

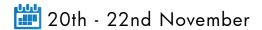
2024 IRSK ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Fostering Integration and Cooperation in the COMESA Region through International Relations and Diplomacy

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

HYATT REGENCY HOTEL

NAIROBI, KENYA





















DAY 1

WEDNESDAY 20th NOVEMBER, 2024

SESSION ONE

TIME	ACTIVITY
08:00 - 09:00	Arrival and Registration IRSK Protocol Team • Eunice Wawuda, Conference Protocol
	Conference Overview Master of Ceremony • Kemsa Rehan Ali, Media Personality
09:00 - 10:00	Opening Plenary Session The opening plenary session of the 2024 IRSK Annual Conference will feature distinguished diplomats, leaders, policymakers, scholars and experts, and will set the stage for critical discussions on fostering integration and cooperation in the COMESA region. These esteemed experts will share insights on advancing diplomacy and international relations to address pressing global and regional challenges with far-reaching impacts on regional stability, peace, and sustainable development through collective action and shared goals.
	ModeratorMs. Winnie Rugutt, Lecturer, DDIS, University of Nairobi
	Opening Remarks • Leonard Wanyama, CEO, IRSK • H.E. Jenny Da Rin, The Australian High Commissioner to Kenya
	 Welcoming Remarks Dr. Kizito Sabala, Chairman, IRSK Annual Conference Dr. Bob Wekesa, Director, ACSUS, University of Witwatersrand
	 Featured Address Dr. Vasu Gounden, Executive Director, ACCORD Dr. Oita Etyang, Head, Governance Peace and Security, COMESA
	 Keynote Speech H.E. Sebastian Groth, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Kenya
	SESSION TWO
10:00 – 10:30	PLENARY SESSION — HIGH-LEVEL OPENING PANEL Fostering Integration and Cooperation in the COMESA Region through International Relations and Diplomacy
	This panel session convenes a distinguished group of diplomats, leaders, policymakers, scholars and experts dedicated to advancing regional cooperation and integration within the COMESA region. The discussions will focus on harnessing diplomacy and international relations to strengthen integration, drive sustainable development, and develop unified strategies for addressing regional challenges. Through shared insights and collaborative efforts, panelists will explore innovative approaches to enhancing trade, promoting political cohesion, and unlocking economic potential across member states, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and interconnected regional community.
	 Moderator Winnie Rugutt, Lecturer, DDIS, University of Nairobi
	 Panelists Dr. Bob Wekesa, Director, ACSUS, University of Witwatersrand Dr. Kizito Sabala, Chairman, IRSK Annual Conference Dr. Oita Etyang, Head, Governance Peace and Security, COMESA Leonard Wanyama, CEO, IRSK
10:30 – 11:00	CEREMONIAL LAUNCH OF COMESA BOOK & ACCORD MONOGRAPH SERIES
11:00 – 11:30	PHOTO SESSION / TEA / COFFEE / HEALTH BREAK
	2024 IRSK



DAY 1

WEDNESDAY 20th NOVEMBER, 2024

SESSION THREE

TIME	ACTIVITY
11:30 -13:00	SESSION THREE
11:30 -13:00	PLENARY SESSION – LAUNCH OF 2023 IRSK CONFERENCE PAPERS Launch of the 2023 IRSK Annual Conference Research Papers
	This plenary session unveils a collection of research papers that were presented during the 2023 IRSK Annual Conference and have now been published by COMESA and ACCORD. The papers delve into critical issues facing the region, offering in-depth exploration of challenges, opportunities, and innovative solutions to foster regional integration, economic cooperation, and sustainable development. Reflecting the collaborative spirit and intellectual rigor of the conference community, these publications bring together diverse perspectives to enrich policy dialogues and inspire future research. This launch marks not only an academic achievement but also a meaningful step toward actionable impact within the region.
	Moderator • Dr. Andrea Prah, Senior Researcher, ACCORD, South Africa
	 Speakers Dr. Oita Etyang, Head, GPS, COMESA and Co-Editor, AJEN Elizabeth Mutunga, Coordinator, APSA, COMESA and Co-Editor, AJEN Dr. Kizito Sabala, Conference Chair and Co-Editor, COMESA Edited Book Prof. Kasaija Phillip Apuuli, Professor, Makerere University and Co-Editor, AJEN
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH BREAK
	2024 IRSK

