrepreneurship Development and Business Innovation Michael Benstrong; former president of Nigeria Major General Olusegun Obasanjo; distinguished officials and board members of Afreximbank; Caroline Abel, Governor of the Central Bank of Seychelles; other bank and local dignitaries.
Referring to the exhibition’s theme, Minister Benstrong, in his opening speech, said it reflected that Seychelles is open for business.

“We are confident that this forum and exhibition will present delegates with the chance to hold concrete and fruitful business discussions, initiate long-term partnership with each other and other businesses in the country and in the region,” the minister said.

It is our hope, he said, that the exhibition and the forum will contribute towards unleashing African’s trade and economic potential, a potential for entrepreneurship, a potential of a continental market and fruitful trade relationships.

He noted that during discussions it is clear Africa has not taken full advantage of growth and development opportunities offered by the abundance of resources, especially those our oceans have to offer which all of us should be taking in great strides.

He added Seychelles is not only known for tourism but also as a vibrant fisheries sector, thriving real estate schemes and our international financial centres. The country is the world’s number one fish transshipment hub in the region and world’s number two largest cannery factory while our real estate market (referring to Eden Island) offers a premium destination for taking residency.

As for Mr Denya of Afreximbank, he said the trade and finance sectors of the continent defines a critical role of promoting diversification, expansion and development of intra and extra Africa trade with a view of projecting and promoting Africa as a global investment destination of choice which offers unique and excellent opportunities for investors from around the world.

“In furtherance of this objective, the bank has over the past years introduced and organised successful investment forums and trade links that offer a continental platform for host countries to showcase their investment opportunities and trade potentials,” he said, adding these forums also provide the opportunity to highlight socio-cultural diversity which this year it has been planned as a sub-regional event which provides the government and people of Seychelles as well as other countries in the sub-region to exhibit their products.

Regarding the Blue economy concept of the Seychelles, Mr Denya said it provides a platform to unveil strategies considered by the government to attract African and international investors in the growing Blue economy sector. And as an emerging Blue economy, Seychelles offers a unique investment and trade alternative for Africa’s economy as a whole.

“It ultimately forces economic integration, promotes intra Africa trades and accelerates the process of structural transformation of African countries,” he said.

The event also saw the presentation of prizes to winners of the exhibition with Amirantes Fisheries clinching first prize. It was given to them