

First Conference on Leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area for Higher Education Integration

7-8 APRIL 2025

INSTITUT DE RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES DE CAMEROON

SALLE AMPHITHÉÂTRE 500

YAOUNDÉ, CAMEROON

THEME FOR THE FIRST CONFERENCE:

SETTING THE STAGE AND LAUNCHING THE INITIATIVE

DAY 1. PLENARY

THE POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK. LOOKING FOR SYNERGIES

- **CHAIR FOR SESSIONS I TO III:** Prof. Jean Koulidiati, Rector of the Pan African University (PAU)
- **RAPPORTEUR FOR SESSIONS I TO III:** Prof. Olusegun Obadina, Association of African Universities (AAU)
- **CHAIR AND RAPPORTEUR FOR SESSION IV:** Prof. Henok B. Asmelash, University of Birmingham
- **MASTER OF CEREMONIES:** Ms. Marina Larrea, OBREAL, Co-coordinator of HAQAA3

8:30h-9:00h	Registration
9:00h-9:15h	Opening Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of the IRIC, Cameroon, Dr Daniel Urbain Ndongo - Rector of the Pan African University, Prof. Jean Koulidiati - Representative of the Head of State of Cameroon
9:15h-10:35h	SESSION I <p>Opening Session: Setting the political and institutional stage</p> <p>KEYNOTE SPEECH: The African Union's Standpoint by H.E. Selma Malika Haddadi, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission</p> <p>The EU perspective: Jérôme Pons, head of cooperation, EU delegation before the Republic of Cameroon</p> <p>The African perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AfCFTA Secretariat: Ms. Daphine Lekipaika, Trade in Services Expert - AUDA NEPAD: representative to be confirmed - The perspective from the Association of African Universities: Prof. Bakri Saeed, President of the Association of African Universities (AAU) - The perspective from NASAC (Network of African Science Academies): Dr. Jackie Kado, Executive Director <p>The HAQAA initiative and its workplan for 2025 – 2028</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Claire Herrmann, European Commission, DG Education and Culture - EAC. - Elizabeth Colucci, Director for Education Policy and Programs, OBREAL/HAQAA3 General Coordinator

- Ms. Nodumo Dhlamini, Director ICT and Communications, Association of African Universities (AAU) and leader of HAQAA Data Collection Team

Trade and Higher Education: a two-way relationship: How to articulate the Multilateral, African Continental and Regional, and National levels.

- Presentation of the Publications included in the folders/Pen Drives
- Presentation of the Leveraging AfCFTA for HE Integration website

10:35h- 11:00h

Pause

11:00h-13:00h

SESSION II

How to develop synergies between the Multilateral and the African Continental and Regional Frameworks

KEYNOTE SPEECH on Knowledge, Training and Trade Agreements and Policy. The experience of the WTO Chairs Programme by Amb. Xiangchen ZHANG, Deputy Director General of the WTO

- Introduced by Manfred Kouty, IRIC and PAU, Co-Chair of the WTO Chair of Cameroun

Multilateral and African Perspectives

- *UNESCO*: Borhene Chakroun, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems
- *World Bank*: Pierre Sauvé, Senior Trade Specialist, Global practice, Geneva
- *African Union Commission*: Saidou Madougou, Director for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI)
- *UN Commission for Africa (UNECA)*: Melaku Desta, Coordinator, Africa Trade Policy Centre
- *IUCEA and the East African Community*: Gaspard Banyankimbona, IUCEA's Executive Secretary, and Michael Mawa, Chief Principal Quality Assurance & Qualifications Framework
- *Bi-regional experiences in Europe, Latin America and Africa*: Paulo Speller, current rector, and Alain Sauter Elong Ebá, Afro American University of Central Africa (AAUCA), Equatorial Guinea
- *Sustainability synergies in multilateral and regional frameworks*: Sergio Balibrea, Adviser on Sustainable Development, DG Trade and Economic Security, European Commission

13:00h – 14:15h

Walking lunch and networking

14:15h – 17:15h

SESSION III (plus poster session)

“Teaming Europe” for African Economic and Higher Education Integration

Higher Education cooperation in the framework of the EU’s Global Gateway and the Youth Mobility Flagship

- *Education and the Global Gateway strategy*: Luisa Bunesco, European Commission DG International Partnerships - INTPA
- *Youth Mobility for Africa flagship initiative and Study and Research in Africa*: Wiebke Growth, EC DG INTPA
- *Erasmus+ and the Africa dimension*: Claire Herrmann, EC DG EAC
- *Intra-Africa Mobility*, Wiebke Growth, EC DG INTPA
- *African Continental Qualifications Framework*: Maria Rosenstock, European Training Foundation (ETF)

