NEWSLETTER

AFRICAN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW NETWORK (AfIELN)

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The AfIELN is a regional network under the auspices of the Society of International Economic Law (SIEL). AfIELN is an organisation aimed at academics, industry practitioners, policy experts and officials with interest in the field of International Economic Law (IEL) in Africa.

Should you wish to include an item in the next AfIELN newsletter, please contact us: afieln.siel@gmail.com

Message du Président

en français

Dr. Regis Simo , AfIELN Président

Chers amis du Réseau africain de droit économique international (AfIELN),

C'est avec un immense plaisir que je vous souhaite la bienvenue à notre 8e Conférence biennale. Après avoir accueilli avec succès des éditions au Ghana, au Kenya, au Nigeria, en Afrique du Sud et en Tanzanie, nous avons enfin franchi le « mur francophone », comme l'a souligné un membre du Conseil Consultatif du Réseau en apprenant la destination de cette année. Pour la première fois depuis sa création en 2008, la Conférence d'AfIELN se tiendra en Afrique « francophone », en Afrique du Nord et dans la région MENA. Le Maroc revêt donc une symbolique triple.

Le Maroc n'est pas seulement parfaitement positionné en tant que pays hôte, mais la région dans son ensemble constitue également un centre géopolitique et économique majeur. Cela en fait un choix idéal pour le thème de cette année, qui, pour rappel, nous invite à naviguer entre « réalignements géopolitiques, impératifs de durabilité et transformations technologiques ». Dans un monde marqué par une compétition mondiale accrue entre pays et blocs économiques tels que la Chine, la Russie, les États-Unis et l'Union européenne, les nations africaines n'ont d'autre choix que de promouvoir la coopération Sud-Sud, notamment en combinant audacieusement les politiques industrielles et commerciales.

Selon l'Indice de l'industrialisation en Afrique 2025 de la Banque africaine de développement, publié fin mai 2026, l'Afrique du Nord demeure la région la plus industrialisée d'Afrique, le Maroc s'imposant comme la première économie industrielle du continent. En passant en tête de ce classement, le Maroc détrône l'Afrique du Sud, qui occupait la première place depuis 2010. Cette avancée est en partie attribuée à une modernisation soutenue de son système productif, à la diversification croissante de ses exportations et à la mise en œuvre effective de sa politique industrielle. Malgré cette progression du Maroc, ainsi que celle d'autres pays d'Afrique du Nord, comme l'Égypte et la Tunisie, qui se classent respectivement en troisième et en quatrième positions, les gains continentaux liés à l'industrialisation demeurent lents et inégalement répartis.

Dans cette optique, aucune autre initiative ne requiert une attention aussi urgente que la mise en œuvre complète de l'Accord portant création de la Zone de libre-échange continentale africaine (ZLECAf). Selon les estimations, la mise en œuvre totale de cet accord pourrait accroître significativement le commerce intra-africain, avec des hausses de 60 % dans l'agroalimentaire, de 48 % dans l'industrie manufacturière et de 34 % dans les services à l'horizon 2045.

Message du Président

en française

L'industrialisation induite par la ZLECAf doit, au-delà des pays d'Afrique du Nord, s'appuyer sur des acteurs clés tels que l'Afrique du Sud, le Nigeria, le Kenya, etc., afin de générer des effets de débordement pour les économies voisines par le biais des chaînes de valeur régionales. La ZLECAf offre à l'Afrique l'opportunité de tirer parti de la transformation numérique en cours. La digitalisation ouvre des horizons prometteurs pour la croissance, en facilitant l'accès au financement, en réduisant les coûts de transaction et en renforçant l'efficacité dans les secteurs privé et public. De plus, les outils numériques permettent aux entreprises informelles et aux consommateurs à faibles revenus de s'intégrer à l'économie formelle, ce qui favorise un environnement plus inclusif.

