

MAU 2023 Simulation Agenda

1. African Continental Free Trade Agreement as a pathway to address challenges of the Global Food and Energy Crises in Africa

The agreement founding the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was brokered by the African Union (AU) and signed by 44 of its 55 member states in Kigali, Rwanda on March 21, 2018. The main objective of the AfCFTA is to achieve a comprehensive and mutually beneficial trade agreement among the Member States of the African Union. Following its ratification by the required 22 countries in May 2019, the AfCFTA came into force in January 2021. The significance of the AfCFTA cannot be overemphasized. It is the world's largest new free trade area since the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994. It promises to increase intra-African trade through deeper levels of trade liberalization and enhanced regulatory harmonization and coordination. Hence, it is expected to improve the competitiveness of African industries and enterprises through increased market access, the exploitation of economies of scale, and more effective resource allocation.

Under the agreement, AfCFTA signatories are committed to eliminating tariffs on most goods and services over 5 - 13 years, depending on the country's level of development or the nature of the products. Its broad and long-term objectives include creating a single, liberalized market; reducing barriers to capital and labor to facilitate investment; developing regional infrastructure; and establishing a continental customs union. The overall aims will enhance socio-economic development, poverty reduction and the competitiveness of Africa in the global economy. AfCFTA's negotiations and implementation are overseen by an Accra (Ghana) based permanent secretariat. On January 13, 2022, AfCFTA undertook a significant step by establishing the Pan-African Payments and Settlements System (PAPSS) to facilitate smooth payments among companies operating in Africa in any of the continent's local currencies.

Incidentally, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) estimates that AfCFTA will boost intra-African trade by 52 percent by 2022, and the World Bank also anticipates that AfCFTA could lift 30 million Africans out of extreme poverty, boost the incomes of nearly 70 million people, and generate \$450 billion in income by 2035. However, the effects of Covid-19 and the negative consequences of the Russia-Ukraine War (since February 2022) on food insecurity and energy crisis have undermined the effectiveness of AfCFTA. Given these challenges, limited intra-African trade, debt crisis and rising inflation have continuously undermined processes of development in Africa. Hence, the imperative to rethink the AfCFTA among other laudable initiatives of the African Union.

Questions to consider

1. How can the AfCFTA boost trade, investment, and regional integration in Africa?
2. What improvement should be made in the provision and implementation strategies of the AfCFTA?
3. How can the AfCFTA's objectives be monitored and evaluated for efficiency, and transformative development in Africa?

4. How is the Ukrainian/Russian war impacting trade in Africa?
5. What has been the negative impact on trade in Africa due to Covid 19 and how can the situation be improved?

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2. Effects of Climate Change on forced migration in Africa and the review of the AU Agenda 2063 (The Africa We Want)

The African Union's (AU) AGENDA 2063: The Africa We Want - is Africa's blueprint and master plan for continental transformation and its strategic framework for inclusive and sustainable development. Agenda 2063 is an affirmation of their commitment signed at the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the OAU/AU in May 2013. The Agenda's *Aspiration 16* seeks to address the global challenge of climate change by prioritizing adaptation, with adequate support (affordable technology development and transfer, capacity building, financial and technical resources) to ensure the implementation of actions for the survival of the most vulnerable populations, including islands states, and sustainable development and shared prosperity. Agenda 2063 calls to action the need for African states to Act with a sense of urgency on climate change and the environment, and implementation of the Program on Climate Action in Africa.

Whilst Africa contributes less than 5% of global carbon emissions, it bears the brunt of the impact of climate change. In Africa, migration induced by slow-onset events such as droughts, desertification, deforestation, water scarcity, rising sea levels, and coastal erosion has increased in occurrence and severity over the last few decades due to the adverse effects of climate change. Consequently, increased poverty, resource scarcity and climate variability have led to more frequent clashes, including violent conflicts, over land rights, access to water, and control of environmental resources in Africa. The World Bank (2021) maintained that Climate Change could further impact Africa's recovery, pushing 86 million people to migrate by 2050. The climate-migration-development nexus underscores the wealth of good practice that can inform projects to innovate and devise more integrative solutions by sharpening attention to underlying causes of forced migration; and where necessary, design interventions that are proactive against future climate risks from slow - and rapid-onset climate impacts.

The AU in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), held the Ministerial Segment of the 7th Pan African Forum on Migration (PAFOM7) on October 21, 2022, in Kigali, Rwanda under the theme: "Addressing the Impact of Climate Change on Human Mobility in Africa: Building Adaptation Strategies and Resilient Communities".

This brings together ministers responsible for Environment, Migration, Foreign Affairs, and International Cooperation from AU Member States. This urged AU Member States to strengthen collaborations on the climate-forced migration nexus, and the need to improve the governance of the labor migration framework in Africa. Although, internal migration patterns in Africa are dominated by rural-to-urban movement, nomadic pastoralism, and seasonal migration from inland areas to the coast play a significant part in preserving livelihood in Africa. The effects of climate change on forced migration worsen socio-economic development and security in Africa given the region's history of trade, nomadic pastoralism, and migration for livelihood diversification. Therefore, how can policies be mainstreamed to combat the effects of climate-induced migration and conflicts resulting from scarcities of environmental resources in Africa?

Questions to consider

1. How can Agenda 2063 provisions on climate change and the environment be strengthened to protect Africa's resource base and its sustainable exploitation and use?
2. How can the AU revisit the plight of vulnerable populations, and island states, towards sustainable development and shared prosperity?
3. What effective climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies can be adopted to enhance the resilience of communities and livelihoods and prevention of forced migration in Africa?
4. What measures should be taken to mainstream migration potentials into sustainable development in Africa?

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