

Rwanda is seeking to use its growing partnership with Togo to expand access to West African markets, with trade, investment and transport identified as areas for closer cooperation.

The two countries signed several agreements in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, covering political consultations, a joint cooperation commission and collaboration in other sectors.

The agreements were signed by Rwanda's Foreign Minister Olivier Nduhungirehe and Togo's Foreign Minister Robert Dussey.

The partnership comes as both countries look to make greater use of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which provides a framework for increasing trade among African economies.

Togo could offer Rwanda an important gateway into West Africa through the Port of Lomé, allowing Rwandan businesses to reach markets beyond the country's traditional trading routes.

Potential areas for expanded trade include agricultural products, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, technology, financial services and other goods produced in Rwanda.

The two governments had already been discussing ways to increase trade and agricultural exports. In May, Rwanda's trade and industry minister held talks with Togo on boosting commerce, adding value to products and increasing exports.

Agriculture is also an area where the two countries could complement each other. Togo has significant production of cotton, coffee, cocoa, soybeans and cashew nuts, while Rwanda is seeking to increase agricultural productivity and value addition.

Nduhungirehe and Dussey said their governments were committed to strengthening bilateral relations and advancing African integration.

The agreement also creates scope for cooperation in technology, biodiversity conservation and climate action.

The partnership gives Rwanda another potential entry point into West Africa as the two governments work to increase trade, investment and movement of goods between their markets.