DAY 1 WEDNESDAY 20th NOVEMBER, 2024

SESSION FOUR

TIME		PARALLEL SESSIONS	
14:00 – 15:30	ROOM 1 - PEACE AND SECURITY PANEL (EAC & IGAD)	ROOM 2 - AFRICA AGENCY PANEL	ROOM 3 – DIPLOMACY PANEL
	Navigating Regional Stability and Security Challenges in Eastern and Central Africa: Examining Peace Architectures, Ethnic Dynamics, and Political Risk	Achieving African Agency in a Changing Global Order: The Role of International Relations and Diplomacy Moderator	The Role of Diplomacy in Advancing Sustainable Development, Regional Integration, and Gender Inclusion in Africa
	Moderator • Dr. John Mwangi Githigaro, Senior Possarch Follow, Mashariki Possarch and	 Moderator Mr. Lweendo Kambela, Doctoral Fellow, University of Tasmania, Australia 	 Moderator Dr. Fatma Abdullatif, Director, Foreign Service Academy, Kenya
	Research Fellow, Mashariki Research and Policy Centre Panelists Prof. Kasaija Phillip Apuuli, Professor, Makerere University, Uganda Dr. Kizito Sabala, Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya Jacques Muhindo Vyalirendi, Doctoral Candidate, University of Nairobi, Kenya Dr. Dan N. Odaba, Executive Director, Institute for Peace and Economics, Kenya Ms. Berita Musau, Doctoral Fellow, Strathmore University, Kenya	 Panelists Amb. Anthony Okara, ALMA Special Ambassador, Kenya Dr. Bob Wekesa, Director, ACSUS, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa Dr. Edson Ziso, Lecturer, University of Adelaide, Australia Prof. Macharia Munene, Professor, United States International University-Africa, Kenya Discussant Dr. Stephen Mwachofi Singo, Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya 	 Panelists Dr. Shazia Chaudhry, Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya Peterson Waweru, MA Student, University of Nairobi, Kenya Shem Siteki, PhD Candidate, United State International University-Africa, Kenya Vumile Mncibi, Lecturer, University of Zululand, South Africa Discussant Dr. Daniel Oloo Ong'ong'a, Lecturer, Mt. Kenya University, Kenya
	Discussant Dr. Nicodemus Minde, Researcher, Institute of Security Strategies, Kenya		, , ,
15:30 – 16:00	TRANSITION TO NEW PANELS		

DAY 1WEDNESDAY 20th NOVEMBER, 2024

SESSION FOUR

TIME		PARALLEL SESSIONS	
16:00 – 17:30	ROOM 1 – ACCORD PANEL	ROOM 2 – TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL	ROOM 3 – MEDIA INFLUENCE PANEL
	Institutionalising Wisdom: The Role of the Panels/Councils in Peace-making in Africa Moderator Dr. Andrea Prah (Ph.D.), Senior Researcher, ACCORD, South Africa Panelists Prof Tim Murithi, Head of Programme - Peacebuilding Interventions, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, South Africa Dr. Festus Aubyn, Senior Research Fellow, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Ghana Prof Kasaija Apuuli, Professor, Makerere University, Uganda Dr. Tunji Namaiko, Peace and Development Consultant, UNDP, Ethiopia Dr. Oita Etyang, Head, Governance, Peace and Security, COMESA Muneinazvo Kujeke, African Governance, Peace & Security Expert	Strengthening Resilience, Cooperation and Development by Leveraging Trade and Investment: Perspectives and Lessons from the COMESA Region Moderator Jane Kibiru, Research Fellow, Trade and Economic Policy, COMESA Panelists Ms. Elizabeth N. Mutunga, Coordinator, APSA, COMESA, Zambia Dr. Kizito Sabala, Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya Dr. Alice Karuri, Lecturer, Strathmore University, Kenya Ms. Winnie Cheptoo Rugutt, Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya Discussant Discussant Dr. Socrates Majeune, Lecturer, Department of Economics and Development Studies, University of Nairobi, Kenya	Shaping Migration and Diplomacy through Media Narratives: Analysis of Selected Afric Newspapers and their Influence Moderator Moderator Mr. Michael Higgins, Senior Researcher, Sahan East Africa, Kenya Panelists Dr. Esther Muthoni King'ori, Lecturer, Strathmore University, Kenya Dr. Maureen Syallow, Lecturer, Strathmore University, Kenya Ms. Charlotte Irigoga, MA Candidate, Aga Khan University, Uganda Mr. Eliud Kibii, Diplomatic Reporter, The Stanewspaper Discussant Prof. George Nyabuga, Associate Professor Graduate School of Media and Communication Aga Khan University, Kenya
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SESSION FIVE

