



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

42nd SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS AND EXPERTS OF CENTRAL AFRICA (ICSOE)



ICSOE2026

Accelerating implementation of priority reforms
to invigorate the private sector in central Africa
at the midpoint of the decade of diversification
(2021-2030).

13 – 15 OCTOBER 2026, Yaoundé – Cameroon

ANNOTATED AGENDA

1. Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony will officially inaugurate the proceedings of the 42nd session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICSOE) and provide an opportunity to situate discussions within the context of the session theme, which focuses on accelerating reforms to promote private sector development and economic diversification in Central Africa. The ceremony will feature statements by the outgoing Chair of the ICSOE Bureau, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Cameroon, the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and a representative of the Government of Cameroon. These statements will highlight the key priorities of the subregion, the expectations of Member States and the strategic directions that should guide the deliberations. The session is expected to foster a shared understanding of the challenges ahead and establish a common framework for action throughout the meeting.

2. Election of the Bureau and Adoption of the Agenda and Programme of Work

The purpose of this session is to establish the institutional arrangements required for the efficient conduct of the 42nd session of the ICSOE. Participants will elect the members of the Bureau, who will be responsible for guiding the proceedings. They will subsequently consider the draft agenda and programme of work to ensure that the issues proposed for discussion reflect the priorities of the meeting and contribute to achieving its objectives. Adoption of these documents will constitute formal approval of the framework and modalities governing the session, thereby ensuring orderly, efficient and consensus-based deliberations.

3. Macroeconomic and Social Overview of Central Africa

This session will provide an updated assessment of the macroeconomic and social situation in Central Africa with a view to informing discussions on structural reforms and private sector development in the subregion. Participants will review key trends in economic growth, public finance, inflation and employment. Discussions will also address developments relating to poverty and inequality, as well as the impact of external shocks, including fluctuations in global markets, geopolitical crises and climate change, on the economies of the subregion. The review will provide a common assessment of recent economic performance, persistent vulnerabilities and opportunities for structural transformation, thereby informing the Committee's recommendations on promoting more inclusive, resilient and diversified growth.

4. Ad Hoc Experts Group Meeting

The Ad Hoc Experts Group Meeting will serve as the main technical forum for examining the theme of the 42nd session of the ICSOE, namely the acceleration of priority reforms in support of private sector development in Central Africa. Drawing on the thematic report prepared by ECA, participants will review the state of private sector development and the reforms undertaken within the framework of the Diversification Decade (2021-2030). Discussions will provide an opportunity to assess progress achieved at the midpoint of the Decade, including accomplishments recorded, their contribution to structural transformation and the extent to which commitments undertaken by Member States have been implemented.

Participants will also examine the major challenges that continue to hinder the achievement of the objectives of the Decade, including institutional constraints, limited access to finance, shortcomings in

the business environment, economic governance challenges and barriers to regional integration. Based on these discussions, the Group of Experts will formulate technical and operational recommendations for member States, regional economic communities and development partners aimed at accelerating the implementation of priority reforms, enhancing private sector competitiveness and supporting economic diversification in the subregion.

5. High-level Panel on the Theme of the Session

This session will take the form of a strategic high-level dialogue bringing together policymakers, private sector representatives, regional institutions, development partners and academic experts to discuss the central theme of the session. Participants will examine the priority reforms required to create a more enabling environment for private sector development and to strengthen its contribution to the structural transformation of Central African economies.

Panelists will consider policies that can accelerate industrialization and economic diversification, mechanisms for mobilizing increased productive private investment and measures to improve the business climate and enterprise competitiveness. Particular attention will be devoted to the role of public-private partnerships as instruments for financing, innovation and infrastructure development. The discussions are expected to identify priority policy actions and coordinated measures at the national and regional levels to reinforce the role of the private sector as a driver of economic growth, job creation and structural transformation in Central Africa.

6. Status of the Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area in Central Africa

This session will review progress made in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Central Africa and examine the opportunities and challenges arising from its implementation for the economies of the subregion. Participants will assess progress in the formulation and execution of national implementation strategies. Discussions will also focus on the opportunities provided by the AfCFTA for expanding access to new markets, promoting intra-African trade and enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises in the subregion. Particular attention will be given to tariff and non-tariff barriers that continue to impede trade flows, as well as opportunities for the development of regional value chains in strategic sectors. The session is expected to identify practical measures to accelerate regional economic integration, strengthen private sector participation in continental trade and maximize the benefits of the AfCFTA for the structural transformation of Central African economies.

