

FUTURE PROOFING REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA
The African Public Square (APS) Debate
Second Continental Edition

REIMAGINING WEST AFRICAN REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION: ALTERNATIVE FUTURES
At the ECOWAS @ 50 Conference

Date: **October 31 – November 1, 2025**

Venue: **Main Auditorium, ECOWAS Commission**
101, Yakubu Gowon Crescent, Abuja-FCT, Nigeria

Time: **09:00 – 18:00 (WAT) Daily**

Day 1: Friday, 31st October 2025

09:30 – 10:00 (30 mins)	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Dr Godwin MURUNGA <i>Executive Secretary, CODESRIA</i> Prof Funmi OLONISAKIN <i>Vice President</i> <i>International, Engagement and Services, King's College London</i> Dr J. Kayode FAYEMI <i>Co-Founder, Amandla Institute</i> His Excellency Dr Omar Alieu TOURAY <i>President of the ECOWAS Commission</i>
10:00 – 12:00 (120 mins)	Africa Public Square (APS) Debate: <i>Future-Proofing Regional Integration in Africa</i>	Moderator: Ms Lara OWOEYE-WISE <i>Deputy Chief News Producer, AIT</i> Introducing the African Public Square Ms Shuvai B. NYONI <i>Executive Director, African Leadership Centre</i> Introducing the Debate and Setting the Ground Rules Prof Funmi OLONISAKIN <i>Vice President</i> <i>International, Engagement and Services, King's College London</i> Debaters: • Prof Abdoulaye BATHILY <i>Senegalese Special Envoy on AES and International Affairs</i> • Dr Titilope AJAYI <i>Institute for Security Studies, Africa</i> • Dr Faisal Garba MUHAMMED <i>Associate Professor of Sociology, Migration and Mobility, The Africa Institute</i> • Dr Babatunde AFOLABI

		<i>Regional Director, Anglophone and Lusophone Africa, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue</i> • Amb El-Ghassim WANE <i>Leading Practitioner, African Leadership Centre</i> • Dr Penda DIALLO <i>Associate, African Leadership Centre</i> • Prof Medhane TADESSE <i>Senior Research Fellow, African World Institute</i>
12:00 – 12:15 (15 mins)	Health/Tea/Coffee Break	
12:15 – 13:30 (75 mins)	West Africa Over the Next 50 Years (Session I): A Projection of Key Trends	Moderator: Mrs Bisi ADELEYE-FAYEMI <i>Co-Founder, Amandla Institute</i> Panelists: Prof Penda MBOW <i>Professor of History, Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar</i> Mr Simon TSIKE-SOSSAH <i>Doctoral Candidate, Sofia University of Bulgaria</i> Ms Ruth OGBEWEKON <i>Legal Research and Project Consultant, Pan African Lawyers Union</i> Framing questions: 1. What history of the ECOWAS experience ought to be borne in mind (especially from the perspective of gender and youth) as we think about West Africa over the next 50 years? 2. How do young people in the region attain and express their agency within the framework of ECOWAS regional governance? 3. What are some of the present and emerging rights, citizenship and belonging questions of future people of the West African region? What should ECOWAS do to respond to these?
13:30 – 14:30 (60 mins)	Lunch Break and Jumaat Prayers	
14:30 – 16:30 (120 mins)	Reimagining West African Integration (Session II): The Future of Regional Economic Integration and Sustainable Development	Moderator: Prof Ekaette IKPE <i>Director, African Leadership Centre, London</i> Panellists: Dr Faisal Garba MUHAMMED <i>Associate Professor of Sociology, Migration and Mobility, The Africa Institute</i> Ms Fatou Senghore JAGNE <i>Gambian Centre for Women's Rights and Leadership</i> Dr Fatima AKILU <i>Director, NEEM Foundation</i> Framing questions:

		1. What key organising principles will determine successful regional integration in a future ECOWAS of peoples 2. What logic of integration is needed to build the requisite infrastructure for an economically competitive ECOWAS that accommodate different futures? 3. How can West African citizens' logic of integration be aligned with a future ECOWAS regional integration agenda? 4. What priorities will shape a new integration process in West Africa?
16:30 – 17:00 (30 mins)	End of Day One / Bus shuttle to the hotel	
19:30 – 21:30 (120 mins)	Special Welcome Dinner Theme: <i>Building An ECOWAS of the People</i>	Special Remarks from Special Guests of Honour: Dr Mohammed Ibn CHAMBAS <i>African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns</i> Prof Abdoulaye BATHILY <i>Senegalese Special Envoy on International Affairs</i>