TIME	ACTIVITY
08:00 - 09:00	ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION
	IRSK Protocol Team Eunice Wawuda, Conference Protocol
	OVERVIEW OF DAY 1 Master of Ceremony • Kemsa Rehan Ali, Media Personality
09:00 - 11:00	PLENARY SESSION – AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION PANEL
09:00 - 10:00	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS - IMPLICATIONS OF CLEAN ENERGY TRENDS This session will examine the collaborative efforts between Australia and Africa in advancing clean and sustainable energy. This panel will focus on the collaborative potential between Australia and Africa in the clean energy transition, emphasizing Africa's vast reserves of critical minerals essential for renewable technologies. It will explore Australian investments in over 200 mining projects, valued at \$60 billion, and discuss the role of initiatives like the Africa Green Hydrogen Hub. The panel will also discuss Africa's clean energy goals, including Kenya's target to generate 100% renewable electricity by 2030, while highlighting how both regions are working towards achieving SDG 7 for sustainable and modern energy access.
	Moderator • Georgie Ndirangu, Award-winning Communications Professional
	Introductory Remarks: • H.E. Jenny Da Rin, The Australian High Commissioner to Kenya.
	 Speakers Nikhath Zigmund, Kenya Country Director, Fortescue Future Industries Matthew Tilleard, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, CrossBoundary Group Dr. Faith Wandera, Director of Renewable Energy, State Department for Energy Amani Mhinda, Senior Advisor in Charge of Business and Strategy, Africatalyst
10:00 – 10:30	PANEL SESSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS - IMPLICATIONS OF CLEAN ENERGY TRENDS
	Moderator • Georgie Ndirangu, Award-winning Communications Professional
	 Panelists Nikhath Zigmund, Kenya Country Director, Fortescue Future Industries Matthew Tilleard, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, CrossBoundary Group Dr. Faith Wandera, Director of Renewable Energy, State Department for Energy Amani Mhinda, Senior Advisor in Charge of Business and Strategy, Africatalyst
10:30 - 11:00	SPONSOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT/PHOTO SESSION
11:00 - 11:30	TEA/COFFEE / HEALTH BREAK
	2024 IDCV

SESSION SIX

TIME	ACTIVITY
11:30 - 01:00	PLENARY SESSION - LABOR MIGRATION
11.30 - 01.00	ROOM 1 - LABOR MIGRATION PANEL
11.00 10.00	
11:30 – 12:30	MANAGING LABOUR MIGRATION IN AFRICA: A BALANCE BETWEEN OPPORTUNITY AND EXPLOITATION
	Africa is experiencing a significant surge in labour migration, both voluntary and forced, driven by numerous factors such as economic disparities, climate change, conflicts and political instability. While labour migration can offer substantial economic benefits to both source and destination countries, it also presents significant challenges, including exploitation, feminisation of migration, human trafficking, and social disruption. This panel on labour migration will explore and provide valuable insights on the multifaceted and complex dynamics of labour migration in Africa and identify practical solutions to address the challenges and maximize the opportunities associated with this phenomenon. Discussants will find time to share their experience and learn from each other on how to improve labour migration governance in the region. Eventually, the panel discussion will contribute to a more informed and effective approach to managing labour migration in Africa.
	Moderator • Joy Doreen Biira, Journalist and Media Personality
	Introductory Remarks • Mathias Kamp, Country Director, KAS Kenya
	 Speakers Amb. Tom Amollo, Former Ambassador of Kenya to Germany Dr. Margaret W. Gichanga, Steering Committee Member, Migration and Refugee Research Network, Oxford Brookes University, UK Frank Nuwagaba, Immigration Officer, IOM, Uganda Priscilla Kerebi, Vice Chair, KEPSA Education Sector Board
12:30 – 13:00	PANEL SESSION MANAGING LABOUR MIGRATION IN AFRICA
	 Amb. Tom Amollo, Former Ambassador of Kenya to Germany Dr. Margaret W. Gichanga, Steering Committee Member, Migration and Refugee Research Network, Oxford Brookes University, UK Frank Nuwagaba, Immigration Officer, IOM, Uganda Priscilla Kerebi, Vice Chair, KEPSA Education Sector Board
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH BREAK
	2024 IDSV

