



PAN AFRICAN CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES(PACPS)

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FOURTH EDITION OF THE ARUSHA SYMPOSIUM, 7-9 NOVEMBER 2022

CALL FOR PAPERS/ABSTRACTS.

**“TAKING STOCK OF THE PROGRESS & CHALLENGES TOWARDS THE
MATERIALIZATION OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY: FROM ABUJA TO
ACCRA VIA KIGALI”**

The objectives of the Community shall be:

- *To promote economic, social and cultural development and the integration of African economies in order to increase economic self-reliance and promote an endogenous and self-sustained development;*
- *To establish, on a continental scale, a framework for the development, mobilization and utilization of the human and material resources of Africa in order to achieve a self-reliant development;*
- *To promote cooperation in all fields of human endeavor in order to raise the standard of living of African peoples, and maintain and enhance economic stability, foster close and peaceful relations among Member States and contribute to the progress, development and the economic integration of the Continent; and*
- *To coordinate and harmonize policies among existing and future economic communities in order to foster the gradual establishment of the Community.*

It was in these terms that the collective goals assigned to the continent were formulated in the treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC), three (3) decades ago in Abuja: (a) “*to promote the integration of African economies*”; (b) “*to establish a continental framework for development and mobilization of human and material resources in Africa*”, (c) “*to promote cooperation in all fields of human endeavor in order to raise the standard of living of African peoples*”; and (d) “*to coordinate and harmonize policies among existing and future Regional Economic Communities (RECs)*”.

Adopted on 3rd June 1991, the Abuja Treaty entered into force in May 1994. It has been signed by all the Member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) except Eritrea. South Africa signed it on 10 October 1997.

We at the Pan-African Centre for Policy Studies (PACPS), today, three (3) decades after the adoption of the Abuja Treaty (1991) and two (2) decades after the paradigm shift transforming the Organization of African Unity (which was political in essence) into the African Union (focused on socio-economic transformation of the continent), believe that the time has come to take stock of the progress and challenges which the organization has encountered on the road for the materialization of the African Economic Community.

The Pan-African Centre for Policy Studies (PACPS), in collaboration with its partners [AfCFTA-Secretariat, East African Business Council (EABC), TradeMark East Africa, AFREXIMBANK, GIZ] will organize the 2022 Arusha Symposium under the theme:

“Taking Stock of the Progress and Challenges towards the Materialization of the African Economic Community: From Abuja to Accra via Kigali”

From 7-9 November 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda.

The symposium will provide a meeting place for trade practitioners, policy makers and policy implementers as well as representatives from civil society organizations, think tanks, academia, and private sector organizations, from in- and outside the African continent to discuss theoretical as well as empirical challenges pertaining to the materialization of the African Economic Community. The operationalization of the ***African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement*** constitutes a landmark progress on the path to the realization of the ***Creation of the African Single Market***. Several Regional Free Trade Areas were created and the Tripartite Free Trade Areas constitutes an concrete example of regional coordination as the practice of free movement of people and common passport in ECOWAS and EAC are signs of regional cooperation. These are positive developments but still a lot remains to be done on the road to the ***Africa we want***. What has been done so far? What are the success stories? What are the structural as well as motivational challenges? What can be done to overcome these challenges in order to ensure an effective and successful establishment of the African Economic Community?



Recognizing that Intra-African trade is key to economic transformation of the continent, the 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 29 to 30 January 2012 adopted a decision to create a Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by an indicative date of 2017. On the same occasion, the Summit also endorsed the Action Plan on Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT), which

related infrastructure, trade finance, trade information, and factor market integration. African leaders held an Extraordinary Summit on the African Continent Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) from 17 to 21 March 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda. At this Summit, the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA was presented for signature, along with the Kigali Declaration and the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right to Residence and Right to Establishment.

The AfCFTA brings together all 55 Member States of the African Union covering a market of more than 1.2 billion people, including a growing middle class, and a combined gross domestic product GDP of more than US\$ 3.4 trillion. In terms of numbers of participating countries, the AfCFTA will be the world's largest free trade area since the formation of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Estimates from the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) suggest that the AfCFTA has a potential not only to boost intra-African Trade by 52.3 percent by eliminating import duties, but to also double this trade should non-tariff barriers be reduced.

