

2026 Global Conference on Trade, Tariffs, and Development in Africa
African Studies Centre Leiden
18 to 19 June 2026

Conference Programme

Day 1: 18 June 2026

Conference Organisers:

Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun (LUC, Leiden University), Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag (ASC, Leiden University), and Professor Dr. Chibuike Uche (ASC, Leiden University).

08:00 – 09:00 | Arrival and Registration

Participants arrive and register. Tea, coffee, and light refreshments will be served.

09:00 – 09:05 | Opening Remarks

Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag

African Studies Centre Leiden

Welcome remarks and introduction of the keynote speaker.

09:05 – 09:15 | Participant Introductions and Conference Connections

Facilitated by Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun

Assistant Professor of Public Policy and International Development, Leiden University

Keynote Address

09:15 – 09:55 | Keynote Address and Moderated Discussion

Dr. Bright Okogu

Chief of Staff, World Trade Organization (WTO)

Representing WTO Director General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala

Topic: To Be Announced (TBA)

Moderated Discussion and Audience Q&A: 09:40 – 09:55

Thematic Panel Session 1

Global Trade Order, Protectionism, and African Economic Sovereignty

Core Theme: This session examines how protectionism, geopolitical fragmentation, and contested multilateralism are reshaping Africa's trade relations and economic sovereignty.

Panel Sessions

Note: Each speaker will deliver a 20-minute presentation, followed by a 15-minute moderated discussion and audience Q&A led by Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag and Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun.

09:55 – 10:30 | Paper 1, Dr. Martin C. Steinwand

Department of Government, University of Essex

Topic: Protectionism or Free Trade in Africa? Constituent Preferences and Policy

Outcomes in Comparative Perspective

Q&A: 10:15 – 10:30

10:30 – 11:05 | Paper 2, Dr. Solomon George Zori

Department of Accounting and Control, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, Netherlands

Topic: U.S. Tariff Shocks and African Capital Markets: Financial Transmission and Development Implications

Q&A: 10:50 – 11:05

11:05 – 11:25 | Coffee and Tea Break

11:25 – 12:00 | Paper 3, Professor Echkoundi Mhammed

Mohammed V University, Morocco

Topic: Fragmentation of Globalization and Geopolitical Reconfiguration: AfCFTA as a Strategy of Economic Resilience for African Economies

Q&A: 11:45 – 12:00

12:00 – 12:15 | Director's Address

Professor Dr. Marleen Dekker

Director, African Studies Centre Leiden

Reflections on the role of the African Studies Centre Leiden as a leading global centre for interdisciplinary research, policy engagement, and scholarly collaboration on Africa and global development.

12:15 – 13:00 | Lunch Reception

Sandwiches, tea, coffee, and light refreshments will be served in the main hall.

Thematic Panel Session 2

Trade Policy, Agriculture, and Structural Transformation

Core Theme: This session explores how agricultural trade, tariff reforms, gender inclusion, and regional integration contribute to economic transformation and development across Africa.

13:00 – 13:35 | Paper 4, Dr. Newman Tekwa

University of South Africa, South Africa

Topic: Gender, AfCFTA, and Structural Transformation in Southern African Economies: The Cases of Zimbabwe, Zambia, and South Africa

Q&A: 13:20 – 13:35

13:35 – 14:10 | Paper 5, Seboka Alemu

University of Szeged and Arsi University, Ethiopia

Topic: Agricultural Trade and IMF Tariff Conditionality in Sub-Saharan Africa

Q&A: 13:55 – 14:10

14:10 – 14:30 | Coffee and Tea Break

Thematic Panel Session 3

Africa in a Changing Geopolitical Trade Order

Core Theme: This session investigates Africa's responses to shifting geopolitical and trade dynamics, including AGOA, China's growing influence, trade governance, and the role of civil society in advancing development and structural transformation.

14:30 – 15:05 | Paper 6, Dr. Uwem Samuel Umoh

University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic

Topic: African Countries' Responses to the African Growth and Opportunity Act Under President Trump

Q&A: 14:50 – 15:05

15:05 – 15:40 | Paper 7, Eniola Sonuga

Optimal Policy, Lagos, Nigeria

Topic: The New Cold War in Trade Law: Leveraging AGOA and China's Zero Tariff Policy for Africa's Structural Transformation

Q&A: 15:25 – 15:40

15:40 – 16:15 | Paper 8, Dr. Clara Weinhardt and Dr. Sjorrie Couvreur

Maastricht University, Netherlands, and the Royal Military Academy, Belgium

Topic: Trapped Interdependence: The Limits of Geoeconomic Agency in Kenya's Trade and Investment Relations

Q&A: 16:00 – 16:15

16:15 – 16:35 | Coffee and Tea Break

16:35 – 17:10 | Paper 9, Ocen Walter Onen

University of Pretoria, South Africa

Topic: The Role of African Civil Society Actors in International Trade and Tariff Negotiations

Q&A: 16:35 – 17:10

17:10–18:00 | Evening Reception and Networking Session

Drinks and light refreshments will be served.

Day 2: 19 June 2026

09:00 – 09:05 | Opening Remarks

Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag

African Studies Centre Leiden

Welcome remarks and introduction of the keynote speaker.

