



Advancing the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area: proposing transformative strategic actions

Fifty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

12 - 18 March, 2025, Addis Ababa

Consolidated timetable

Wednesday, 12 March Meeting of the Committee of Experts Venue: Conference Room 1

9–9.30 a.m.	Opening of the forty-third meeting of the Committee of Experts and the fifty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Africa (agenda item 1)
9.30–9.40 a.m.	Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work (agenda item 2)
9.40–10.40 a.m.	Session I: Overview of recent economic and social developments in Africa (agenda item 3)
10.40–11 a.m.	Coffee break
11 a.m.–12 noon	Session II: Assessment of progress on regional integration in Africa (agenda item 4)
12 noon–12.30 p.m.	Session III: Presentation on the theme of the fifty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Africa (agenda item 5)
12.30–2.30 p.m.	Lunch break
2.30–3.30 p.m.	Session III (continued)
3.30–3.45 p.m.	Coffee break
3.45–5.30 p.m.	Session IV: Statutory issues (agenda item 6)
5.30 p.m.	Reception



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Thursday, 13 March
Meeting of the Committee of Experts
Venue: Conference Room 1

9–10 a.m.	Session V: Statutory issues (continued)
10–10.30 a.m.	Session VI: Statutory issues
10.30–11.30 a.m.	Session VII: Statutory issues
11.30–11.45 a.m.	Coffee break
11.45 a.m.–12.15 p.m.	Session VIII: Statutory issues
12.15–1.15 p.m.	Session IX: Statutory issues
1.15–2.45 p.m.	Lunch break
2.45–3.45 p.m.	Session X: Statutory issues
3.45–4 p.m.	Coffee break
4–4.30 p.m.	Session XI: Date, venue and theme of the fifty-eighth session of the Economic Commission for Africa (agenda item 7)
4.30–5 p.m.	Other matters (agenda item 8)



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ECA Conference of Ministers

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Friday, 14 March
Meeting of the Committee of Experts
Venue: Conference Room 1

9.30–10.30 a.m.	Session XII: Presentation on financing the second 10-year implementation plan (2024–2033) of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, and the second priority action plan (2021–2030) under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
10.30–11.30 a.m.	Engagement of the Executive Secretary with delegates
11.30 a.m.–12 noon	Knowledge fair and coffee break
12 noon– 4.30 p.m.	Drafting of the report on the meeting of the Committee of Experts
12 noon–2 p.m.	Lunch break
2–4 p.m.	Africa Hall and Addis Ababa city tour
4–4.30 p.m.	Break
4.30–6 p.m.	Session XIII: Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee of Experts and consideration of recommendations and draft resolutions (agenda item 9)
6–6.30 p.m.	Closing of the forty-third meeting of the Committee of Experts (agenda item 10)



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Saturday, 15 March

Side events

9.30–11 a.m.	<p>Side event 1: The Single African Air Transport Market, the free movement of people and the African Continental Free Trade Area</p> <p>Organizers: Technology, Innovation, Connectivity and Infrastructure Development Division (ECA) and Regional Integration and Trade Division (ECA)</p> <p>Venue: Conference Room 3</p> <p>The objective of the side event is to broaden the discourse on the benefits and challenges of the Single African Air Transport Market beyond stakeholders in the aviation industry, and to discuss the advancement of the free movement of people, goods and services, with a view to optimizing the implementation of the Single Market, the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment.</p>
9.30–11 a.m.	<p>Side event 2: Role of subregional multilateral development banks in delivering on African development objectives</p> <p>Organizers: Macroeconomic Policy, Finance and Governance Division (ECA) and Trade and Development Bank</p> <p>Venue: Conference Room 5</p> <p>The objective of this side event is to explore how subregional multilateral development banks in Africa can expand their financial capacity and leverage partnerships to play a more transformative role in delivering on African development objectives. The discussion at the side event will also focus on effective de-risking strategies to attract private sector investment and foster regional economic integration.</p>



