



## **CALL FOR PAPERS**

### **2026 International Conference of the African Trade Group (ATG) of WTO Chairs**

#### **Theme:**

### **AfCFTA and the Geoeconomics of African States: Integration, Power, and Structural Transformation**

#### **1. Background and Rationale**

On behalf of the African Trade Group (ATG) of the World Trade Organization Chairs Programme, Prof. Ngozi Egbuna International Centre for Regional Integration and Trade Research (ICRITR) at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria is organising an international conference on the theme:

#### **“AfCFTA and the Geoeconomics of African States: Integration, Power, and Structural Transformation.”**

The African Trade Group (ATG) are members of the WTO Chairs from the following: Benin, Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia. The conference will take place on 9th and 10th November 2026 in Abuja, Nigeria. The Prof. Ngozi Egbuna International Centre for Regional Integration and Trade Research (ICRITR) at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria is the host of the 2026 conference. This conference aims to convene leading scholars, policymakers, private sector stakeholders, and development partners to examine the transformative potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area as a driver of Africa’s economic integration, industrialization, and strategic positioning in the global economy.

The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) marks a historic milestone in Africa’s economic integration agenda. Beyond trade liberalization, AfCFTA represents a strategic geoeconomic instrument aimed at transforming Africa’s position in the global economy.

In a rapidly evolving global landscape shaped by shifting power dynamics, supply chain reconfigurations, and the rise of regional economic blocs such as the European Union and Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Africa faces both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges. AfCFTA offers a pathway toward industrialization, enhanced intra-African trade, and greater bargaining power in global trade governance, including within the World Trade Organization.

This conference seeks to bring together scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and development partners to critically examine the geoeconomic implications of AfCFTA for African states.

## **2. Conference Objectives**

The conference aims to:

- Examine AfCFTA as a geoeconomic strategy for Africa
- Explore its implications for industrialization and structural transformation
- Assess Africa's positioning in the evolving global economic order
- Identify policy pathways for maximizing the benefits of AfCFTA
- Foster collaboration between academia, policy, and industry

## **3. Sub-Themes**

Contributions are invited (but not limited) to the following areas:

### **1: Trade Integration and Market Dynamics**

- Trade creation and diversion under AfCFTA
- Intra-African trade and trade facilitation
- Tariff and non-tariff barriers

### **2: Industrialization and Regional Value Chains**

- Industrial policy and manufacturing development
- Regional and continental value chains
- Sectoral transformation (agriculture, textiles, automotive, pharmaceuticals)

### **3: Geoeconomics and Global Power Shifts**

- Africa in a multipolar global economy
- Strategic trade relations with China, United States, and European Union
- Supply chain reconfiguration and global competitiveness

### **4: Digital Trade and Innovation**

- E-commerce and digital trade ecosystems
- Fintech and cross-border payments

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Blockchain Technology
- Data governance and digital sovereignty

#### **5: Infrastructure and Connectivity**

- Role of infrastructure in trade integration
- Transport, energy, and logistics systems
- The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa and regional connectivity

#### **6: Finance, Investment, and Development**

- Financing AfCFTA implementation
- Investment flows and capital markets
- Role of financial institutions in development

#### **7: Governance, Institutions, and Political Economy**

- Institutional frameworks and implementation challenges
- Dispute settlement and legal frameworks
- Interface with global trade governance (WTO compatibility)

#### **8: Inclusivity and Development Outcomes**

- Gender and trade
- Youth employment and entrepreneurship
- SMEs and informal cross-border trade

#### **9: Regionalism and Legal Architecture**

- AfCFTA and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- Legal harmonization and regulatory convergence
- Trade in services and investment protocols

#### **10: Sustainability and Green Transformation**

- Climate change and sustainable trade
- Green industrialization and energy transition
- Environmental standards and carbon markets

#### **11: Peace, Security, and Integration**

- Trade and conflict prevention

- Economic integration and regional stability

## **12: Case Studies and Comparative Perspectives**

- National and regional implementation experiences
- Lessons from EU and ASEAN
- Comparative regional integration models

## **14: Measurement and Methodology**

- Empirical assessments (CGE, gravity models)
- Data challenges and impact evaluation

## **15: Future of AfCFTA and Strategic Autonomy**

- Long-term scenarios for African integration
- Policy pathways for transformation
- Africa's role in the global economic order

## **4. Submission Guidelines**

- **Abstracts:** 300–500 words (Time New Roman, Size 12)
- **Full Papers:** 5,000–8,000 words (Time New Roman, Size 12)
- Submissions should clearly state:
  - Research question
  - Methodology
  - Key findings
  - Policy relevance
- **Format:** Microsoft Word or PDF
- **Referencing Style:** APA / Harvard / Chicago

## **5. Important Dates (*Insert specific dates as appropriate*)**

- Abstract Submission Deadline: Friday, July 31st, 2026
- Notification of Acceptance: Monday, August 31, 2026
- Full Paper Submission: Friday, September 25th, 2026

- Conference Dates: Monday, November 9th – Tuesday, 10th November, 2026

## 6. Publication Opportunities

Selected papers will be:

- Published in an **edited volume**
- Considered for **special issues in peer-reviewed journals**
- Featured in **policy briefs for African institutions**

## 7. Participation

The conference welcomes:

- Academics and researchers
- Policymakers and government officials
- Private sector actors
- Development partners and international organizations
- Graduate students

## 8. Submission and Contact

- **Submission Email/Portal:** <https://icitr.unizik.edu.ng> / [email-atg2026icitr@gmail.com](mailto:email-atg2026icitr@gmail.com)
- **Conference Secretariat:** ICITR, UNIZIK Awka

## 9. Target Impact

This conference provides a unique platform to interrogate the transformative potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area and to shape the discourse on Africa's geoeconomic future.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



# AfCFTA and the Geoeconomics of African States:

*Integration, Power, and Structural Transformation*



Trade & Integration



Global Power Shifts



Industrialization & Value Chains



Digital Economy & Infrastructure

## — CALL FOR PAPERS —

- Research Presentations
- Policy Dialogues
- Networking Opportunities



Abstract Submission Deadline

Conference Dates



July 31, 2026

November 9 & 10, 2026

*Publication Opportunities in Special Issues & Edited Volumes*

Submit Abstracts: <https://icritr.unizik.edu.ng> | Email: [Ngozi.egbuna@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:Ngozi.egbuna@unizik.edu.ng)