

Concept Note for the 5th EPRN Annual Economic Research Conference

Theme: “The African Continental Free Trade Area: Challenges and Opportunities”

12/03/2019 @ Kigali Convention Centre, Rwanda

1. Introduction

The Economic Policy Research Network (EPRN Rwanda) is a Non-Governmental Organization aiming at strengthening the capacities of individuals and organizations active in or with an interest in economic policy research and analysis. EPRN Rwanda therefore responds to economic policy gaps resulting mainly from lack of quality and informative research and the challenge of human capacity in terms of limited numbers of economic researchers and active involvement.

The mission of EPRN Rwanda is to contribute to the evidence based economic policy making by providing high quality research, building capacity and creating networking opportunities.

One of the flagship activities of EPRN is the Annual Economic Research Conference. This year, EPRN in collaboration with GIZ, UNECA, UNDP and other partners is organizing the 5th Economic Research Conference scheduled on 12th March, 2019 at Kigali Convention Centre.

This high-level interactive research conference is expected to convene more than 200 participants, including researchers, senior policy-makers, representatives of the development partners, civil society, private sector and the media. During the conference, research papers and reports on the topic will be presented and discussed.

This year’s main theme is **“The African Continental Free Trade Area: Challenges and Opportunities”**, which is broken down into three sub-themes:

- *Regional Integration*
- *Human Capital Development*
- *Financial Sector*

2. Purpose of the Conference

The conference seeks to provide a research platform and opportunity for economic researchers from a wide spectrum such as academics, government officials, representatives of development partners and international and local NGOs with interest on research topics related to African Continental Free trade Area. The purpose of the conference is to witness the current progress, evaluate the policy progress, suggest innovative policy solutions and, discuss strategies for achieving desired goals and targets.

3. Presentations

3.1. Research Papers by EPRN Researchers

- “Rwanda in Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): Challenges-Opportunities Analysis”
By Dr. Twagilimana Emmanuel and Mr. Raymond De Gaullle
- “Regional Trade and Competitiveness of Rwandan Agriculture: Empirical Analysis of Selected Priority Foodstuffs” by Dr. Edouard Musabanganji, Mr. Aristide Maniriho, Mr. Pascal Kayisire and Mr. Christian Nyalihama
- “Can Rwanda Benefit from Monetary Union adoption within EAC?” By Mr. Rafiki Murenzi

- “The effect of Human Capital Development on Economic Growth in Rwanda” by Dr. Joseph Nkurunziza, Mr. Gallican Cyesa and Mr. Léandre Turayishimye
- “The effect of trade credit on financial performance of manufacturing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)” by Mr. Byombi Kamasa Vedaste

3.2. Reports by partner institutions

- “The case for implementing the AfCFTA in East Africa; Some New Estimates” by UNECA
- “Regional and Continental Integration for Africa’s Development” by UNDP
- “Opportunities and challenges of Cross-border trade in Africa towards AfCFTA”, by AGRA

4. Expected Outcomes of the conference

In addition to research papers and reports, the expected outcomes of the conference are the policy briefs summarizing key findings and recommendations.

The final papers with key policy recommendations will be published online through EPRN website: www.eprnrwanda.org and through the *EPRN Paper Series Vol II*. Policy recommendations will also be developed and disseminated to stakeholders (mainly policy making institutions) for information and action.

Contacts:

Economic Policy Research Network (EPRN Rwanda)
Prof Thomas Kigabo, EPRN Board Chairperson
Dr Charles Ruranga, EPRN Legal Representative
Mr Seth Kwizera, EPRN Coordinator
E-mail: info@eprnrwanda.org
Website: www.eprnrwanda.org
Tel: 0788305142
P.O Box 7375 KIGALI