

FIFTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF FINANCE,
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



African Continental Free Trade Area:
Creating fiscal space for jobs and
economic diversification

11 to 15 May 2018 | 11 - 15 mai 2018

Tentative Timetable



Friday, 11 May 2018
Meeting of the Committee of Experts
 United Nations Conference Centre

9 - 9.30 a.m.	Opening of the meeting (agenda item 1)
9.30-9.45 a.m.	Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work (agenda item 2)
9.45-11.15 a.m.	Session I: Overview of recent economic and social developments in Africa (agenda item 3)
	Assessment of progress on regional integration in Africa (agenda item 4)
11.15-11.30 a.m.	Coffee break
11.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m.	Session II: Presentation on the theme of the fifty-first session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development: "African Continental Free Trade Area: creating fiscal space for jobs and economic diversification" (agenda item 5)
12.30-1.30 p.m.	Lunch break
1.30-3.30 p.m.	Session II (continued)
3.30-4.30 p.m.	Session III: Statutory issues (agenda item 6)
4.30-4.45 p.m.	Coffee break
4.45-7 p.m.	Session IV: Statutory issues (agenda item 6)
7 p.m.	Reception



Saturday, 12 May 2018 Meeting of the Committee of Experts United Nations Conference Centre

9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Nineteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (Conference Room 1)

Organizers: Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and African Union Commission

The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa holds regular inter-agency meetings in partnership with the African Union, with a view to improving coordination and enhancing the collaboration of the United Nations system in providing support to the region.

The theme of the nineteenth session is “United Nations system support for the African Union in winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa’s transformation”. This issue is timely because the goal of many African countries, as enshrined in their development plans or strategies, and in global and regional goals, is to reach middle-income country status by the next decade, which can be achieved through an increase in per capita income. There is recognition, however, that such a noble ambition may not be realized if wanton corruption and the illicit financial flows that prevail in many African countries are not addressed swiftly. The nineteenth session will provide an opportunity for the United Nations and the African Union to strategize on efforts to combat corruption and illicit financial flows and contribute to an improvement in systems that ensure Africa’s transformation and success in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063.

9 a.m.-11 a.m.

Session V: Statutory issues (agenda item 6)

11-11.15 a.m.

Coffee break



11.15 a.m. - 12.15 p.m.	Session VI: Statutory issues (agenda item 6)
12.15-12.45 p.m.	Date, venue and theme of the fifty-second session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (agenda item 7)
12.45-1 p.m.	Other matters (agenda item 8)
1-2 p.m.	Lunch break
2-4.30 p.m.	Drafting of the report on the meeting of the Committee of Experts
4.30-6 p.m.	Session VII: Consideration and adoption of the draft report on the meeting of the Committee of Experts and consideration of recommendations and draft resolutions (agenda item 9)
6-6.30 p.m.	Closing of the meeting (agenda item 10)



Sunday, 13 May 2018 Side events and other meetings United Nations Conference Centre

9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Nineteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (continued)
(Conference Room 1)

9-10.30 a.m.

Side event 1: Addressing data gaps for Sustainable Development Goal economic indicators in Africa
(Conference Room 3)

Organizer: ECA

In the 2030 Agenda, there is a recognition of the essential role of statistics, and it contains calls for intensified efforts to strengthen statistical capacities, especially in developing countries. Recent surveys and discussions with national statisticians have revealed the large gaps in statistics for Sustainable Development Goal economic indicators in African countries and highlighted the urgent need for further intervention and action to improve the situation. The objectives of this side event are to raise awareness of the state of Goal indicators among national officials and to engage them in a discussion regarding the best way to improve statistics systems and share best practices and experiences so that national statistics systems may optimize their production of the indicators. Following this side event, it is expected that member States will follow up to develop action plans for more integrated economic statistics and allocate additional resources to improve their national statistics systems.



9-10.30 a.m.

Side event 2: Policy dialogue on financing infrastructure in Africa

(Conference Room 4)

Organizer: ECA

Building resilient infrastructure is a key to ensuring the sustainable development of Africa by contributing to economic transformation and social development. There is therefore a need to mobilize additional finance to meet Africa's infrastructure investment needs.

This high-level policy dialogue intends to examine the main challenges in securing adequate infrastructure finance for African countries. The policy dialogue will focus on the mobilization and use of domestic resources for financing various types of infrastructure, how to ensure that infrastructure finance is more sustainable, the potential contribution of the Group of 20 and its members to this agenda and the way in which African countries can use innovative approaches to mobilize infrastructure finance, including from non-traditional sources.

11 a.m.-12.30 p.m.

