



Updated 18 March 2021

Consolidated timetable for the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the Committee of Experts and side events

WEDNESDAY, 17 MARCH 2021

Meeting of the Committees of Experts

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| 11–11.30 a.m. | Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1) |
| 11.30–11.45 a.m. | Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work (agenda item 2) |
| 11.45 a.m.–1 p.m. | Session I: Overview of recent economic and social developments in Africa in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (agenda item 3) |
| 1–1.15 p.m. | Coffee break |
| 1.15–2 p.m. | Session II: Assessment of progress on regional integration in Africa in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (agenda item 4) |
| 2–3 p.m. | Lunch break |
| 3–6 p.m. | Session III: Presentation on the theme of the fifty-third session of the Commission (agenda item 5) |

THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 2021

Meeting of the Committees of Experts

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| 11 a.m.–12.30 p.m. | Session IV: statutory issues (agenda item 6) |
| 12.30–12.45 p.m. | Coffee break |
| 12.45–2.15 p.m. | Session V: Statutory issues (agenda item 6) (continued) |
| 2.15–3.15 p.m. | Lunch break |
| 3.15–5.15 p.m. | Session VI: Statutory issues (agenda item 6) (continued) |
| 5.15–5.30 p.m. | Coffee break |
| 5.30–7.30 p.m. | Session VII: Statutory issues (agenda item 6) (continued) |

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FRIDAY, 19 MARCH 2021

Meeting of the Committees of Experts

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| 11 a.m.–1 p.m. | Session VIII: Statutory issues (agenda item 6) (continued) |
| 1–1.15 p.m. | Health break |
| 1.15–1.45 p.m. | Date, venue and theme of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission (agenda item 7) |
| 1.45–2.15 p.m. | Other matters (agenda item 8) |
| 2.15–3 p.m. | Lunch break |
| 3–4 p.m. | Drafting of the report on the meeting of the Committees of Experts |
| 4–6 p.m. | Session IX: Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee of Experts; consideration of recommendations and draft resolutions (agenda item 9) |
| 6.15–6.45 p.m. | Closing of the meeting (agenda item 10) |

SATURDAY, 20 MARCH 2021

Side events

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| 10–11.30 a.m. | <p>Side event 1: Digitalizing migration response to harness Africa's economic development and demographic dividend in the COVID-19 era</p> <p>The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 had unprecedented impact on mobility, and highlighted the potential harm of the crisis to Africa's economic development and the necessary mitigation strategies required to ensure that the continent's industrialization pathways are not stalled. This includes the critical role of border infrastructure, cross-border traders and migrant essential workers in the response to the pandemic. This event will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highlight key migration thematic areas, which will play a role in the continent's economic development, particularly for young people, including legal identity, border infrastructure and trade, labour migration (spotlight on skills development and recognition), Skills Mobility Partnerships, remittances, environment and climate change, and migration data and statistics; ▪ Explore the increasing evolution of digitalized migration response initiatives to promote the changing dynamic and operationalization of events in a post-COVID-19 era, noting the migration and development component, big data, integrated border management systems and existing applications that have facilitated migrant access to and information about services that particularly relate to vulnerable migrants, migration health and financial transfers, among others; ▪ Explore the interplay between migration and the diversification of the digital economy in Africa; ▪ Propose policy approaches to sustainable industrialization and economic diversification, to be adopted in the context of migration. |
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| <p>11 a.m.–12.30 p.m.</p> | <p>Side event 2: Launch of the report “COVID-19 impact on ecommerce in Africa”</p> <p>This event will contribute to improved understanding of how COVID-19 has changed the e-commerce landscape in Africa, with policy and business comparisons and lessons drawn from each United Nations regional commission, in accordance with equivalent regional reports from those regions on the same topic. Attendees will have the opportunity to see how COVID-19 has accelerated digitalization in Africa, and policy options for ensuring conducive e-commerce growth in the pandemic recovery, drawing from this recent research.</p> |
| <p>11.30 a.m.–12.30 p.m.</p> | <p>Side event 3: Making the fourth industrial revolution work for Africa</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has reached almost every country globally, and has harmed the environment, society and economy. However, the ongoing pandemic also represents an opportunity to accelerate collaborative solutions to international development issues, primarily through advanced technologies and digitalization. The side event will be led by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and will discuss the role of digitalization for promoting Africa’s sustainable industrialization. It will consist of opening remarks from the Managing Director of UNIDO, Bernardo Calzadilla-Sarmiento, who will also moderate the high-level discussion panel. The panel session will feature regional policymakers, private sector representatives and researchers, who will examine initiatives and different approaches for adopting digital technologies in Africa, and pinpoint critical elements for developing and instrumentalizing the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) to advance the fourth industrial revolution in the region within the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).</p> |
| <p>Noon–1.30 p.m.</p> | <p>Side event 4: Digital agribusiness for a sustainable industrialization: The role of economic planning and capacity-building towards a resilient economic recovery</p> <p>Sustainable industrialization and diversification in Africa have been a cross-cutting issue in the discussions over development, especially in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union. A sustainable and green industrialization will have a positive impact over mitigating the effects of climate change, at the same time contributing to the creation of jobs that support progress on regional integration. These three elements, coupled with the development of the primary sector as an agribusiness activity, will constitute a crucial turning point in economic planning, sustainable industrialization and capacity-building for resilient economies in a post-COVID-19 scenario. The event will provide a platform to discuss planning, strategy and best practices for agricultural services, digital inclusion and sustainable industrialization. It will also examine the role of e-agribusiness in building forward better during a COVID-19 world as well as a postCOVID19 world.</p> |