La ZLECAf ne protège pas seulement les économies africaines contre le protectionnisme extérieur, les guerres tarifaires renouvelées et la fragmentation géopolitique, mais offre aussi aux pays africains l'opportunité de passer du statut de simples « Rule Takers » à celui de « Rule Makers » au sein des institutions internationales. Alors que la demande mondiale de matières premières critiques connaît une hausse exceptionnelle, les pays africains ont la possibilité, grâce au droit et à la politique économique, de valoriser davantage leurs ressources locales plutôt que de se limiter à l'exportation brute. La ZLECAf offre ainsi à l'Afrique l'occasion d'améliorer son intégration commerciale et industrielle.

Conformément à la tradition, la conférence réunira un ensemble diversifié de participants, comprenant des universitaires, des décideurs, des professionnels du secteur, des représentants de la société civile ainsi que des étudiants, afin d'analyser de manière critique les transformations technologiques, les enjeux de durabilité et les rivalités géopolitiques.

Je souhaite terminer en exprimant ma gratitude envers notre hôte, l'Institut AIRESS de la Faculté de Gouvernance, Sciences Économiques et Sociales (FGSES) de l'Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique (UM6P) à Rabat, pour son accueil chaleureux et tous les efforts qu'il a consacrés à l'organisation de cet événement traditionnel d'AfIELN. Je tiens à remercier sincèrement le Conseil Consultatif d'AfIELN ainsi que l'équipe exécutive (Harrison Mbori, Gertrude Amarh, Jonathan Kabré et Janet Njambi) pour leur engagement dévoué et leur précieuse contribution en faveur d'AfIELN.

Je me réjouis à l'avance de nos délibérations productives.

Message from the President

in English

Dr. Regis Simo
AfIELN President

Dear Friends of the African International Economic Law Network (AfIELN)

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to our 8th Biennial Conference. After successfully hosting in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania, we have finally breached the "Francophone wall", as one Member of the Network's Advisory Board noted upon learning this year's destination. For the first time since its creation in 2008, the AfIELN Conference will take place in "Francophone" Africa, in North Africa, and in the MENA region. Morocco is therefore threefold symbolic.

Morocco is not only perfectly positioned as the host country, but the region, as a whole, is also a major geopolitical and economic hub. This makes it an excellent choice for this year's conference theme, which, as a reminder, encourages us to navigate "geopolitical realignments, sustainability imperatives, and technological disruptions". In a world characterised by an intensifying global power contest among countries and economic blocs such as China, Russia, the United States, and the European Union, African nations have no choice but to promote South-South cooperation, notably by boldly combining industrial and trade policies.

In the African Development Bank's Africa Industrialisation Index 2025, published in late May 2026, Morocco rose to the top position, overtaking South Africa, which had consistently held first place since 2010.

This breakthrough is attributed, in part, to sustained industrial upgrading, export diversification, and implementation of strategic industrial policy. Despite Morocco's rise, alongside other North African countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, which ranked third and fourth, respectively, the continent-wide gains from industrialisation remain slow and uneven.

In this vein, no other initiative demands more urgent attention than the full implementation of the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). According to estimates, full implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement would significantly increase intra-African trade, with increases of 60 per cent in agrifood, 48 per cent in manufacturing, and 34 per cent in services by 2045. AfCFTA-driven industrialisation must, beyond North African countries, be anchored on South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, etc., to generate spillover effects for these countries' neighbouring economies through regional value chains. The AfCFTA also presents opportunities for Africa to leverage the ongoing technological transformation across the continent. The growth of digitalisation opens exciting opportunities for progress, especially by making it easier to access finance, cut transaction costs, and boost efficiency in both the business and public sectors. Digital tools also help informal firms and low-income consumers integrate into the formal economy, creating a more inclusive environment.

