

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

Draft Conference Programme

Day 1: 18 June 2026

Moderators

Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag and Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun

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 Director of the African Studies Centre Leiden and the keynote speaker.

09:05 – 09:15 | Welcome Address

Professor Dr. Marleen Dekker

Director, African Studies Centre Leiden

Opening 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.

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 | Panel 1, Professor Prema Elumalai and Professor P.R.L.

Rajavenkatesan

VIT School of Law, Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai, India

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

Q&A: 10:15 – 10:30

10:30 – 11:05 | Panel 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 | Panel 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 – 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 policy, trade reform, and gender inclusion influence structural transformation and development outcomes in Africa.

13:00 – 13:35 | Panel 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 | Panel 5, 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: 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 AGOA, China's growing influence, and the broader geopolitical restructuring of global trade relations.

14:30 – 15:05 | Panel 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 | Panel 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 | Panel 8, Dr. Clara Weinhardt

Maastricht University, Netherlands

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

Q&A: 16:00 – 16:15

16:15 – 16:45 | Networking Break

16:45 – 17:00 | Closing Reflections

Professor Chibuike Uche

Stephen Ellis Professor of the Governance of Finance and Integrity in Africa

African Studies Centre Leiden

17:00 – 17:30 | Closing Reception

Drinks and light refreshments will be served.

Day 2: 19 June 2026

Moderators

Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag and Dr. Ayokunu Adedokun

09:00 – 09:05 | Opening Remarks

Professor Dr. Mayke Kaag

African Studies Centre Leiden

Welcome remarks and introduction of the keynote speaker.

Keynote Address

09:05 – 09:45 | Keynote Address and Moderated Discussion

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: 09:30 – 09:45

Thematic Panel Session 4

Taxation, Governance, and Trade Regulation in Africa

Core Theme: This session explores the relationship between tariff governance, taxation, illicit financial flows, and civil society participation in African trade governance.

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.

09:45 – 10:20 | Panel 9, 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: 10:05 – 10:20

10:20 – 10:55 | Panel 10, Professor Dr. Irma Mosquera

Leiden University, Netherlands

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

Q&A: 10:40 – 10:55

11:00 – 11:20 | Coffee and Tea Break

11:20 – 11:55 | Panel 11, Ocen Walter Onen

University of Pretoria, South Africa

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

Q&A: 11:40 – 11:55

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 examines the relationship between infrastructure, logistics, environmental governance, and Africa's green industrial transition.

13:00 – 13:35 | Panel 12, 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 | Panel 13, Dr. Gideon Ndubuisi

Delft University of Technology, Netherlands

Topic: Regionalizing Green Transition Minerals for Structural Transformation in Africa

Q&A: 13:55 – 14:10

14:10 – 14:45 | Panel 14, 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: 14:30 – 14:45

14:45 – 15:00 | Coffee and Tea Break

Thematic Panel Session 6

Trade Sovereignty, Protectionism, and Development Futures

Core Theme: This session reflects on the tensions between free trade, protectionism, sovereignty, and external conditionality in determining Africa's development trajectory.

15:00 – 15:35 | Panel 15, 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: 15:20 – 15:35

15:35 – 16:10 | Panel 16, Seboka Alemu

University of Szeged and Arsi University, Ethiopia

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

Q&A: 15:55 – 16:10

16:10 – 16:45 | Panel 17, 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: 16:30 – 16:45

16:45 – 17:15 | Networking Break

17:15 – 17:30 | Closing Reflections

Professor Chibuike Uche

Stephen Ellis Professor of the Governance of Finance and Integrity in Africa

African Studies Centre Leiden

17:30 – 19:00 | Closing Reception and Boat Cruise in Leiden

Drinks and light refreshments will be served.

Conference Organisers:

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

All inquiries about this conference can be sent to:

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