

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Press Release No: 000/2025

Date: 6th February 2025

Venue: Addis Ababa

HIGH-LEVEL STRATEGIC DIALOGUE ON ACCELERATING VISA-FREE MOVEMENT FOR AFRICA'S TRANSFORMATION

INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

On the sidelines of the 38th AU Summit, the **African Union Commission (AUC)** and the **African Development Bank (AfDB)** are co-hosting a High-Level Strategic Dialogue on Accelerating Visa-Free Movement for Africa's Transformation.

Free movement of people across the continent is fundamental to Africa's economic integration, as outlined in the [Abuja Treaty](#), **AU Agenda 2063**, and the [AU Protocol on Free Movement of People](#). However, despite strong policy commitments, implementation remains uneven.

The [Africa Visa Openness Index](#)—a joint initiative of AfDB and AUC tracks progress in facilitating visa-free travel. The **ninth edition** of the Index highlights the urgent need for decisive action to unlock Africa's economic potential through enhanced mobility.

This high-level dialogue will leverage the AU Summit to advance regional integration by showcasing successful visa-free policies, addressing implementation challenges, and fostering commitments from policymakers, businesses, and regional institutions.

WHEN: 12 February 2025

WHERE: Marriott Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

TIME: 08:30hr – 17:00 hr. UTC +2 (SAST)

The dialogue will convene high-ranking officials, including Ministers from African Union (AU) Member States, representatives from Regional Economic Communities (RECs), senior government officials, private sector leaders, think tanks, academics, and development partners. Key speakers include:

- Ambassador Cessouma Minata Samate, AU Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development
- Nnenna Nwabufu, Vice President for Regional Development, Integration, and Business Delivery, AfDB
- H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary General, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat
- Ministers from Rwanda, The Gambia, Seychelles, Benin, and Ghana
- Business leaders from Afrochampions, Ethiopian Airlines, AeTrade Group, and TradeMark Africa

This high-level dialogue is of strategic importance as Africa continues to advance regional integration efforts, particularly through visa-free movement policies that facilitate trade, economic growth, and development. Key topics to be covered include:

- Highlighting the benefits of visa-free movement by showcasing positive experiences from countries leading the Africa Visa Openness Index.
- The Role of Regional Economic Communities by examining how REC frameworks support free movement and economic prosperity.
- Private Sector Perspectives by understanding how visa openness impacts trade, investment, and business expansion.
- Policy Insights - Discussing the alignment of visa-free movement with AU Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

- Next Steps: Introducing the 2025 Visa-Free Roadshow as part of a broader campaign to drive policy action.

For more information

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