Message from the President

in English

Not only is the AfCFTA the primary mechanism to protect African economies from external protectionism, renewed tariff wars, and geopolitical fragmentation, but it also helps African countries transition from being rule-takers to rule-makers within international institutions. As the global transition demands critical minerals, African countries, through international economic law and policy, stand a chance of capturing greater local value rather than merely exporting raw materials. The AfCFTA is a timely opportunity for Africa to enhance its trade and industrial integration. In keeping with tradition, the conference will bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, including academics, policymakers, industry professionals, civil society organisations, and students, to critically explore technological disruption, sustainability challenges, and geopolitical rivalries.

I want to end by thanking our host, the Africa Institute for Research in Economics and Social Sciences (AIRESS) of the Faculty of Governance, Economics and Social Sciences (FGSES) at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P), Rabat, for their hospitality and the effort they put into organising this traditional AfIELN event. I sincerely thank the outstanding AfIELN Advisory Board and Executive Team (Harrison Mbori, Gertrude Amarh, Jonathan Kabré, and Janet Njambi) for their dedicated and gracious service to AfIELN.

I cannot wait for our fruitful deliberations.

Message from the Conference Chair

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 8th Biennial Conference of the African Network of International Economic Law (AfIELN), organized under the theme: "Africa and the Future of International Economic Law: Navigating Geopolitical Realignments, Sustainability Imperatives, and Technological Disruptions."

This conference is taking place at a crucial moment in the history of the international economic order, which is undergoing profound transformations that are redefining the law and practice of international economic relations. For Africa, these transformations offer a unique opportunity to rethink its place within the global economy and to contribute more actively to the development of international economic law: from the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to their engagement in digital trade, climate governance and emerging technologies, African states and institutions are increasingly called upon to develop legal responses tailored to their aspirations and realities.

Dr. Rimdolmson Jonathan Kabre
Conference Planning Chair
8th Biennial Conference of the African International Economic Law Network (AfIELN)
Mohammed VI Polytechnic University
Rabat (Morocco) 24-26 June 2026

Against this background, this conference aims to provide a space for critical reflection on how Africa can leverage these multidimensional transformations to advance its economic integration and assert a more influential voice in shaping global economic standards. During our discussions, we will explore not only the challenges facing the continent but also the legal strategies and innovations needed to transform these challenges into opportunities.

Beyond its academic significance, this conference offers a platform to (re)connect with colleagues and forge new collaborations and to strengthen the academic and professional networks that support our collective work. In the spirit of the African philosophy of Ubuntu, this gathering reaffirms a simple but powerful truth: our greatest achievements arise from solidarity and the pursuit of a common goal.

I warmly welcome you to this important event and look forward to the stimulating discussions and new partnerships that will emerge from our meetings.

Welcome! Bienvenue ! Merhba bikoum!

The 8th Biennial Conference

"Africa and the future of international economic law: Navigating geopolitical realignments, sustainability imperatives and technological disruptions"

The global order is undergoing a profound transformation shaped by a confluence of three interconnected forces: heightened geopolitical rivalries, the urgent imperative of sustainable transformation, and the rapid acceleration of technological change. Rising global rivalries, reflected in geo-economic fragmentation, resource nationalism, the weaponisation of trade and finance, and new configurations of South–South and North–South alliances, are reshaping the foundations of international economic law (IEL). At the same time, climate change and the global push toward decarbonisation are exerting unprecedented pressure on existing legal regimes governing trade, investment, finance, intellectual property, and energy. In parallel, the Fourth and emerging Fifth Industrial Revolutions, characterised by breakthroughs in AI, automation, datafication, quantum technologies, blockchain and advanced biotechnology, are blurring traditional divisions between goods, services, data, and knowledge.

For Africa, these overlapping transformations create historic opportunities but also heightened vulnerabilities. They open pathways for digital leapfrogging, new value-chain participation, green industrialisation, and a more assertive African agency in global governance. However, they also generate systemic risks: exposure to supply-chain realignments, dependence on extractive resource cycles, unequal access to technology, climate fragility, cyber vulnerabilities, intensified debt pressures, and structural asymmetries in global rule-making.