Side event 3: Structural transformation, employment, production and society (STEPS)

(Conference Room 3)

Organizer: ECA

The structural transformation, employment, production and society (STEPS) profiles are aimed becoming a strategic vehicle to produce and disseminate country-specific and region-specific data and policy analysis on structural transformation, with a view to promoting sustainable economic and social development in member States. The profiles are meant to be the first point of reference for anyone seeking a concise, yet comprehensive, assessment of structural transformation at the country level. Within the core objective of accelerating structural transformation (ST), there are three inherent dimensions to be assessed: employment (E), production (P), and society (S). This speaks directly to the need to transform economic and social structures, with employment playing a key role in linking economic growth (production) and social development (society) in both directions. Structural transformation, employment, production and society for Sustainable Development (STEPS4SD) is the framework that shapes the design and implementation of the profiles. This side event will introduce the STEPS4SD framework and present the pilot profiles that have been produced to date.



Tentative timetable

11 a.m.-12.30 p.m.

**Side event 4: 2017-2018 *Global Education Monitoring Report*
“Accountability in education: meeting our commitments”**

(Conference Room 4)

Organizer: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The Global Education Monitoring Report is an editorially independent, authoritative and evidence-based annual publication of UNESCO. Drawing on a well-tested model and 12 reports produced since 2002, the Report is mandated to monitor progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning and its 10 detailed targets, as well as the other targets of the Goals with a clear education dimension. The 2017-2018 edition of the Report, “Accountability in education: meeting our commitments”, contains an examination of accountability in education and an analysis of how all relevant stakeholders can provide education more effectively, efficiently and equitably. There is also an examination of various accountability mechanisms that are used to hold Governments, schools, teachers, parents, students, international organizations and the private sector accountable for inclusive, equitable and quality education.



11 a.m.-12.30 p.m.

Side event 5: A force to be reckoned with: agriculture powering Africa's economic transformation

(Conference Room 5)

Organizers: ECA and Africa Centre for Economic Transformation

This side event is intended to launch Africa Centre for Economic Transformation's second African Transformation Report, which focuses on transforming agriculture to power economic transformation in Africa. The Report's authors look at agriculture from an overall economic transformation lens and at how to remodel and commercialize agriculture by raising productivity on farms, reducing harvesting and post-harvest losses, strengthening value chains and linking agriculture more effectively to the rest of the economy through downstream agro-processing, upstream manufacturing of inputs and logistics. In addition to powering industries, the authors also look at how a transformed agriculture will create employment in value chains, increase incomes, reduce poverty and help to improve the external trade balance. Attention is paid to the gender equity, environment and climate change aspects of agricultural transformation. The event will provide evidence-based information to policymakers and other stakeholders on how to model inclusive structural transformation through agricultural modernization and agro-processing policies that link smallholders to input and output markets.



2-3.30 p.m.

Side event 6: Leveraging domestic resources to green Africa's infrastructure for resilient economies

(Conference Room 3)

Organizers: ECA, World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), African Union Commission, New Climate Economy, P4G Partnership Fund and Global Green Growth Institute

The challenge faced by Africa in closing the huge infrastructure gap on the continent is how to do so with very limited public resources and fast enough to meet increasing demand, while ensuring that any investment made today does not become stranded or that there are any underperforming assets as a result of climate change. At the same time, the continent's major infrastructure deficit provides an opportunity for African countries to adopt a new climate-smart economic approach, capitalizing on the framework of the Paris Agreement on climate change and increasing requirements for climate-related financial risk disclosure of investment, in order to forge ahead and build quality infrastructure that is resource-efficient and resilient to natural disasters. Substantial upfront investment, however, is needed to harness the long-term "resilience dividend" that comes with this approach. This will present the Africa Climate Resilient Investment Facility (a joint initiative of the ECA and the World Bank, in collaboration with AfDB and the African Union Commission, with initial funding from the Nordic Development Fund) and engage public and private sector leaders, experts, influential figures, development partners and investors to deliberate and provide insights on enhancing the enabling environment for increased and innovative private sector investment in climate-resilient and resource-efficient infrastructure development in Africa.



2-3.30 p.m.

Side event 7: Launch of African Governance Report V: Natural Resources Governance and Domestic Revenue Mobilization for Structural Transformation

(Conference Room 4)

Organizer: ECA

In African Governance Report V: Natural Resources Governance and Domestic Revenue Mobilization for Structural Transformation, an examination is undertaken of efforts to improve the governance of Africa's abundant natural resources, in which an emphasis is placed on the need to strengthen natural resource governance institutions and frameworks for the enhancement of domestic revenue mobilization, the promotion of economic diversification and, ultimately, structural transformation. Four broad issues are addressed: (a) the inability of resource-rich African countries to transform their economies; (b) the institutions for improving the development impact of Africa's natural resources; (c) development planning and African policy outcomes; and (d) the raising of domestic revenue in Africa. The launch will feature the presentation and dissemination of the main findings resulting from the report, with a view to identifying concrete entry points for implementing the recommendations contained therein. The key messages and policy recommendations in the report are intended as input to ongoing efforts to strengthen the governance of Africa's natural resources sector, with a view to making it a true enabler of development.

