

CoM at a Glance



FIFTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

AFRICA'S SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND DIVERSIFICATION
IN THE DIGITAL ERA IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

What is CoM2021

CoM2021 is the 39th Economic Commission for Africa Committee of Experts of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the 53rd session of the Economic Commission for Africa.

Theme: Africa's Sustainable Industrialization and Diversification in the Digital Era in the Context of COVID-19.

17 March 2021 to 23 March 2021

CoM2021 Objectives

- To provide an important platform for Africa's policymakers to explore and consolidate strategies to effectively manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on African economies
- To give an opportunity to policymakers to discuss ways and means through which to industrialize Africa in a sustainable manner; diversify its economies and recommend concrete actions to that effect
- To discuss any other priority issues of concern to Africa at this particular point in time

What to expect at CoM2021

High-level opening session

High-level ministerial policy dialogue on the theme of the 53rd Session: "Africa's sustainable industrialization and diversification in the digital era in the context of Covid-19"

The Big Debate: Sustainable Growth in the Digital Era Post-COVID-19

Panel discussion: Managing Debt and Innovative Finance for Fiscal Sustainability, and the Role of the Private Sector

Panel discussion: Is Africa Ready to Finance Its Own Vaccine?

Panel on Leveraging Opportunities for Accelerated Growth: Prospects and Policies for the Next Decade and more

CoM2021 Programme of Events

CoM2021 will be divided into two parts: A meeting of the Committee of Experts (17-19 March) and the Conference of Ministers (22-23 March)

- **17-19 March:** Technical Preparatory Meeting: Thematic meetings; presentation of the issues paper on the theme of the Conference; discussions; review of the current economic and social situation in Africa; adoption of the draft report of the Committee of Experts and draft resolutions; recommendations for consideration by the Conference of Ministers
- **22-23 March:** Conference of Ministers: High-level panel discussions comprising eminent personalities, senior government leaders, private sector practitioners and distinguished experts; consideration of the report and major recommendations of the meeting of the Committee of Experts; adoption of the draft Ministerial Statement and draft resolutions.



ALL SET FOR THE 2021 CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS

THE 53RD SESSION OF THE COMMISSION AND 2021 CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT will be held from Wednesday, 17 March 2021 to Tuesday, 23 March 2021, under the theme: Africa's Sustainable Industrialization and Diversification in the Digital Era in the Context of COVID-19.

This year's theme embraces the need for African countries to achieve rapid economic growth through environmentally conscious industrialization and diversification while taking advantage of digitalization. Scaling-up digitalization in Africa could be transformational, helping Africa to sustainably industrialize and diversify within a global digital economy estimated to soon surpass \$11.5 trillion. Discussions under the theme will explore and consolidate strategies on the way forward to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on African economies. The specific topic of the AfCFTA will enter into the ministerial, experts

and side event sessions as one of the particular tools available to African countries as they chart their recovery from COVID-19. The AfCFTA has long been held as a vehicle for stimulating Africa's overdue industrialization.

The upcoming AfCFTA protocol on e-commerce is expected to particularly enter the discussions. The Ministers resolutions from the conference are expected to outline the support they would want from the ECA in negotiating and implementing the AfCFTA e-commerce protocol. The side event 'Report Launch: COVID-19 Impact on e-Commerce in Africa', will consider options for the e-commerce protocol in the AfCFTA.

As COVID-19 has exposed Africa's overreliance on international supply chains for medical research, equipment and pharmaceuticals, there will be discussions around how Africa can generate its own pharmaceutical sectors, and the role of the AfCFTA within these. Notable sessions here include:

We have an exciting line-up of confirmed speakers including:

- **H.E. MR ABIY AHMED**, Prime Minister of Ethiopia who will set the tone of the meeting
- **H.E. MR KEN OFORI-ATTA**, Minister of Finance, Ghana who will frame the discourse of the conference on Africa's recovery imperative
- **BARONESS MINOUCHE SHAFIK**, Former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England and former Deputy Managing Director IMF who will deliver a keynote statement on what the world can take away from the Covid-19 crisis, Brexit, trade and what should Africa expect
- **H.E. MS ZAINAB AHMED**, Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Nigeria who will lead a debate on the preparedness of the multilateral systems to support African countries in dealing with crises like covid-19
- **H.E. MR AHMED SHIDE**, Minister of Finance of Ethiopia, who will share Ethiopia's Covid-19 recovery efforts and the policies that have been put in place to mitigate the impact of the pandemic
- **H.E. MR MOHAMED BENCHABOUN**, Minister of Economy, Finance and Administration Reform of Morocco, who will join the big debate and share views on the implication of the crisis for emerging an middle income economies and the macroeconomic fundamentals in mitigating future impact
- **H.E. MR. JOSE SELE YALAGHULI**, Minister of Finance, DRC who will bring a finance Minister's perspective to Africa's vaccine imperatives for economic growth and recovery
- **TEDROS ADHANOM**, Director General of the World Health Organisation and **MR BENEDICT ORAMAH**, President of Afreximbank who will lead discussions on Africa's readiness to finance its own vaccines.



SIDE EVENTS



THERE'S SO MUCH TO EXPECT FROM THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS. Ms. Lashea Howard-Clinton, a Social Affairs Officer at the ECA, has been part of the team working hard to put together twelve thought provoking virtual side events that participants can attend during the weekend of Saturday, March 20th and Sunday, March 21st, 2021.

"It's been an exciting process for our team to coordinate with our UN Agency partners and subject matter experts who have attracted specialists and innovative thought leaders to plan for unique side events. This year, it has been both exciting and challenging as we faced unprecedented planning methods. Indeed, this is the year for implementing the digital era and we have wholeheartedly adopted this approach for each virtual event in 2021."

The side events will all compliment CoM 2021's overall theme. Our team has been working with various ECA Divisions, several UN Agencies and an extraordinary African youth group, the Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA), to plan for events that will lead to important discussions on how to address some of the urgent challenges facing the continent.

ECA is striving to put a spotlight on the predicament that COVID-19 has placed on Africa's women, youth, our industries and on our intra-African trade aspirations. These weekend events will examine how various sectors of our economies are using innovative ways to overcome challenges brought about by the pandemic.

Some of the events that our esteemed participants can expect during the weekend of CoM 2021, include: Digitalizing Migration Responses to Harness Africa's Economic Development and Demographic Dividend in the COVID-19 Era; Public-Private Partnerships to Foster Digital Development of Industry and Trade in Southern Africa; Unleashing the Potential of Women & Youth Entrepreneurship in the Digital Age and also an African Girls Can Code event!

TO REGISTER FOR SIDE EVENTS, please refer to our **UNECA.org** website where you can select and register. Participants can attend as many side events as they want - all very interesting and in line with the ECA's mission to deliver ideas and actions for an empowered and transformed Africa!

ADEBAYO ADEDEJI LECTURE

THE ANNUAL ADEBAYO ADEDEJI LECTURE will this year focus on the historic and game-changing African Continental Free Trade Area (AfcFTA).

Set up to honour the late Professor Adebayo Adedeji, who was one of Africa's foremost development thinkers and the longest serving ECA Executive Secretary, the lecture will be delivered by South Africa's former Trade and Industry Minister, Rob Davies.

The landmark AfcFTA has the potential to create a continental free-trade zone with a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD\$3.4 trillion, becoming the largest in the world, if fully

The ECA launched the annual Adebayo Adedeji lecture series in 2014 in Abuja, Nigeria, to honour and recognize the intellectual contribution to development, service to Africa and humanity of Adebayo Adedeji.



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