7. Presentation of the Activity Report and Recent Initiatives of the Subregional Office for Central Africa

This session will be devoted to the presentation of the activity report of the Subregional Office for Central Africa since the previous session of the Intergovernmental Committee. It will provide Member States with an overview of key achievements, technical assistance provided to countries of the subregion and progress made in the implementation of studies, programmes and projects undertaken by the Office.

Participants will also review recent initiatives launched in response to the development priorities of Central Africa, as well as planned areas of intervention for the coming years. The presentation will provide an opportunity to assess the Office's contribution to regional integration, economic transformation and sustainable development, while identifying emerging needs and areas where enhanced cooperation with Member States and development partners may be required. The discussion is expected to help guide future ECA interventions in support of the priorities of the subregion.

8. Presentation on Recent ECA Initiatives, Emerging Risks and Future Areas of Intervention in Central Africa

This session will provide ECA with an opportunity to brief Member States on key developments that may influence the economic and development trajectory of Central Africa and on the programme responses being considered to address them. Participants will review recent regional economic trends, new programmes and initiatives being implemented or prepared by ECA and emerging risks that may affect the stability and economic transformation of the subregion, including risks of an economic, social, environmental and geopolitical nature.

The session will provide Member States with greater visibility regarding ECA's strategic orientations and future interventions in Central Africa, while facilitating stronger alignment between those interventions and national and regional development priorities.

9. Theme, Date and Venue of the Next Session of the Intergovernmental Committee

This session will consider proposals relating to the organization of the next session of the ICSEO. Participants will be invited to discuss and agree on the theme that will guide future work of the Committee, taking into account emerging priorities in the subregion and the needs of member States. They will also examine indicative dates and any offers to host the next session. Discussions are expected to result in consensus on the theme, provisional timetable and host country, thereby facilitating preparations and ensuring continuity in the work of the Committee.

10. Any other business

This session will provide delegations with an opportunity to raise issues of interest to the subregion that have not been addressed under the preceding agenda items. It will serve as a forum for Member States, regional organizations and development partners to draw the attention of the Committee to emerging concerns, new initiatives or issues requiring particular follow-up. The discussion may also be used to share additional information, offer observations on the proceedings of the session or propose future courses of action. The main issues raised will be recorded to inform the Committee's deliberations and, as appropriate, future activities undertaken by ECA and its partners.

11. Evaluation of the 42nd session of the ICSEO

This session will be dedicated to the evaluation of the 42nd session of the Intergovernmental Committee by participants. It aims to gather the views of delegations regarding the organization of the meeting, the quality of the discussions, the relevance of the topics considered, and the usefulness of the documentation and recommendations produced. Participants will also identify good practices, challenges encountered and areas for improvement in future sessions. The observations and suggestions received will contribute to enhancing the effectiveness, relevance and impact of future meetings of the Committee, while ensuring closer responsiveness to the expectations and needs of Member States.

12. Consideration of the Draft Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

This session will consider the draft summary of the main conclusions and recommendations emerging from the deliberations of the 42nd session of the ICSEO. It will provide an opportunity to synthesize the key findings and messages arising from the various sessions, including discussions on economic diversification, private sector development, implementation of the AfCFTA and prospects for regional cooperation. Delegations will be invited to review the document, propose any necessary amendments

and ensure that the recommendations accurately reflect the consensus reached during the deliberations. The session is expected to culminate in the adoption by consensus of the final summary of conclusions and recommendations of the 2026 ICSOE, which will serve as a reference framework for follow-up actions and the preparation of future activities.

13. Closure of the Meeting

The closing session will mark the formal conclusion of the proceedings of the 42nd session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for Central Africa. It will include closing statements by representatives of the relevant institutions, as well as expressions of appreciation by the Bureau of the Committee to the host country, participating delegations and partners whose contributions helped ensure the success of the meeting.

The session will conclude with the official closure of the 42nd session of the ICSOE, confirming the adoption of follow-up commitments and paving the way for the implementation of the priority actions identified during the deliberations.