Some examples and different forms of EU Member States action

- *The East African Digital Skills, AI Research, and Innovation Alliance (GIZ)*: David Roos, Head of dSkills@EA
- *Unlocking the potential of microcredentials as a bridge between Europe and Africa*: Mònica Rius, Coordinator for Relations with Africa - Vice-Rectorate for Internationalization Policy, and Victòria Alsina, Director General for Strategic Affairs, Lifelong Learning Institute - University of Barcelona
- *The ESAMI - Trade Policy Training Centre (ESAMI-trapca) and its WTO Chair, Arusha, Tanzania*: Caiphaz Chekwoti, Head of Centre and Chair
- *Articulating the different levels of action (multilateral, regional and bi-regional, national)*: UNU-MERIT, Maastricht: Mindel van de Laar

Promoting synergies between different EU-funded projects

- *The Intra-African Mobility Scheme*: CSAS/U. Dschang, Cameroon, Christopher Tankou
- *The Jean Monnet Network and Africa*, PolyCIVIS, Sebastian Seiffert, co-coordinator
- *Presentation of the poster session*
 - o U. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria -ULPGC- and ERUA
 - o Université Libre de Bruxelles -ULB- and CIVIS
 - o U. Clermont-Auvergne -UCA- and ARTEMIS
 - o U. Beira Interior -UBI- and UNITA-Universitas Montium
 - o U. Extremadura -UNEX- and EU-GREEN
 - o U. Salamanca -USAL- and EC2U
 - o Philipps-Universität Marburg and EUPeace

o European University Institute -EUI- and CIVICA

17:15-17:35

Pause

17:35-18:30

SESSION IV

Trade Policy and Higher Education: A two-way street. Transitioning to Day 2

MASTER CLASS on Regional economic integration, the multilateral trading system and Higher education: promoting synergies by Prof. Peter van den Bossche

- Former President of the Society of International Economic Law (SIEL) – 2018 – 2024 -, former member of the WTO Appellate Body, former professor at the U. Maastricht and the WTI in Bern, currently professor at Xi'an Jiaotong University, China.

KEYNOTE SPEECH on Enhancing Innovation through University – Industry Collaboration by Dr. Kaviraj Sharma SUKON

- Dr. Kaviraj Sharma SUKON, Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Research of the Republic of Mauritius

Organization for day 2. Logistics and Content

- Henok Asmelash, U. Birmingham, Coordinator of the Academic Conference

19:30 – 21:30

Official dinner (upon invitation)

DAY 2

9:00h-10:30h

A) PLENARY SESSION

Introduction to the second day : L'intégration africaine dans l'éducation : une entreprise de longue haleine

- H.E. Mohammed Belhocine, former AUC Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI)

Keynote speech: Multilingualism in a multilingual world: Not a tautology but a relevant political objective

- Prof. B.S Chumbow, president of the Cameroun Academy of Sciences

Higher Education Informal Diplomacy -HEIDI-. A Horizon Europe Project. Universities as Diplomatic Actors

- Marina Cino Pagliarello, EUI Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow

The Voice of the students

- Peter Kwasi KODJIE. Secretary General of the All-Africa Students Union (AASU)

The AfIELN and AfronomicsLaw Experiences

- Regis Y. Simo, Queen's University Belfast, AfIELN President

10:30h-10:45h

Pause

10:45h-15:45h

B) Parallel Sessions

10:45h-12:00h

Parallel Session 1**Panel I: The Interplay Between Education and Economic Development****Chair:** Prof. Professor Bolanle Idowu Akeredolu-Ale, Vice-Rector PAU**Rapporteur:** Prof. Manfred Kouty, IRIC - WTO Chair

- Ibrahim Musa Akanbi, Yusuf Suleiman & Yusuf Olasunkanmi
Ibrahim: *Economic Impacts of Higher Education Integration on Member States of the AfCFTA*
- Amanda Bisong & Pierre Sauvé: *When Brains Move: Scaling up African Human Capital through Enhanced Student and Academic Mobility in the Context of the AfCFTA*
- Wail Benjelloun: *African Free Trade and Higher Education: A Two-Way Street*
- Giuseppe D'Aronco : *L'innovation propulsée par l'IA : un levier majeur pour le développement économique de l'Afrique*
- Atse Kambo Martial : *L'innovation en tant que secteur clé pour relier l'enseignement supérieur et le développement économique*

Panel II: The Role of Education in Promoting the AfCFTA**Chair:** Prof. Amany El-Sharif, Vice-President PAU Council**Rapporteur:** Prof. Rodrigue Tassé, IRIC-PAU

