

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY



TOWARDS A VISA FREE AFRICA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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PROSPECTS**

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This is to certify that this thesis by Beyene Gebere, entitled **‘Towards Visa Free Africa: Challenges and Prospects’** and submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in International Relations complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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ACRONYMS

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AEC	African Economic Community
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development
CAP	Common African Position
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
CEPGL	Economic Community Great Lakes States
CENSAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CFTA	Continental Free Trade Africa
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
EASFCOM	Eastern Africa Stand by Force Coordination Mechanism
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
E-commerce	Electronic Commerce

FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGAD	Inter Governmental Authority on Development
NARC	North African Regional Capability
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
PIDA	Program for Infrastructural Development in Africa
PTA	Preferential Trade Agreements& Areas
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RTA	Regional Trade Agreement
SADC	South African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TF	Trade Facilitation
UDEAC	Central African Customs and Economic Union
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on trade and Development
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organization
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
WEFORUM	World Economic Forum

Abstract

This study attempts to underscore that the groundwork should be paved first before the full implementation of the visa free Africa. While the African Union wants its realization by 2020, much of the work remains to be done with respect to promoting African and regional economic integration.

Findings of the study indicate that implementing the visa free Africa plan would be significant, if it goes beyond cooperation to scale up trade volumes and promote economic transformation through integration.

The experiences of African countries that have made great strides in easing visa restrictions could be helpful in facilitating its realization. However, political instability, poor infrastructure & ICT services in the continent could constrain the plan from happening soon. Thus, this study recommends that African governments should focus on building and improving infrastructural facilities such as roads and rail networks that link a country with its neighboring countries and beyond, thereby strengthening ties and integrations among sisterly African countries. Moreover, the African governments should also emphasis on intra-continental trade and investments rather than relying on exporting raw materials to foreign countries.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) played a crucial role in ending colonialism in many countries of Africa. Pan-Africanism, as a belief, has contributed in bringing colonialism to its end in Africa, and the guidance of the OAU was vital, in this regard. As a result, Africa as a continent could decolonize itself. One of the positive outcomes of the OAU was that it laid foundation for intra-Africa economic integration.

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) which were established in the continent have made modest contribution with regard to paving the way for intra-Africa trade. Realizing economic independence through nurturing import substitution within member states and fostering African regional trade is instrumental in ending dependence.

The Agenda 2063 of the AU has placed a great emphasis on furthering economic integration with a view to laying the foundation for political unity in the long run. It clearly says that promotion of regional trade is preliminary to integrate the countries economically. The free movement of people and the establishment of continental institutions are envisaged to realize economic integration leading to political unity. The free movement of people, capital, goods and services is expected to cause meaningful increases in trade and investments thereby raising the African countries to unprecedented levels and strengthening Africa's position in global trade.

The African Union (AU) has put emphasis on intra-African trade and regional economic integration in order to bring about continental political unity after over five decades. Launching of Visa-Free Africa by 2020 is part of the 2063 aspirations of Africa which ultimately envisions “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena.”¹

¹ African Union (<https://au.int/en/about/vision>)

Apart from making some achievements in avoiding non-tariff barriers within regional communities, the African Union's strategic objective of realizing regional trade integration has not been fully achieved.

The plans and programs of the Visa Free Africa aim to ensure the free movement of people spur economic growth and development as well as promote intra-African trade. To this end, the possibilities and potential hindrances to the implementation and realization of this vision in the year 2020 should have been well stated. At the start, it was to realize the plan in 2018; however, it was clear that it couldn't happen in such short time.

Enabling conditions as to how the promotion of Intra-African trade could boost and ease doing business within the continent of Africa need to be identified with a view to reducing trade deficit among the nations.

The African Union Electronic Passport, which has been prepared to offer unrestricted movement of persons, goods and services across regions and the continent, was discussed during 27th AU summit in Kigali, Rwanda on 17 July 2016, whereby the first two e-passports were issued to Idriss Deby Itno, Chairperson of the AU and President of the Republic of Chad, and President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda.² While Britain is on the brink of leaving the European Union, the African Union is taking bold steps to bring about a closer integration and common passport towards granting visa-free access to all 55 member states. The ideal conditions and drawbacks that tend to determine realization of Africa without borders vision needs due attention.

The African Union is working to realize the most ambitious and all-encompassing continental vision. The current heads of state and government have predicated their common mission upon the unfulfilled promises and dreams of the earlier Pan-Africanists. The continental body (OAU) succeeded in bringing colonialism to an end in the continent. It also made a considerable contribution to the demise of apartheid in South Africa. Initiated by the continental organization, the Regional Economic Communities have played a crucial role towards connecting the member states economically and politically.

² African Union (<https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20160716-2>)

When it comes to history, African countries had diverse paths particularly during and after colonialism. Even after they won their independence, many of the countries maintained close relationship with former colonial powers. Thus, the legacies of the colonial powers have vividly continued to have preeminence in connection with trade, tourism, investment, art, culture and sports. This could be manifested in their socio-political and economic orientations. Diverse interests and priorities which emanate from colonial history and legacy could pull them apart while trying to work on their common vision and aspiration. Therefore, the diverse colonial legacies the continent underwent might impede an inclusive growth and sustainable development in the move to integrating the countries economically.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Despite the protocol to the treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to free movement of persons, right of Residence and right of Establishment (Article 12-17) and the plan that “the AU assembly of Heads of State and Government has put in 2019 to set the stage for AU Member States to begin the process of production and issuance of the African passport in accordance with their national laws and regulations”³, the progress has not been that satisfactory to realize the visa-free Africa project within the scheduled timeline. Without the African Passport, The Protocol on Free Movement of Persons will be incomplete. Like twins, the Protocol and the African Passport are inextricably interlinked.

The task is not easy as it takes new measures and commitments of each member state as well as adequate preparations. Although the decision was made unanimously, all governments have not yet taken meaningful steps toward allowing citizens of African countries to exercise the free movement in the territories of the continent. Needless to mention, people move from one country to another in search of job and better living conditions. Hence, the member states should be able to create ample jobs which could benefit citizens of neighboring countries besides their own job seekers; otherwise it might bring burden to the host country.

On top of that it was noted at the Assembly of Heads of State and Government that it is possible to achieve the AU vision of visa-free continent, in spite of the prevailing security and stability

³ African Union (<https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20180709/member-states-experts-meet-guidelines-design-production-and-issuance-african>)

challenges in different parts of the continent. Here, the issue of peace and security should not have been neglected as it could hold back implementation of the program. Needless to mention, some countries of Africa have its own issues which they need to work out before fully opening their borders to neighboring states. The threat posed by terrorist groups in the Horn of Africa, for example, might hinder the free movement of persons and goods in the region.

Furthermore, infrastructural development in most countries of Africa is still lagging behind. For instance, rudimentary transportation and communication systems have not been developed yet. Having next to nothing or poor cross boundary roads and rail way networks among the member states, how could it be possible to achieve the African integration project?

Africa is a continent where most of its population is young. It is also endowed with natural resources ranging from ever green rainforests to valuable ground minerals. The continent has the potential to grow; however, it still lacks effective management and modern technology to create competitive economy. Consequently, it has not yet occupied a position it deserve in the global arena such as in the UN and its agencies. Most of the international organizations are under the developed nation's sphere of influence. While receiving aid and being financed by these global institutions and the EU, how could Africa achieve its economic and political dreams to realize the African integration?

For the continent to be united and become an influential global player, an unprecedented and radical measures need to be taken at leadership level while engaging the public. Otherwise, it would be very challenging for Africa to meet its ultimate aspiration, to become a major political and economic force in the global arena.

1.3. Core argument of the study

The political instability, poor ICT and infrastructural facilities in the continent might constrain the plan of the visa-free Africa project from being realized soon, Africa has not overcome its challenges yet. The security issue in the continent, for example, is one of them. While having such unsettled challenges at hand, the Union has declared the implementation period of the visa-free Africa, which is by 2020. Therefore, the core argument of this paper is that the project cannot be successful within the scheduled period of time.

1.4. Objectives of the study

1.4.1. General objective

The general objective of the study is to explore the prevailing potential constraints to the realization of the Visa-Free Africa project and promising opportunities for its realization.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

The specific objective of the study is:

- to examine the ties and integration of member states with each other
- to indicate how external forces could impact implementation of the visa-free project
- to throw light upon the rudimentary activities needed for integration and intra-Africa trade
- to assess preconditions for the attainment of visa-free Africa plan

1.5. Research questions

The basic questions asked in the course of the study include:

- 1) Is the Visa Free Africa achievable in terms of time?
- 2) What enabling conditions are in place to implement the plan at this critical time?
- 3) What motivated the African Union to dream of integrating African countries and opening borders among member states?

1.6. Research Methodology

The research approach is qualitative. It is depended on data collected from secondary and primary sources, and is discussed and analyzed content-wise.

1.6.1. Research Design

The research is relied on descriptive survey method as it enables to come up with adequate and relevant information. The gathered data of the research is also discussed and analyzed accordingly.

1.6.2. Data collection Methods

The research relied on secondary sources; therefore, it is based on AU reports, books; published and unpublished scholarly articles, Journals, African Union reports, African Development Bank annual report, periodicals and websites.

1.7. Significance of the study

First and foremost the research could contribute to the understanding and knowledge gap existing in connection with the enabling conditions and potential threats to the visa-free Africa and economic integration. This study has offered enough information to those who are going to undertake further studies. What is more, it could help students and scholars working with the AU and African studies affairs to visualize the magnitude of the obstacles which could encounter 'Africa without Borders' vision in particular and some aspirations of the Agenda 2063 in general.

1.8. Scope of the study

This research examines weather the visa-free Africa project is going to be achieved within the scheduled time and the fundamental issues in working toward integration. The research does not emphasis on the whole agenda 2063; however, it attempts to look into the current status of regional economic communities to be able to predict the achievability of the ongoing promotion of intra-Africa trade and integration at continent level.

1.9. Limitations of the study

Needless to state, there is no adequate fund allocated solely for the research purpose. This could affect its depth and scope to a certain extent. Moreover, there is no enough research conducted in relation to the research topic. Hence, it was difficult to get enough sources related to the topic.

1.10. Organization of the study

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter gives background and introductory information pertaining to the topic. The second chapter presents conceptual framework and review of literature that is related to the study. Chapter three deals with the issues related to visa-free Africa project. Chapter four discusses challenges and prospects of visa-free Africa project. Finally, the last chapter i.e. chapter five provides conclusion of the study, and points out recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with relevant concepts of intra-Africa trade and regional economic integration depending upon the previous scholarly works of various researchers. The role of the Pan African movement as well as related processes that contributed to the consolidation of regional integration would be discussed. The changes seen in the continent with regard to regional economic integration have their roots in these ideas and movements as they managed to bring many leaders together.

2.2. Definition of terms and key concepts

2.2.1 Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism, even though it went through certain phases, was a movement that brought together people of African origin. It can be also defined as “a strategy for social solidarity, as well as cultural, political and economic emancipation.”⁴

Various studies tend to highlight that Pan-Africanism is a political and cultural phenomenon that regards Africans and African descendants abroad as a unit and that seeks to regenerate and unify Africa and promote a feeling of oneness among the people of African world. It glorifies the African past as it inculcates pride in African values.

Two major concepts which emerged from the discourse of pan-Africanism were “the redemption of Africa” and “Africa for Africans”. It was also an ideology with shared vision of what is desirable for future of all Africans in Africa and in the Diaspora rather than what actually existed.

Actions during the early days of Pan-Africanism were also a response to the emerging anti-colonial movements, and issues pertaining to post-colonial development, and Africa’s

⁴ Mkandawire, Thandika, “Re-thinking Pan-Africanism”, paper presented at first conference of Intellectuals of Africa and its diaspora, Dakar, Senegal 6-9 October 2004

relationship with former colonial powers. Some of African leaders demanded that the resource of Africa should be used for the benefit and development of Africa. Such goals were noble, but also an anathema to the former colonial powers, for which Africa's only purpose was to fill the coffers of the imperial powers. Most of these leaders of the movement were, therefore, hounded and got rid off of the position they hold or murdered. (Yeebo, 2016).

Mathews (2016) notes that Pan-Africanism and its modern version, African renaissance are popular themes in contemporary African discourse. "African unity is closely intertwined with evolution of Pan-Africanism. Pan Africanism has been and remains the most ambitious and most inclusive ideology that Africa devised for itself since the 19th century. The conceptual notion of Pan-Africanism provided the philosophical frame work such ideas as a united states of Africa, an African federation, or a union Government of Africa-essentially stressing the need for continental unity as a means of achieving African liberation and development.