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<p>9.30 a.m. – 4.15 p.m.</p>	<p>Side event 3: Making the African Continental Free Trade Area work for African young people: opportunities, challenges and the way forward</p> <p>Organizers: Strategic Planning, Oversight and Results Division (ECA), Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division (ECA), Regional Integration and Trade Division (ECA), Subregional Offices of ECA, in conjunction with external partners, including Pan African Youth Union</p> <p>Venue: Africa Hall</p> <p>The primary objective of the side event is to provide a platform for young Africans to discuss the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, its relevance, efficacy, opportunities and challenges with relation to interests of young people and the economic development of the continent. Participants will be invited to propose recommendations on the ways in which the Agreement can be made relevant to and be driven by young people. An emphasis will be placed on young Africans in various sectors of the economy, in particular young entrepreneurs who are affected by the Agreement daily.</p>
<p>10.30 a.m. – 12 noon</p>	<p>Side event 4: Innovative financing instruments for sustainable climate finance and debt management in middle-income countries</p> <p>Organizers: Macroeconomic Policy, Finance and Governance Division (ECA)</p> <p>Venue: Conference Room 4</p> <p>The main objective of the side event is to provide a platform for policymakers, practitioners and academics to identify actionable solutions for closing the financing gap in African middle-income countries. The emphasis will be on the role of innovative financing mechanisms in addressing public debt challenges, fostering resilience and driving transformative development across the continent.</p>



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<p>12 noon-1.30 p.m.</p>	<p>Side event 5: Empowering businesses in Africa to trade successfully under the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area to foster inclusive growth and decent work</p> <p>Organizers: Subregional Office for Southern Africa (ECA), Subregional Office for North Africa (ECA), African Trade Policy Centre (ECA) and Regional Office for Africa of the International Labour Organization</p> <p>Venue: Conference Room 6</p> <p>The objective of the side event is to allow participants to explore how businesses in Africa, including micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, can take advantage of the Agreement and what support mechanisms they will need to do so, so that they can grow and contribute to broader development goals – not only those for the Area but also those of other international agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 8, on decent work and economic growth. Participants will also examine the ways in which the Agreement can strengthen international standards, including labour standards, to support the creation of decent jobs and foster inclusive growth.</p>
<p>2.45-4.15 p.m.</p>	<p>Side event 6: Food security and cross-border trade: navigating challenges and opportunities amid the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area</p> <p>Organizers: Subregional Office for Eastern Africa (ECA) and Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute</p> <p>Venue: Conference Room 3</p> <p>The side event will be focused on the current state of food security in Africa, the potential impact of the Agreement on food security and the state of intraregional food trade, including critical exporters and trade patterns. During the event, participants will be invited to identify barriers to intraregional trade in food, explore opportunities for enhancing cross-border agricultural trade and discuss the potential benefits of intraregional trade for food security and development. Following an examination of logistical needs and consideration of the roles of various stakeholders in promoting trade and cooperation, attention will turn to best practices and complementary measures to reduce food insecurity on the continent.</p>

Monday, 17 March
Ministerial segment
Venue: Conference Room 1

7.45–9.15 a.m.	Engagement with ministers of finance by the Deputy Executive Secretary (Programme) and Chief Economist
9.30–10.30 a.m.	Opening of the ministerial segment (agenda item 1)
10.30–11 a.m.	Group photo, ministerial tour of the knowledge fair, and coffee break
11–11.15 a.m.	Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work (agenda item 2)
11.15 a.m.–1 p.m.	Dialogue on the theme of the fifty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Africa (agenda item 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keynote address: 2025 Adebayo Adedeji Memorial Lecture • Launch of the Economic Report on Africa, 2025
1–2.30 p.m.	Lunch break
2.30–3.15 p.m.	Dialogue on the theme of the fifty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Africa (agenda item 3) (<i>continued</i>)
3.15–4.15 p.m.	High-level round-table discussions (agenda item 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round table 1: The nexus between the African Continental Free Trade Area and infrastructure development
4.15–4.30 p.m.	Coffee break
4.30–5.30 p.m.	High-level round-table discussions (agenda item 4) (<i>continued</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round table 2: Promoting cross-border instant payment systems and digital inclusivity in Africa
5.30–6.30 p.m.	Press conference
6.30 p.m.	Reception (Venue: Skylight Hotel)



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Tuesday, 18 March
Ministerial session
Venue: Conference Room 1

9-10 a.m.	Presentation on the forthcoming ECA report on optimizing information and communications technology-related tax regimes for economic growth and job creation in Africa
10-11 a.m.	High-level round-table discussions (agenda item 4) (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round table 3: Special economic zones as drivers of the development of regional value chains in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area
11-11.15 a.m.	Coffee break
11.15 a.m.-1.15 p.m.	Consideration of recommendations and adoption of resolutions (agenda item 5)
1.15-2.45 p.m.	Lunch break
2.45-3.45 p.m.	Consideration and adoption of the ministerial statement (agenda item 6)
3.45-4.30 p.m.	Other matters (agenda item 7)
4.30-5 p.m.	Closing of the ministerial segment and the fifty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Africa (agenda item 8)
5 p.m.	Cocktail reception