9 a.m.-12.30 p.m.

Side event 8: Railway stock financing: a new solution for Africa

(Conference Room 6)

Organizer: ECA

This event is being organized to discuss the Luxembourg Rail Protocol to the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment and how the Protocol will play a key role in attracting private capital. The purpose of attracting capital is to create a sustainable model for supporting existing and new rail projects. In turn, it is hoped that this will facilitate the efforts of banks and other funders that are providing finance for rolling stock procurement through secured credit and leasing equipment (i.e., rolling stock) to operators to do so without the need for State guarantees.



2-3.30 p.m.

Side event 9: Capacity imperatives of the African Continental Free Trade Area

(Conference Room 6)

Organizers: African Capacity Building Foundation and ECA

The agreement to establish the African Continental Free Trade Area was signed by 44 countries in Kigali on 21 March 2018, with the goal of creating a single market, the free movement of goods, people and services and a single currency union. Many expectations have been placed on the Free Trade Area, given that it is estimated to cover a market of 1.2 billion people and a gross domestic product of \$2.5 trillion in all 55 member States of the African Union. Creating a single continental market for goods and services, with the free movement of business persons and investment, would not only accelerate the establishment of a continental customs union, but also ensure Africa's competitiveness in the global economy. For Africa to reap the full benefits of the agreement, however, some enablers have to be in place. An important one is the capacity required for the ratification and implementation of the agreement after the signing. As the African Union's specialized agency for capacity building, the African Capacity Building Foundation is particularly concerned that the agreement may follow several others that have not been ratified by a critical mass of member States or effectively implemented, owing to a lack of implementation capacities at the national, regional and continental levels.

It is in this regard that the African Capacity Building Foundation will host a high-level panel discussion that will focus on the capacity imperatives for the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement and the need for a coordinated capacity development programme to implement it.



4-5.30 p.m.

Side event 10: Priorities for tackling illicit financial flows in Africa

(Conference Room 3)

Organizer: ECA

Illicit financial flows represent a significant drain on Africa's development. It is estimated that the continent loses tens of billions of dollars annually. The High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa concluded that illicit financial outflows from Africa were likely to exceed \$50 billion annually. African countries have committed themselves to tackling these flows. In this context, ECA, the African Tax Administration Forum and the Government of Norway are hosting this side event to discuss the priorities for tackling illicit financial flows from Africa. The session will focus on identifying the obstacles to the efforts to address the impact of illicit financial flows on domestic resource mobilization. It will also highlight critical tax policy and revenue mobilization concerns and provide an opportunity to discuss the key messages from two new ECA publications—both of which will be launched at the fifty-first session—that explore, in greater detail, priorities for tackling illicit financial flows on the continent.

4-5.30 p.m.

Side event 11: United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel

(Conference Room 5)

Organizer: ECA

The main objective of this high-level side event is to engage with government officials and partners on the new direction taken by the United Nations in its support to the Sahel. The event will provide policymakers and other partners with updated information on the support plan and other work to be carried out by the United Nations. It will offer an invaluable opportunity to engage with them on the social and economic prospects for the Sahel.



Monday, 14 May 2018 Ministerial Conference

United Nations Conference Centre

	Opening of the session (agenda item 1)
8.15-9.15 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statements by the host• Statements by the special guests
9.15-9.30 a.m.	Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work (agenda item 2)
9.30-10.45 a.m.	High-level ministerial policy dialogue on the theme of the fifty-first session: "African Continental Free Trade Area: creating fiscal space for jobs and economic diversification" (agenda item 3)
10.45-11 a.m.	Coffee break
11 a.m.-3 p.m.	High-level round-table discussions (agenda item 4)
11 a.m.-12 noon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Round table 1: African Continental Free Trade Area: transforming Africa
12 noon -1 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Round table 2: African Continental Free Trade Area: fiscal space and financial sustainability for Africa
1-2.30 p.m.	Lunch break
	2018 Adebayo Adedeji Lecture
2.30-3.30 p.m.	Round table 3: Private sector and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area
3.30-4 p.m.	Presentation of the revised strategic framework 2018-2019
4-4.15 p.m.	Coffee break
4.15-5.45 p.m.	Consideration of recommendations and adoption of draft resolutions (agenda item 5)
5.45 p.m.	Reception



Tuesday, 15 May 2018
Ministerial Conference

United Nations Conference Centre

9.30-10.30 a.m.	Consideration and adoption of the draft ministerial statement (agenda item 6)
10.30-11 a.m.	Other matters (agenda item 7)
11-11.15 a.m.	Closing of the session (agenda item 8)
11.15-11.45 a.m.	Press conference

