



Regions  
Refocus

# Regions Refocus Recap

## Our 2016 Anniversary Report

Dear colleagues,

As 2017 begins, Regions Refocus is writing to share with you some highlights of our work in 2016. Our three "slow thinking" workshops on trade, economic policy, and regional integration (in [East Africa](#), the [Caribbean](#), and the [African continent](#)), a couple of hard-hitting publications, and some strategic planning towards upcoming regional initiatives characterize a year that was a deep dive into some of our broader regional convenings and policy analysis since Regions Refocus was launched in early 2015. We encourage you to read through our snapshots and resources, watch the 13 new [Virtual Teach-in Videos](#) we published in 2016, and share this email with your networks.

We're grateful to work with each of you, as our collective endeavors become ever more precarious and necessary in the face of polarizing and alarming geopolitical contestations.

In peace and solidarity,  
Anita and Katie

Anita Nayar, Director  
Kathryn Tobin, Policy Coordinator  
[Regions Refocus](#)



## Towards an Equitable and Feminist Trade Agreement in Africa

### **Africa Trade Network Convening on the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)**

From 26-27 November 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Third World Network-Africa and Regions Refocus co-hosted a two-day African civil society consultation on ongoing processes around the Continental Free Trade Area, under the umbrella of the Africa Trade Network (ATN). The ATN meeting provided an opportunity for African civil society organizations to share information and analysis on the CFTA, discuss their perspectives and concerns with the processes so far of the CFTA, and develop approaches to effective engagement with these

processes in general, as well as highlight their perspectives and concerns at the subsequent Africa Trade Week by the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission.



- [Virtual Teach-in: The CFTA and the Structural Transformation Agenda in Africa](#)
- [The Continental Free Trade Area \(CFTA\): Process and Political Significance \(Primer\)](#)
- [Photos from the ATN Convening in Addis Ababa](#)

### **Towards an Equitable and Transformative Continental Free Trade Area: A Heterodox and Feminist Approach (East Africa "Slow Thinking" Workshop)**



Held in Kampala, Uganda from April 24-27, this workshop brought together feminist and youth organizations, activists, academics, and progressive policy-makers to build knowledge and solidarity around the proposed Continental Free Trade Area. Through a series of teach-ins, roundtable discussions, and intensive group strategizing, the workshop discussed heterodox and feminist approaches towards a CFTA that can actually benefit African workers, producers, traders, consumers, and economies. Participants examined sectoral imperatives around trade and industrial policy, agriculture and the rural economy, financial services and financialization, and extractive industries. The

workshop concluded with a Uganda Public Forum, where the strategies and proposals identified through the slow thinking workshop were shared and debated with a broader public of students, policy-makers, NGOs, and the media.

- [Article](#)
- [Virtual Teach-ins](#)
- [CFTA: East African Perspectives \(Video\)](#)

**Up Next in 2017:** Sub-regional workshops on the CFTA (Southern Africa, North Africa) and collaborative tracking and advocacy as the CFTA negotiations unfold; Policy analysis on 1) agriculture and structural economic transformation in Africa; and 2) North African trade agreements and perspectives on regional integration, to be published and launched at key regional and global policy spaces

## Caribbean Partnerships II: Co-Constructing Transformative Economic Policy (A Heterodox and Feminist Approach)

At this slow thinking workshop, held 23-25 May in Trinidad and Tobago, participants from across the Caribbean critically examined macroeconomic policy and climate finance, identifying progressive proposals from heterodox and feminist perspectives. Organized by the Institute for Gender and Development Studies: Nita Barrow and St. Augustine Units, University of the West Indies and Regions Refocus, in collaboration with the Caribbean Development Bank and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, CPII identified several concrete areas for follow-up on the issues of fiscal policy, debt, climate finance, and participatory governance.



- [Article](#)
- [Virtual Teach-ins](#)
- [Caribbean Perspectives on Social and Economic Transformation: Video](#)

**Up Next in 2017:** Policy analysis on 1) gender and climate change; 2) the Caribbean debt crisis; and 3) fiscal policy and participatory democracy, to be published and launched at key regional and global policy spaces; Follow-up workshop on debt and fiscal policy in late 2017.



## Resources and Further Reading by Regions Refocus

### [The Continental Free Trade Area \(CFTA\): Process and Political Significance](#)

A Primer by Regions Refocus and Third World Network-Africa, outlining the background, timeline, goals, actors, principles, scope, and substantive issues at stake in the ongoing negotiations of the African Union towards a CFTA.

### [Trade for Economic Justice? The Continental Free Trade Area and the Structural Transformation Agenda in Africa](#)

Article by Kathryn Tobin in African Agenda 19.2. Scroll to page 11 to read.

### [Reclaim UNCTAD to Uphold Africa's Structural Economic Transformation: An African Civil Society Call to Governments at UNCTAD 14](#)

Regions Refocus joined the Africa Steering Group of civil society for the 14th session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 14), and contributed to the writing and dissemination of this statement, which was signed by upwards of 200 civil society organizations in Africa and beyond.

### [Regional Mechanisms Reader: The Continental Free Trade Area \(CFTA\)](#)

An annotated bibliography of resources related to the CFTA, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the European Union and African sub-regions, agriculture, industrial policy, gender, and regional integration.

### [Regional Mechanisms Reader: Co-Constructing Transformative Economic Policy \(Caribbean\)](#)

An annotated bibliography prepared for our Caribbean slow thinking workshop, covering sustainable development, feminist economics, and heterodox economics in the Caribbean.

