



## Fourth African International Economic Law Network Biennial Conference

### Africa's Participation in International Economic Law in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The African International Economic Law Network (AfIELN) invites the submission of abstracts for the 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference taking place at **Strathmore University, Nairobi, Kenya from 18 to 20 July 2019**.

#### 1. Conference Theme

The theme for the 4<sup>th</sup> AfIELN Biennial Conference is *Africa's Participation in International Economic Law in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Historically, while Africa's voice has remained at the margins of International Economic Law (IEL), recent years have seen an emergence of exciting, new scholarship and research on the continent's contributions to, and involvement with IEL. Given the current inauspicious international economic regime, examining Africa's participation is even more critical.

At the continental level, the framework agreement for the African Continental Free Trade (AfCFTA) signed on the 21st of March 2018, by forty-four African Union (AU) countries is among the recent efforts to transform Africa's participation in the global economy. When established, the Agreement aims to create a single market for goods, services and movement of persons in the African continent. The signing of the AfCFTA was coupled by the adoption of an AU common position for negotiations of a new cooperation agreement with the European Union post 2020. This occurred at a time when the United States is also considering maturing its trade relations with Africa upon the expiration of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) waiver in 2025.

The AfCFTA Agreement adds to the adoption in 2016 of a Pan-African Investment Code (PAIC), the first continent-wide model investment agreement whose objective is to foster coherence and consistency regarding the rules and principles that govern investment protection, promotion and facilitation on the African continent. Whether the negotiations of the AfCFTA investment chapter will support the trends of the PAIC or will follow another standard approach remains to be seen.

While the signing of these Agreements connotes significant progress in the Continent's participation in global economic governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, several questions still remain. Narratives and counter-narratives of what it means to live in a globalized world where trade is free, fair and equitable could influence the challenges that have hitherto slowed down the pace of trade liberalization within the Continent. Other than the internal challenges encountered by trade liberalization in Africa, at the global scene, a rising wave of market protectionism has emerged in the United States and Britain which threatens the present construct of free trade.

The purpose of this conference, therefore, is to bring together scholars and scholarship that highlights original and innovative thinking in IEL as it pertains to the continent. In doing so, the Conference aims not only to encourage collaboration and network that challenges, engages and addresses Africa's marginality in global economic governance but also critical scholarship on the various emerging innovative platforms on the continent.

Therefore, the AfIELN 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference invites academics, practitioners, and government officials to submit papers that examine the recent crop of African trade, investment and economic partnership agreements as well as the AfCFTA and their impacts on Africa's economic development.

The Conference Committee invites submissions that address *Africa's Participation in International Economic Law in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* in the following areas.

1. Regional and Continental Integration through the AfCFTA Agreement: Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade in Goods; Movement of Natural Persons; Trade in Services; Dispute Settlement; etc.
2. African Approaches to Global Economic Governance: Multilateralism; Regionalisation, etc.
3. The Pan-African Investment Code and Investment Facilitation in Africa: The Fragmentation of African Investment Law Landscape; Harmonisation of Regional Investment Agreements; The African Perspective to the Shaping of International Investment Law – or 'Africanization' of International Investment Law; Intra-African Cross-Border Investment Facilitation; etc.
4. Africa and the WTO: Accession; Trade in Goods and Services; Dispute Settlement System; Trade Policy Review Mechanisms; Trade Facilitation; Trade Remedies; Special and Differential Treatment; etc.
5. Monetary, Financial and Tax Law: Comparative Regional Approaches
6. Human Rights, Extractive Industry and Corporations: African Realities, Interests, Priorities and Concerns
7. New Developments in Private International Law and IEL in Africa
8. Emerging Issues on Terrorism, Cyber-terrorism, Piracy in Africa vis-à-vis IEL
9. Africa, IEL, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
10. International Intellectual Property Law and Africa
11. International Arbitration and Investor-State Proceedings
12. Women and Gender in International Economic Law
13. The Environment Climate Change and Africa: Connecting Law and Science in IEL
14. Bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements and Cooperation in Africa

15. Civil Society and Other Non-State Actors, focusing on how these actors interact with laws and institutions at domestic, regional and sub-regional levels
16. Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Food Security
17. New Constitutionalism, International Economic Agreements Enforcement Processes and the Jurisprudence of the Regional Economic Courts
18. Blockchains, Cryptocurrencies and Digital Transactions
19. Public Policy, Global Health and other disciplines relating to IEL
20. Legal Education and International Economic Law
21. China and Africa

## 2. Submission Instructions

The Conference Committee welcomes individual and panel proposal submissions from African and Africanist IEL scholars, new voices as well as established scholars whose work relate directly or indirectly to the continent. Submissions should include a research abstract (no more than 400 words) and a short bio to be sent no later than **7 December 2018** to [afieln.siel@gmail.com](mailto:afieln.siel@gmail.com). Papers will be selected based on quality, originality, and their capacity to provoke productive debates. Enquiries can be submitted to [afieln.siel@gmail.com](mailto:afieln.siel@gmail.com).

Furthermore, interested parties working on a common issue or topic not listed among the thematic areas above may propose their own panel by submitting a common proposal for such panel with the following details:

- Proposed topic or issue for the panel
- Names of panel participants and their respective affiliations
- Respective paper titles and abstracts of no more than 400 words
- Contact details of panel head

The Conference Committee plans to announce decisions no later than **28 February 2019**. Selected applicants will be expected to submit their complete paper (not exceeding 6000 words) by **20 June 2019**.

## 3. Conference Fees, Costs and Financial Support

Conference fees and associated attendance costs are fairly low. All conference participants and speakers must plan to cover their travel, accommodation and attendance costs.

If funds become available, AfIELN plans to offer limited scholarship and conference registration waiver for graduate students of African origin and scholars that are based on the continent. Applicants are invited to submit a paragraph-long statement indicating if they will need financial support with their abstract. More information on conference registration fee will be available on the conference webpage in due course.

## 4. Conference Publication

In line with previous AfIELN Conferences, the Conference Committee plans to publish selected articles in a peer-review Journal special issue or edited book volume. More information will also be provided in due course.