- Adaeze Agatha Aniodoh: *The Role of Higher Education and Higher Education Integration in Fostering the Achievement of the AfCFTA's Objectives*
- Wycliffe Misuko Nyaribo: *Opportunities and Challenges of African Continent Free Trade Area: Role of Universities in Enhancing Sustainability*
- Aguirigoh Youssifou, Guidime Detondji Camille & Galadima Traoré Firdaws : *L'innovation par l'éducation est-elle nécessaire à la mise en oeuvre de la ZLECAf ? Une étude de cas des pays de la CEDEAO*
- Adebuseyi Isaac Adeniran & Ruth Abiola Adimula: *Sustaining AfCFTA Initiative via Cross-Regional Harmonization of Universities' Curricula and Free Movement of Faculties: Case Study of West Africa*
- Assodah Tirvassen: *Higher Education and Regional integration: The Case of a Regional Community of Islands in Africa*
- Sesha Nyanga: *Facilitating Collaborative Research and Innovation through Regional Trade Agreements in Higher Education Integration*

12:00h-13:15

Parallel Session 2

Panel III: Issues in the intersection of Regional Economic and Higher Education Integration

Chair: Prof. Professor Bolanle Idowu Akeredolu-Ale, Vice-Rector PAU

Rapporteur: Prof. Manfred Kouty, IRIC - WTO Chair

- Damilola Awotula: *Rethinking Legal Education: Changing African Markets and Integrative Pedagogy*
- Fred Awaah: *Culturo-Cyber Theory of Trade*
- Denis N. Yuni, Chukwunenye F. Emekaraonye & Evelyn N. Ogbeide-Osaretin: *Innovation, Regional Integration and International student mobility in Africa*
- Olumayowa Joseph Iyanda: *Fostering Agricultural Innovation through Higher Education: The Role of Regional Trade Agreements in Africa*
- Yusuf Suleiman et al: *Developing Policy Framework for Higher Education Integration to Support the AfCFTA's Objectives*

Panel IV: Issues in African Continental and Regional Higher Education Integration

Chair: Prof. Amany El-Sharif, Vice-President PAU Council

Rapporteur: Prof. Rodrigue Tassé, IRIC-PAU

- Boopen Seetanah & Kiran Bhujun: *Internationalisation of Higher Education in Mauritius: Opportunities and Challenges*
- Olubanke O. Ogunlana et al: *Leveraging Quality Assurance Tools to Build Resilient and Inclusive Higher Education Systems in Africa: A Case Study of Covenant University*
- Lockias Chitanana: *Harmonisation, Quality Assurance, and Accreditation in African Higher Education: Examining Regional and Continental Interactions within the SADC Context*
- Somadina Ibe-Ojiludu: *AfCFTA, Mutual Recognition of Legal Professional Qualifications and International Human Rights Law: Common Law West Africa as a Case Study Unit*
- Yuliia Bleshmudt & Rebekka Welker: *International Accreditation: An Opportunity for African Higher Education Internationalization?*

13:15h-14:30

Lunch

14:30h-15:45h

Session 3

Panel V: The Role of the AfCFTA in Promoting Higher Education Integration

Chair: Prof. Professor Bolanle Idowu Akeredolu-Ale, Vice-Rector PAU / Prof. Amany El-Sharif, Vice-President PAU Council

Rapporteur: Prof. Manfred Kouty, IRIC - WTO Chair / Prof. Rodrigue Tassé, IRIC-PAU

- Michael C Ogwezy: *The Role of AfCFTA and Other African RTAs in Advancing Higher Education Integration in Africa by Adopting the Erasmus Model of EU*
- Juliana Njiriri: *From Lecture Halls to Continental Trade Halls: Impact of AfCFTA and other African Trade Agreements on Continental Higher Education*
- Michael Mwareri Wangai: *Advancing Higher Education Integration Through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): Reflections from the East African Community (EAC)*
- Uriah Alexander Lar: *Building a Unified Geoscience Education in Africa: Leveraging the AfCFTA for a Resource-Rich Future*

15:45h-16:00h

Pause

16:00h-17:00h

C) PLENARY CLOSING SESSION
Conclusions of the sessions, by the rapporteurs

- Prof. Olusegun Obadina, Association of African Universities (AAU)
- Prof. Manfred Kouty, IRIC - WTO Chair
- Prof. Rodrigue Tassé, IRIC-PAU

Conclusions of the Conference: Moving forward

- Ms. Elizabeth Colucci, Director of International Projects, OBREAL
- Prof. Bakri Saeed, President of the Association of African Universities (AAU)

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