Recognizing the critical role that academic forums play in informing policy and practice, this conference will function as a policy exchange between research and implementation of international economic law from Africa's perspective, with a special focus on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Thus, while designed as an academic conference, the conference invites participation from practitioners and policy makers to promote interdisciplinary dialogue among stakeholders involved in Africa's trade and regional integration, digital governance, green industrialization and emerging technology regulation.

About the Conference Venue

The Africa International Economic Law Network (AfIELN) and the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University will convene the 8TH AfIELN Biennial Conference from 24th to 26th June 2026 in Rabat, Morocco. The conference will be held at UM6P Rabat campus, within the Social Sciences, Economics and Humanities Cluster of Mohammed VI Polytechnic University. The Cluster is a teaching and research ecosystem that closely brings together three entities:

- Faculty of Governance, Economics and Social Sciences (FGSES); offering Bachelor's, Master's, as well as Ph.D. programs.
- The Africa Institute for Research in Economics and Social Sciences (AIRESS): geared towards research.
- The Public Policy School (PPS): offering executive education programs for decision-makers in both public and private sectors.

Each of these entities fulfills its mission, using the knowledge and experience shared among a community of professors, researchers, scholars as well as public decision-makers.

The AfIELN Conference will bring together scholars, academics, practitioners, policymakers, negotiators, regulators, development partners and students working at the intersection of international economic law and African economic governance. The conference will provide a platform to discuss the shifts in the global economic order, with focus on Africa's role in shaping and responding to this global economic order.

Meet The Conference Committee

Professeur Sâ Benjamin TRAORE

Ms Gertrude A. Amarh

Dr Harrison O. Mbori

Prof. Regis Y. Simo

Ms Janet Njambi Macharia

Dr Rimdolmsom Jonathan Kabré

8th Biennial Conference Registration

Registration for the 8th Biennial Conference is open. The registration for the conference is as follows:

- 20 USD – Global South based students
- 30 USD – Global North based students
- 80 USD – Global South based Academics and Professionals
- 110 USD – Global North based Academics and Professionals

For any questions regarding logistics, please contact the AIRESS Team at: AfIELN.2026@um6p.ma
For any other inquiries, please contact: afieln.siel@gmail.com

Conference topics:

- Africa's Engagement in Global Governance
- Sustainable Transformation, Climate Governance, and Green Industrial Policy
- Digital Trade and Regional Integration
- Regional Integration and Economic Resilience
- Intellectual Property and Innovation
- Investment Law, Geopolitics and the Digital Economy
- Emerging Technologies: Legal Readiness and Regulatory Gaps
- Crosscutting Issues

UPCOMING EVENTS

GENCGOV Conference 2026

Abuja, Nigeria - June 2026

The GenCGov International Conference convenes leading academics, policymakers, civil society leaders, and grassroots innovators from across Africa and beyond to advance gender-responsive climate governance. Hosted in Abuja, Nigeria's policy capital, the conference explores how climate risks are redistributed in an era of geopolitical fragmentation and constrained climate finance. It creates a platform to translate research into actionable policy while foregrounding justice, inclusion, and institutional design as central to effective climate action. By placing gender at the core of climate governance, the conference seeks to illuminate hidden burdens and develop transformative solutions for resilient and equitable climate systems. For more information, visit: https://gencgovconference.org

Pan African Lawyers Union 16th Annual Conference

Cairo, Egypt - Aug/Sep 2026

The Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU) is proud to announce that the PALU Annual Conference 2026 will convene in Cairo, Egypt, from 31 August – 2 September 2026. Over three dynamic days, leading legal minds, judges, senior counsel, policymakers, academics, and partners from across Africa and beyond will engage on the most pressing issues shaping law, justice, governance, and development across the continent. Expect High-level plenaries and thought-provoking panel discussions; Strategic networking with influential legal and policy leaders ; Insightful exchanges on emerging jurisprudence and continental priorities; and Opportunities to deepen partnerships and advance collective advocacy. Further details on the conference theme, programme, speakers, and registration will be released soon. Please follow this link for further updates and information: https://events.lawyersofafrica.org

