

Insights: Publications

A Window of Flexibility: Why the Formation of AfCFTA Provides an Ideal Opportunity for African Nations to Employ TRIPS Flexibilities on a Continental Scale

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In October 2016, crowds of Rwandans gathered outside of the capital of Kigali and cheered as they witnessed medical delivery drones swoop in and drop off lifesaving supplies to remote hospitals and clinics. This was the first of many such deliveries from drones operated by Zipline, a San Francisco-based startup operating in multiple countries across Africa. In Rwanda, over 30,000 people require blood transfusions annually. To receive treatment, most Rwandans must travel multiple hours to hospitals on unreliable roads often washed out by storms. Adopting innovative technology like drone delivery systems allows a country like Rwanda to “leapfrog” over previous barriers to development and move quickly into the 21st century. Rwanda's commitment to this level of innovation is the reason it recently received a \$30 million USD pledge from the African Development Bank to stimulate innovation, reduce poverty, and promote socio-economic growth.