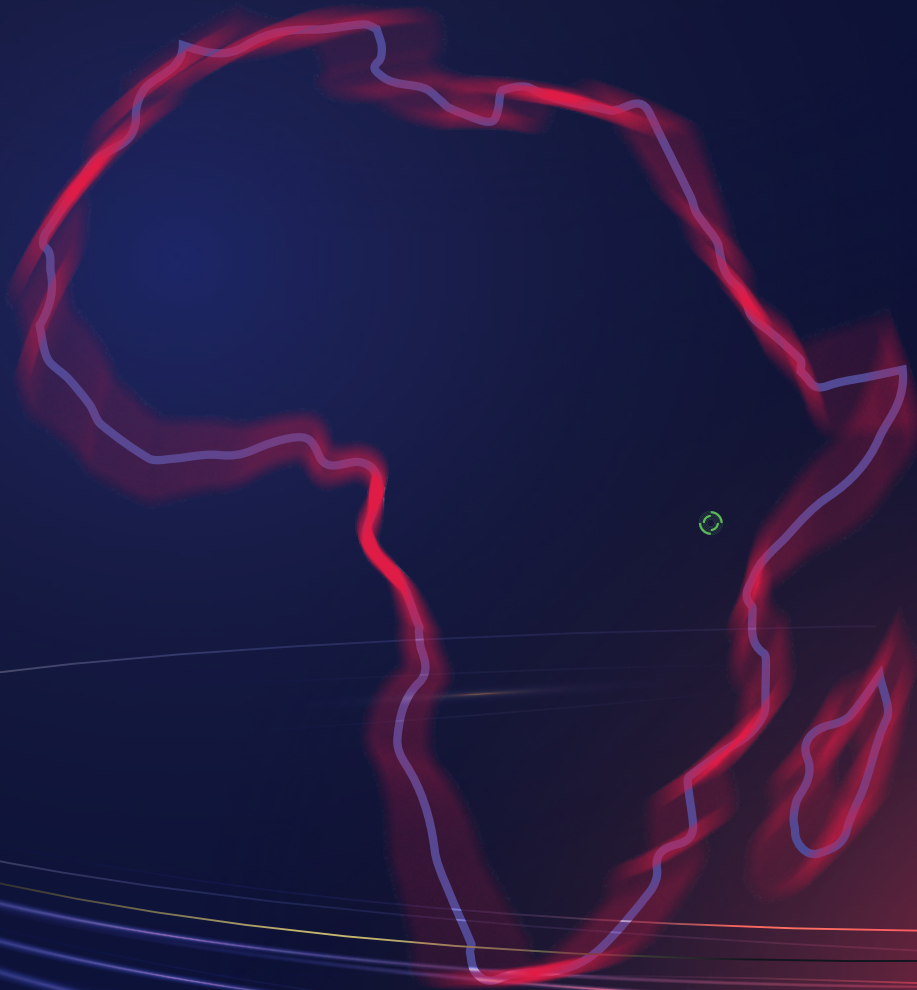




AFRICAN SEZs ANNUAL MEETING
NAIROBI - KENYA | **NOVEMBER 27 - 29, 2024**



CONCEPT NOTE

OVERVIEW

African Special Economic Zones have continuously proved their potential in leveraging FDIs and accelerating industrialization. As tools for economic diversification and job creation, SEZs perfectly illustrate successful and pragmatic collaboration between public and private institutions, particularly in the context of improving social inclusion and advancing economic prosperity in Africa.

In this optic, sophisticated infrastructure and better practices must be encouraged as imperatives to attract FDIs and boost productivity. Nowadays, FDIs are facing a challenging future, with declining inflows and simultaneous geopolitical crises threatening the global balance and weighing down investors' enthusiasm for cross-border expansion. This, in turn, limits the social and economic spillovers resulting from industrial activity within SEZs. The landscape for global investments is shifting rapidly, and countries are competing to find their rightful place in the new global value chains. This creates several challenges, but also opportunities.