SESSION SEVEN

TIME		PARALLEL SESSIONS	
14:00 – 15:30	ROOM 1 - PEACE AND SECURITY PANEL (COMESA)	ROOM 2 – GEO-ECONOMICS PANEL	ROOM 3 - DEMOCRACY AND ELECTIONS PANEL
	Advancing Peace, Security, and Trade in the COMESA Region: Challenges, Opportunities, and Collaborative Solutions Moderator • Dr. Andrea Prah, Senior Researcher, ACCORD Panelists • Evans Daka, Lecturer, University of Zambia • Ms. Elizabeth Mutunga, Coordinator, APSA, COMESA • Dr. Hiroyoshi Fujimoto, Economist, Embassy of Japan in Zimbabwe • Mr. Sean Yeo, Engineer & Analyst, Virtual Research Associates, Boston, US • Dr. Oita Etyang, Head, Governance, Peace and Security, COMESA, Zambia • Lweendo Kambela, University of Tasmania, Australia • Boniface Cheembe, Lecturer, University of Zambia • Dr. Musavengana W.T. Chibwana, Research Fellow, University of Free State, South Africa Discussant • Prof. Kasaija Apuuli, Professor, Makerere University, Uganda	Examining the Geo-Strategic Role of Corridor Infrastructure in the Horn of Africa Region: Intersections of Development, Diplomacy, and Debt Moderator • Kiplimo Kigen, Head of Policy Research & Advocacy, KNCCI Panelists • Dr. Mohamed Osman Guudle, Associate Professor, University of Hargeisa, Somaliland • Susan Handa Onyango, Lecturer, Strathmore University, Kenya • Stephen Fowler, Senior Consultant, Abu Dhabi • Dr. Kizito Sabala, Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya • Lemmy N. Mulaku, Ph.D. Candidate, DDIS, University of Nairobi Discussant • Dr. Peter Mwencha, Faculty Member, Aga Khan University, Kenya	Towards Fair, Peaceful and Inclusive Elections in the COMESA Region: Leveraging Technology, Political Mobilization and Democratic Practices Moderator • Edward Kakumu, Mzalendo Trust, Program Manager Panelists • Dr. Ndakaitei Makwanise, Lecturer, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe • Fridah Wanjiru Njoki, University of Nairobi, Kenya • Immanuel Mwendwa Kiilu, Student, Strathmore University, Kenya • Thelma Nabwire Mondoh, Researcher, Golden Letters Research, Kenya • Renic Ochieng, Researcher, Golden Letters Research, Kenya. Discussant • Dr. John Mwangi Githigaro, Senior Research Fellow, Mashariki Research and Policy Centre
15:30 – 16:00		TRANSITION TO NEW PANELS	

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SESSION SEVEN

TIME		PARALLEL SESSIONS	
16:00 – 17:30	ROOM 1 - REGIONAL INTEGRATION PANEL (EAC)	ROOM 2 - REGIONAL INTEGRATION PANEL (COMESA)	ROOM 3 – PEACE AND SECURITY PANEL
	Balancing National Priorities and Collective Goals in the EAC Region: Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects	Navigating the Path to Deeper Regional Integration within COMESA: Harnessing Diplomacy, Competition, and Identity	Building Peaceful and Secure Futures: A Multifaceted Exploration of Perspective on Peace and Security in Africa
	ModeratorCon Omore Osendo, IndependentConsultant, Governance and Economics	 Moderator Jane Kibiru, Research Fellow, Trade and Economic Policy, COMESA 	 Moderator Dr. Oita Etyang, Head, Governance, Peadand Security, COMESA
	 Panelists Dr. Kizito Sabala, Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Kenya Benedict Arwa, Doctoral Candidate, University of Nairobi, Kenya James Shikwati, CEO, IREN East Africa, Kenya Lawrence Jost, Researcher, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Kenya Discussant Dr. Janet Muthoni Kiguru, Political and Economic Affairs Manager, Australian High Commission to Kenya 	 Panelists Dr. Peter Mwencha, Faculty Member, Aga Khan University, Kenya Dr. Reason Masengu, Senior Lecturer, Middle East College, Oman (Virtual) Moronge Obonyo, Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya Paul Chayuga, Researcher, Kenya School of Government Discussant Amani Mhinda, Senior Advisor in Charge of Business and Strategy, Africatalyst 	 Panelists Prof. Redie Bereketeab, Senior Researcher, Nordica Africa Institute, Uppsala University, Sweden Anwar Abdifatah, Doctoral Candidate in International Studies, University of Nairob Kenya Edwine Otieno Ayoma, Doctoral Candidate, University of Nairobi, Kenya Adlaide Musanga Muchesia, Doctoral Candidate, University of Nairobi, Kenya Discussant Dr. Nicodemus Minde, Researcher, Institute of Security Strategies, Kenya