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| <p>2–3.30 p.m.</p> | <p>Side event 5: Public–private partnerships to foster digital development of industry and trade in Southern Africa</p> <p>The ECA Subregional Office for Southern Africa, in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Business Council and UNIDO, will hold a side event on the theme “Public–private partnerships to foster digital development of industry and trade in Southern Africa”. It is aimed at generating a constructive dialogue involving the public sector (governments) and the private sector (entrepreneurs, investors and nongovernmental organizations) in analysing how digitalization can aid trade, industrial transformation and the advancement of Sustainable Development Goal 9 in the SADC region. This side event will serve as follow-up to a sensitization forum for the private sector held on 6 November 2020, organized by the Subregional Office for Southern Africa, in collaboration with the SADC Business Council. It will further the dialogue initiated at the forum on post-COVID-19 recovery strategies in Southern Africa.</p> |
| <p>4–5.30 p.m.</p> | <p>Side event 6: Experience-sharing on promoting smooth functioning of corridors for sustainable industrialization and diversification during the COVID-19 era</p> <p>The side event will share experiences on how to promote smooth functioning of corridors during the COVID-19 pandemic, leveraging on AfCFTA. The comprehensive high-level event also aims at increasing awareness and will spur deeper discussions on how to further develop corridors to stimulate industrialization and diversification for increased trade and economic growth. The Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 cannot be achieved if the most vulnerable countries, such as the landlocked developing countries, are left behind. Therefore, promotion of corridors for sustainable industrialization and diversification is crucial for supporting the structural economic transformation of the landlocked developing countries.</p> |
| <p>5–6.30 p.m.</p> | <p>Side event 7: Driving Africa’s industrialization agenda by investing in youth’s digital innovations post-COVID-19</p> <p>This side event will deliberate on the challenges and means through which digitalization is recharacterizing industry and opening up opportunities in various sectors – such as agriculture, services and clean energy – that have the capacity to drive industrialization and diversification, while adapting for climate resilience. Also, the conversations at the event will consider how these opportunities have been shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, while emphasizing the importance of sustainability. The side event will further explore youth inclusion in the discourse on fourth industrial revolution – given that more than 167 million Internet users, innovators and developers in Africa are youth – in a manner that will cultivate the willingness of young people to actively use digital tools as solutions in addressing challenges that their communities, countries or regions face given the impact of COVID19 on the economy in Africa. It will thus create a platform where youth can propose innovative strategies that encompass digitization to promote the rapid sustainable industrialization of the African continent.</p> |

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SUNDAY, 21 MARCH 2021

Side events

Noon–1.30 p.m.

Side event 8: Building back better through greening the African Continental Free Trade Area

Broad consensus is emerging around the silver-lining opportunity to “build back better” from the COVID-19 crisis by creating more sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies. But in the broader context of climate change, what does this mean for Africa, which produces just 2–3 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions from energy and industrial processes? In building back better, Africa can take strategic advantage of the landmark Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area to advance the green transition agenda. The objective of the session is to discuss how trade and AfCFTA can be used to advance the green transition of Africa. To deliver on this objective, the session will aim to answer the following questions:

- What role can trade play to mitigate and adapt to climate change in Africa?
- What actions are required by African policymakers and businesses for African countries to harness AfCFTA to further the green agenda?
- How can AfCFTA be utilized to develop a common African position on trade and climate change to help secure the continent’s trade and climate interests in other forums, including at the multilateral level?
- How can green technologies support intra-African trade and environmental sustainability?

2–3.30 p.m.

