



Inaugural
UNCITRAL Days in Africa
Launch Event
27 May 2022

Modernizing and harmonizing international
commercial law framework in the AfCFTA context

At the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration,
Accra, Ghana and online via [Zoom](#)



(A bilingual event, in English and French)

Introduction

“UNCITRAL Days” are a series of academic events held to celebrate both the establishment of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) in December 1966, and to raise awareness of UNCITRAL instruments and the importance of legal harmonization amongst the next generations of legal thinkers and policymakers. It seeks to engage with law students and future participants in, and contributors to, the work of UNCITRAL.

The UNCITRAL Days project was first launched as a regional event in 2014 by the UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific, and in 2020 the inaugural Latin America and Caribbean UNCITRAL Day was held. The events “UNCITRAL Days” are organised by institutions of higher learning and public agencies during the last quarter of each year, with the support of the UNCITRAL Secretariat, and under a general UNCITRAL-related theme. In 2020, there were 19 events in the Asia-Pacific region, with 35 partnering universities and institutions in 10 jurisdictions, and 30 events in Latin America and the Caribbean, with 34 participating universities and institutions in 16 jurisdictions.¹ Together, they reached many thousands of participants.

At its 54th Session in July 2021, UNCITRAL welcomed the successes of the 2020 annual UNCITRAL Day and welcomed the forthcoming 2021 series, and heard the potential benefits for other regions to host UNCITRAL Day events. In this regard, the Chairman of UNCITRAL, H.E. Amb. Philbert Abaka Johnson (Ghana) called upon States to support the expansion of the project to Africa and expressed his wish to see the UNCITRAL Days project launched in Africa in 2022.

At an Africa Forum held in conjunction with UNCITRAL’s 54th session, approximately 50 representatives from African States shared their thoughts on areas of commercial law with particular resonance in the region. These areas included the digitization of the economy; the establishment of a harmonized legal framework for a fair and efficient settlement of international investment disputes and proposed reforms in that field; support for enterprises from establishment to exiting the market through insolvency proceedings; and transparency, accountability and good governance in the rules governing commercial relations. The harmonization of the commercial law framework has taken on greater importance in the context of the increased economic ties among African countries following the entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA).

The inaugural UNCITRAL Days in Africa will start with a Launch Event on 27 May 2022 in Accra, Ghana co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ghana and the UNCITRAL Secretariat, and with the support of the European Union. The launch event will discuss the legal framework needed to implement AfCFTA commitments in the area of international trade.

High-Level launch event for the UNCITRAL Days in Africa

The objectives of the launch event are to kick-off the UNCITRAL Days project in Africa and to encourage securing wide participation from as many African universities as possible in UNCITRAL Days in Africa, by organizing an event on their campuses or online in the last quarter of 2022. In light of the topics discussed at the Africa Forum, discussions at the academic events may focus on – as an overarching theme – **the modernization and harmonization of international commercial law framework in the AfCFTA context.**

The launch event will present the UNCITRAL Days in Africa project and highlight its importance for raising the voices from Africa in the ongoing and future work of UNCITRAL. It will also introduce participants to UNCITRAL and its legislative and non-legislative work (technical cooperation and assistance to law reform and online tools supporting the use and interpretation of UNCITRAL texts and internship programmes).

¹ Reports of the 2020 UNCITRAL Day’s activities are published on the UNCITRAL website, available [here](#) for the 2020 LAC Days and [here](#) for the 2020 AP Days.

Inaugural UNCITRAL Days in Africa

Launch Event - Programme

Friday 27 May 2022

9:00-13:30

Moderator: Ms. Anna Joubin-Bret, Secretary, UNCITRAL

Opening remarks (9:30-09:50)

- *Hon. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Republic of Ghana*
- *Hon. Yaw Osei Adutwum, Minister for Education, Republic of Ghana*
- *H.E. Mr. Irchad Ramiandrasoa Razaaly, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Ghana*

Commemorative photograph (09:55-10:00)

Keynote address: A message to future leaders in international trade law (10:00-10:15)

- *H.E. Mr. Philbert Abaka Johnson, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana to the United Nations in Vienna and Chairman of UNCITRAL*

Introduction to UNCITRAL (10:15 -10:30)

- *Ms. Anna Joubin-Bret, Secretary, UNCITRAL: UNCITRAL's legislative work and its relevance for the region*
- *Ms. Caroline Nicholas, Head, Technical Assistance Unit, Senior Legal Officer, UNCITRAL secretariat: Technical assistance activities of the UNCITRAL secretariat and rationale of UNCITRAL Days*

A view from participating institutions on past UNCITRAL Days (10:30-10:45)

Feedback on experiences with the UNCITRAL Days in other regions and on its benefits for students, academic institutions, and other interested stakeholders

- *Prof. Jaemin Lee, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea, sharing his experience with the UNCITRAL Asia Pacific Days from 2014 through 2021*
- *Prof. Paula All, President of the American Association of International private law (Asociación Americana de Derecho Internacional Privado or ASADIP), sharing her experience with the UNCITRAL LAC Days in 2021*

Synergies with the work of regional and international organizations active in Africa (10:45-11:15)

- *Ms. Angela Lusigi, Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Republic of Ghana*

- *Mr. Vincent Durruty, Team Leader, Pan-African Sectoral Cooperation Team, European Union Delegation to the African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.*
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- *Pr. Emmanuel Sibidi DARANKOUM, Permanent Secretary, Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) [tbc]*
- *Mr. Henri Monceau, Director, Directorate of Economic and Digital Francophonie (DFEN), Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*

Refreshments and networking (11:15-11:30)

Hosting UNCITRAL Days in Africa Events in 2022 (11:30-12:00)

- *Ms. Caroline Nicholas, Head, Technical Assistance Section and Senior Legal Officer, UNCITRAL secretariat. The importance of UNCITRAL Days to support the use of UNCITRAL texts*
- *Ms. Miriana Belhadj and Mr. Benjamin Herisset, Legal Officers, UNCITRAL secretariat: the key commitments under AfCFTA requiring international trade private law rules and practical information on hosting UNCITRAL Days events*

Interventions from the confirmed participating universities/institutions (12:00-13:00)

Moderation by Justice Prof. Dr. Samuel Kofi Date-Bah, former Chair of UNCITRAL

**Dr. Alexander Beyleveld, Senior Researcher, Mandela Institute, Wits School of Law, Johannesburg, South Africa*

**Dr. Alioune Badara Thiam, Professor and Researcher, University Gaston Berger, Saint-Louis, Sénégal*

**Dr. Jean-Baptiste Harelimana, Attorney at Law, President of AAILP – The African Academy for International Law Practice, Paris, France*

**Prof. Kwadwo Appiagyei-Atua, Associate Professor, University of Ghana School of Law, Accra, Ghana*

**Ms. EibunOluwa Tengbe, Associate Lecturer, Njala University, the School of Social Sciences & Law, Bo Campus, Sierra Leone*

**Prof. Ahmed F. Khalifa, Director of the International Relations and Collaboration Office and Prof. Dr. Yassin El Shazly, Vice Dean & Professor, Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt*

Closing remarks (13:00-13:10)

- *H.E. Mr. Philbert Abaka Johnson*
- *Ms. Anna Joubin-Bret*

Reception at 13:30