Call for Papers: African International Economic Law Network (AfIELN) Invites Contributions towards its 6th Biennial Conference - International Economic Law in an Era of Multiple Crises: Opportunities and Challenges for Africa-Deadline extended

By:

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International Economic Law in an Era of Multiple Crises: Opportunities and Challenges for Africa

The African International Economic Law Network (AfIELN) invites the submission of abstracts for its 6th Biennial Conference taking place at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, Faculty of Law (GIMPA), Accra, Ghana, from **21 to 24 June 2023**.

Background

The explosion of protectionist measures, high inflation, huge debt burdens and economic slowdowns continue to have detrimental effects across the world. In the midst of these, the global economy has been experiencing significant geopolitical changes. Although the World Trade Organization (WTO) Members have managed to deliver on two important multilateral agreements since its creation, namely the Trade Facilitation and the Fisheries Subsidies Agreements, negotiations under the Doha Development Round have stalled. In addition to the stalemate, there is a rise of protectionism alongside the purported invocation of national security exceptions to justify them. Trade wars are erupting between the countries that designed the post-second World War global order, coupled with what looks like an irremediable crisis in the WTO dispute settlement system. These events are constant reminders of the gravity of the threat to multilateralism. That the WTO is facing its worst existential crisis is, therefore, not an exaggeration.

As the world continues its struggle to recover from the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19), the war between Russia and Ukraine added another dimension to an already tense situation. Changes to the global order due to the war in Ukraine have also put Africa in the geopolitical spotlight as a new arena for the struggle between the United States, European countries, and Asian states. As African countries persistently refuse to pick a side in these ongoing military and economic conflicts, the world may be entering a new geoeconomics order.

The creation of the WTO once reaffirmed the choice in favour of multilateral trade liberalization. However, regional/preferential trade agreements have proliferated in the face of the WTO’s actual and perceived difficulties in adapting to a changing global trade environment. Responding to and revealing this changing global trade environment, African countries concluded the

Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in 2018. The AfCFTA Agreement entered into force in 2019 and the implementation phase started with an official start of trading on 1 January 2021. Trade is, therefore, bound to take place under its auspices between State Parties to the Agreement that have deposited their instruments of ratification.

More complex yet, despite the official start of the trading date, some challenges remain to be addressed before the AfCFTA can realize its full potential. These include, for example, completing negotiations on rules of origin, tariff concessions for trade in goods and schedules of specific commitments in services. In the meantime, AfCFTA State Parties have signed trade and investment agreements with third states, and other negotiations are under consideration. The impacts of these "side deals" on the implementation of the AfCFTA are yet to be seen. However, their consistency in consolidating intra-African trade and investment has generated a vigorous debate splitting African countries into different camps. In the meantime, a broad range of efforts to reform the international investment regime has raised similar questions - will these reforms rectify or retrench Africa's marginal position in the global economy?

Conference Theme

The theme of the 6th AFIELN Biennial Conference is *International Economic Law in the Era of Multiple Crises: Opportunities and Challenges for Africa*.

We invite submissions that address the conference theme in the following (non-exhaustive) areas:

• Regional Integration through the AfCFTA Agreement: Phase 1 and 2 instruments.

• Bilateral and Regional Trade/Investment/Economic Partnership Agreements in Africa.

• International Trade Law and the WTO.

• Sovereign Debt.

• Monetary, Financial and Tax Law.

• Intellectual Property Law.

• Global Health and Public Policy.

• Trade and Gender.

• Sustainable Development Goals.

• Human Rights and International Economic Law.

• Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Food Security.

• Extractive Industries, Environment, Energy and Climate Change.

• International Arbitration and Investor-State Proceedings.

• Artificial Intelligence, Blockchains, Cryptocurrencies, Digital Transactions and Emerging Technologies.

• Emerging Issues in Terrorism, Cyber-terrorism and Piracy.

• Emerging Issues in Private International Law and International Economic Law.

• Role of Civil Society and Other Non-State Actors in law and policy making.

• African Approaches to Global Economic Governance: Multilateralism, Regionalization, Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL), etc.

• New Constitutionalism, International Economic Agreements Enforcement Processes and the Jurisprudence of the Regional Economic Courts.

• Legal Education, Pedagogy and International Economic Law.

Submission Instructions:

We welcome submissions in English and French. Papers will be selected based on quality, originality, alignment to the theme/sub-themes and their capacity to provoke productive debates. Submissions must include a research abstract (no more than 400 words) and a short biography (no more than 200 words). Submission

Deadline: Tuesday, 10 January 2023 (Midnight GMT). Email: afieln.siel@gmail.com.

Authors working on a common issue or topic may propose their own panel by submitting a common proposal for the establishment of such a panel with the following details: Proposed topic or issue for the panel; names of panel participants and their respective affiliations; respective paper titles and abstracts of no more than 400 words; and contact details of panel head.

Decisions on the acceptance of abstracts will be communicated by Monday, 30 January 2023. Selected applicants will be expected to submit their complete paper (not exceeding 6, 000 words) by Monday, 5 June 2023.

Conference Fees, Costs and Financial Support

Conference fees and associated attendance costs will be kept fairly low in the interest of securing widespread attendance. All conference participants, and speakers, must plan to cover their own travel, accommodation and attendance costs.

If funds become available, AfIELN plans to offer limited scholarship and conference registration waiver for graduate students of African origin and scholars that are based in Africa. Those requesting consideration for funding are invited to submit a paragraph-long motivation indicating why they will need financial support, along with their abstract submission.

More information on the conference registration fee will be available on the conference webpage in due course.

Conference Publication

In line with previous AfIELN Conferences, the Conference Committee plans to publish selected articles in an edited volume and in a journal special issue after a successful peer-review. More information will be provided in due course.

Enquiries:

Please submit any enquiries to the Conference Chair, Dr Regis Simo, by email at **afieln.siel@gmail.com**.

Download the Call for Papers here.

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