

There are no translations available.

NEPAD, the development agency of the African Union responsible for coordinating and executing priority regional and continental development projects that promote economic integration in Africa, just released the [Second Agenda 2063 ten-year implementation plan](#) covering the 2024 – 2033 period. Agenda 2063 is a long-term strategy (covering a period of 50 years) that was adopted in 2013 by the African Union (AU) on the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Organisation of African Unity (the predecessor of the AU), to guide Africa's development for the next half-century. Its purpose is to identify a series of objectives (called “aspirations”) that aim at transforming the continent into a global powerhouse by 2063. Agenda 2063 is implemented by a series of Ten-Year Plans. The [first one](#)

, referred to the period 2014-2023, was adopted by the AU Heads of States and Government Assembly in June 2015. The current one was adopted at the recently concluded 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the AU held in Addis Ababa from 17th to 18th February 2024.

The new implementation plan mentions the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a tool to accelerate the growth of Intra-Africa trade. The objective is to leverage trade to support sustainable development in Africa, specifically by doubling intra-Africa trade, and strengthening Africa's voice and policy space in global trade negotiations. Such influence is supposed, among other things, to strengthen Africa's trading position in the global market. Among the recommendations in the report, there is the implementation of the Annual African Economic Forum, a multi-stakeholder meeting which will bring together the Africa's policy makers, private sector, academia and civil society to elaborate solutions on how accelerating Africa's socio-economic development and transformation by harnessing its vast resources. This event, which is critical to address policy obstacles for investment and business in the continent, has not yet been organized, despite being one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063 and the fact the AU has already developed [an area of its website](#) (that is currently blank) to contain all information and conclusions arising by the various editions of the Forum.

Another key strategic objective of the second Agenda 2063 implementation plan and which is instrumental to the growth of trade is the Objective 2.2. (Improve Connectivity). In this regard, the document recognizes that Regional Power Pools and transport and communication infrastructure are a prerequisite for achieving “a more integrated and connected Africa”, which will be prioritized during the execution of the Plan. Specifically, for what concerns transport infrastructure, the Plan urges African States and other sub-regional organizations in the continent to make at least 80% progress in the completion of inter-African transport connectivity by road; and make at least 50% progress in the completion of inter-African transport connectivity by rail. A key flagship project will include the development of an Integrated High-Speed Train Network that aims to connect all African capitals and commercial centres

through an African High Speed Train Network thereby facilitating the movement of goods, services and people, even know it is not clear from where the funds for completing this project will come.

Importantly, the second edition of the Plan indicates as a key objective for this decade, the acceleration of the implementation of the African Passport and Free Movement of People flagship project, noting that the full operationalisation of this project will boost trade, tourism, education, cultural exchange and regional cooperation among African countries. Priorities also include ensuring Member States ratify the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons (so far ratified only by [4 African States](#) ), and subsequently the removal of restrictive visa regimes among AU Member States and fast-tracking the issuance of the African Passports to African citizens. The previous Agenda 2063 implementation plan planned the issuance of the African Passport by 2025, which is, realistically, a deadline impossible to respect. Moreover, considered the limited progress achieved so far in this sector, with the security concerns of African States still prevailing over the need to facilitate circulation of goods and persons, one wonders if it is also realistic to expect this objective achieved by 2033, especially in the light of the fact that instability has recently grown in Africa because of coups, conflicts and escalating tensions in many of its regions, such as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, with border controls on the movement of people that are becoming even more stricter than in the past.