



14^e WTO Ministerial
Conference



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Conference
Yaoundé - Cameroon
2026



ECA

MC14: What's in it for Africa? What next for secure development outcomes and fast integration imperatives?

ECA sub regional office for Central Africa

Concept Note and Agenda

Yaounde Congress Hall
24 March 2026, 15:00-17:00 GMT+1)

1. Context

Africa is at the crossroads again to disentangle the complex rules and procedures of the WTO system and make these work for its millions of poor - its food unsecured, small-holder producers, micro entrepreneurs and other marginalized players of the global trading system.

With less than 3 percent of global market share and nearly 2 percent contribution in terms of global manufacturing value added, Africa has remained on the sidelines of the great promise of the triumph of globalization and the expected benefits of trade liberalization due to notorious deficiencies in productive capacities and shortcomings in successful integration into the world's most lucrative value chains. Indeed, Africa remains the continent that produces and exports to enrich others despite its high status in adherence to market laws and alignment, in the letter and spirit of the principles and prescriptions of the WTO.

Co-organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the ministry of commerce of Cameroun, this session will convene policymakers, trade negotiators together with development practitioners and industry captains from international organizations, business, civil society, academia and rural communities to explore cooperative approaches to protect Africa's interests and make the MC14 a success.

In the opinion of several experts, MC14 presents itself as the most important ministerial meeting in the history of the WTO and will therefore determine its survival. Likewise, the survival of Africa and especially its repositioning into the future as the next global factory and trade hub depend on it.

The meeting will take stock of the levels of preparedness and ambitions of Africa's interest groups in the current trade negotiations and what it takes to translate these aspirations into tangible transformative outcomes and fast forward integration imperatives.

The discussion will also highlight where to focus and the most promising negotiating routes to consider for Africa to reshape emerging global trading rules in its favor, advance its participation in global value chains while fast forwarding its industrialization agenda and integration imperatives.

2. Session objectives

- Highlight and discuss the levels of preparedness and ambitions of Africa' interest groups in light of the outcomes of past ministerial conferences, and lessons learnt for the future.
- Highlight what to expect from the MC14 in terms of risks and threats for what matters the most for Africa's transformation agenda?
- Explore how African countries can collectively shape and navigate the intricacies of the present trade ruling system in ways to make the WTO system works for the continent in terms of tangible development outcomes while limiting procedural barriers, unjustifiable or discriminatory trade rules.
- Identify the common negotiation pathways and the most promising cooperation incentives that African countries can pursue at MC14 in order to achieve concrete results aimed at accelerating the pace of AfCFTA implementation while increasing their productive capacities and upgrading in global value chains.

3. Methodology

The session will take place in plenary and hybrid modes for a duration of two hours.

4. Expected outcomes

- Better understanding of Africa's level of preparations and ambitions, its achievements and advantages;
- Contribute to the success of the CM14's work;
- Facilitate the participation of the member states of African Union, the emergence of common positions, and the recognition of their Union;
- Contribute to the provision of informed working documents in support of African negotiating groups.

5. Place and date

The session will take place at the Yaounde Congress Hall (Avenue Narvick) in Cameroon, on March 24, 2026.

6. Participants

- Members of the African negotiating group;
- Members of the scientific subcommittee/negotiations for MC14;
- Representatives of the private sector and civil society;
- Representatives of academic circles ;
- Representatives of regional organizations.

7. Agenda

Time	Activities	Speakers
14:00-14:10	Welcome & Opening Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jean Luc Namegabe Mastaki, Subregional Director for Central Africa, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)• Representative from the Ministry of Trade, Cameroon (Host Country)
14:10-15:00	Presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adama Ekberg Coulibaly, Chief, sub regional initiatives, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA),• Olinga Narcisse, Chief MC14 Facilitator• Sekou Doumbouya, Global services, trade policies and WTO agreements expert• Krishna Chikhuri, Agricultural policy, commodities markets, trade and WTO agreements expert
15:00-16:40	Open discussion and Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All
16:40-17:00	Closing remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CEA, Ministry of Commerce

Note: The session will consist of a Lead presentation by ECA with discussions followed by an open round of questions and answers. The lead presenter will have 20 min presentation followed with 10 minutes speech for each discussant. The first round will focus on the first two objectives of the session (assessment of development outcomes and risks, new generation trade and industrial policies and Africa collective action), and the second round will focus on the fourth and third objective (identification of the low hanging fruits in development outcomes, identification of most promising routes in international and regional cooperation that bring about a meaningful repositioning of African economies in global value chains while fast forwarding the implementation of the AFCFTA).

8. Contact

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