There are ideas that will not die regardless of the passage of time, their power and reach is of such magnitude. One of those ideas is Pan-Africanism. The idea, history and cause of Pan-Africanism is marked, celebrated and reaffirmed each year on African day, May 25. Pan-Africanism which is more an idea and the challenge appears when it comes to any idea is of course, actually putting in to practice. Turning Pan-Africanism from an idea in to reality was a challenge. For the challenge or hurdles to turn Pan-Africanism from an idea to reality had varies causes'' (John Wright).

Independence has brought statements from many African leaders of a common aspiration for a "united Africa". The background of colonial status, shared in one way or another by nearly all, gave meaning to the aspiration which had its intellectual birth in the series of Pan-African congresses held at intervals from 1900 on.

Pan-Africanism managed to influence African nationalism in many ways. Pan-African Congresses which were held in 1945 emphasized the need to promote the dignity of black people and liberate them from racial discrimination. They emphasized the idea of Africa for Africans. Of particular importance was 5th Pan-African Congress which was held in Manchester in 1945. It was attended by key figures like Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta. The congress resolved

that Africans must organize liberation movements to free Africa from foreign control. This encouraged the rise of nationalist movements. (www.myelimu.com)

2.3. Regional Cooperation and Economic Integration

The need for forging unity is part of the reasons for the establishment of the African Union. “Achieving greater unity and solidarity between the countries and the peoples of Africa as well as accelerating the political and socio-economic integration of the continent” has been stated in Article of the Union. The integration of Africa is instrumental in consolidating democratization, strengthening peace effort and accelerating development process. The principal drive for the establishment of the AU has been the desire to strengthen the cohesion, solidarity and integration of African peoples and countries (Mathews, 2016).

As early as the 1960s the leaders of Africa who worked for the defeat of colonialism differed on their views of unity and integration. They were divided in their views and approaches to bring the states of Africa together (Martin, 2002). Since independence the states of Africa pursued policies of regional cooperation and integration with a view to reversing dependence on the west.

According to Mathews (2006) unpublished work, regional interaction comprises a range of cooperation among countries within a given geographical area. It is a broad undertaking which takes harmonization of policies in various areas such as trade, investment, infrastructural development as well as fiscal and monetary policies between member states. It is aimed at ensuring stability and continued economic growth and development within the area concerned with interaction. Integration of the states of Africa requires regional unity and varied economies to work together through curbing trade, custom and immigration barriers among the states.

”Integration is understood and employed not just or just exclusively in terms of economic processes and the institutional mechanisms by which they find expression but also with reference to the associated political visions and actions with which they are closely intertwined. Economic integration projects are always incubated and operationalized within the framework of a political vision – an ideological mooring.”

The purpose of African regional integration is mainly to solve the economic, political and social problems of African countries by coordinating the efforts of all African countries through regional and continental integration. The motives of regional economic communities have the prospect of enhancing continental development and integration in Africa under the umbrella of African Union (Ketema, 2013).

Discussing the potential challenges to continental development and regional integration Sarbo (2010) pointed out that there are many and regional integration has great potential to weed-out Africans from these problems. But it need great take care in the regional cooperation and integration areas identification, operation and implemented as well as evaluation. This will be possible by ensuring that the role of regional blocs and understood by all the necessary stakeholders. African regional blocs are increasingly being viewed as important mechanisms of interstate cooperation in the environmental, political, security and economic spheres. Today, there is no a country in the world that is not encompassed by one or more regional groupings. There are not just expectations and opportunities from regionalism, but also fears. While some see it as a potential to enhance their position, provide economic benefits, protect their national identity and values against western dominated globalization, others may consider it a mechanism that might dilute their identity and weaken their newly achieved sovereignty.

Taking advantage of regional integration states can pool their efforts and resources together to offset their marginal position through a coordinated approach for a stronger bargaining position in the global arena. Regional integration and common institutions can also help in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts between and within states. In the post-colonial period, political and economic integration has viewed in Africa as mechanism to overcome underdevelopment, marginalization and fragmentation as well as improve the continent's position in the global political economy systems. The creation of a vast Continent with common market by opening up of African economies through the effort of RECs is a prerequisite for Africa's economic development and integration. It must, therefore, be re-emphasized here that Africa either unites or perishes, and there is no other choice (Sarbo, 2013).

Trade integration is recognized as a powerful leverage tool for growth, development, and poverty alleviation. The issue of international trade in Africa (both intra and extra regional flows) is the object of a long-term focus of African governments, international institutions, aid agencies, and other stakeholders. Nevertheless, measuring and monitoring the level of intraregional trade and, in particular, regional integration is a major challenge for both analysts and policy makers.

On many occasions political turmoil has persistently limited realization of notable progress in several African nations. In several African countries, deep suspicion of free trade existed. All such slow progresses in regional integration implies that African economic communities have failed to live up to their full potential in terms of achieving significant economies of scale, increased competitiveness, industrial modernization and upgrading, higher domestic and foreign investment, and greater intraregional trade (African Union Commission, 2012). African countries have not fully exercised their bargaining power to reap all the benefits of trading and engaging in a globalized world. This can be largely attributed to existing barriers (both tariff and non-tariff) to the free movement of goods and services across countries (Alem, 2014).

The African Union (AU) has articulated in agenda 2063, a long-term framework for enhancing “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.” The Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) was identified therein as the pillar for “accelerating progress towards continental unity and integration for sustained growth, trade, goods exchanges, services, free movement of people and capital.” In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) launched a new development compact, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with specific targets for eliminating extreme poverty. The SDG targets are aligned with Agenda 2063 through the Common African Position (CAP) an initiative adopted by AU Heads of State and Government in 2014 as a “Collective African Voice” to inform the SDGs development process. In similar development, African Ministers of Finance and Economy in March 2016, called for an integrated approach to the AU and SDG agendas monitored through one consolidated result framework. There is now a consensus among African countries and the international community to use trade as a tool for economic transformation and poverty eradication.

Since recent time the African trade agenda is at a critical junction. All African sub-regions have engaged in negotiations for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the European Union. On June 24, 2016, the United Kingdom, a major trading partner for several of these EPAs sub-regions, voted to separate from the European single market. This development adds a significant complication to the African trade agenda (UNECA, 2016).

The issue of trade facilitation is vital to the region. Adopting the Trade Facilitation (TF) agreement in Bali in 2013 has had considerable consequences for African countries. Trade facilitation is projected to boost intra-African trade by between 10 and 16 per cent. Analytical studies indicate that the creation of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) accompanied by more efficient customs procedures and reduction in delays at African ports can more than double intra-African trade within a decade. Likewise, implementing trade facilitation measures in coastal and transit countries can have positive spillover effects on hinterland countries. The positive externalities Trade Facilitation reforms and investments produces need to be viewed as a regional public good. The Agenda 2063 10-year Implementation Plan amongst other important priorities for the continent includes several flagship projects. The CFTA is one of these projects as defined in AU Assembly Decision 394 of January 2012, on Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) and fast tracking the establishment of the CFTA. Through the CFTA, intra-African trade is expected to double between 2012 and 2022, intra-African agricultural trade to triple by 2025 (Malabo Declaration of June 2014).

Trade creates linkages that are essential to the integration agenda. Although intra-African trade is not a panacea for development, it is quite important. Small & Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) could become more competitive by creating economies of scale across their respective regions. As they grow, SMEs can strengthen product value chains and facilitate the development of technology and knowledge. Trade incentivizes and spurs infrastructure development and attracts foreign direct investment thus expanding intra-African trade. This is a key to accelerating economic growth on the continent. Especially important for the continent's many small, non-coastal countries that face tremendous challenges trading internationally.

Presently, the continent's internal trade is challenged by the fact that most of its exports go to the world's more advanced economies like the US, UK and China, and most of its imports come

from those same advanced economies. In this respect, the African Economic Platform focused on:

- ❖ Economic diversification in order to encourage many African countries to specialize in complementary goods to exchange with each other;
- ❖ Conflict, as it diminishes the capacity for African states to engage in intra-continental trade. These factors lead to low levels of economic growth, destroy needed export infrastructure, and slows and reverses regional integration;
- ❖ Infrastructure is and has always been a major issue for Africa. Like conflict, infrastructural deficiencies reduce economic growth and productivity, and raise transportation costs.
- ❖ The unnecessary delays, harassments and massive graft associated with corruption among those engaged in intraregional trade in Africa needs to be addressed in order to increase trade.
- ❖ To effectively stimulate growth across sectors and among nations in the region, significant efforts must be undertaken to address these challenges if the benefits of intra-Africa trade are to be truly realized (African Economic Platform March 2017, Mauritius)

Not getting access to adequate and relevant information on trade may be more serious with respect to, but is in no way limited to, intraregional flows. Significant questions surround the level of participation of Africa in world trade as well. General trends, however, indicate that Africa's share in world trade of goods is still very low, despite an upswing in recent years after having reached a minimum of 2 percent in 2010 (UNECA 2010). Africa's share in the global market is highly correlated with the evolution of commodity prices. The level of intra-Africa trade is equally low by world standards. While the share of in-trade reached 40 percent in North America and 63 percent in Western Europe in 2009, it was estimated at only 10 to 12 percent in Africa (UNECA, 2010).

Better measurement of trade levels and patterns is a prerequisite for improved understanding of African trade's determinants, which in turn is critical for proper policy planning and implementation and the tracking of progress, as well as the impact of trade impact on major targets such as growth, income generation and distribution, and food insecurity. In addition, most African countries are parties to regional and international trade agreements. A thorough

evaluation of the trade diversion and creation effects generated by such agreements requires reliable and up-to-date trade data (Bouet and Roy, 2012).

Missing trade flows are defined here as those flows that may have taken place between two potential trading partners but that are unknown to the researcher because neither partner has reported them to the existing databases. The huge share of intra-Africa trade that goes unreported to international and regional databases and that cannot be matched using traditional reconciliation techniques (since neither partner reports its trade) has given rise to the so-called “missing trade” literature, which has followed in the wake of Trefler (1995). Since a huge share of the potential trade flows in Africa fits this definition, the topic has been deemed important, and econometric models (mainly gravity equations) have been used to measure and predict these potential, unobserved trade flows (Villoria 2008).

Informal trade is a common feature of African landscapes. Estimates indicate that some 3 million metric tons of staple food commodities were traded informally in East Africa in 2013, and that several hundred thousand cross Southern Africa’s borders via informal routes every year. In most cases (some say up to 70%) it’s women trading. And it’s not only agricultural commodities but also includes small electronics, household appliances, clothes, shoes and cosmetics, among others. Such trade is essential for welfare and poverty reduction: it creates jobs (particularly for vulnerable groups – not only women but also youth), supports livelihoods and contributes to food security. COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) has tried to address some of those challenges with the Simplified Trade Regime (STR). Under this, traders carrying goods included in a pre-negotiated list and worth up to \$1,000 can clear them with little paperwork (using a simplified certificate of origin) and without inspection by clearing agents. The processing fee also has been lowered in a number of COMESA countries.

The African Economic Outlook 2017 of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted that over the past two decades Africa has enjoyed advances in trade and regional integration, but the volume of intra-Africa trade remains low. The value of trade between Africa and the world has quadrupled. The continent’s trading partners are also more geographically diverse, and regional co-operation is building momentum. This is because African countries have adopted more open policies, invested in infrastructure and continued to

pursue regional integration. These achievements ease business by reducing the costs and time required to move goods and services within countries and across borders; they also increase the continent's appeal as a partner in global trade. Moving forward, Africa should first diversify its exports to reduce exposure to commodity price shocks. Second, it should better tap the capacity of intra-Africa trade. Thus, governments need to focus on moving regional integration initiatives forward.

This African Economic Outlook also indicated that Africa continued to experience regional and global headwinds in 2016, resulting in a further slowdown in growth performance. This notwithstanding, the outlook for the medium term is positive. The decline in economic growth posted in 2016 is attributed to several factors: low commodity prices, a sluggish performance in the global economy, a gradual deceleration in China's growth and second-order effects of the Arab Spring, amplified by the prolonged conflict in Libya. While Africa's net commodity exporters faced a difficult year, the majority of the continent's non-commodity exporting countries continued to grow, consolidating previous years' gains. Fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies varied across the continent. Countries with coordinated policies were able to better withstand shocks.

Promoting industrialization is back on Africa's economic policy agenda, with renewed impetus and vigor. Industrialization in 21st century Africa calls for innovative strategies embracing all the potential of its 54 countries. First, innovative industrialization strategies should go beyond sectorial approaches that target only manufacturing. Africa can industrialize by promoting all economic sectors that have potential for high growth and employment creation. Second, strategies should include high-potential entrepreneurs. Start-ups and small and medium-sized firms with high-potential can complement the growth of large companies in driving Africa's industrialization. Policies must promote "green industrialization" with lower environmental costs. Industrial policies must adapt lessons from countries that have already developed a strong industrial base to the distinct African context. Innovative peer learning is critical to the new wave of industrialization in Africa, according to AEO 2017.

