



AFRICAN SOCIETY OF COMMUNITY LAW (ASCL)

CALL FOR PAPERS

COLLOQUIUM OF DAKAR (SENEGAL)

December 2025

“AFRICAN INTEGRATION AT THE TIME OF THE AfCFTA”



Under the scientific supervision of Mr. **Alioune SALL**

Professor at the Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Lawyer, Former Judge at the ECOWAS Court of Justice, Member of the UN International Law Commission, Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

I. CONTEXT:

The problem of regional integration in Africa posed after the independence of the 1960s remains at the heart of contemporary issues in international law and African international relations. From the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU), through initiatives such as the Lagos Action Plan (1980), the Abuja Treaty (1991) or the New Partnership for Africa's Development (2001), the African States have systematically pursued the objective of economic and political “integration”, which is also thought in terms of articulation between the sub-regional and the continental levels.

On 21st March 2018, the agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was adopted by the 10th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda. It entered into force on 30th May 2019. The operational phase was launched in Niamey, Niger, on 7th July 2019, and 1st January 2021 marked the start of trade under this agreement, which expresses an ambition to boost intra-African trade and a willingness to position the continent in the world economy through the gradual elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers, as well as the liberalization of services. The relatively rapid signing of this agreement (which currently has 54 States parties) demonstrates political commitment to this project.

However, despite this momentum, many challenges hamper the achievement of the African economic integration project. These include internal conflicts, terrorism, cross-

border crime, the multiplicity of national currencies and tensions related to the coexistence of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) recognized by the African Union (AU). The latter, although essential for sub-regional integration, raise questions of normative overlap and coordination with the continental framework. The relationship between the AfCFTA and pre-existing mechanisms, including the African Economic Community under the Abuja Treaty, is a major issue because it highlights the central question of the readability and coherence of this integration project. This challenge of achieving African integration is accentuated by recent efforts to "rationalize" the RECs, illustrated by initiatives aimed at merging entities such as CEMAC and ECCAS or at harmonizing the tripartite free trade area (COMESA-EAC-SADC).

From a legal point of view, the AfCFTA raises complex issues: harmonization of national legislations, dispute settlement mechanisms (partly modelled on those of the WTO), and implementation of protocols (freedom of movement, right of establishment, investment).

A scientific colloquium dedicated to these issues is therefore a major event. It should enable theoretical analyses to be compared with feedback from experience, identify synergies between the AfCFTA and previous integration models, and propose, as far as possible, solutions to the obstacles identified. By crossing theoretical and practical perspectives, this event should contribute to transforming Pan-African aspirations into tangible achievements, while consolidating the legal basis essential for the emergence of an integrated and prosperous Africa.

II. SCIENTIFIC APPROACH:

African integration at the time of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offers an opportunity to rethink, from a new angle, the impact of this project on regional dynamics. This scientific reflection focuses on the market as a vector of the Pan-African project, analyzing its ability to generate a normative and structuring political dynamic, while identifying the limits of this project and the ways to overcome them. To do this, it calls for a multidisciplinary approach, involving not only lawyers - who are mainly concerned here - but also political scientists and economists, in order to understand the AfCFTA not only as an instrument of trade liberalization, but also as a factor generating political meaning in the construction of lasting continental integration.

The colloquium takes a two-pronged approach: on the one hand, a critical analysis of the foundations of the AfCFTA, assessing the pace and timetable set by its founding texts which reflect an assumed institutional maturity; on the other hand, an operational reflection on the challenges related to its accelerated institutionalization. These challenges include the persistence of tariff and non-tariff barriers, the diversity of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that are still not well established, the resistance that States may oppose to the concessions involved in the free trade area, the heterogeneity of currencies and exchange regimes, as well as complex interactions with

other legal systems on the continent. In addition, there are security obstacles such as conflicts and other threats to peace.

The colloquium aims to explore ways and means of effective governance of the AfCFTA on the empowerment of community institutions, the prioritization of standards (community, international and national), the liberalization of intra-African trade, the RECs harmonization, innovative financing of integration and the promotion of peace and security. Other aspects will be examined, including dispute resolution mechanisms, the digitalization of business procedures, budgetary management and ethics in trade monitoring.

Finally, it is appropriate to question the relationship between the African project and its international environment integrating “external” actors such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Union (EU), private partners, etc.

III. FORMAT OF THE COLLOQUIUM:

The colloquium will take place, in a residential format, in **December 2025** in **Dakar (Senegal)**.

It will bring together about twenty participants, specialists in Law, Political Science, Economics and others, practitioners and theorists, and will take place over two and a half days.

The proceedings of the colloquium will be published in the first half of 2026, in accordance with the editorial policy of the African Society of Community Law (ASCL).

As a reminder, the proceedings of the first one, *L'état du droit communautaire en Afrique*, were published in February 2025 by L'Harmattan Senegal.

IV. TERMS OF SUBMISSION:

Proposals for communications must be conform to the following characteristics:

- a summary of up to two (2) pages, including: the name(s), first names, electronic contact details, academic or professional status and institutional affiliation of the author(s), title of the communication, problem, research methods, the theories involved, the expected results and five key words;
- document format: *Word* or . doc;
- police: *Times New Roman* ; size: **12**, line spacing: **1.5**.
- language: **English or French**.

Proposals for papers should be submitted concurrently to the following email addresses: syllasow19@gmail.com et dipasquale92@ymail.com.

V. SCHEDULE:

Call for papers published: **28th April 2025.**

Deadline for submission of proposals: **14th July 2025.**

Notification to Successful Proponents: **4th August 2025.**

Final submission deadline: **15th October 2025.**

Colloquium held: **December 2025.**

Submission of articles by communicants: **March 2026.**

Items sent back for final correction: **April 2026.**

Returns and book formatting: **June 2026.**