

Green Corridors Transport Services and the African Green Transition

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Green corridors will work only if they are treated as coordinated economic systems, not transport routes with an environmental label. The session examined how national institutions, regional corridor bodies, the AfCFTA and private actors can align transport, energy, trade, customs, standards, finance, digital systems, investment and skills. Cleaner infrastructure must be matched by services capacity, interoperable regulation and institutions able to deliver across borders.

Moderated by George Riddell, the discussion brought together Professor David Luke, Hon. Axel Addy, Janet Macharia and Dr Jodie Keane. It connected regional corridor innovation, national implementation, the legal architecture for cross-border delivery, and the evidence on services trade and environmental outcomes.



Panel discussion during the WTO Public Forum 2026 session in Geneva.

Green corridors are systems not routes

Vehicles, ports, railways, vessels and charging assets are only the visible layer. Their deployment depends on engineering, project finance, testing and certification, maintenance, logistics, software and data, insurance, payments, environmental services, education and training. These functions are often divided among agencies operating under different mandates, timelines and systems. The result can be duplicated approvals, incompatible standards, weak project pipelines, higher trade costs and uncertainty for investors and service providers.

National delivery therefore requires a clear lead institution, structured inter-agency cooperation and a practical map of the permits, licences, standards and data requirements affecting each corridor. Digital single windows can improve transparency and reduce discretion, but only when agencies agree on common processes and exchange reliable

information. Dialogue with corridor users - including transport operators, ports, utilities, financiers, technology firms, workers and SMEs - must be built into implementation.

From regional innovation to delivery

Africa's corridors are already becoming laboratories for innovation. Work around the Northern and Central Corridors, green freight and maritime corridors, and production and logistics initiatives linked to the DRC-Zambia and Lobito routes shows how regional action can join infrastructure, trade facilitation, standards, data and investment. RECs and corridor institutions can coordinate neighbouring regulators, pool demand and reduce project risk. Green corridors support broader economic resilience and boost economic efficiency through cluster support and services like maintenance, testing, digital services, supplier development and recycling and value addition. The related knowledge spillovers can assist movement over time towards great value addition processes and products.