Alem Shumiye (2014) mentioned that emphasis on regional economic integration in Africa dates back in 1963 following the formation of the then Organization of African Unity (OAU) which is transformed into the African Union in 2002. Since then, regional economic co-operation and integration are given special impetus and high priority to promote long-term collective self-sustaining and integrated socioeconomic development in Africa. Various policies were adopted to back regional economic integration initiatives in Africa. The first major plan for Africa's development – the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos was adopted in 1980 and set out a vision of an integrated African market by the year 2000, though it failed. Further impetus was given by the Abuja Treaty which was approved in 1994 with a plan to form the African Economic Community (AEC) by 2028. As “pillars” of the AEC, the African Union officially recognized eight economic blocs (Economic Commission for Africa, 2012) namely Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The relatively poor trade performances of Africa, and especially its very low extra-and intra-trade as compared to that of other regions of the world, may partly be explained by such obstacles limiting spillovers associated to exchanges within the continent. In addition, the inability of most African countries to secure access to larger markets, inherent high trade costs among neighbors, lack of an effective framework for regional cooperation and resource pooling worth mentioning. In this context, opening African economies within themselves is expected to generate great benefits to Africa. Hence, African countries do not trade much with each other means that they have been unable to fully harness the synergies and complementarities of their economies and take full advantage of the economies of scale and other benefits (such as income and employment generation) than greater market integration would have provided(Alem,2014).

The elimination of trade barriers is certainly important in order to improve extra-bloc and intra-bloc trade performance in the IGAD region. But, it will not have the desired effect if it is not complemented with policy measures to boost supply capacities. If this is not done there is a risk that domestic firms will continue to be unable to take advantage of the market access

opportunities created by regional integration, leaving ample space for foreign firms to capture most of the benefits from the process, with dire consequences for domestic enterprise and industrial development. In this regard, it is vital to encourage and promote the involvement of private sectors to participate in the planning and implementation of infrastructures (road, railways, energy distribution channels, etc.) so as to strengthen the economic integration process. While enacting policies to lift tariff and non-tariff barriers to intra-IGAD trade is important, policymakers must also foster entrepreneurship and address supply side constraints inhibiting the ability of the private sector to produce and export.

Blatantly, economic integration as a development strategy in Africa has reached a crossroads. The time has come to take a stand. This is because implementation of regional integration programs is in quite a crisis. In COMESA for instance, some member states, for different reasons, are yet to join the free-trade area, established way back on 1 November 2000; namely, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda and Swaziland, being five out of the 19 member states of COMESA. The Customs Union was launched on 7 June 2009, but the three year transition period within which it was supposed to become functional passed without any member state indicating that it was ready to implement the Customs Union, and a number of reasons were advanced for this state of affairs (Mangeni, 2013).

The pressing issue is whether the short-term revenue losses from elimination or reduction of customs duties on certain tariff lines, can be addressed. Analytical assessments, for IDS, clearly demonstrated that revenue losses resulting from elimination or reduction of customs duties can usually be recouped from slight increases on the rates of trade taxes such as VAT or excise. On the broader benefits of economic integration, recent work by IDS (2013), for instance, estimates that a Tripartite FTA involving elimination of duties and non-tariff barriers, as well as trade facilitation, will generate additional new trade worth US\$7.7 billion annually, constituting an increase of about 20% over the 2014 baseline; whereas mere elimination of duties would generate just US\$250 million annually (Willenbockel, 2013).

2.4. Prerequisites for regional economic integration

Infrastructure development and environment for inclusive economic development industrialization, private sector-led intra-African Trade and sustainable utilization of natural resources created. By all accounts, Africa's economic growth and performance this past decade has been exceptionally strong, even in the midst of widespread global economic crisis and recession. The growth however has not resulted in significant and commensurate declines in poverty levels, nor has it been rich in jobs. In a large measure, the growth has not also been sufficiently inclusive. Low intra-African trade, limited integration and infrastructure connectedness are additional obstacles to boosting the global competitiveness of African economies and contributing to the elimination of poverty. (<https://au.int/en/auc/priorities>)

The continent needs to accelerate efforts towards continental integration, boost intra-African trade and improve connectivity through infrastructure development. Much has been achieved to date, but the road ahead is still far. The development of infrastructure and connectivity between the different African countries is key to Africa's integration efforts to facilitate people to people relations and to facilitate intra African trade. Infrastructure is one of the key factors hindering the successful integration of the African continent into the global trading system due to high trade costs, especially for landlocked countries-poor infrastructure accounts for 40per cent of transport costs for coastal counties and 60 per cent for landlocked ones (Willenbockel, 2013).

Although progress has been registered in some aspects, the African Union Commission is expected to accelerate implementation of the institutional architecture for infrastructure development and ensuring mobilization of adequate resources. Tangible measures need to be taken to complete the missing links in the continent's transport and ICT infrastructure networks. Moreover, the need for working towards facilitating conditions for joint civil aviation, and marine/surface transport policies seeks due attention. Access to efficient, cost-effective and environment friendly modern energy services as well as improved integrated water resource management need to be among the priority areas for the Commission. (www.au.int/en/auc/priorities)

For over five decades, regional integration has been part of the African continent's overarching strategy for economic transformation. The establishment of regional trade agreements (RTAs)

and regional economic communities (RECs) was viewed as the panacea for a whole range of socioeconomic, developmental and political challenges. Their scope included the promotion of intraregional trade, policy coordination, and the management or development of shared physical infrastructure. While some of these regional arrangements also covered issues of common interest in public governance, defense, and security, others extended to political issues. The creation of RTAs and RECs was treated as the sine qua non to address the challenges of small domestic markets, weak productive structures, slow progress on reforms/ economic growth, and widespread conflict/political instability. Over time, however, these regional arrangements were either punctuated by periods of stagnation or blighted by reversals, with modest achievements, at best, in a few instances (AfDB, 2012).

The core challenge is how to improve the processes of moving goods and services across national boundaries, and henceforth, building and operating efficient border posts and customs procedures. To date, few trade facilitation initiatives have successfully addressed this challenge. Improving border posts and customs procedures will not only reduce the cost and delays incurred by commercial companies, and enhance trade competitiveness, but will also boost government revenues (potentially by up to 25 percent) and accelerate economic development in the continent.

The low level of intraregional trade in Africa has been persistent. The intensification of the RTAs following the initiatives agreed under the Abuja Treaty of 1991 (e.g. the establishment of the African Economic Community and the more recent Constitutive Act of the African Union) encouraged governments and sub-regional organizations as well as pan-African organizations (AU, NEPAD) to scale up their efforts towards facilitating intraregional trade.

A border post can be defined as the “location where one country’s authority over goods and persons ends and another country’s authority begins.” It is the location where a multitude of government agencies (i.e. Revenue Authority – Customs; Immigration; Security – Police; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Health; Bureau of Standards, etc.) are involved in the various document and goods controls, the calculation and collection of duties and taxes, as well as immigration. The multiplicity of those agencies operating on both sides of the same border doubles the bureaucracy at border posts, which translates into congestion and delays (the waiting time for a container/truck to cross a border post in Africa can range from 3 minutes to 2.8 days).

The cumbersome procedures entailed in customs processing can cost a consignment about US\$ 185 for each day of delay (AfDB, 2012).

Goods are transported through 10 major corridors -- Northern, North–South, Dar Central, Dar es Salaam, Nacala, Beira, Maputo, Trans Kalahari, Trans Kaprivi, and Trans Cunene, in Eastern and Southern Africa. The large number of border post and roadblocks along those corridors and the inefficiency of the procedures are overwhelmingly costly to traders and businesses in the sub-region. For instance, traders/trucks have to negotiate 47 roadblocks and weigh stations between Kigali (Rwanda) and Mombasa (Kenya); and they have to wait about 36 hours at the South Africa–Zimbabwe border post (Beitbridge). In Southern Africa and EAC countries, customs delays cost the two sub-regions about US\$ 48 million and US\$ 8 million respectively per annum (USAID, 2009).

The bottlenecks confronting formal cross-border trade in Africa serve to fuel the very high level of informal trading practices. These can be defined as the trade in goods, between two neighboring countries, which does not pass formally through customs controls. While informal trade is a major source of job creation and livelihoods (60–70 percent of African households earn income from the informal sector), policymakers have been slow to incentivize traders to formalize their activities (AfDB, 2012).

The informal sector in Africa, which is estimated to represent about one-third of official GDP, is characterized by micro, small and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs), predominantly women and individual dealers in agro-business and pastoral activities. Small traders and business owners turn to the informal sector to avoid the complex regulations and duties (especially the high price of import and export duties) levied in formal trade, cumbersome customs procedures, and the high degree of corruption and “facilitation payments” encountered at checkpoints and border posts (USAID, 2009).

Regional Integration in Africa report published by the World Trade Organization, urges African leaders to expand trade finance and reduce behind-the-border trade restrictions such as excessive regulations and weak legal systems in order to accelerate regional integration. Nevertheless, saddled with weak economies, small domestic markets and 16 landlocked countries, governments believe they can achieve economic integration by starting at the regional level and

working their way up, merging all the regional trading blocs into an African Free Trade Area. But with 14 different trading blocs, critics say that's just too many. Some blocs have overlapping members and many countries belong to multiple blocs. Yet, the challenge is not simply the number of trading blocs, experts say, but their track record. Governments need to implement their trade agreements.

Lack of progress in implementing agreements along with the absence of reliable transport, energy and information and technology infrastructure make the journey towards regional integration long and arduous. "Road freight moves incredibly slowly, while major ports are choked for lack of capacity," notes the AfDB. Even with the current gains Africa is making in upgrading regional infrastructure, Ibrahim Mayaki, the head of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Union's development arm, finds the continent still faces serious infrastructure shortcomings across all sectors, both in terms of access and quality. NEPAD has just completed a 30-year plan that focuses on regional trans-border projects like the 4,500-km highway from Algiers in Algeria to Lagos, Nigeria. Africa requires huge investments to develop, upgrade and maintain its infrastructure. The AfDB estimates the region would need to spend an additional \$40 billion a year on infrastructure to address not only current weaknesses but also to keep pace with economic growth. (<http://www.un.org>)

Africa Renewal, a magazine published by the United Nations, also calls for intra-Africa trade to go beyond political commitments and that African states need to reduce dependence on commodities by expanding the services sector, including telecommunications, transport, educational and financial. "They need to increase investments in infrastructure. And they need to eliminate or significantly reduce non-tariff barriers that are major roadblocks to intra-African trade. The list of non-tariff barriers is as long as it is comprehensive, ranging from prohibitive transaction costs to complex immigration procedures, limited capacity of border officials and costly import and export licensing procedures. For this to happen, it will take much more than political commitments; it will require practical steps on the ground even if they come with some costs."

CHAPTER THREE

Visa openness and related issues

3.1. Issues about Passport

A passport holder is normally entitled to enter the country that issued the passport, although some people entitled to a passport may not be full citizens with right of abode. A passport does not of itself create any rights in the country being visited or obligate the issue country in any way, such as providing consular assistance. Some passports attest to status as a diplomat or other official, entitled to rights and privileges such as immunity from arrest or prosecution.

Many countries normally allow entry to holders of passports of other countries, sometimes require a visa. Many other additional conditions, such as not being likely to become a public charge for financial or other reasons, and the holder not having been convicted of a crime, may apply. Where a country that does not recognize another, or is in dispute with, may prohibit the use of their passport for travel to that other country, or may prohibit entry to holders of that other country's passports, and sometimes to others who have, for example, visited the other country.

The African Union launched the first African Passport at the 27th AU Summit in July 2016. The electronic passport with inscriptions in English, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Swahili is being issued to AU Heads of State and Government, Foreign Ministers and other high-level representatives. The goal is to work towards rolling out the passport for all African citizens, thereby facilitate the long standing dream and plan of the realization of visa-free Africa. Africa's visa-free passport is a core part of realizing the goals set out in Agenda 2063 to integrate and unite the continent, helping to facilitate free movement of people, building on regional protocols, and promoting open visa policies and procedures for African travellers.

Following the launch of the African Union Passport and the overwhelming enthusiasm that greeted it, the Assembly decided to encourage all Member States to adopt the African Passport. The Commission is set to provide technical support to Member States to enable them to produce and issue the African Passport to their citizens. The Commission has put in place an implementation roadmap for the development of a Protocol on the Free Movement of persons in

Africa by January 2018, which should come into immediate effect in Member States, in line with the continental transformation framework, Agenda 2063.