Africa in the Global Economy

Bonn, Germany - Dec 2026

This conference will take place 2 - 4 December 2026 in Bonn. It provides a forum to discuss the implications of Africa's evolving regional and global economic relationships, with a focus on policy-relevant empirical research related to international trade, finance, and development. This conference provides a forum to discuss the implications of Africa's evolving regional and global economic relationships, with a focus on policy-relevant empirical research. Topics of interest include international trade, finance, and development, but contributions exploring other areas with clear links to Africa's regional or global economic integration

Symposium: The Economic Community of West African States in its Fifties – Looking Back, Look Forward

This symposium is a scholarly reflection on the past, present, and future of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as it enters its sixth decade. Rather than simply judging ECOWAS as a success or failure, the contributors examine how the organization has shaped regional integration, governance, law, security, and development in West Africa while confronting major contemporary challenges such as democratic backsliding, insecurity in the Sahel, weak intra-regional trade, and the withdrawal of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger from the bloc. The symposium explores both ECOWAS's achievements and its shortcomings in economic integration and implementation. You can follow the symposium on Afronomics Law at: https://www.afronomicslaw.org/index.php/symposia

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Books & Book Chapters

1. Oriakhogba D, Musiza C, Mba-Kalu S, Intellectual Property Rights and Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, Taylor & Francis Group, 2026

2. Harrison Mbori, The Inequalities of Sovereign Equality, in Mohsen al Attar & Claire Smith (eds), Emancipating International Law: Confronting the Violence of Racialised Boundaries (Oxford University Press, 2026).

3. Gordon J, ed. Economic Sanctions from Havana to Baghdad: Legitimacy, Accountability, and Humanitarian Consequences. Cambridge University Press; 2025.

4. Harrison Mbori, Sovereign Debt in Antony Anghie et al (ed) Research Handbook on Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL) (Elgar Publishing, 2025) (with James T. Gathii).

5. Regis Y. Simo, "The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)", in J. Chaisse and C. Hermann (eds.) The International Law of Economic Integration (Oxford University Press, 2025), pp. 794-809.

6. Rimdolmsom Jonathan Kabré, 'Les investissements chinois dans le secteur minier en afrique face aux défis de la transition énergétique' in Olivier Bichsel, Olivier Delas, Carla Gomez, Mulry Mondélice, Richard Ouellet (eds) Défis énergétiques et enjeux géopolitiques contemporains, Perspectives transatlantique et internationale, Bruxelles, Larcier Intersentia, 2024, pp. 351-366.

7. Regis Y. Simo, R.Y. "Sustainability Obligations and Developing Countries: Any Scope for Special and Differential Treatment?" in K. Claussen & G. Vidigal (eds.) THE SUSTAINABILITY REVOLUTION IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS (Oxford University Press, 2024), pp. 199-216.

Academic Papers

1. Jackline Nyaga, Financing Development in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of the Western Model and China's Approach, Volume 6, Issue 1, AfJIEL (2026).

2. Rimdolmsom Jonathan Kabré, 'Le contrôle de constitutionnalité des traités d'investissement en droit burkinabè', Revue des Réflexions Constitutionnelles, n° 067 / Mars 2026, pp.41-65.

2. Francesco Gaudiosi, Global Health Security in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of EU and China Regulatory Measures for the Regional Health Partnerships, Volume 6, Issue 1, AfJIEL (2026)

3. Roberto Isibor and Caterina Coroneo, The Future of African Pharmaceutical Market Harmonization: A Compared Analysis Between the European and Chinese Approach to African Medicines Agency Establishment, Volume 6, Issue 1, AfJIEL (2026).

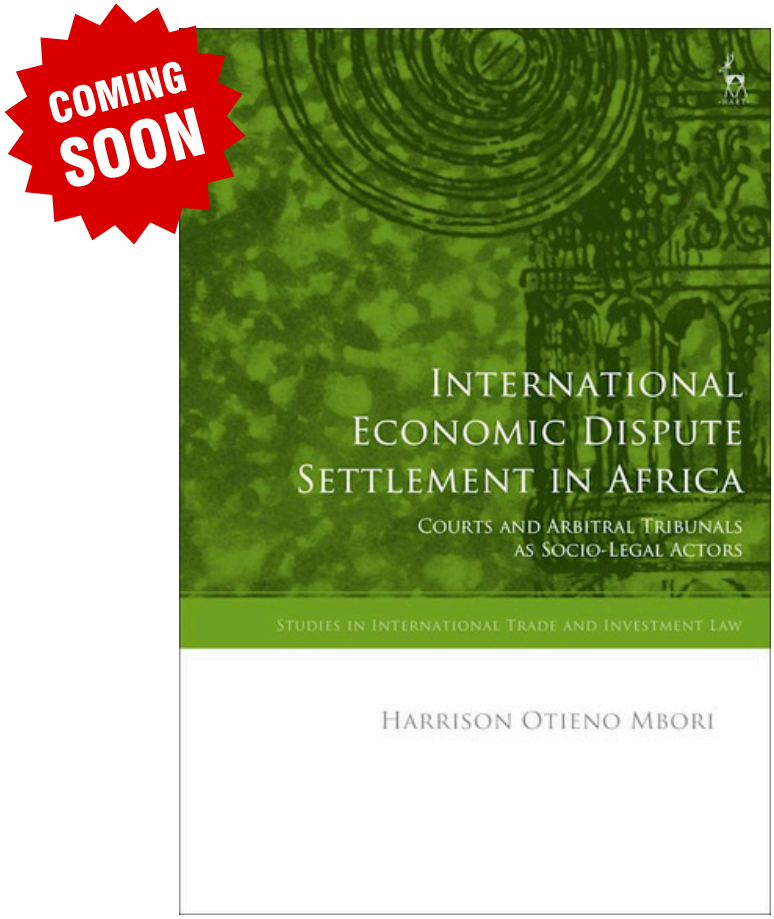
4. Lorenzo Gasbarri and Melvis Ndiloseh, "Symposium: China and Europe in the African Continent: Economic, Legal and Political Perspectives - Introduction to Symposium on China and Europe in Africa", Volume 6, Issue 1, AfJIEL (2026).

5. Rimdolmsom Jonathan Kabré, 'Sustainability in investment arbitration: an empty promise?' in African Journal of International and Comparative Law, Volume 33, issue 3 August 2025, pp. 396–414.

6. Rimdolmsom Jonathan Kabré, 'La prise en compte de l'urgence dans les marchés publics en droit ivoirien', Revue Internationale de Droit et Science Politique, Volume 5, N°8 – Août 2025, pp. 21-49.

International Economic Dispute Settlement in Africa by Dr. Harrison Mbori

Winner of the 2024 SIEL-Hart Prize in International Economic Law



We are pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of International Economic Dispute Settlement in Africa by Dr. Harrison Mbori.

As African economies play an increasingly significant role in global trade and investment, this timely book provides a comprehensive analysis of the laws, institutions, and actors shaping international economic dispute settlement across the continent. Examining both international litigation and public and private arbitration, the book offers a fresh perspective through a TWAIL and socio-legal actors framework.

5

The book explores the roles of African states, transnational corporations, international organisations, legal scholars, and emerging arbitration actors in shaping Africa's dispute settlement landscape. Through its analysis of sub-regional courts and arbitral tribunals, it offers valuable insights into the legal, political, and institutional dynamics influencing economic dispute resolution in Africa today.

This book is an essential resource for practitioners, policymakers, researchers, academics, and business leaders seeking to understand Africa's evolving approach to international economic dispute settlement.