The main objectives of the AfCFTA are to:

- create a single market for goods and services, facilitated by movement of persons in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent and in accordance with the Pan African Vision of “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa” enshrined in Agenda 2063;
- Create a liberalized market for goods and services through successive rounds of negotiations;
- Contribute to the movement of capital and natural persons and facilitate investments building on the initiatives and developments in the State Parties and RECs;
- Lay the foundation for the establishment of a Continental Customs Union at a later stage;
- Promote and attain sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, gender equality and structural transformation of the State Parties;
- Enhance the competitiveness of the economies of State Parties within the continent and the global market;
- Promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development, agricultural development and food security; and
- Resolve the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships and expedite the regional and continental processes.

With the adoption of the AfCFTA, African Union's Member States have acknowledged the pivotal role of achieving gender equality for the structural transformation of the continent (in the spirit of the Article 3(e) of the General objectives of the AfCFTA Agreement). This will require a shift in mindset at the conceptualizing and programming levels of AfCFTA policy implementation at national as well as regional levels. Women traders and entrepreneurs' networks will require support to take advantage of the AfCFTA provisions and this will entail building their capacity to understand the terms of the agreement and to ensure that women traders and entrepreneurs interests and concerns are taken, well articulated and represented at all relevant levels of the AfCFTA governance structures.

The AfCFTA envisions the progressive removal of the so-called non-tariff barriers (NTBs) including custom clearance delays, corruption, restrictive licensing processes, uncoordinated transport-related regulations, and certification challenges. Studies have demonstrated that even minimal reduction of NTBs can have non-negligible positive effect on intra-African trade. With the stage set to implement the AfCFTA, it is crucial that appropriate measures are taken to overcome these anticipated challenges.

During the Third Arusha Symposium, held in Zanzibar, Tanzania, 8-10 November 2021, under the theme: "Women in intra-African Trade: Overcoming Organizational Challenges for the Successful Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area [Beyond Borders & Boundaries]", concerns have been raised on various difficulties to engage in intra-African trade in general, as a man-trader and even more challenging as a woman-in trade. Following factors have been mentioned as rendering trade in Africa extraordinarily challenging: lack of reliable data; hostile business environment (specially for women traders); complicated transition from informal to formal trade; lack of coherence between national and international trade regulations; double taxation for cross-border trading; existence of funding facilities; etc.

In the meantime attempts at solutions are in progress: For instance, on the issue of funding challenges, the African Export and Import Bank (Afreximbank) is proposing funding solutions as well as facilities such as Pan African Payments and Settlement Systems (PAPSS); and the AfCFTA- Secretariat is proposing the African Trade Observatory (ATO) - a trade information portal - as a tool that strengthens the information to compensate for the data deficit.



THE QUESTION WHICH WILL BE ADDRESSED AND DISCUSSED AT THIS FOURTH EDITION OF THE ARUSHA SYMPOSIUM IS: HOW MUCH HAS BEEN DONE IN THE VARIOUS CONTEXT(S), NATIONALLY AND REGIONALLY TO ADDRESS THE ABOVE-MENTIONED AS WELL AS MORE GENERAL INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE RELATED CONCERNS ? HOW MUCH HAS BEEN DONE AND HOW MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE TO REALIZE THE GOAL(S) OF THE SO MUCH DESIRED AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY IN GENERAL AND THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE AfCFTA IN PARTICULAR?

Requirements

- Interested candidates should submit an abstract written in English to PACPS. All abstracts should be strongly aligned to the theme of the Symposium.
- Each abstract (maximum of 2 pages) should include the title, the abstract, and the affiliation of author(s).
- The research can focus on any one of the themes above or bring out multi-linkages within themes.

Submission of Abstracts:

- Abstract for the Annual Arusha Symposium, a maximum of two (2) pages, should be submitted not later than 30 June 2022.
- Once reviewed the date for the notification of the authors of selected

- abstracts will be not later than 30 July 2022; and deadline for the submission of full papers by authors will be 30 September 2022.
- The selected papers will be peer-reviewed and published in the PACPS Quarterly Review of the African Agenda 2063.
- Abstracts should be submitted to the following email addresses:

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