In order to ensure effective implementation of the Protocol and the issuance of the African Passport, Africa needs to take the first step of abolition of visas to facilitate the right of entry through its introduction. However, some countries of Africa have not opened its door for visa-free policy yet.

3.2. Issues about Visa and Visa openness

A visa is an official document that allows the bearer to legally enter a foreign country and is usually stamped or glued into the bearer's passport. If one's visa is glued into the passport, it is usually a small document that includes the name, passport number, place of birth, reason for travel and expiration date. Stamped visas typically have less information on them. They usually only have the destination and date from which the visa is valid and official instructions stating how many days the visa is valid for.

There are three different classifications concerning visa requirement. Visa required means a visa has to be obtained before departure. Visa on arrival means a visa has to be obtained upon arrival in the country. This includes filling out any visa application forms, paying the visa fee if applicable, and receiving a visa in a travel document. No visa required or visa-free means that there is no visa needed either before departure or on arrival, with no entry authorization required to walk freely into the country.

There are several different types of visas, each of which afford the bearer different rights in the host country. Travel visas, for instance, allow the bearer to enter a foreign country for touristic and leisure purposes only and stays for a predetermined amount of time. These visas do not entitle the holder to work or engage in any business activities in the host country, according to Passport Index. Travel visas can be separated into two categories: immigrant and non-immigrant visas. Immigrant visas allow the bearer to reside permanently in the host country, whereas non-immigrant visas allow the bearer entry into the host country on a temporary basis.

The Passport Index also notes that work-visas are required for individuals who wish to take on employment or engage in business activities in the host country. There are several types of work visas that depend on the nature of the work and length of stay. For example, working holiday visas allow individuals to temporarily take on employment while travelling through the country. A business visa allows the bearer to enter the host country and engage in business activities without joining that country's labor market. For example, an individual may require a business visa if they are travelling to a country to do business with another company or if they are attending a business conference. The visitor typically must show that they are not receiving income from the country.

A student visa is a type of non-immigrant visa that allows the bearer to enroll at a post-secondary educational institution in the host country. High school foreign exchange students must typically obtain a visa for temporary residence.

Refugee and asylum visas can be granted to individuals fleeing persecution, war, natural disasters and other situations in which their life is at risk. Working holiday visas allow the bearer to undertake temporary employment in a country through which they are travelling.

Spousal visas allow partners to visit each other when the couple does not hail from the same country. Travellers may sometimes require transit visas in order to pass through a country that is not their destination. Transit visas are typically required if you have a layover in a country of more than a few hours.

An Electronic visa or e-Visa is a digital visa that is stored in a database rather than stamped or glued into the bearer's passport. The e-Visa is linked to the individual's passport number. Applications for e-Visas are typically done over the Internet and the applicant will receive a paper document to present while travelling.

A country's visa policy is a rule that states who may or may not enter the country. The policy may allow passport holders of one's country to enter visa-free but not the passport holders from foreign countries. Some visa policies are bilateral whereby countries allow visa-free travel to each other's citizens, so as to strengthen ties and integration among themselves. To do so, visa openness or relaxation is a key.

Visa openness means how easy it is for visitors to travel to a country when it comes to visas. A more visa-open country has a liberal or relaxed visa policy for travellers, so that visitors either do not need a visa when they enter or can get a visa on arrival. (AfDB's Africa Visa Openness Index report 2018)

Most countries of Africa have been closed off to their citizens of neighbor countries of Africa owing to restrict visa requirements. However, in recent years, African countries have loosened visa restrictions on their neighbors in order to facilitate the free movement of people and goods; thus, regional integration has become a priority. The continent is seeing a shift towards more free movement of people.

Africa Visa Openness Index of African development Band has been measuring African countries how open they are when it comes to visas, by looking at what they ask of citizens from other countries in Africa when they travel. It aims to show at a glance which countries are facilitating travel for citizens of other countries and how: whether they allow people to travel to their country without a visa, if travellers get a visa on arrival or if visitors need to get a visa before travel.

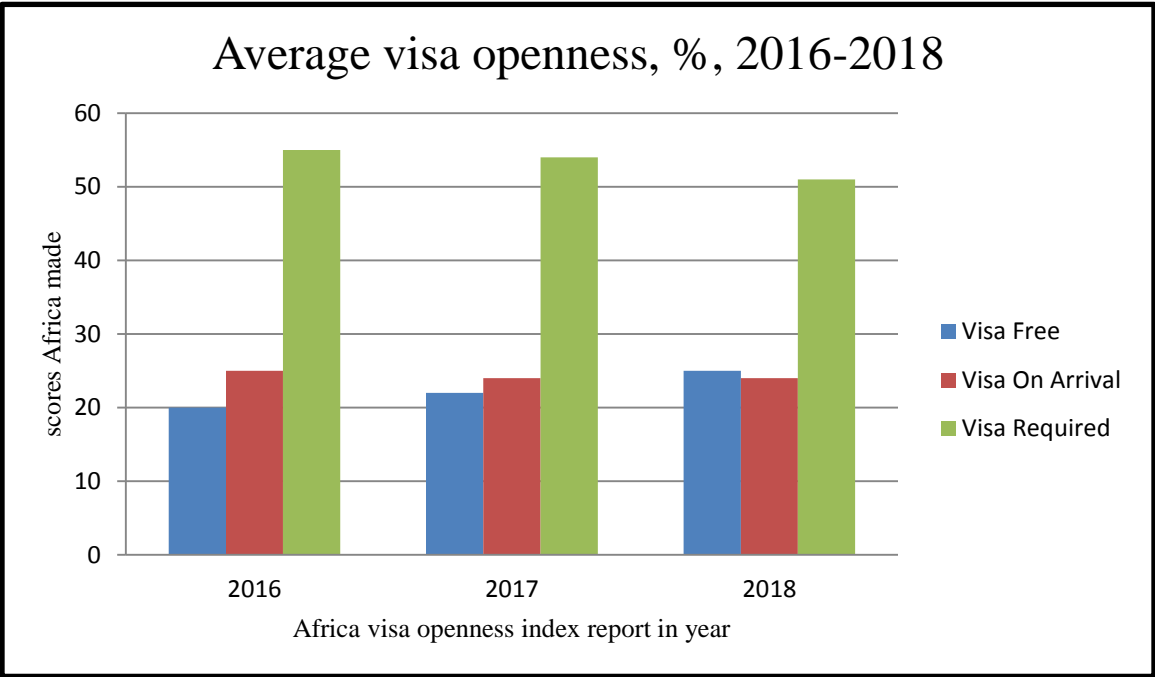
Currently, According to Africa Visa Openness Index report 2018, 11 African countries offer liberal access (visa-free or visa on arrival) to all Africans (up from 10 in 2017, and 13 in 2016), 4 African countries offer visa on arrival to all Africans (also 4 in 2017, and 3 in 2016), and 16 African countries offer e-Visas (up from 13 in 2017 and 9 in 2016). (See Appendix A)

African countries on average are becoming more open to each other, with indications that travel within the continent is getting easier. Compared to previous years, progress has been made in 2018 against visa openness indicators. Africans currently do not need a visa to travel to more countries than in previous years, and they need visas to travel to fewer countries. However, the fact that Africans still require visas to travel to just over half of other African countries shows more progress is needed to realize free movement of people continent-wide.

In 2018, Africans did not need visas to travel to 25 percent of other African countries⁵, compared to 22 percent in 2017⁶ and 20 percent in 2016⁷. The small increase may indicate that the way

⁵ AfDB, Africa Visa Openness index report 2018

forward will yield more visa openness, with African countries being more open to host African citizens from other countries. (See Appendices A, B, C)



From the chart we understand that Africans can get visas on arrival in 24% of other African countries (also 24% in 2017, and 25% in 2016). Africans need visas to travel to 51% of other African countries (down from 54% in 2017, and 55% in 2016). (See Appendix D)

⁶ AfDB, Africa Visa Openness index report 2017

⁷ AfDB, Africa Visa Openness index report 2016

3.3. Experiences of relevant African countries

3.3.1 The case of Seychelles and Mauritius

Seychelles and Mauritius are in the top 10 of the most visa-open countries in Africa. The case stories of Mauritius, an island state, showcase how the freer movement of people is leading to economic dividends. In recent years, the two countries have adopted open visa policies and smart travel solutions for visitors from other African countries in an effort to promote tourism, attract investment and boost the competitiveness of their economies. As a result, both countries have seen an increase in African business and leisure travellers, which has in turn generated an economic impact that is still growing.

According to Board of Investment Mauritius, greater visa openness forms part of Mauritius' Africa strategy, which aims to promote the country as a gateway for investment into the continent. There are over 20,000 global business companies registered in Mauritius. The country is ranked number one in Africa in the World Bank's *Doing Business 2016* and in the Global Competitiveness Index 2015-2016.³⁰ The Africa Centre of Excellence, the Board of Investment of Mauritius' one-stop shop on investment opportunities in Africa, provides real-time information for business ventures. The platform now has 7000 users, nearly two-thirds from Africa and outside the continent (<http://www.investmauritius.com>).

The Seychelles and Mauritius also have relatively open inbound visa policies, which works in their favor. The Seychelles, which has rendered itself a completely visa-free destination, has secured additional deregulated visa access for its own passport holders through visa waivers from the governments of Thailand and Angola in the first quarter of 2018. Similarly, Mauritius, which is visa-free for all but 16 countries, secured a visa-waiver agreement with New Zealand in April 2018.

3.3.2 Rwanda's visa openness

Rwanda Development Board noted that visa openness is helping Rwanda to achieve its goal to become a Middle Income Country by 2020. In recent years, trade, tourism and investment has grown and the economic outlook is strong. GDP growth increased to 7% in 2014 and tourism revenues rose by 4% to USD 305 million. The Rwanda Development Board's Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions initiative has seen results as conference visitors increased by 24% in 2014 (<http://www.rdb.rw>). To support its open visa policy at the regional level Rwanda abolished work permits for East African Community citizens. This has led to over 12,000 people getting work permits free of charge. Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda also allow travel between their countries with national identity cards, which has increased cross-border trade by 50%. The three countries launched a single tourist visa, which led to a 17% increase in arrivals to Rwanda in one year (ibid).

Within the framework of Rwanda's National Migration Policy, the country's systems include a visa-on-arrival policy for all Africans and an efficient visa procedure. The visa fee was halved from USD 60 to USD 30. Electronic visas are available through a virtual office policy. Rwanda processes over 90,000 e-Visas a year for 95% of visitors; only 5% of visitors go to an Embassy. Alongside the country's relaxation of visa requirements for visitors, Rwandans can get a passport in 3 days, down from 30 days, Rwanda Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration indicated.

The Automated Passenger Clearance System at Kigali Airport clears all Rwandans, who make up 30% of travellers, and frees up space for visitors. The Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration has won awards for service delivery using ICT and in promoting client satisfaction, now monitored through customer surveys (<https://www.migration.gov.rw>).

3.2.3 Ethiopia's status

Ethiopia is one of the founding members of the League of Nations, United Nations and Organization of African Union, and had much better and longer history of diplomacy compared to the rest of African countries. And also, it is a seat for African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and a member of Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); which is the largest regional economic organization in Africa, with 19 member states and a population of about 390 million, and the country had played a leading role during the pan-African movement; However, when it comes to Visa-free Africa project envisaged by AU, Ethiopian's role and rank is much more lesser than the rest of African Countries, only above Eritrea, Sudan, Libya, Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara. (See appendix E)

Ethiopia had played a leading role during the pan-African movement. Currently, its role, however, is not the same as it used to be. For instance, Ethiopia's role in realization of AU's vision of visa-free Africa project is very limited, which is thought provoking for a country with such great diplomatic background to stand at the bottom. As to visa openness index 2018, Ethiopia is ranked 50th (49th in 2017 and 46th in 2016) from the total number of African countries, which is 55. (See Appendices E, F and G)

Although, the country has relaxed its visa requirements for Africans into visa-on-arrival in 2018, its rank has been deteriorating from 46th to 50th. Many countries have visa policies and agreements that allow their citizens to travel freely between them without the need for a visa. Visitors to Ethiopia must obtain a visa from one of the Ethiopian diplomatic commission unless they come from one of the visa exempt countries or countries whose citizens are eligible to apply for an electronic or visa on arrival.

Citizens of Djibouti for three months and Kenya for one year do not require a visa to visit Ethiopia. Visas are required for all visitors except Kenyan and Djiboutian nationals and they must obtain from one of the Ethiopian diplomatic missions. Tourist visa, which is valid for up to three months, can be issued on arrival only at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport to nationals of the 40 countries and territories or persons holding residence permits issued by these countries or territories.