The stakes are on leveraging SEZs as a tool to attract impactful, high-added-value investments, effectively increasing their competitiveness among global value chains and contributing to more inclusive and productive industries.

As is the case in different regions of the world, current and past events have closely affected Africa's development trajectory, each contributing to a complex landscape of African economies. Inflation, disruptions to healthcare systems, and food and energy insecurities are among the most concerning issues that have been amplified in the past years. On an international scale, the world has recorded severe shortages of key components, such as semiconductors and raw materials, which have hindered manufacturing, impacting economies reliant on industrial production and commodities exports. With abundant natural resources and a skilled and cheap workforce, Africa can distinguish itself as an ideal investment destination, with a focus on key sectors such as Agriculture, Renewable Energies, ICT, and large-scale Manufacturing.

On this level, there is much work to be done, with particular interest in:

- Reinforcing weak infrastructure and encouraging sustainable practices
- Restructuring governance models and establishing relevant policies based on inclusivity
- Supporting capacity building and knowledge sharing
- Fostering innovation and new technologies in the context of digitization
- Boosting logistic corridors and intra-regional trade
- Improving access to relevant information that translates market intelligence into business opportunities for SEZs

It is in this context that the AU Commission and AEZO are joining efforts in holding the African SEZs Annual Meeting 2024, a premier gathering point, where stakeholders converge each year to exchange ideas, foster collaboration, and drive forward the development of special economic zones across the continent.

More than a networking event, The African SEZs AM 2024 is a central hub to support the inception of the African SEZ of the future, a smarter, more resilient, and higher-performing model that fits the African Context.

This year, the event will take place in **November 27th - 28th - 29th 2024** at **Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC)**, in Nairobi Kenya, under the theme: **"Building Resilient, Inclusive & Sustainable Economies: The Role of African SEZs in Attracting Impactful Investments & Redefining Competitiveness."** The event will be held in the presence of Ministerial personalities, senior representatives of the African SEZs community, big players from the private sector, and international institutions supporting the development of African SEZs.

This year's edition aims to reinvigorate the status quo and kick-start a new era of sustainable development in Africa. This gathering represents a unique platform to address the critical role of SEZs in shaping the future of Africa's economic landscape. By focusing on building inclusive and sustainable economies, this event aims to inspire and drive impactful investments, redefine competitiveness, and promote holistic and green development across the continent.

AFRICAN ECONOMIC ZONES ANNUAL MEETING 2024

The African Economic Zones Annual Meeting 2024 will provide guidance and an open-dialogue environment to discuss cross-cutting issues related to the contribution of SEZs in accelerating innovative industrial development:

Building Intelligent Infrastructure in SEZs : Focus on the necessary infrastructure upgrades, such as 5G networks and data centers, to support industrial activity in all security.

Workforce Development for SEZs : Strategies for upskilling the workforce to integrate large-scale technologies.

Regulatory Frameworks for new technologies : Examine how policies can be adapted to foster technology innovation while protecting data privacy and ensuring ethical use.

Sustainability as a Core Pillar of Modern African SEZs : Discuss the integration of circular economy principles, eco-industrial parks, and sustainable urban planning in SEZ development.

Financing Sustainable SEZs : Introduce innovative financing mechanisms such as green bonds and climate funds to support the sustainable development of SEZs.

Policy and Governance for a New Generation of SEZs : Examine how African governments can create conducive environments for the growth of socially inclusive and sustainable SEZs.

MODALITY & EVENT FLOW

The two-day event will include a high-level opening session followed by thematic panel discussions and in-focus outlook sessions combining government representatives and private operators. Evenings will be dedicated to interactive workshop sessions and networking appointments.

The event's agenda will also include site visits, distribution of AEZO Awards in recognition of key African SEZs and their significant contribution to the community, as well as other manifestations to culminate international cooperation between AEZO and its partners.