Side event 9: Unleashing the potential of women and youth entrepreneurship in the digital age

The side event will provide an opportunity for policymakers, digital entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to engage with women and youth entrepreneurs to discuss how technology and digitalization can be used to boost and support women and youth entrepreneurship in Africa, taking note of the health inequality that has been both revealed and heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the side event will:

- Build an informed understanding of the challenges faced by women and youth entrepreneurs in Africa, and how they can benefit from increasing digitalization, including health technology;
- Showcase good practices and the potential and value of women and youth in the digital age, as well as highlight challenges faced in productive entrepreneurship post-COVID-19;
- Build consensus on the next steps needed for launching an international multi-stakeholder coalition to support women and youth entrepreneurship in Africa.

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| <p>2–4 p.m.</p> | <p>Side event 10: African Girls Can Code Initiative</p> <p>The African Girls Can Code Initiative – a partnership between UN Women, the African Union Commission and the International Telecommunication Union – aims to train and empower a minimum of 2,000 girls and young women aged 17 to 20 years across Africa to become computer programmers, creators and designers, placing them on track to take up studies and careers in the information, communications and technology (ICT) sector. The initiative is implemented through coding camps, mainstreaming ICT, and facilitating coding and gender into the national curricula. Moreover, it promotes the implementation of national media campaigns involving role models (such as women in ICT and female teachers in schools) and utilizes an online platform to enhance networking among the girls, trainers and mentors. The side event is expected to bring a select number of young girl coders and other key stakeholders with the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a platform for young girl coders to share their innovative initiatives and COVID-19 success stories; ▪ Promote the role of young women in the growing innovation and development of Africa, in line with the theme of the 2021 Conference of Ministers; ▪ Garner commitment from relevant stakeholders – including African Union member States, the United Nations system, development partners and the private sector – to support the initiatives of the African girls who code. |
| <p>4–5.30 p.m.</p> | <p>Side event 11: Industrializing in the digital age: key findings and insights from the Industrial Development Report 2020</p> <p>The side event will be led by UNIDO and will present the key aspects of “Industrializing in the digital age”, based on the Industrial Development Report 2020, and provide an opportunity to discuss and elaborate on the challenges and opportunities that the COVID-19 pandemic presents to African countries for the adoption of advanced digital technologies and their future course of industrialization.</p> |
| <p>5–6.30 p.m.</p> | <p>Side event 12: Institutional investors and “green” investment in the context of COVID-19</p> <p>ECA, jointly with the Africa Investor African Sovereign Wealth and Pension Fund Leaders Forum, will bring together African ministers of finance and leading institutional investors from Africa and around the world to discuss investment partnership opportunities, and put forward best practices to support “green” investments in the continent that will fast-track sustainable industrialization, the implementation of AfCFTA, and – importantly – lead to a stronger recovery and more resilient African economies and societies. This event will be the first in a series of open and strategic dialogues aimed at creating stronger synergies between African policymakers and institutional investors on continental initiatives geared towards scaling up “green” investments on the continent, enhancing the attractiveness of Africa for global and domestic institutional investors, and fostering public and private markets for intra-African “green” investment projects.</p> |

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MONDAY, 22 MARCH 2021

Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

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| 11 a.m.–noon | Opening of the session (agenda item 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements by the host Statements by the special guests |
| Noon–12.15 p.m. | Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work (agenda item 2) |
| 12.15–1.45 p.m. | High-level ministerial policy dialogue on the theme of the fifty-third session of the Commission: "Africa's sustainable industrialization and diversification in the digital era in the context of Covid-19" (agenda item 3) |
| 1.45–2.45 p.m. | Lunch break 2021 Adebayo Adedeji Lecture: Towards a Developmental Approach to the African Continental Free Trade Area |
| 2.45–5.30 p.m. | High-level panel discussions (agenda item 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel 1: Sustainable Growth in the Digital Era Post-Covid-19 Panel 2: Managing Debt and Innovative Finance for Fiscal Sustainability, and the Role of the Private Sector |
| 4.15–4.30 p.m. | Health break |
| 6–6.15 p.m. | Closing |

TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 2021

Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

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| 11 a.m.–12.30 p.m. | High-level panel discussions (agenda item 4) (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel 3: Is Africa ready to finance its own vaccine? |
| 12.30–12.45 p.m. | Health break |
| 12.45–2.45 p.m. | Consideration of recommendations and adoption of resolutions (agenda item 5) |
| 2.45–3.45 p.m. | Lunch break |
| 3.45–4.45 p.m. | Consideration and adoption of the draft ministerial statement (agenda item 6) |
| 4.45–5.30 p.m. | Other matters (agenda item 7) |
| 5.30–5.45 p.m. | Closing of the session (agenda item 8) |

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

CINQUANTE-TROISIÈME SESSION DE LA
COMMISSION ÉCONOMIQUE POUR L'AFRIQUE

L'INDUSTRIALISATION DURABLE ET LA DIVERSIFICATION
DE L'AFRIQUE À L'ÈRE DU NUMÉRIQUE DANS
LE CONTEXTE DE LA COVID-19

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