Visa is also granted on arrival at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport for visitor with an invitation letter attending meetings, or workshops organized by African Union, participants of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa conference and meetings. Visa on arrivals do not apply to nationals of Eritrea, Somalia, and Pakistan. Eligible persons of Eritrean and Somalis origin must supply a contact number and address in Ethiopia while applying for visa.

Regardless of nationality, travelers in transit do not require a visa if they arrive by air, remain in the permitted transit and depart within 12 hours. Ethiopia launched its own electronic visa platform on 12 June 2017. As of June 2018, nationals of the countries mentioned above, are eligible for eVisa. Travelers with e-Visa must enter via Addis Ababa Bole International Airport. Entering from other ports of entry is prohibited.

3.2.4 South Africa's experience

The Henley Passport Index is a ranking of all the world's passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa. Based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association, the index is updated in real time, as and when visa-policy changes come into effect.

The South African passport remains stable in the update of the Henley Passport Index. South Africa, ranked 50th globally, occupies third place in the sub-Saharan Africa region, following the Seychelles, ranked 24th globally, and Mauritius, ranked 28th globally. The latter two countries are the only ones in Africa that have unqualified access to the Schengen Area, which gives them a clear advantage over their regional peers in terms of passport power.

While South Africa has gained access to a number of new travel destinations since 2009, it is not improving its global access levels as quickly as other high-performing countries on the index, "leading to an overall decline in its passport power."

Ryan Cummings, Director of Signal Risk, explains the decline as: "Driving the downward spiral since 2009 have been concerns over the unlawful replication of South African passports documents, with replication often abetted by corrupt officials within the department of home

affairs. These concerns saw visa regulations being enforced by several countries, including the UK and Colombia.”

There is reason for optimism, however. Cummings says: “The implementation of widespread reforms at the department since 2014 – focused on improving security features both in the application process and within the passport document itself – is expected to enhance confidence in the South African passport and may relax visa restrictions for its holders in future. Other factors that could strengthen the South African passport over the short-to-medium-term include President Cyril Ramaphosa’s intention to ease visa restrictions for African passport holders so as to induce greater intra-Africa trade.”

Ramaphosa has expressed a commitment to follow in the general direction of visa liberalization set out by the AU, as outlined in its Agenda 2063 mandate. “South Africa’s borders need to be open for people – particularly Africans – to move more freely and to promote business,” he told journalists following an AU summit recently. “The easy movement of people across borders and countries should never be seen in a negative way by us as South Africans.”

According to Amanda Smit, Director at Henley & Partners South Africa, a potential model for South Africa in terms of promoting travel freedom is Angola, which recently removed visa requirements for nine African countries: namely, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Cabo Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Morocco, Swaziland, Algeria, and Zambia. Similarly, the undertaking of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community to grant visa waivers to passport-holders of its member states (Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Central Africa Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Chad) could also be replicated by other regional political blocs seeking to promote the AU’s vision of increasing intra-African trade and travel.

3.2. Issues of Regional Economic Communities

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa do not only represent network of economic structure but an organ which collaborates with the African Union in terms of maintaining peace and security. In the context of globalization, regional integration has been an imperative for Africa, in terms of enhanced competitiveness in global trading, prevention of conflicts and consolidation of economic and political reforms. The 1980 Lagos Plan of Action envisaged the African Economic Community (AEC) which categorized the African continent into five regional areas: North Africa, West Africa, South Africa, East Africa and Central Africa.

The configuration of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) does not tally with the AEC regions. Indeed many studies have outlined the problem of multiple and overlapping memberships in RECs, which has had the net effect of undermining integration. Political and strategic reasons have been cited as the overriding motivation for this multiplicity of memberships in RECs.

In terms of progress made in advancing the goals of regional integration, the results are mixed with a general sense that there remain substantial gaps in achievements. Although some RECs have made strides towards free trade and a customs union, progress towards harmonized and integrated sub regional markets is slow. For example, only a few countries dominate export trading and privileged access is still reserved to markets in Europe, North America or Asia. Other impediments to intra-regional trade include: persistent conflicts; slow progress on removal of nontariff barriers; freeing the movement of people across regional borders; failure to mainstream gender in integration efforts, and an underdeveloped infrastructure which leads to high cost of doing business (Ndomo, 2009).

The Regional Economic Communities in Africa have been facing various challenges. Several of the RECs overlap in membership: for example, in East Africa, Kenya and Uganda are members of both the EAC and COMESA, whereas Tanzania, also a member of the EAC, left COMESA and joined SADC in 2001. This multiple and confusing membership creates duplication and sometimes competition in activities, while placing additional burdens on already over-stretched foreign affairs staff to attend all the various summits and other meetings. Beyond their role in peace and security, RECs have the immense challenge of working with governments, civil

society and the AU Commission in raising the standard of living of the people of Africa and contributing towards the progress and development of the continent through economic growth and social development (<http://www.un.org/en/africa>).

Regional Economic Community (REC) scores, in visa relaxation, are averages of country scores and reflect the individual openness of countries in the REC toward their fellow African countries. As a group, ECOWAS is more visa open than its fellow regional economic communities. Top performing RECs on open reciprocity include: ECOWAS (100%), EAC (90%), UMA (60%) and SADC (56%). (AfDB, Africa Visa Openness index 2018)

The Central African Economic and Monetary has lifted visa requirements for their citizens traveling within the six-member regional bloc. Despite the stride toward integration, challenges remain to ensuring free movement and deepening economic integration. For example, rebel combatants from the Central African Republic have been arrested trying to cross disguised as business persons and refugees.⁸

Another concern, when the economies of Gabon and Equatorial Guinea were straggling owing to the global drop in oil prices. The two countries sealed their borders to stop job-seeking youths flooding into their countries and even began expelling some migrants from other CEMAC countries.⁹

Although the Regional Economic Communities are encouraging for visa openness and integration, the security issue is still a hindrance. As a result, countries and Regional economic communities would reconsider the visa openness project. Because, a visa-less Africa would allow terrorists travel more easily between countries.

^{9, 8} <https://www.voanews.com/a/central-africa-regional-bloc-creates-six-country-visa-free-zone/4096907.html>

CHAPTER FOUR

Prospects and Challenges of Visa-Free Africa

According to Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, University of Cape Town, the African integration project took several major steps in 2017. One of them was the African Union's adoption of a Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons. The move has been widely welcomed.

The free movement of Africans between African countries could unquestionably facilitate growth. Allowing freer movement would encourage trade, tourism and investment between African countries. And it would allow students to study in other African countries and Africans with suitable skills to find rewarding jobs. Opening up borders has been shown to have positive effects in other parts of the world. The case in point is that the growth of many Asian countries is significantly attributable to the liberalizing of inter-Asian relationships including through an agreement between Southeast Asian countries that promotes freer mobility for workers.

Some African countries have recognized the benefits of ensuring free movement of people. Seychelles, Mauritius and Rwanda have liberalized their visa requirements. One effect is that there has been a significant rise in inward tourist arrivals from other African countries. And the removal of visa and even passport requirements within regional trading blocs in both East and West Africa are widely believed to have led to increased economic activity. However, there are major obstacles that need to be cleared before the ambition for free movement across the continent. The main one is posed by concerns raised from countries with highest GDP like South Africa and countries in North Africa where unemployment rates are high and there are fears that increased immigration could contribute to increasing domestic tensions. There are also concerns that if not well managed the free movement could worsen brain drain for poorer countries. Because of these concerns, among others, only 30 countries have signed the protocol. This is much lower than the 44 countries that have signed the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

The AU recognizes the lack of readiness of many domestic and continental arrangements that would allow the immediate full implementation of the protocol. Some countries have population

registration and passport systems which lack integrity, some have weak border management, and some have poor security intelligence. Due to this, implementation has been divided into three phases: right of entry and abolition of visa requirements; right of residence; and right of establishment (which includes investment and setting up a business).

Phases 2 and 3 will not be implemented until the implementation of the first phase is reviewed. But many countries, especially the richer ones, are reluctant even to enter phase one unless some conditions are met. The key concerns are around the absence of inter-country cooperation measures on immigration procedures, border management, education systems and mutual recognition of qualifications, common standards for working conditions, and access to or portability of social security benefits.

South Africa, in particular, has issues with a range of the requirements. A memo of the South African Department of Home Affairs identifies 12 preconditions for the implementation of the protocol. Some of them are unrealistically idealistic such as the condition of “peace, security and stability on the continent”. But about half of the preconditions seem quite reasonable and understandable. They include civil registration systems and bilateral return agreements. Civil registration systems critical; South Africa is one of the few countries on the continent that has a comprehensive ID system.

According to the report of the 2016 United Nations Secretary General, Africa’s development priorities identified in the African Common Position on the post-2015 development agenda were enshrined during the reporting period in several continental and global landmark agreements, including the African Union Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Effective implementation of these agendas will require coherence and complementarity between global, continental, regional, national and local efforts.

The continent has embarked on the first ten-year implementation plan for the African Union Agenda 2063. The Agenda’s people-centered approach promises to enhance inclusive economic and social progress and its emphasis on agriculture development, infrastructure development and industrialization provides critical drivers for job creation and poverty eradication. The United Nations system is supporting the efforts of the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa’s

Development (NEPAD) and African regional economic communities for the effective implementation of the new agenda (<https://www.un.org>).

Currently, The AU passports have been issued to AU Heads of state and government, ministers and foreign affairs, and the permanent representatives of AU member states based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was first used in 2016, by selective AU officials and representatives during the 27th Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit in Kigali, Rwanda. Initially, the passport was awarded to President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Chairperson of the AU, President Idriss Deby of Chad. “These are great steps we are taking. Our Union has great ambitions in order to ensure economic and political integration”, said Deby. The hope was that by 2018, single-visa passports were to be issued to all African citizens across the continent, thus abolishing restrictive visa requirements for African citizens travelling within the continent.

The single visa is hoped to bring about greater integration across the continent, as well as stronger economic and trade growth. Through this, people with skills will be easily entering various African countries, and promoting employment opportunities in the continent. “The developments on Free Movement of Persons pave the way for countries to take steps towards allowing African citizens’ rights of residence and establishment Africa-wide. The Single African Air Transport Market – launched in January 2018 – marks another milestone to improve air connectivity that means faster, cheaper and accessible travel across Africa.¹⁰

Intra-state trade will also be greater supported, which could help ease economic dependence on international powers. Furthermore, this will hopefully ease restrictive visa requirements that have prevented travel for many African citizens in the past. In addition, the passport might have an added safety bonus. An e-document could make the visa more secure than the old ones, as they are more difficult to forge. Thus, it will also be easier to track terrorists and criminals.

According to Young Professionals in Foreign Policy, some countries, including the Seychelles, Ghana, and Rwanda, have also made significant efforts to ease visa restrictions on travelers. The Seychelles is one of the few visa-free countries that does not require visa for citizens of any country upon arrival. After adopting the policy, international tourism arrivals to the country increased by an average of 7% per year between 2009 and 2014. Ghana has adopted the 2063

¹⁰ Africa visa openness index report 2018, page 11

Agenda's visa-free policy, which was formally launched July 2016. Rwanda in particular has made significant strides to ease visa restrictions for African nationals, and provides an important example of the potential for the adoption of the visa-free policy in other countries.

According to the AfDB, Rwanda's 2013 visa-free policy for African nationals resulted in several positive benefits with regard to economic development; these include an estimated 24% increase in tourism arrivals from African countries and a 50% increase in intra-African trade. Since the implementation of the policy, trade with Democratic Republic of the Congo alone has increased by 73%.

Presently, travel on the continent remains difficult for most Africans. According to the Report, issued by the African Development Bank Group and the African Union, visas are required for more than half of the countries on the continent. Only 13 African countries don't require visas or issue them on arrival. In fact, it can be easier for non-Africans to travel to many African countries. For instance US citizens can travel to 20 African countries without visas or with visas on arrival.

The single passport model is based on the European Union's Schengen Area, a group of 26 European countries that abolished visa requirements for travel between them. Certain regions within Africa have also eliminated or relaxed their visa policies. The Seychelles does not require a visa for any visitors, from Africa or elsewhere. The East African Community, which includes Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, did away with visa requirements for citizens visiting other member states.

Critics say a visa-less Africa would allow terrorists to travel more easily between countries. Or that it could increase competition for jobs, especially in smaller countries. The revenue from visa fees has also become an important source of income for embassies, which worry that eliminating the requirement will make it hard to keep the doors open and the lights on. If successful, the single African visa will realize a vision that has been decades in the making. As early as 1980, the Organization of African Unity called for policies that would promote free movement within African countries. AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma described the single visa initiative in 2016 as a "steady step toward the objective of creating a strong, prosperous and

integrated Africa, driven by its own citizens and capable of taking its rightful place on the world stage."