The program will focus on creating a welcoming atmosphere to encourage experience sharing and developing budding partnerships among all parties involved. We aim to facilitate the conception of numerous collaboration opportunities inspired by this year's theme, and the mission of our organization.

HOST COUNTRY & PARTNERS

EVENT ORGANIZERS

The African Special Economic Zones Annual Meeting 2024 is co-organized with the AU Commission for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals. This year, the event will take place in Nairobi, Kenya.



HOST COUNTRY & PARTNERS

This year's edition will be held with the support of our Kenyan members, represented by the Kenyan SEZs Authority as well as the Ministry of Investments, Trade, and Industry.



Special thanks to our supporting institutional partners, who have contributed heavily to the organization of this year's edition:



PARTICIPATION

This year's edition will gather more than 300 participants to follow the deliberations and interact with eminent experts, academia, policymakers, financial institutions, and C-level representatives from Economic Zones and Investment Promotion Agencies.

To register, please click on the following link: <https://forms.gle/YkFiiANrBHvSYXyp7>

DATES & VENUE

Dates : November 27th – 29th

Location : Nairobi, Kenya

Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, is a vibrant and dynamic metropolis that serves as the economic, political, and cultural hub of the region. Known as the «Green City in the Sun,» Nairobi is one of Africa's most influential cities, offering a unique blend of modernity and tradition.

Nairobi is a leading financial center in Africa, home to major multinational corporations, regional headquarters, and a thriving startup ecosystem. The city's strategic location, well-developed infrastructure, and connectivity make it a prime destination for business events. Nairobi is also the gateway to East Africa, providing access to a market of over 300 million people.

Nairobi boasts state-of-the-art conference centers, luxury hotels, and business facilities that cater to international standards. The Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) is one of Africa's premier conference venues, offering expansive meeting spaces and advanced technology. Additionally, Nairobi's international airport, Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, provides excellent connectivity to major global cities.

Beyond its business appeal, Nairobi offers a rich cultural experience. The city is surrounded by natural beauty, including the Nairobi National Park, where you can see wildlife just a short drive from the city center. Nairobi also has vibrant markets, historical sites, and a diverse culinary scene that reflects its multicultural population.

Nairobi is a city that has invested heavily in security measures, particularly in areas frequented by business travelers and tourists. The city's business districts are well-policed, and major hotels and event venues provide secure environments.

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ABOUT AFRICA ECONOMIC ZONES ORGANIZATION « AEZO »

Africa Economic Zones Organization (AEZO) is a continental association representing leading public and private institutions in charge of the development, management, and promotion of Economic Zones in Africa.

Founded in November 2015 by Tanger Med Group - Morocco, the Africa Economic Zones Organization (AEZO) is striving to support African Economic Zones projects and strengthen relationships within its ecosystem.

Africa Economic Zones Organization (AEZO) is guided by its strategic orientations to “foster collective knowledge sharing, provide strategic and technical assistance, connect with the international business network and promote sustainable economic models and practices”.

AEZO comprehends today 92 members representing 46 countries.

ABOUT AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION « AUC »

The African Union Commission (AUC) is the executive organ of the African Union (AU), responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Union's policies and decisions. As the central institution of the AU, the AUC is at the forefront of realizing the African Union's vision of an integrated, peaceful, and prosperous Africa.

Through its various departments and programs, the AUC is committed to driving continental economic development and social progress, fostering cooperation among Member States, and addressing the challenges facing the continent, including conflict resolution, human rights, and sustainable development.

ABOUT THE AFRICAN SEZs ANNUAL MEETING

Held annually, the African SEZs Annual Meeting is the Flagship event of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Africa Economic Zones Organization (AEZO) bringing together governmental representatives, international experts, and senior executives to offer broad-based insights on critical issues related to the development of Economic Zones in Africa.

Through the get-together initiatives, AEZO provides its members a unique opportunity to develop networking, build strong business alliances, and access key international decision-makers.





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