



AfDiB 2025

**“Harnessing African Diplomacy for the
Success of AfCFTA”**

September 3, 2025 @ African Association of Universities, Accra

Hosted by SALT University College (SUC)



Introduction

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement officially entered into force on May 30, 2019, following its adoption and opening for signatures on March 21, 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda. Impressively, as of February 2025, 54 out of the 55 African Union (AU) Member States have signed the agreement. Forty-eight of the Member States have so far ratified the agreement, demonstrating heightened interest and enthusiasm in the initiative. It is estimated that, by the time all Member states complete the signing and ratification processes, AfCFTA will create a single market for goods and services for about 1.4 billion people across Africa, with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of 3.4 trillion U.S. dollars.

Analysts are projecting that a fully functional AfCFTA will significantly boost trade among African countries by removing tariffs on 90% of goods and reducing non-tariff barriers. This is expected to increase intra-African trade by over 50% in the next few years. It is further projected that AfCFTA will encourage African countries to shift from exporting raw materials to producing and trading value-added goods. This will facilitate investment flows to support industrial growth, manufacturing, and job creation across sectors such as information technology, agriculture, finance, tourism etc.

However, the journey towards AfCFTA has not been smooth sailing. Since the 1960s, the quest for African regional integration has been marked by diverse perspectives and strategies. Notably, the Casablanca bloc (led by Kwame Nkrumah, Gamal Abdel-Nasser and Sékou Touré) and the Monrovia bloc (led by William Tubman, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Felix Félix Houphouët-Boigny) advocated for distinct pathways to Africa's unity, emphasizing the continent's complex political and economic landscape. Nevertheless, the pursuance of regional integration remained centered on economic and commercial cooperation. Trade, indeed, emerged as a potent instrument for African development, from the Lagos Plan of Action to the AfCFTA.

Quite significantly, as a departure from the historical ideological dichotomy, AfCFTA embraces a non-aligned Pan-African posturing that seeks to foster unity and cooperation. AfCFTA sees continental free trade as a means to decolonize global trade in the interest of Africa and its citizens. And, to be able to achieve this vision, it is essential to harness the force of diplomacy as a catalyst for intra-African and intercontinental trade in the interest of Africa.

Bilateral channels have long been the norm in the sphere of diplomacy, facilitating international transactions and nurturing diplomatic relationships. However, the scope of diplomacy has expanded in response to globalization and increased interdependence. African states' aspirations for global relevance stimulate economic diplomacy, which is propelling engagement with both traditional and non-traditional allies. It is within the context of the foregoing that the maiden edition of the **African Diplomacy and Business Dialogue (AfDiB 2025)** is being organized to harness the power of diplomacy as a critical scaffold in the building of AfCFTA.

2.0 Host Institution

The host institution for AfDiB 2025, SALT University College (SUC), was founded in 2003 as an institute for leadership training in Africa. In 2018, SUC received accreditation from the Ghana Tertiary Educational Commission (GTEC) to operate as a tertiary institution. It is currently affiliated to the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) as well as University of Cape Coast (UCC).

Located in Accra, Ghana, and with affiliates across the African continent, SUC runs postgraduate programmes in Leadership and Management as well as International Relations and Diplomacy, among others. The University is committed to raising, training, and developing servant leaders for business and public life in Africa as well as the global marketplace.

The SALT model is to train and develop leaders who will be able to:

- Lay new foundations in leadership based on godly principles for African peoples and the nations;
- Mobilise human resources and build coalitions from available human resources to provide the best possible governance;
- Translate God’s plan for their nations into reality by planned implementation;
- Understand what will transform African nations economically, socially, and politically;
- Interpret national crises correctly, work out solutions and implement recommendations accurately;
- Handle the intrigues of governance and leadership without losing personal integrity;
- Become channels through which righteousness and justice can flow to impact people and politics.

3.0 Conference Details

AfDiB 2025 is scheduled as follows:

Date: September 3, 2026

Time: 9.00 am – 2.00pm

Venue: African Association of Universities, Accra, Ghana

Theme: “Harmonising African Diplomacy for the Success of AfCFTA.”

Guest Speaker: Minister of Trade, Agri-Business and Industry: Honourable Elizabeth Ofosu-Adjare

4.0 Strategic Objectives of the Conference

The strategic objectives for this important continental Dialogue are as follows:

- i. Facilitate discussions and initiatives to strengthen intra-Africa trade and to contribute to the realization of the dream of the African Continental Free Trade Area.
- ii. Facilitate networking and collaboration among participants from trade and diplomatic institutions, universities, government agencies, and businesses to foster partnerships and create opportunities to achieve the AfCFTA.
- iii. Encourage policymakers to create an enabling environment for trade and investment by discussing policy reforms and regulatory frameworks that support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
- iv. Generate actionable recommendations and policy proposals to promote trade, investment, and diplomatic relations within Africa and between Africa and the rest of the world.

5.0 Presentations and Discussions

These are being further developed.

6.0 Target Participants

The Africa Diplomacy and Business Dialogue seeks to attract stakeholders from across the African continent, including:

- African Union Commission representatives
- AfCFTA Secretariat
- Diplomatic missions and representatives
- National and regional policymakers
- Business leaders and entrepreneurs
- Representatives from the Ghana Chamber of Commerce
- Academics, researchers, and think tanks
- Development partners and international organisations
- Civil society organisations and youth networks
- Media representatives

7.0 Conference Format

The Dialogue shall take the form of a plenary session, paper presentation and panel discussions. This approach seeks to promote exchanges of ideas, facilitate in-depth analyses, and generate actionable suggestions.

8.0 Expected Outcomes

At the end of AfDiB 2025, participants can expect to:

- Gain insight into emerging trade models and their significance in Africa.
- Identify pragmatic solutions to trade challenges and capitalize on opportunities within the African context.
- Enhance their comprehension of diplomacy's indispensable function in ensuring the success of the AfCFTA.
- Establish strategic relationships with key stakeholders across industries and regions.
- Develop policy recommendations and trade promotion strategies for Africa.

The Organizing Committee comprises:

i	Ambassador Elizabeth Adjei	-	Chairperson
ii	Ambassador Kodzo Alabo	-	Member
iii.	Dr. Fatima Alabo	-	Member
iv.	Dr. Denise Anatsui	-	Member
v.	Dr. Emmanuel Dei-Tumi	-	Member
vi.	Lawyer Yaw Adjei Nketia	-	Member
vii.	Lawyer Nana Ama Andoh	-	Member
viii	Dr. Reuben Coffie (Ghana)	-	Member
ix.	Mr. Ernest Ortsin (Ghana)	-	Member

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