Day 2: Saturday, 1st November 2025

9:00 – 09:30 (30 mins)	Recap of Day One	Mme Marieme CISSE <i>WATHI/Deputy Chief Rapporteur</i>
09:30 – 11:00 (90 mins)	Reimagining West African Integration (Session III): <i>ECOWAS Vision 2050 and New Technologies, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Transformation, Communication and Social Media</i>	Moderator: Mme Mbathio SAMB <i>Institute for Economic Development and Planning</i> Panellists: Dr Damilola ADEGOKE <i>Head of Datalab, African Leadership Centre, King's College London</i> Dr Carlos CARDOSO <i>Founding Director, Amílcar Cabral Centre for Social Studies</i> Mr Bergedor Bignon HADJIHOU <i>Charge de Recherche, WATHI</i> Mr Ayodeji Yusuf ODUSOTE <i>Senior Tech Advisor, Nigeria's Ministry of Finance</i> Framing questions: 1. What observations are apparent in the attitudes and approaches of “future leaders” and next generation Africans to the use of AI, new digital technologies and social media for regional and transnational engagement? What lessons do these offer a future ECOWAS of peoples? 2. What kind of leadership is required to effectively unlock the potentials of new technologies, artificial Intelligence, digital transformation, communication and social media for the next 25 years?

		3. What values and features should be at the core of digital transformation in a future ECOWAS of peoples?
11:00 – 11:30 (30 mins)	Health and Tea/Coffee Break	
11:30 – 13:00 (90 mins)	Reimagining West African Integration (Session IV): <i>Women and Girls in Governance, Peace, Security and Regional Integration</i>	Moderator: Mme Antionette MBROU <i>Executive Director, Women in Law and Development in Africa</i> Panellists: Ms Bernadette FRENCH <i>Programme Manager, CCG, Sierra Leone</i> Dr Adeoti DIPEOLU <i>Afe Babalola Centre for Transnational Education</i> Dr Aleida BORGES <i>Lecturer, African Leadership Centre, King's College London</i> Framing questions: 1. How can ECOWAS address the constraints that hinders the effective participation of women and Girls in the development of the community at all levels? 2. What form of leadership is needed to transform the inhibiting cultural norms, disinformation, and violence against women in politics to foster an inclusive environment essential for achieving durable integration, peace and development?
13:00 – 14:00 (60 mins)	Group Lunch	
14:00 – 15:30 (90 mins)	Reimagining West African Integration (Session V): <i>The Future of ECOWAS's Partnerships and Relations with International Alliances and Groups</i>	Moderator: Amb Kenneth E.T. ABOTSI <i>Ghana's Deputy Ambassador to Ethiopia</i> Panellists: Dr Chikouna CISSE <i>University de Félix Houphouet Boigny, Abidjan</i> Dr Gilles O. YABI <i>Executive Director, West African Thinktank Initiative</i> Ms Shuvai B. NYONI <i>Executive Director, African Leadership Centre, Nairobi</i> Framing questions: 1. How can ECOWAS harness the different neo-colonial legacies to pursue a purposive multi-lateral engagement for its common futures in a constantly changing multi-polar world? 2. What key principles should guide ECOWAS engagement with key global networks and multipolar actors?

		3. How can future ECOWAS engagements with global actors champion and embed the priorities of West African peoples?
15:30 – 16:00 (30 mins)	Health/Tea/Coffee Break	
16:00 – 17:30 (90 mins)	Reimagining West African Integration (Session VI): <i>The Future of the West African Community: ECOWAS of the People, Peace and Prosperity for all</i>	Moderator: Dr Emmanuel O. AKWETEY <i>Executive Director, Institute for Democratic Governance</i> Panellists: Gen El-Hadji Babacar FAYE (Rtd.) <i>Counter Terrorism, Defence and Security Expert</i> Amb Abdulahi SHEHU <i>Former Nigerian Ambassador to Russia</i> Hon Mama KANDEH <i>Pan-African Parliament, Banjul</i> Ms Hyeladzira JAMES MSHELIA <i>Acting Chief Executive, Connected Development</i> Framing questions: 1. Looking back into the future, what forms of ECOWAS integration can be responsive to various political communities for collective prosperity? 2. What organising logic will necessitate a transformed peoples' ECOWAS? 3. How is the next generation of leaders reshaping ideas of regional integration and political community? 4. What lessons can a future ECOWAS learn from the continental organising framework and relationship with the Africa Union.
17:00 – 17:30 (30 mins)	Closing Session	Key Takeaways: Mr James GADIN <i>Chief Rapporteur</i> Closing Remarks, Next Steps and Vote of Thanks Dr Godwin MURUNGA <i>Executive Secretary, CODESRIA</i> Ambassador Abdel-Fatau MUSAH <i>ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security</i>
17:30 – 18:00 (30 mins)	Bus shuttle to the hotel	

Programme Direction:

1. **Dr Otiye IGBUZOR** – *Founding Executive Director, Centre-LSD*
2. **Dr Khady DIOP** – *Program Manager, CODESRIA*