Though the passport has officially launched, it will be quite some time before ordinary citizens will be able to get their hands on one. The policy guiding the passport's release – Agenda 2063 – targets a full roll-out to be complete by 2018 – however, analysts have pointed out that the deadline is extremely optimistic, considering the lack of infrastructure and technical skills in many member nations. More realistically, the passports won't be fully and freely available until after 2020. Currently, 13 African countries in the AU offer visas on arrival, including Rwanda, Mauritius and more recently Ghana. This system is a precursor to the open "Africa Passport", and is expected to be applied by more African nations.

The passport has faced criticism, and faces more than a few hurdles: for one, millions of Africans are undocumented, and simply won't be able to get a passport. This is a result of many issues in the countries themselves, including civil unrest, and nomadic lifestyles. Another factor is that many African nations are unable to develop the biometric systems necessary for the electronic passport. Some analysts have also raised concerns over disproportionate access – where more developed markets such as South Africa and Egypt would see an influx of people from other countries, bringing massive social, economic and political pressures. Locally, with one of the highest unemployment rates in the world and a history of xenophobic attack, critics have highlighted that an open-border policy in South Africa could be disastrous.

As the European Union threatens to unravel in the wake of Britain's vote to leave, the African Union is pursuing a path of closer integration through the launch of a common passport that will grant visa-free access to all 55 member states. The first of the electronic passports were unveiled at the AU Summit in Kigali, Rwanda, where they were issued to heads of state and senior officials. The Union aims to distribute them to all African citizens by 2020.

Most people in Africa migrate across regions, moving to and from regional hubs, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Libya, Nigeria and South Africa, as well as between bordering countries. Supporting Africans to move regionally is facilitated by free movement of person's protocols. The protocols mutually exempt all or certain categories of travellers from visa requirements.

There has been limited change in recent years, although member countries of ECOWAS and the EAC have already ratified their protocols.

The benefits of more open visa policies impact not just the members of regional and economic blocs but also non-members. Trends point towards greater openness; the Schengen Area has 25% open reciprocity between its members and non-members, while ASEAN has a level of 14%. In Africa, open reciprocity levels between members and non-members of Regional Economic Communities are markedly lower than the world average. SADC, which has 44% open reciprocity among its members, has 8% open reciprocity between members and non-members. ECOWAS has open reciprocity levels of just 2% between its members and non-members.

African countries can be benefited from tapping into global trends on facilitating the freer movement of persons by looking at visa openness solutions. This will help in reaching milestones set out in the African Union's Agenda 2063 including removing visa requirements across the continent by 2018 and the creation of an African passport. Visa reciprocity in Africa (matching the treatment a country receives from visa-open countries) is also weak. Most African countries do not stand to gain from promoting more visa-free regional blocs across the continent, but also from pushing for greater reciprocity among members and non-members.

In summary, facilitating free movement of people through more liberal visa policies is important for a number of reasons. First, visa openness fosters tourism, facilitates trade and investments, helps fill skills gaps in the labor market, allow young people to study anywhere in the continent and creates jobs. Secondly, unlike infrastructure or industrialization policy, it requires minimal upfront capital investments. A more visa-open country has a liberal or relaxed visa policy for travellers, so that visitors either do not need a visa when they enter or can get a visa on arrival. A more visa-restrictive country requires visitors to get a visa before they travel, in most cases from an Embassy. Greater visa openness is a vital part of the solution in getting Africa to reach that vision. There is a strong business case for visa openness in Africa, which in turn promotes the free movement of people and is at the foundation of deeper and closer integration of the continent.

4.1. Progress in Visa Free Africa Implementation

As regards the free movement of people and regional integration, the African Development Bank Group Regional Integration policy and Strategy (RIPoS) 2014-2023 notes that free movement of persons is the main feature of regional economic integration, expanding trade and economic growth in the continent. The free movement of people has positive repercussions for economic benefits--both temporary and long term effects to economies in the region. It has also immense contributions to the traditional sectors such as tourism by filling gaps in low-and-skilled labor markets and maximizes economic efficiency by reducing labor shortages.

Visa openness is about facilitating free movement of people. It is about getting more people mobile to carry out their business easily, spontaneously, quickly, with minimum cost. Visa openness is a vital step forward towards a more integrated Africa. There are huge potential gains for countries and regions across Africa from adopting visa-open policies for other Africans.

Since the idea of visa-free Africa was conceived in 2013, various activities have been undertaken to consolidate the integration move through adopting common visa to the citizens of states of Africa. Among the actions taken towards realizing the visa-free Africa project the Free Movement protocol adopted in 2017 is one of the concrete steps towards facilitating implementation of the accord setting up the African Economic community through ensuring the free movement of persons, right of residence and right of establishment in the continent.

According to the Free Movement Protocol endorsed by the African Union in 2017, the AU passport, which has been envisaged to be issued to the nationals and travellers of Africa, is a travel document which complies with the International Civil Aviation Organization standards. It aims to ensure free movement of persons – the right of citizens of member state to enter and move freely in another member state in agreement with the rules and regulations of the host country.

One of the most crucial points underlined in the protocol is the need for not discriminating against nationals of other state. This is to allow citizens of neighboring or another state to be able to mix easily reside and/or work with equal status with others. It also envisages fostering real cooperation and unity among peoples of different states in order to make radical shift towards

sound integration. In connection with this, Article 5 of the Protocol reads: "A citizen of another Member State entering, residing or established in a member state, in accordance with this protocol, shall enjoy the protection of the law of the host member state, in accordance with the relevant national policies and laws of the host member state. The free movement of people is set to be executed progressively through three stages-- right of entry and abolition of visa requirements, the right of residence and the right of establishment respectively.

Kenya and Rwanda have carried out far-reaching activities on easing visa access. In 2017, Rwanda announced that it would issue 30-day visas on arrival to citizens of all countries, while allowing citizens of COMESA Member States 90-day visas on arrival. Before this, only citizens of African countries and a few others were eligible for visas on arrival. Some citizens, like those of EAC Partner States, continue to enjoy visa-free access to Rwanda. In the case of Kenya, President Uhuru Kenyatta, during his inauguration speech in November 2017, announced that any African wishing to visit the country will be eligible to receive a visa on arrival. President Kenyatta also stated that citizens of EAC Partner States will be treated like Kenyans (<https://www.Nation.co.ke/news>).

According to the Protocol, the right of entry and abolition of visas is all about implementation that urges Member States relaxing visa requirements for citizens of other AU Member States by December 2018. This includes issuing visas on arrival to AU citizens and using simplified visa-processing procedures and mechanisms such as e-visa online applications and multiple-entry/multi-year visas.

4.2. Result of interview held with MoFA expert

The African Union has been taking multiple actions with a view to forging regional economic integration in the continent of Africa. As part of the Agenda 2063 the African Union is doing its level best to realize the Visa Free Africa plan. As regards its attainment the expert stated that it is worth identifying opportunities and threats likely to face in the process of implementation.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 laid out the far-reaching goal of free movement of persons in a continent "with seamless borders," and set the more immediate target for "the abolition of visa requirements for all African citizens in all African countries. According to him, the Conviction of "implementing Visa-free in Africa will boost inter-continental relations strengthen the region's self-reliance and improve Africa's global status over the next five decades."

The idea of open visas and/or visas on arrival is beneficial to Africans because it facilitates the ease of doing business between our country and other countries, helps investors to come here easily, and to spend, which creates revenue and jobs and also helps to promote tourism have been raised as opportunities whereas increasing risks to national security through the creation of borderless Africa and heightened exposure to regional conflicts, contagion from public health crises, increasing the movement of the jobless from many parts of the continent, as well as attracting a large number of migrants from other countries could be among the threats which could occur due its implementation.

The AU is set to achieve the Visa-Free Africa plan by 2020. But it has left with only less than one year to fully apply it. The respondent mentioned that currently domesticating the passport within African states while going through the process to fulfill the legal and technical requirements need to make it acceptable to all nations on earth so that Africans could travel to other continents on AU passports by 2020.

The African common passport is part of the unfolding of the AU's Agenda 2063 flagship program for the socio-economic transformation of the continent. "In this regard, the African Union may realize the single African passports by 2020; however the visa-free travel may seek some additional time for implementation."

Cognizant of poor infrastructure, instability, problems of peace and security, hunger and poverty the realization of the program could not go unchallenged. The informant underscored that Africa is changing at an extraordinary speed. In the coming period, the combined pressures of a growing population, environmental change and rapid economic growth will transform the lives and livelihoods of Africans at an unprecedented pace. These changes are in many respects positive, providing the impetus for Africa's continuing development. Some of these changes are a product of Africa's successful development, and some, like poverty and exclusion, are legacies of Africa's past underdevelopment that have yet to be overcome.

The informant also indicated that the future is bright for Africa. "Now it is an exciting time for Africa. The winds of change are blowing, opening up new possibilities. More Africans than ever before can look forward to brighter futures for themselves and their children. Hopefully, it will be possible to implement the visa free Africa program above all odds."

Some countries of Africa have already made great strides towards easing visa restrictions even before the AU has come to invite the member states. On the other hand some countries have done nothing on opening their borders to allow others to enter without visa or issuing visa on arrival. In this regard, Ethiopia is one of the countries that have lagged behind in taking meaningful steps with respect to visa openness, as Ethiopia was one of the catalysts of pan-Africanism and is a seat for AU. According to the expert, the major concern of Ethiopia regarding open-visa policy is national security. Since the horn of Africa is a very volatile region, due to the movement of al-Shabaab and other extremist groups, Ethiopia was not on a position to allow a Visa-free access for all AU member states, but visa-on-arrival. The proximity of the country to the Middle East by itself increases the vulnerability of the country to extremist groups. All these have made the country to be very vigilant to adopt the visa openness policy.

Addis Ababa is a hub to the headquarters of the African Union and a seat for various multilaterally and bilaterally accredited missions, delegations and institutions. Although, Addis Ababa is the diplomatic hub of Africa, it is among the countries that lie at the bottom in easing restrictions. The implication that this could have when discussing other countries visa openness issue is not easy. The interviewee noted that Ethiopia as a headquarters of the AU, should offer an enabling environment and platforms for Pan-African states and non-states actors to enter to

the country without cumbersome visa process and create a space for Pan-African debate on the AU agenda and monitoring of AU's activities. In nutshell, Ethiopia should be exemplary in these all fronts while fulfilling its responsibility of national security will not be compromised.

Obviously, the time is short but Ethiopia has not done most of the things towards visa relaxation. The respondent notes that in line with African Union's vision and roadmap for the next 50 years, Ethiopia should play its leading role on the African integration agenda without compromising its national interest. So far, Seychelles is the only country in Africa that has abolished visa requirements for all African countries. Ethiopia is one of the 21 African countries having visa-on-arrival policy for AU member states. In this regard, Ethiopia has not lagged behind to fulfill its task recommending that the country should reaffirm its commitment to the African integration until visa-free arrangement is implemented across the Union.

4.3. Information obtained from AUC Information and Communication Directorate

In June 2018 Immigration Experts from African Union Member States met in Nairobi for a three-day technical meeting to fine-tune the draft guidelines for the design, production and issuance of the African Passport.

Article 10 of the Protocol on Free Movement of people calls for the adoption, production and issuance of the African Passport. The implementation roadmap provides the necessary action and time-frames for the adoption, production and issuance of the Passport, including convening of meetings of African Chiefs of Immigration to guide the process.

African Union Commission Director of Political Affairs Department Dr. Khabele Matlosa said the meeting was a follow on to the meeting of the Chiefs of Immigration held in Seychelles in May 2018, where the meeting tasked the African Union to convene a meeting of Experts to discuss the technical specifications and security features of the African Passport.

The Director said African Passport will be meaningless without the full and effective implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons. “The Protocol on Free Movement of Persons will be incomplete without the African Passport. Like twins, the Protocol and the African Passport are inextricably interlinked” Dr Khabele said. He said that in order to ensure effective implementation of the Protocol and the issuance of the African Passport, Africa needs to take the first step of abolition of visas to facilitate the right of entry through its introduction.

He also pointed out that the agreed guidelines of the technical meeting would be adopted by the Special Technical Committee on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons before the end of 2018, and thereafter be adopted the AU assembly of Heads of State and Government in 2019 to set the stage for AU Member States to begin the process of production and issuance of the African passport in accordance with their national laws and regulations.

Declaring the meeting open on behalf of Kenyan government, Charles Munyao, Head of Passport Section of the Republic of Kenya, said Kenya has already rolled out East African Regional Passport as a prelude to the establishment of the African passport. Munyao said as part of her commitment to the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in Africa, the Kenyan

Government has opened up for all Africans to get Visa upon arrival to enable all Africans access the country without hassles of obtaining Visas before travelling.

The three day technical meeting which has Immigration experts on passports from Member States, which is also being attended by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), would followed by a two-day meeting of Immigration Chiefs from Africa, according to Directorate for Information and Communication of the Commission of the African Union.

4.4. Merit and Demerit of AfCFTA

The ratification and promotion of the continental free movement has become one of the top agenda for the African Union Commission in 2018. The signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, which took place in Kigali, Rwanda, on 21 March, 2018, brought together 55 African economies into a larger more coherent market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments. “The AfCFTA was signed by close to 50 countries at the AU Summit in March 2018, alongside the Kigali Declaration and the Free Movement Protocol.¹¹ The AfCFTA creates one African market of 1.2 billion people, with a GDP of US\$2.5 trillion, that has the potential to boost intra-African trade by 52% by 2020, benefitting African producers, consumers and traders. The developments on Free Movement an Africa with open borders and open skies is open for business. And, the upcoming Africa Investment Forum aims to connect the continent’s investors and fast-track investments.”¹¹ However, a country like Nigeria with large GDP, has not signed the agreement for AfCFTA yet. In July 2018, South Africa, one of the countries with large GDP, has signed the agreement. After signing the agreement, the president of South Africa said “There are many other areas of cooperation where we can foster integration, particularly at a regional level, such as tourism, energy and transport. This agreement offers the prospect of a new dawn for Africa.”

The Continental Free Movement Protocol also stresses that facilitated movement of Africans will create employment, support intra-Africa trade and investment, cultivate tourism and enhance foreign remittances and support the use of human and material resources for the continent's self-reliance and development in tandem with the AU's aspiration for an integrated continent. Also recently, the decision passed during the 30th Ordinary session of the AU in January 2018 --

¹¹ Africa visa openness index report 2018 page 11

adoption of a single African air transport market, is a significant step towards connecting the states economically. It also realized the implementation of the combined commitment of 23 member countries set as Yamoussoukro Decision. The decision is aimed at reducing air transport costs on the continent, accelerating the movement of people, strengthening intra-Africa trade thereby consolidating connectivity through air transport. (<https://au.int/en/press-releases/2018>)

Like the continental Free Movement Protocol, the AfCFTA is expected to deepen Africa's integration further. The main objectives of the AfCFTA are to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments; accelerate the establishment of the Customs Union; Expand intra-African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation and instruments across the RECs and across Africa in general and Enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploitation of opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources. The idea for the treaty was mooted in 2012 following a resolution by the African Heads of State and Governments to create a single continental market for goods and services in member nations of the AU, with free movement of business persons and investments using a single currency. (<https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/sa-signs-africa-continental-free-trade-area-agreement>)

Rilwan Akeyewale, CEO of Grandir Inc. has written the merit and demerit of AfCFTA on world Economic Forum that the AfCFTA agreement is expected to favor small and medium-size businesses, usually known by the acronym SMEs, which are responsible for more than 80% of Africa's employment and 50% of its GDP.

Obviously, any economic policy that facilitates imports and exports among member countries - with lower or no tariffs, free access to the market and market information, and the elimination of trade barriers - offers numerous benefits to Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). And as history's largest free trade agreement, which has a market size in the region of \$3 trillion, most people are excited at the development. But skeptics have pointed to impending challenges, especially those which affect SMEs. These must be addressed if the AfCFTA is to achieve its objectives. But first, let's look at who stands to gain.

4.4.1. Merit of AfCFTA

New markets, the AfCFTA will allow African-owned companies to enter new markets. This expands their customer base and leads to new products and services, making investing in innovation viable.

Economic growth, Manufacturing represents only about 10% of total GDP in Africa, on average. This is well below the figure in other developing regions. A successful continental free trade area could reduce this gap. A bigger manufacturing sector will lead SMEs to create more well-paid jobs, especially for young people, thereby alleviating poverty.

Foreign direct investment, with restrictions lifted on foreign investments, investors will flock to the continent. This adds capital to expand local industries and boost domestic businesses. New capital enhances an upward productivity cycle that stimulates the entire economy. An inflow of foreign capital can also stimulate banking systems, leading to more investment and consumer lending.

Reduction in input costs, the AfCFTA will ease the process of importing raw materials from other African countries. It will also enable SMEs to set up assembly firms in other African countries, in order to access cheaper means of production and thereby increase their bottom lines.

Increased efficiency and sales, global companies have more expertise than domestic companies to develop local resources. That's especially true for businesses in the manufacturing sector. The AfCFTA will allow multinationals to partner with local firms to develop raw materials, training them in best practices and transferring technology in the process.

4.4.2. Demerit of AfCFTA

A major potential challenge in harmonizing Africa's heterogeneous economies under one agreement is the wide variation that exists in their levels of development. For example, over 50% of Africa's cumulative GDP is contributed by Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa, while Africa's six sovereign island nations collectively contribute just 1%.

The AfCFTA has the greatest levels of income disparity of any continental free trade agreement, and more than double the levels witnessed in blocs such as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Many emerging African markets are traditional economies that rely on farming for employment. These small family farms can't compete with large agri-businesses in high-income African countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt and Nigeria. As a result, they may lose their farms, leading to high unemployment, crime and poverty.

Choking of local SMEs, consumers always prefer cheaper products. This may lead to local producers losing huge sales to foreign suppliers, because the latter can lower the cost of their products by leveraging the reduced tariffs imposed on imported goods.

Adverse working conditions and job losses, laborers from poorer countries may be forced to work long hours and to live in shanties without basic amenities such as drinking water and electricity, in order to send money to their families. Some workers might even be forced to accept lower wages and be prevented from joining labor unions, under threat of losing their jobs.

This may explain why the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC), in their refusal to endorse the agreement, describes the trade agreement as a "renewed, extremely dangerous and radioactive neo-liberal policy initiative".

Environmental depletion, tough competition may lead some companies to disregard the environment when it comes to making products and disposing of waste, just so they can survive in their industry. Many SMEs are likely to cut costs, including those related to manufacturing and the proper dumping of waste.

Theft of intellectual property, many African countries doesn't have laws in place that protect patents, inventions and new processes. The laws they do have aren't always strictly enforced. As a result, companies' ideas often get stolen. With the AfCFTA, this could get worse, leading SMEs to invest poorly in research and development.

[\(https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/10/africa-continental-free-trade-afcfta-sme-business/\)](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/10/africa-continental-free-trade-afcfta-sme-business/)

4.5. Governance issue and risk of political instability

The visa-free Africa project is hoped to bring about greater integration across the continent, as well as stronger economic and trade growth. However, the threats to political stability in the continent may constrain the project from being successful. “Sub-Saharan Africa faces multiple structural pressures that increase the risk of political instability and violent conflict in the region. Structural pressures refer to broad development contexts in which events may happen and in which individuals and groups make decisions and take action. These pressures stem from demographics, low levels of development, regime type, and horizontal inequalities or cross-group discrimination. Inequalities and state-led discrimination across groups are likely to continue to fuel grievances and instability. This is connected to the greatest challenge to future stability across sub-Saharan Africa – regimes that are neither autocratic nor democratic, but somewhere in between. At the same time, democracies characterized by widespread poverty appear to be particularly vulnerable to political instability.”¹² Let us see, For instance, regime type, how it is going to be hindering to the project.

Most of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa are anocracies. These relatively unconsolidated regimes, of which many have recent histories of authoritarian rule, combine elements of both autocracy and democracy and are therefore prone to political instability, including abrupt regime change. The probability of political instability driven by anocratic governance structures has grown across time and through the end of the Cold War, especially in Central, East and West Africa. (See Appendix A)

Central Africa is likely to see increases in the average risk for political instability associated with anocratic regimes, and this pressure remains relatively high in East Africa and the Horn. Most of West Africa is less exposed to pressure from anocratic regimes as average levels of democracy are relatively high. (Julia Bello-Schunemann and Jonathan D Moyer 2018, Page 16)

According to IFs the countries with the highest risk of political instability due to their institutional governance structure are Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Mauritania,

¹² Julia Bello-Schunemann and Jonathan D Moyer “Structural pressures and political instability”: trajectories for sub-Saharan Africa, Africa Report 9, September 2018, page 3

Rwanda, Sudan, Togo, Uganda and Republic of the Congo. All of them are anocracies tending more towards the autocratic than the democratic.

Table 1: Levels of democracy in sub-Saharan Africa (Polity IV), 2018

Democracies	Mauritius, Cape Verde, South Africa, Kenya, Comoros, Botswana, Lesotho, Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, Benin, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Namibia, Guinea Bissau, Malawi
Anocracies	Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Liberia, Niger, DRC, Mozambique, Mali, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Tanzania, Sao Tome and Principe, South Sudan, Burundi, Uganda, Central African Republic, Mauritania, Togo, Angola, Chad, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Sudan, Congo, Gambia
Autocracies	Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Swaziland

Source: IFs, v. 7.34.

In some countries most at risk, heads of states are actively undermining democratic governance as they try to hold on to power. According to Freedom House, since 2015 leaders in Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Republic of the Congo and the DRC ‘has pushed through constitutional changes to term and age limits, or otherwise evaded such barriers, to perpetuate their rule’ (Julia Bello-Schunemann and jonathan D moyer)

A recent report by the ISS on Central Africa highlights that the region ‘currently has some of the longest-serving and oldest African presidents’ and that ‘some kind of turnover (i.e. change in leadership) is inevitable in the next 10 to 15 years’; Given the history of personalized presidential governance, political transitions will be clouded by uncertainties regardless of how

they occur. Whether they take place through violence or the ballot box.¹³ The transitioning of regimes on the autocracy/anocracy/ democracy spectrum often involves organized violence. Nevertheless, Large-scale organized violence or civil war, typically fought for state control, has declined; however, organized political violence on a smaller scale has, however, increased and persists across the region.¹⁴

Africa is characterized by Low level of GDP per capita, which reflects low levels of investment in human development, lack of infrastructure, poor government capacity, and often central governments that are viewed as lacking legitimacy. As Jonathan Di John summarizes, ‘Very negative economic performance surely contributes to undermining regime and government legitimacy and therefore may increase widespread support for abrupt and even violent changes.’¹⁵ Which is Africa has been known for. Hence, political instability would grow to cause disturbed regions that would halt the free movement of persons and goods, thereby negatively affects the continental visa-free Africa project, which is impossible to implement in unstable country or region.

Furthermore, xenophobia is also another problem that would cripple that the visa-free Africa project from being effective. For example, South Africa’s xenophobic attack of 2015 on other African nationals can be mentioned here. As South Africa is Africa’s most industrialized country, it attracts foreign nationals every year, seeking refuge from poverty, economic crises, and war and government persecution in their home countries. In 2015, a xenophobic attack has been taken place against African nationals by South African. A south African history online have highlighted various issues contributing to xenophobia; some of which include ‘poor service delivery, competition for resources... foreigners took jobs opportunities away from local South Africans and they accept lower wages’¹⁶, which talks to issues of governance.

¹³ Z Donnenfeld and F Akum, Gathering storm clouds: Political and economic uncertainty in Central Africa, ISS, 30 November 2017, <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/car11.pdf>, 14.

¹⁴ S Straus, Wars do end! “Changing patterns of political violence in sub-Saharan Africa”, *African Affairs* 111:443, 2012, 179-201;

¹⁵ J Di John, Conceptualising the Causes and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of the Literature, Crisis States Research Centre Working Paper 25, 2008, www.files.ethz.ch/isn/57427/wp25.2.pdf, 23.

¹⁶ south African history online: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/xenophobic-violence-democratic-south-africa>

As issues of governance are lingering issues of Africa in general, hence, the problems related to governance and governance structure in the continent would repeat the same story of xenophobia against African nationals, keeping in mind that the free movement of people, especially to the most industrious countries, that the visa-free project would grant. Therefore, governments would be obliged to reconsider, or may withdraw from, the agreement on visa-free Africa project to mitigate the situation, whatever it is going to be. Consequently, the visa-free project would get hindered from becoming successful.

4.6. ICT Development

In the last two decades, information and communication technology (ICT) has become a central part of social, cultural and economic life for an increasing number of people. As such, the availability, security and integrity of ICT systems have become extremely important on different levels in society: On an individual level; in terms of access to electronic services, privacy and freedom of speech. On an organizational; level for safely being able to provide products and services and involving stakeholders. And also, as a society in terms of availability of critical infrastructures, for example telecommunication, healthcare, energy supply and water supply, and the protection of the democratic legal order and national security. As a result of this, a certain dependency on ICT has been created; without available, secure and incorruptible ICT systems, society will come to a standstill.

Apart from the growing interrelation of ICT systems with daily life and its ancillary dependency, ICT systems also have an increasing connection with each other. This far-reaching connection of systems not only serves convenience, efficiency and pleasure, it is also an important driving force for innovation and economic growth.

ICTs play a very important role in the global digital economy. E-commerce presents Africa with an opportunity to increase its share of the global trade and extensive mobile signal penetration, offers the youth of the continent opportunities to access the global market. However, the current Africa's share of the global e-commerce market remains insignificant.

As President Uhuru Kenyatta summarizes, in the context of development, high-quality ICT infrastructure is an unavoidable requirement for maintaining on-going development. However, there is a shortage of basic infrastructure in Africa, so beyond simply maintaining quality, compensating for shortages in absolute quantities is an urgent issue. Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), is instrumental in boosting intra-African trade and Africa's integration agenda.

Ethiopia's internet penetration, for instance, in 2016 was 15.4% while recent statistics show mobile penetration at 63%, with low penetration rates stemming from underdeveloped telecommunications infrastructure. With a population over 100 million and a median age of less

than 18 years, Ethiopia offers significant opportunities for ICT development, although there are many challenges including heavy regulation and government control over networks and poor telecommunications infrastructure.¹⁷

Telecommunications remains one of the sectors where foreign direct investment is prohibited in Ethiopia. Ethio -Telecom continues to operate the fixed, mobile, broadband, and value-added services without a challenge from local or foreign private sectors. Because of the absence of competition, Ethiopia does not have vibrant software and networking industries with the potential to emerge as challengers to Ethio -Telecom. The only domestic private players in the telecommunications market are mobile handset, voucher resellers, handset repair outlets, and internet cafes.

According to ICT development index 2017, Ethiopia is 32nd in Africa and 170th in the world in terms of information and communication development. Percentage of individuals using the Internet in Ethiopia is 15.37, Fixed (wired)-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants is 0.55 and Active mobile-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants 5.28 (<http://www.itu.int/net4/itu-d/idi/2017/index.html#idi2017economycard-tabÐ>)

This low level of development in ICT sector would be a great hindrance especially for those who are going to be enrolled in the service sector such as Banks and others.

¹⁷(<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20181105005688/en/ICT-Market-Analysis-Ethiopia-2018---Challenged>)

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

One of the goals of the founding fathers of the Organization of African Unity was to foster unity, continental integration and bringing independent African states closer together. More than half a century later, most of the African countries remain closed to each other, owing to restrict visa requirements. Consequently, Movement of people between African countries has been still restricted, and so has been intra-African trade.

The reasons African countries remain closed off to each other vary significantly. The key reasons advanced by policy makers generally relate to fears of job losses and security concerns. But there could also be issues of culture and trust. The answer probably lies somewhere in the nexus between politics, culture, history and economics.

Since independence, the African countries followed policies of regional cooperation and integration with a view to reversing dependence on the west. In this regard, unlike AU, whose principal drive for its establishment was to strengthen the cohesion, solidarity and integration of African peoples and countries, some sub-regional groupings had made a promising stride on regional integration. For example, the East African Community (EAC) launched its passport in 1999 and has recently started a process to issue an EAC e-passport with digital identification features.

Similarly, In West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) launched a regional passport in 2000, but the implementation by member states has been slow. Despite the effort, neither of them could make the dream come true.

The ‘close door policy’ the continent has been pursuing so far, regarding African, has resulted in the prevalence of a pressing need to train, retain and attract skilled professionals in the continent. Beyond trade and investment for job creation, African countries require highly-skilled innovative entrepreneurial forces for economic transformation in order to profit from emerging industries such as banking, extractive industries and ICT. The private sector has not been able to quickly acquire, move and retain skills, due to restrictive immigration laws that limited regional skills to

pooling throughout Africa. Therefore, the restricted mobility of professional services has been hindering the growth in African countries.

The African Union (AU) has launched its continental passport in 2016, which is one of the aspirations of Africa in agenda 2063, with the goal of helping realize the dream of visa-free travel for African citizens within their own continent by 2020. AU leaders hope that this will be a key stroke in boosting integration and free movement in Africa. In recent years, Some African countries have loosened visa restrictions for African citizens in order to facilitate the free movement of people and goods; thus, regional integration has become a priority.

Currently, African countries on average are becoming more open to each other, with indications that travel within the continent is getting easier. Compared to previous years, progress has been made in 2018 against visa openness indicators. Africans currently do not need a visa to travel to more countries than in previous years, and they need visas to travel to fewer countries. However, the fact that Africans still require visas to travel to just over half of African countries shows more progress is needed to realize the free movement of people throughout the continent.

Generally, few countries embraced the visa-free Africa policy to facilitate the integration, which is ultimately supposed to boost the intra-African trade, more than half of the countries are yet to open their doors to other African citizens while some have relaxed their visa policy, at least, into visa-on-arrival. Anyway, the continent is seeing a shift toward more free movement of people.

Advocates of visa-relaxation say that the free movement of people will promote employment by allowing those with skills to easily cross borders to find opportunities. That should undercut the costs of expatriates from outside the continent. It also promotes trade across regional blocs of the continent as envisaged under the Free Trade Area. In other words, Africans will focus their primary efforts on intra-African trade rather than fighting for highly competitive markets in Europe and America. Moreover, it will improve ease of doing business across borders, thus allowing entrepreneurs to establish enterprises in neighboring countries. This would create employment opportunities and thereby halt the surging flood of unemployed youth trying to make the death-defying journey across the Mediterranean Sea into Europe.

Some African countries have recognized the benefits of ensuring free movement of people. Seychelles, Mauritius and Rwanda have liberalized their visa requirements. One of the effects is that there has been a significant rise in inward tourist arrivals from other African countries. And also, the removal of visa and even passport requirements within regional trading blocs in both East and West Africa are widely believed to have led to increased economic activity. For example, according to an African Development Bank report, tourism in Seychelles increased by 7% annually between 2009 and 2014 when the country abolished visas for African nationals. By 2015, as a result of the increased revenues, it had become a high income country with thriving real estate, aviation and service industries.

The same report also states that African travel to Rwanda has increased by 22% since it eased its visa requirements in 2013. Since then Rwanda's cross-border trade with Kenya and Uganda has increased by 50%.

This is evidence that free movement of labor and capital, boosts the economies of receiving countries. Thus, free movement in Africa can be expected to enhance business and investment, as the experience of EU shows.

There are major obstacles, however, that need to be cleared before the ambition for free movement across the continent. The main one is posed by concerns raised from countries with highest GDP like South Africa and countries in North Africa where unemployment rates are high and there is a fear that an increased immigration could contribute to increasing domestic tensions. There are also concerns that if not well managed, the free movement could worsen brain drain for poorer countries. As a result, only 30 countries have signed the protocol so far. This is much lower than the 49 countries that have signed the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

Another, the AU recognizes the lack of readiness of many domestic and continental arrangements that would allow the immediate full implementation of the protocol. Some countries have population registration and passport systems which lack integrity; some have weak border management, and some poor security intelligence. Due to this, implementation has been divided into three phases: right of entry and abolition of visa requirements; right of residence; and right of establishment, which includes investment and setting up a business.

Phases 2 and 3 will not be implemented until the implementation of the first phase is reviewed. However, some countries, especially those with relatively high GDP ones, are reluctant even to enter phase one unless some conditions are met; absence of inter-country cooperation on immigration procedures, border management, education systems and mutual recognition of qualifications, and common standards for working conditions.

Moreover, the obvious wide gap in the economic development between individual African countries. It is feared that removing visa requirements could lead to a one-way flow of migrants to countries perceived to offer more opportunities and the growing and large economies worry about the impact that increased population movements might have on labor markets and Cities. The result could be the occasional Afro-phobic flare-ups as experienced in South Africa in 2015 and 2016. Xenophobia is a legitimate concern when it comes to free movement.

Furthermore, although terrorism has not been much of a headache for now, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, there are fears that removing visa restrictions could be catalyst for easy infiltration by terror gangs and shipment of arms. Hence, visa relaxation could likely experience an exponential growth in crime, possibly involving violence as people of questionable backgrounds and characters move freely across borders within the continent.

Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063, number 32, states that “by 2020 all guns will be silent.” However, the goal of achieving a conflict-free Africa is not entirely new. In July 2005, the 5th African union summit adopted a declaration on the millennium development goals, in which they resolved to achieve a conflict-free Africa by 2010, which had failed and later was extended to 2020.

Similarly, the reality on the ground, today also, does not show that Africa is on the right track to realize the plan of “silencing the guns by 2020”. Because the sub-Saharan Africa countries face various structural pressures that increase the risk of political instability and violent conflict. These structural pressures stem from demographics, low levels of development, regime type and horizontal inequalities.

ISS’s Africa report 9 of 2018, forecasts that horizontal inequalities and state-led discrimination between groups are likely to continue to fuel grievances and instability in the continent, and the

greatest challenge to future stability in Africa is regimes that combine autocratic and democratic features. Thus, the anocracy regime, which is characterized by autocratic and democratic features, that most of African countries are characterized by and the forecast made by ISS would not create enabling conditions for the plan to be realized by 2020. The reality on the ground does not show any hope for the plan to happen, therefore, it will not be realized.

The African Union has been pursuing a path of closer integration through the launch of African passport that will grant visa-free access to all 55 member states. The Union aims to distribute the African passport to all African citizens by 2018. Although it has been officially launched in July 2016, the plan has not fully worked out within the prescribed period of time, only higher officials have been able to acquire it; and it will take quite some time before ordinary African citizens will be able to get their hands on one.

When the African Union launched the African passport, it was supposed to be helping realize the dream of visa-free access for African citizens within Africa by 2020. This is a goal of impossible, briefly less than one year away. Because it is impossible to overcome the constraints that are delaying the plan within the timetable left over, which is less than a year.

Besides, the concerns of the countries toward visa-free Africa have not been addressed or guaranteed yet. Even though, the Protocol to the treaty establishing economic community relating to free movement of persons, right to residence and right to establishing, says that the benefit of free movement of people, goods, and service far outweigh the real and potential security challenges that may be perceived and generated, more than half of the countries are still reluctant to open their borders. As a result, 51% of the African countries still require for a visa while visiting. Therefore the African Union may realize the issuance of the African passport to all African citizens by 2020; however the visa-free Africa project may need some extra time for full implementation.

The Visa-Free Africa, which is expected to be fully implemented by 2020, should be extended beyond 2020; the remaining amount of time from the prescribed timeline, which is less than a year, is too little to address the concerns raised by the member countries. Moreover, obviously, people move from one country to another in search of better opportunities. Thus, the member

states should be able to emphasis on creating jobs which could benefit citizens of other countries as well; otherwise it may bring about burden to the host country.

Since security is one of the concerns that member states are raising in order to abolish visa requirements, the AU could use structures and instruments like the Continental Early Warning Systems, and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council ECOSOC to help it manage issues of security and xenophobia. Another, The AU's Special Technical Committee on Defense and Security can also be given the job of improving intelligence sharing as well as cross-border police co-operation.

Furthermore, various state and non-state actors should also sensitize domestic populations on the benefits of free movement in order to avoid a surge of nationalism, anti-immigrant hysteria and the kind of right wing politics that has swept across Europe and America over the past four years. In order to create conducive environment for visa-free movement, Member states of the African Union should first secure peace, maintain political stability which are a threat to free movement of people, goods and services.

As Africa is creating a single continental market area for goods and services, which is supposed to accelerate the establishment of the Customs Union, expand intra-African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation and instruments across the RECs and across Africa in general and enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploitation of opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources.

So far, 49 African countries have signed the agreement of establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, but only 19 countries have ratified it, and 22 ratifications are needed by March 2019 to enable it enter into force. Although, the UN Economic Commission for Africa is working to support African members' states in the implementation process of the AfCFTA; however, the rudimentary infrastructures for the AfCFTA plan to happen are not on the ground, in most part of Africa. Therefore, investing in cross-border infrastructures such as roads and rail networks is mandatory and must be prioritized.

Furthermore, in order to fully utilize the opportunities of the AfCFTA, each country is recommended to develop an AfCFTA strategy which is complementary to their broader trade policies and identifies key trade opportunities, current constraints and steps required to take full advantage of the continental African market. Without comprehensive policy-making and preferential treatment for Africa's most at-risk economies, the AfCFTA could prove to be a force for economic divergence, rather than a force for good. It is, therefore, important that participating countries build an efficient and participatory institutional architecture to avoid leaving any economies behind.

To sum it up, when once the concern of the member states toward visa-free Africa is addressed and/or guaranteed and the rudimentary infrastructural facilities are fulfilled, the project, for sure, will play a vital role in bringing African states and people together for better and also link fragmented local markets across Africa with its consumers, which ultimately benefit the procedures such as the farmers.

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