09:05 – 09:15 | Participant Introductions and Conference Connections

Facilitated by Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun

Assistant Professor of Public Policy and International Development, Leiden University

Keynote Address

09:15 – 09:55 | Keynote Address and Moderated Discussion

Dr. Tsotetsi Makong

Director, African Continental Free Trade Area, Accra, Ghana

Topic: The AfCFTA and the Reinvention of the Global Economic System

Moderated Discussion and Audience Q&A: 09:40 – 09:55

Thematic Panel Session 4

Economic Governance, Trade Policy, and Development in Africa

Core Theme: This session examines how taxation, trade regulation, industrialisation, and sectoral policies influence economic transformation and development across Africa.

Panel Sessions (Hybrid Session)

Note: Each speaker will deliver a 20-minute presentation, followed by a 15-minute moderated discussion and audience Q&A led by Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag and Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun. *Please note that all presentations in this panel session will be delivered virtually, while moderation and audience discussion will take place in person.*

09:55 – 10:30 | Paper 10, Dr. Gbenga Oyebode Falana

African Centre for Tax and Governance, Nigeria

Topic: Tariff Regimes and Illicit Financial Flows in Africa: Trade Mis-Invoicing, AfCFTA Risks, and Domestic Resource Mobilisation

Q&A: 10:15 – 10:30

10:30 – 11:05 | Paper 11, Mengfan Cheng

New York University, United States

Topic: Industrialization and National Identification: Evidence from Nigeria

Q&A: 10:50 – 11:05

11:05 – 11:25 | Coffee and Tea Break

11:25 – 12:00 | Paper 12, Dr. Oluwakemi Adeola Obayelu

Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Topic: Review of Rice Policies in Nigeria: Implications for Achieving Competitive Advantage in Rice Production

Q&A: 11:45 – 12:00

12:00 – 13:00 | Lunch Reception

Sandwiches, tea, coffee, and light refreshments will be served in the main hall.

Thematic Panel Session 5

Infrastructure, Green Transition, and Sustainable Trade

Core Theme: This session explores the relationship between infrastructure, trade resilience, environmental governance, and Africa's green industrial transition.

13:00 – 13:35 | Paper 13, Dr. Clayton Hazvinei Vhumbunu

University of the Free State, South Africa

Topic: Trade Without Friction? Infrastructure, Logistics, and the Reality of AfCFTA Integration

Q&A: 13:20 – 13:35

13:35 – 14:10 | Paper 14, Dr. Marina Dodlova, Dr. Justyna Jantos, Professor Krisztina Kis-Katos, and Dr. Anna Kochanova

University of Münster, Germany; University of Göttingen, Germany; and Cardiff University, United Kingdom

Topic: Disaster Induced Import Dynamics: Evidence from South African Floods

Q&A: 13:55 – 14:10

14:10 – 14:30 | Coffee and Tea Break

14:30 – 15:05 | Paper 15, Dr. Gideon Ndubuisi

Delft University of Technology, Netherlands

Topic: Regionalizing Green Transition Minerals for Structural Transformation in Africa

Q&A: 14:50 – 15:05

15:05 – 15:40 | Paper 16, Dr. Ndubuisi Augustine Nwafor

University of the West of England, Bristol, United Kingdom

Topic: Plastic Pollution Regulation in Africa: Could AfCFTA Be the Silver Bullet?

Q&A: 15:25 – 15:40. *(Please note that the format for this session is hybrid. The presentation will be delivered virtually, while moderation and audience discussion will take place in person).*

15:40 – 16:00 | Coffee and Tea Break

Thematic Panel Session 6

Trade Sovereignty, Protectionism, and Development Futures

Core Theme: This session examines the evolving relationship between trade governance, taxation, sovereignty, protectionism, and development in Africa. It explores how global agreements, external influences, and domestic policy choices affect Africa's capacity to pursue autonomous and inclusive development pathways.

16:00 – 16:35 | Paper 17, Professor Dr. Irma Mosquera

Leiden University, Netherlands

Topic: Good Tax Governance and Trade: A Case Study of the Samoa Agreement

Q&A: 16:20 – 16:35

16:35 – 17:10 | Paper 18, Professor Prema Elumalai, Professor P. R. L.

Rajavenkatesan, and Mr. Ragul O. V.

VIT School of Law, Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai, India and High Court of Madras, Chennai Campus, Tamil Nadu, India

Topic: Hegemonic Protectionism and African Sovereignty in an Era of Contested Multilateralism

Q&A: 16:55 – 17:10

17:10 – 17:45 | Paper 19, Dr. Okey Ndubueze and Professor Dr. Chibuike Uche

University of Applied Sciences Europe, Amsterdam and Leiden University

Topic: From Colonialism to Neocolonialism: African Tariff Architecture and the Question of Trade Sovereignty

Q&A: 17:30 – 17:45

17:45 – 18:00 | Coffee and Tea Break

18:00 – 18:10 | Closing Reflections

Professor Dr. Chibuike Uche

African Studies Centre Leiden

18:10 – 19:00 | Closing Reception and Networking Session

Drinks and light refreshments will be served.

Acknowledgements:

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