

UAE and Benin Presidents witness exchange of Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

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UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and His Excellency Romuald Wadagni, President of the Republic of Benin, witnessed the exchange of the UAE-Benin Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

The agreement opens a more ambitious phase of trade and investment cooperation between the two countries and will support stronger trade and investment flows, expand opportunities for collaboration between their business communities, and advance mutual economic growth.

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan affirmed that the agreement represents a milestone in relations between the UAE and Benin, embodying their shared commitment to building economic and development partnerships that benefit the peoples of both nations.

His Highness stated: “The relationship between the UAE and the Republic of Benin is founded on a shared belief in dialogue, partnership, and the role of international cooperation in advancing sustainable development. This agreement marks a significant milestone in our bilateral relations and reflects our common ambition to achieve long-term development aims, create new opportunities for our business communities, strengthen economic resilience, and contribute to prosperity and stability in our regions. We look forward to building on these foundations and expanding cooperation in areas of mutual interest in the years ahead.”

For his part, His Excellency Wadagni welcomed the exchange of the agreement, emphasising its importance in advancing bilateral economic cooperation and achieving shared sustainable development objectives.

The agreement was exchanged by His Excellency Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UAE Minister of Foreign Trade, and His Excellency Olushegun Adjadi Bakari, Minister of Tourism and Foreign Trade, in charge of Industry and Private Investment Promotion for the Republic of Benin, during an official exchange ceremony in Abu Dhabi.

Following the completion of ratification procedures and the agreement’s entry into force, the UAE-Benin CEPA will reduce or eliminate customs duties on a wide range of goods, remove unnecessary barriers to trade, and improve market access for service providers and investors. These measures will strengthen supply chains and support increased trade and investment flows between the two countries.

The agreement builds on strong momentum in the UAE-Benin trade relationship. Bilateral non-oil trade reached USD 2.15 billion in 2025, an increase of 65% compared to 2024 and more than double the USD 1.01 billion recorded in 2021. This momentum continued in the first half of 2026, with bilateral non-oil trade reaching USD 1.29 billion, a year-on-year increase of 37.4%.

The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Benin represents an important addition to the UAE's network of trade partnerships and will further consolidate the country's position as a global hub for trade, investment, and logistics. The CEPA programme is a key pillar of the UAE's foreign trade agenda. Since its launch in September 2021, the programme has expanded the UAE's network of trade partnerships worldwide, reflecting the country's commitment to open, rules-based trade as a driver of economic growth and diversification and as a means of creating new opportunities for businesses in high-growth markets around the world.

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed and His Excellency Wadagni also witnessed the announcement of the following memoranda of understanding, cooperation protocols, and related instruments:

- * Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations between the two countries
- * Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Joint Committee on Consular Affairs
- * Memorandum of Understanding between the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Benin
- * Letter of Intent on Data Hosting and Information Systems
- * Memorandum of Understanding on Workforce Cooperation and Cooperation Protocol on Domestic Workers
- * Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Government Experience Exchange
- * Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Investment Partnership

The memoranda and cooperation protocols were exchanged on behalf of the UAE by Her Excellency Reem bint Ebrahim Al Hashimy, Minister of State for International Cooperation; His Excellency Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Gergawi, Minister of Cabinet Affairs; His Excellency Dr Abdulrahman Al Awar, Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation; and His Excellency Mohamed Hassan Alsuwaidi, Minister of Investment.

On behalf of the Republic of Benin, the memoranda and cooperation protocols were exchanged by Her Excellency Corinne Amori Brunet, Minister of Foreign Affairs; His Excellency Hugues Oscar Lokossou, Minister Delegate to the Minister of Economy and Finance, in charge of External Resource Mobilisation and Debt Management; His Excellency Olushegun Adjadi Bakari, Minister of Tourism and Foreign Trade, in charge of Industry and Private Investment Promotion; and His Excellency Mahuna Akplogan, Minister of Digital Transformation and Innovation, in charge of the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy.