



AFRICA LEATHER AND LEATHER PRODUCTS INSTITUTE

Sustainable leather for health, wealth, and luxury!

PRESS RELEASE

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Unleashing Africa's Leather Potential: Sustainable, Inclusive & Competitive

The Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI) will host the 18th Africa Leather Value Chain Annual Forum from 26–28 November 2025 at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka, Zambia. Bringing together continental and global leaders, the Forum stands as Africa's foremost platform for shaping the future of a sustainable, competitive and fully integrated leather value chain.

This year's edition is being convened at a decisive moment for the industry. Global demand is shifting toward traceable, ethical, and durable leather products, while due-diligence regulations continue to redefine market entry. These changes, combined with Africa's vast livestock resources, growing youthful workforce, and the emerging opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), create the most promising window yet for Africa to reposition itself from a raw-material supplier to a global supplier of finished, value-added leather goods.

Over three days, the Forum will assemble ministers, regional economic communities (RECs), business leaders, financiers, designers, academia, and SMEs to accelerate the transformation of Africa's leather ecosystem. The program opens with high-level remarks from ALLPI Executive Director Nicholas Mudungwe, COMESA Assistant Secretary General Dr. Dev Haman, and Zambia's Minister of Industry and Commerce, Hon. Chipoka Mulenga, followed by a VIP industry tour and live media engagements. Panels that follow bring together experts from the African Union, AfCFTA Secretariat, COMESA, SADC, EAC, ECOWAS and IGAD to define a coordinated continental framework for leather sector competitiveness (2025–2035). Their discussions will address traceability, sustainability compliance, standards harmonisation, financing models, and the creation of integrated regional value chains.

The Forum further spotlights ALLPI's programme impact through dedicated sessions on business ecosystems, cluster development, applied innovation, product design, sustainability, and standards. Experts from Egypt, Turkey, India, Tunisia, South Africa and others will share insights on industrial upgrading, Leather Working Group (LWG) certification, and the growing role of green technologies in global value chains. Parallel to these discussions, financiers including the African Development Bank, Afreximbank, TDB, Stanbic, and the COMESA Clearing House, alongside PAPSS and policy leaders, will explore solutions for unlocking SME financing, expanding inter-Africa payment systems, and de-risking investment in the sector.

A major highlight of the Forum is the emphasis on market access and distribution. Manufacturers, retailers, and designers from Zambia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Egypt, and South Africa will unpack the evolving dynamics of digital commerce, buyer expectations, and consumer trends across the continent.

This focus on markets is complemented by a deep dive into strengthening private-sector associations, clusters, and cross-border BSO collaboration, critical pillars for building a resilient, export-ready African leather industry.

Beyond the plenaries, the Forum hosts over 50 exhibiting SMEs from more than 15 African countries, showcasing footwear, leather goods, garments, and accessories. A specialized Deal Room will drive B2B and B2F engagements, enabling real partnerships between SMEs, tanneries, designers, financiers, and buyers. A unique feature, the Open Bazaar, will connect exhibitors directly with staff from embassies, COMESA institutions, and conference delegates, creating immediate trade opportunities and tangible economic impact.

Creativity and innovation will take centre stage with the Real Leather. Stay Different. Africa Talent Leather design Showcase 2025 Awards, featuring 15 finalists selected from 149 designers across the continent. Their showcase celebrates Africa's talent, sustainability, and contemporary design excellence, further reinforcing the Forum's commitment to youth and creative industries.

The final day will feature the presentation of Forum resolutions, recognition of partners, and the highly anticipated launch of ALLPI's new Brand and its 2026–2030 Institutional Strategy, a dual milestone signaling a renewed commitment to harmonised standards, digital transformation, enterprise competitiveness, sustainability leadership, and continental integration.

Outcomes expected from the Forum include the endorsement of a Continental Leather Business Ecosystem Framework, the establishment of a Strategic Partnership and Financing Framework, the operationalisation of an Inter-REC Collaboration Mechanism, and the documentation of investment commitments, B2B linkages, and policy recommendations. These deliverables will form the backbone of Africa's coordinated transformation agenda for the leather value chain.

As Africa accelerates its industrialisation under the AfCFTA, the Africa Leather Value Chain Forum 2025 reaffirms ALLPI's role as a continental catalyst—uniting policy, industry, finance, and innovation to build a greener, more inclusive, and globally competitive leather sector.

About ALLPI

The Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI), formerly known as COMESA/LLPI, was established in 1990 under the endorsement of 17 COMESA Heads of State. In 2018, it was rebranded to reflect its expanded mandate across the continent.

Headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ALLPI works to enhance value addition, sustainability, and competitiveness in Africa's leather sector. With a membership spanning ten countries, the institute collaborates with additional nations under consultancy services and continues to expand its reach.

Through its strategic initiatives, capacity building, and multi-stakeholder collaborations, ALLPI has positioned itself as Africa's leading institution for advancing a competitive leather sector globally.