DAY 3 FRIDAY 22nd NOVEMBER, 2024

SESSION EIGHT

TIME	ACTIVITY
08:00 - 09:00	ARRIVAL OF GUESTS AND REGISTRATION
	IRSK Protocol Team • Eunice Wawuda, Conference Protocol
	OVERVIEW OF DAY 2 Master of Ceremony • Kemsa Rehan Ali, Media Personality
	PLENARY SESSION - FISCAL/DEBT DIPLOMACY
09:00 – 10:00	THE ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY OF FISCAL JUSTICE - HOW CIVIL SOCIETY AND ACA DEMIA USE RESEARCH TO CHALLENGE INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND PRACTICES
	This session will explore the critical role civil society and academia play in reshaping global economic norms through research-driven advocacy. The discussion will focus on how these groups, operating at local, national, regional, and global levels, use evidence-based strategies to challenge entrenched practices in areas such as tax justice, debt advocacy, global fiscal standards, tax treaties, climate financing, and economic human rights violations. Panelists will demonstrate how civil society uses research to support campaigns, protests, and global advocacy, applying tools such as ranking lists, public awareness campaigns, and civil protests to apply pressure on both domestic and international actors
	Moderator • Wanjiru Gikonyo, Transformational Governance Expert
	 Introductory Remarks: Leonard Wanyama, Regional Coordinator, The East African Tax and Governance Network (EATGN).
	 Speakers Riva Jalipa, Advisor, Amnesty International Kenneth Okwaro, Executive Director, Africa Centre for People, Institutions and Society (ACEPIS) Florence Syevuo, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Kenya Forum.
10:00 – 10:30	PANEL SESSION ON THE ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY OF FISCAL JUSTICE
	Moderator • Wanjiru Gikonyo, Transformational Governance Expert
	 Panelists Riva Jalipa, Advisor, Amnesty International Leonard Wanyama, Regional Coordinator, The East African Tax and Governance Network (EATGN). Kenneth Okwaro, Executive Director, Africa Centre for People, Institutions and Society (ACEPIS) Florence Syevuo, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Kenya Forum.
10:30 – 11:00	PHOTO SESSION/ TEA/COFFEE/HEALTH BREAK
	2024 IRSK

DAY 3 FRIDAY 22nd NOVEMBER, 2024

SESSION NINE

TIME	ACTIVITY
	PLENARY SESSION – YOUTH AGENCY PANEL DISCUSSION
11:00 – 11:45	ROOM 1 - YOUTH PANEL DISCUSSION
	YOUTH AGENCY AND VOICE IN DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA TODAY
	This session seeks to address the multifaceted challenges and opportunities for African youth in within the COMESA region, whereby youth discontent over issues such as unemployment, exclusionary policies, and police brutality reflects the broader continental challenges of youth underrepresentation. This panel discussion seeks to explore how African youth - especially in COMESA member states - can play a central role in shaping governance and democratic processes. The panelists will examine how regional cooperation, international relations, and diplomacy can be leveraged to amplify youth voices and support their active engagement in peace and security initiatives.
	Moderator • Eunice Wawuda, Student, DDIS, UoN
	 Introductory Remarks: George Ngoha, Conflict and Peace Researcher, DDIS, UoN
	 Panelists Esther Nambuye, Researcher and Consultant, DDIS, UoN Wambui Gachihi, Vice-Chair, International Relations Student Association of Kenya (IRSAK) Judy Njeri, Communications and Media Relations Assistant, IRSK Byron Osumba, Information, Management and Outreach Intern, UNEP
	CLOSING SESSION
11:45 – 12:30	Closing Session/Ceremony
	Moderator • Kemsa Rehan Ali, Media Personality
	 Speakers: Leonard Wanyama, CEO, IRSK Mathias Kamp, Country Director, KAS Kenya Dr. Oita Etyang, Head, GPS, COMESA Dr. Kizito Sabala, Chairman, 2024 IRSK Annual Conference
	Vote of Thanks • Roselyn Musera, Vice-Chair and Council Member, IRSK
12:30 – 13:00	PHOTO SESSION
	END OF THE CONFERENCE
	2024 IRSK



