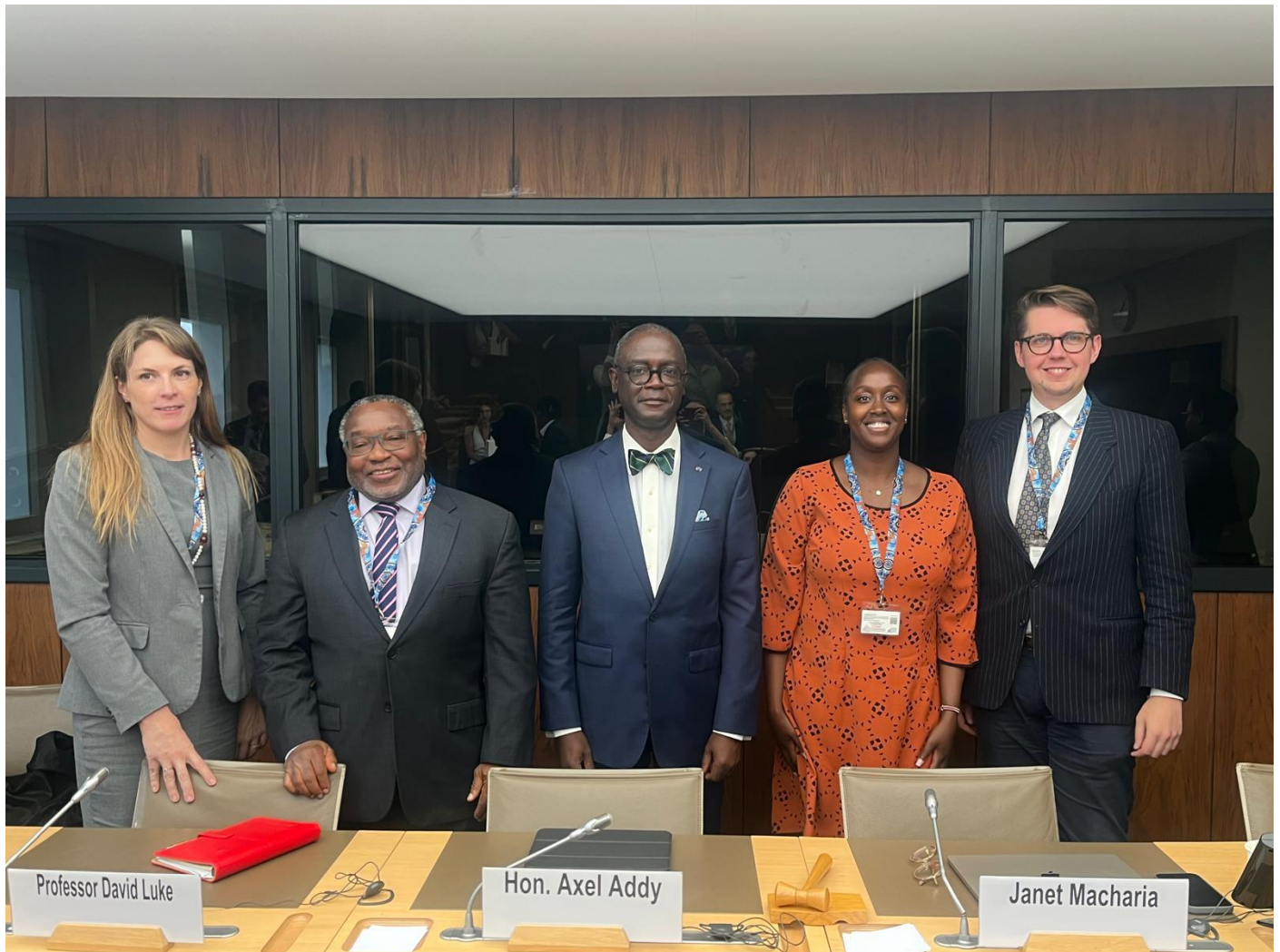


The coordination challenge spans trade, transport, customs, immigration, standards, energy, environment, finance, digital systems, investment, skills, safety and subnational government. Session visual concept by Axel Addy.

Five priorities for implementation

- 1 Build national coordination into corridor design.** Create an accountable delivery mechanism that joins trade, transport, energy, industry, customs, standards, finance, environment, education and subnational authorities, with continuous private-sector consultation.
- 2 Treat services and education as infrastructure.** Map the enabling services and connect education to certification, licensing and recognition. Priorities include engineers, EV and high-voltage technicians, drivers, logistics professionals, digital specialists and MRV capability.
- 3 Use the AfCFTA architecture as an implementation toolkit.** The Services Protocol offers routes through domestic regulation, recognition and scheduled commitments, including Articles 9, 10 and 19-22. The digital trade architecture supports electronic documents, identity, payments and interoperable logistics, while the Investment Protocol points to facilitation, supplier linkages, training and technology transfer. Delivery still depends on schedules, domestication, regulator agreements and the confirmed legal status of the newer protocols.
- 4 Pilot at REC and corridor level.** A Green Corridor Services Compact could begin with two occupations and two equipment categories, combining expedited recognition, acceptance of trusted test results, interoperable credentials and data, and an aligned investment and skills package before wider AfCFTA scaling.
- 5 Measure climate and development together.** Close the evidence gap by tracking emissions and fuel use alongside border and dwell time, trade costs, reliability, services activity, local supplier spend, jobs, training and SME participation. This would connect environmental performance directly to competitiveness and structural transformation.

Immediate opportunity. Launch one narrow, measurable REC-led 12-month pilot, backed by national coordination and a shared measurement framework. This would test whether legal interoperability, skills, finance and regional governance can make a corridor cleaner, more competitive and more productive.



Panellists Jodie Keane, David Luke, Axel Addy, Janet Macharia and George Riddell.