

Members. Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara), São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Aims. The African Union aims to promote unity, solidarity, cohesion and co-operation among the peoples of Africa and African states, and at the same time to co-ordinate efforts by African people to realize their goals of achieving economic, political and social integration.

Activities. The African Union became fully operational in July 2002, and is working towards establishing the organs stipulated in the constitutive act. These include a Pan-African parliament, an Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOC) and a Peace and Security Council (which have now been inaugurated), plus a Central Bank (which has not yet been launched).

The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights was established in 2004. A protocol to set up an African Court of Justice entered into force in 2009, but has been superseded by a plan to create an African Court of Justice and Human Rights—also incorporating the Court on Human and Peoples' Rights—which had yet to come to fruition as of Feb. 2017. Supporters of the proposal hope that this court will eventually supplant the International Criminal Court in prosecuting human rights abuses in Africa.

The African Union has established several peacekeeping forces, including in Burundi (2003–04), the Darfur region of Sudan (initially from 2004, and as part of a hybrid AU–UN mission since 2007), Somalia (since 2007) and the Central African Republic (since 2013).

Official languages: Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Swahili.

Headquarters: POB 3243, Roosevelt St. (Old Airport Area), W21K19 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Website: <http://www.au.int>

Chairman: Alpha Condé (Guinea).

Chair of the African Union Commission: Moussa Faki Mahamat (Chad).

Further Reading

- Makinda, Samuel M., and Okumu, F. Wafula, *The African Union: Challenges of Globalization, Security, and Governance*. 2007
- Miller-Jones, Edward R., *The African Union: Aiming to Unify the Continent*. 2010
- Muthri, Tim, Akopari, John and Ndinga-Mavumba, Angela, (eds.) *The African Union and its Institutions*. 2008
- New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *African Union Handbook 2016*. 2016
- Welz, Martin, *Integrating Africa: Decolonization's Legacies, Sovereignty and the African Union*. 2012

Bank of Central African States (BEAC)

The Bank of Central African States (Banque des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale) was established in 1973 when a new Convention of Monetary Co-operation with France was signed. The five original members, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo and Gabon, were joined by Equatorial Guinea in 1985. Under its Convention and statutes, the BEAC is declared a

'Multinational African institution in the management and control of which France participates in return for the guarantee she provides for its currency'.

Official language: French.

Headquarters: 736 avenue Monseigneur Vogt, 1917 Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Website (French only): <http://www.beac.int>

Governor: Abbas Mahamat Tolli (Chad).

Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO)

Established in 1962, the Central Bank of West African States (Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest) is the common central bank of the eight member states that form the West African Monetary Union (WAMU). It has the sole right of currency issue throughout the Union territory and is responsible for the pooling of the Union's foreign exchange reserve; the management of the monetary policy of the member states; the keeping of the accounts of the member states treasury; and the definition of the banking law applicable to banks and financial establishments.

Members. Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.

Official language: French.

Headquarters: Avenue Abdoulaye Fadiga, 3108 Dakar, Senegal.

Website: <http://www.bceao.int>

Governor: Tiémoko Meyliet Koné (Côte d'Ivoire).

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

COMESA is an African economic grouping of 19 member states who are committed to the creation of a Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. It was established in 1994 as a building block for the African Economic Community and replaced the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa, which had been in existence since 1981.

Members. Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Objectives. To facilitate the removal of the structural and institutional weaknesses of member states so that they are able to attain collective and sustainable development.

Activities. COMESA's Free Trade Area (FTA) was launched on 31 Oct. 2000 at a Summit of Heads of States and Government in Lusaka, Zambia. The FTA participating states have zero tariff on goods and services produced in these countries.

In addition to creating the policy environment for freeing trade, COMESA has also created specialized institutions like the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (PTA Bank), the PTA Reinsurance Company (ZEP-RE), the Clearing House and the COMESA Court of Justice, to provide the required financial infrastructure and service support. COMESA has also promoted a political risk guarantee scheme, the Africa Trade Insurance Agency (ATI), a Leather and Leather Products