

Dear ImpacTribe,

It's September, the beautiful month that ushers in the fall season, New York Fashion Week, and, definitely, the Super Bowl of diplomacy: the UNGA. This deserves special mention as conversations on sustainability and ethical trade would be held at the general assembly and between world leaders at unofficial brunches. Speaking of ethical trade, we had an amazing discussion on Africa's potential in ethical trade and how its cultural terrain is not a liability but an advantage. If you missed this, you can check it out [here](#).

This month, Africa's agricultural export is examined. Why agriculture? It is the single most important economic activity in Africa, employing over half a billion people. This newsletter provides insights into the African agriculture export game to change the status quo and contribute to growth on the continent.

### ➤ **Enhancing Market Access and Trade Competitiveness**

Picture this. You have two cocoa farmers in West Africa with the same hectares of farm and access to export opportunities. Farmer A uses organic fertiliser, cover cropping, and regularly prunes the trees on the cocoa farm to improve the soil's fertility. Farmer B uses chemical pesticides, which are cheaper and available, and water from the public stream to irrigate his farm. Farmer A's produce is known for its longevity, organic taste and richness. Farmer B wonders why his trading partners complain about the different cocoa taste and the short longevity of his cocoa products.

Two cocoa farmers, different realities. That is what sustainable agricultural practices present. Farmer A has better access to global markets based on the old business rule that your reputation precedes you. His products are sustainable and nutritious. While enhancing market access begins with sustainable practices at the farm level, trade agreements, partnerships, and brand image are important and necessary. International trading partnerships are built on mutual trust, Trust that the products are healthy and that they are traded for their worth. Branding and storytelling are useful tools in this regard, because how would the world know that you practice ethical trade if you do not have proof to show for it?

A vivid example of impactful storytelling is the use of Juan Valdez in Colombia to influence America and the world that Colombia's coffee is sustainable and rich. Juan Valdez helped to point a human angle to Colombia's coffee industry and created a story weaving family, sustainability and healthy practices into the global coffee trade. Aside from the impact of trade agreements and the signing of fancy documents that went down this month in New York between African leaders and their global counterparts, what stories are Africans telling about their products and resources?

### ➤ **Market Access and Trade Policies**

The African Continental Free Trade Agreement is a breath of fresh air in the sustainability sector through its shared resources advantage. It helps African farmers and exporters to achieve technology transfer and innovation. Simply put, ACFTA helps farmers in rural Rwanda gain knowledge in sustainable practices from farmers in Uganda through technology transfer. Another breath of fresh air is tariffs. Yes, you read correctly, Tariffs. On the surface, tariffs look like little bumps resisting trade, but they are not entirely bad. Tariffs on products that do not observe sustainable agricultural practices can reduce imports of such products; on the flip side, it can also boost demand for local businesses that practice sustainable agriculture. Lower tariffs on eco-friendly products can drive sustainable practices in Africa, leading to increased exports and global certification.

### ➤ **Balancing Food Security with Export Ambitions**

Balancing food security with security ambitions may sound like juggling fire, but sustainable agricultural trade can make the act much easier. Food is not just about filling stomachs; it is about keeping peace. A hungry population is rarely a calm one, so smart governments treat farming and trade as part of their security plan. Sustainable trade opens the door to premium markets. Fair-trade cocoa, organic coffee, or climate-friendly grains bring in valuable revenue while protecting the soil for future harvests. The trick is to export wisely without emptying the local market. Nobody wants to earn foreign exchange while citizens queue for bread. When revenues are invested into grain reserves, irrigation, and rural roads, the benefits multiply. Borders can still be kept secure while fast lanes ensure food keeps moving. In the end, sustainability ties food and security together, feeding people and calming tensions at once.

### ➤ **Food Security and Social Impact**

Some practical initiatives that balance export targets and local supply include:

- Introducing policies that cap the export of staple products like Rice, Beans, and Sugar to increase availability for local demand.
- High-value crops like rubber take priority for exports, while staple foods are protected for local consumption, thereby improving local diets and bringing in foreign exchange.
- Foreign exchange gotten from exports is reinvested in the local economy, providing subsidised seeds for local farmers and improving local consumption.

### ➤ **Spotlight**

**One Acre Fund:** Based in Kenya with branches in East Africa, One Acre Fund supplies smallholder farmers with asset-based financing, training in sustainable intensification, agroforestry, composting, and better fertiliser use. They also plant millions of trees with farmers

to restore the ecology. Most importantly, they use storytelling to build impact. They publish impact stories from farmers, show how sustainable practices raise yields, and decrease vulnerability. Their annual reports include data and personal farmer experience. These stories help with fundraising, global partnerships, and awareness among consumers and investors on how sustainable trade works.

## ➤ **Conclusion**

Whew, we've had a long and interesting conversation on how you, as an agriculturalist, business owner, trade specialist, policy maker and farmer, can improve trading practices in agriculture. Sustainable grassroots agricultural practices are not enough to gain access to the global market. Branding and storytelling can improve your chances and gain you an entrance into the world of sustainable trade. While doing this, don't forget the folks back at home who depend on these agricultural products to survive. Keep your fingers crossed for next month's issue, as it promises to be as interesting and mysterious as the autumn season.