

2019



ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA

CONCEPT NOTE

National Economic Summit

Theme

“The Future of Economic Diplomacy:

Supporting inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa”

1. INTRODUCTION

Economic Diplomacy is a game-changing reality which African countries must fully embrace in order to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

In the New World Economic Order, characterised by globalisation, economic diplomacy is emerging as one of the ubiquitous modes of modern diplomatic practices in both the developed and developing nations. It is also worth noting that Economic Diplomacy takes many forms, such as negotiation of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, establishing foreign economic relations, nation branding, the attraction of foreign direct investment and promoting international tourism in the pursuit of national development objectives.

There is no doubt that cross-border linkages are a fundamental factor in the growth and development of highly interconnected economies, which makes sound economic diplomacy very essential. A closer look at Africa's growing market economies reveals a more complex picture involving the importance of economic diplomacy. In view of the foregoing, there is a need for Africa to further strengthen its promotional activities with the view to creating an image of a dependable partner in trade and tourism investment. The creation of awareness and developing interest in the trade, investment and tourism opportunities available in Africa should be pursued aggressively and in a sustainable manner. The summit will, therefore, deliberate on how Economic diplomacy could propel economic growth throughout the continent.

“The Future of Economic Diplomacy: Supporting Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa” is the theme of the 2019 Economic Summit, organized by the Economics Association of Zambia (EAZ) with support from various stakeholders.

Africa has over the years pursued economic diplomacy in a quest to increase exports, particularly of value-added or industrial products, improve international tourism to pursue national development imperatives and facilitate foreign direct investment that provides job opportunities and contribute to growth. The economic diplomacy of African states is primarily diplomacy of development aimed at improving the quality of life of African citizens. Development policy and economic diplomacy, therefore, should work in tandem. To that end, economic diplomacy has assumed great significance and has become one of the dominant features of global economic relations.

Even though Africa is moving at a slow pace, overall, it is making steady progress in building the critical ingredients for sustainable and resilient economies. In order for Africa to develop a clearer and stronger economic diplomacy that is aimed at supporting both national and continental development, there will be need for identification of strategic foreign policy priorities, greater institutional co-operation among agencies dealing with economic and foreign policy development as well as building synergies between corporate strategies on the one hand and government's foreign policy objectives on the other hand.

Promoting inclusive growth is a critical aspect in having an interconnected global economy, as well as a moral imperative of development policy. Sustained inclusive economic growth promotes political and economic stability. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN place emphasis on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and creating employment opportunities and decent work for all, especially for the marginalised youth.

This economic conference will try to spark interest and create a platform for stakeholders to find answers through policy recommendations, formulation of strategies to help various governments and other key players to find mechanisms that will help in eradicating poverty and hunger, and jump-start economic recovery in Africa. Furthermore, the conference will also seek to address the challenges that many policy makers face in Africa, including the lack of country-specific empirical evidence that could guide their policy choices.

Some of the credible solutions lie in the improvement of Africa's key sectors such as agricultural productivity through the improvement of market access for smallholder farmers, expansion of local production of goods and services, increasing exports, strengthening service delivery and providing an enabling environment for businesses to thrive and create jobs which are gender-responsive and represents the needs of the young people.

Africa has a number of potential opportunities in all the above areas and it is difficult to explain why its recovery has remained elusive. As a precondition to jump-starting economic recovery, Africa needs to better manage the economy to increase investor

confidence, improve ease of doing business, and attract foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country. Among the major instruments, the foreign policy of a nation could be used to achieve national goals, hence the call for a united Africa.

2. OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

The main objective of this conference is to offer a unique avenue as well as present a platform where key stakeholders can gather to discuss, evaluate and develop strategies aimed at strengthening the economic environment in Zambia in particular and across Africa in general in order to achieve sustainable economic development. Furthermore, the Conference will also seek ways in which trade can be used as a mechanism to improve Africa's economy from being lower income to higher income and improve the living standards of the citizenry. Economic diplomacy might just be the key as it may result in economic growth, job creation, poverty eradication and improving the global competitiveness of Zambia in particular and Africa as a whole.

Taking into perspective the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) which aims at accelerating development efforts towards Vision 2030 and the Africa Union Agenda 2063 with focus on Africa, we believe this economic conference is timely and will address burning issues of various stakeholders.

3. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- i. Promote economic dialogue between the state and non-state actors
- ii. Develop mechanisms that support the effective use of local products to stimulate economic growth through value addition
- iii. Provide crucial information that could assist governments to support national efforts at diversifying and increasing the export base, attracting foreign investments, and promoting the tourism and hospitality sector, among other things
- iv. Create a platform that supports the exchange of ideas and innovative thinking among researchers, development practitioners, and policymakers at all levels (local, national, regional and global)
- v. Encourage and enhance research on economic and policy issues related to the

development of the Zambian and African economies

- vi. Create avenues through which the African economy would be boosted.
- vii. Promote evidence-based policy planning and implementation

EAZ has always considered the promotion and advocacy of sound economic policies as one of its critical cornerstones. EAZ will continue to advocate for sound and timely economic policies that will result in economic growth and development. Consequently, they will help in the attainment of the Vision 2030. The Association has in the past held regular debates on critical economic issues. These debates provide opportunities to share analysis, opinion and policy ideas in front of a diverse audience. The discussions have regularly received extensive media coverage and attracted interest from various stakeholders in the country.

4. EXPECTED RESULTS

- i. Improved working relationships between state and non-state actors
- ii. Strengthened peer learning, information sharing mechanisms and collaboration among key players at all levels
- iii. Enhanced awareness of better economic practices at all levels
- iv. Effective coordination, planning and implementation of plans and policies
- v. It is envisaged that the deliberations will provide contributions to the discussions of high-level policy makers
- vi. The insights and analyses presented at the Conference will provide important analytical milestones for achieving the Vision 2030 without leaving anyone behind, especially as Zambia's 7th National Development Plan unfolds
- vii. This Conference is also expected to provide important opportunities for key policy makers to develop new partnerships and deepen networks

5. FORMAT OF THE CONFERENCE

Key discussion topics will focus on the broad theme of the Conference which is "***The Future of Economic Diplomacy: Supporting Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa***" and will comprise deliberations on a broad range of economic issues in Africa. Furthermore, the 2019 Economic conference will focus on and provide meaningful insights for improved policy making in Africa.

The two day Conference will provide a number of plenary sessions on the various themes. These will feature presentations and discussions by local academics, policymakers, the private sector, opinion leaders, government officials, and representatives from the country's developmental partners. The Conference will also feature breakout sessions that will provide more in-depth discussions and technical analyses of pertinent topics related to the thematic focus of the Conference.

The conference will also cover the following thematic areas:

- i. Structural policies and bilateral trade and investment agreements.
- ii. International organizations and their role in the development process.
- iii. Economic Diplomacy in Africa.
- iv. Regional Integration and Infrastructure
- v. Global Dimension of Growth & Sustainability
- vi. Economic Integration and Communication Technology
- vii. Institutional Framework for Inclusive Economic Growth
- viii. Agriculture as a means of Economic Diversification
- ix. Financing for Development
- x. Trade and Investment
- xi. Energy and Industrialization
- xii. Policy Framework for Growth
- xiii. Population, Migration and Urbanization
- xiv. Socioeconomic Development
- xv. Commercial diplomacy and Non-Governmental Organisations.

6. EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND INPUTS

The expected outputs from the 2019 Economic Conference include:

- i. A Conference Report summarising key findings as well as important policy recommendations extracted from conference papers and keynote speeches;
- ii. The proceedings of the Conference, incorporating relevant comments and feedback from peer review and conference participants, may be published after the Conference.

7. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND TIMEFRAME

- i. Authors must follow the instructions of the 2019 EAZ Economic Conference on our website www.eazambia.org to submit papers. Only full papers will be considered for presentation. We also encourage the submission of policy- and solution-oriented papers with strong empirical work. The Conference shall give priority to solution-oriented papers.
- ii. Participants and experts submitting papers for the Conference must adhere to the key deadline dates as stated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Annotated Time Frame

Annotation	Deadline
Call for Papers	30 th January ,2019
Deadline for Papers Submissions	1 st March 2019
Notification of final acceptance	10 th March, 2019
Last day for registration for presenters	15 th May 2019
The closing of flight bookings	30 th June 2019
Conference dates	25 th July- 26 th July 2019

Note: Contributors and experts submitting papers for the Conference must observe the key deadline dates stated above.