



2021 ADEBAYO ADEDEJI LECTURE

TOWARDS A
DEVELOPMENTAL
APPROACH TO THE AFRICAN
CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE
AREA



FIFTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
AFRICA'S SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND DIVERSIFICATION
IN THE DIGITAL ERA IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

 United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

The 2021 Adedeji Lecture will be delivered by Dr. Rob Davies on the theme; "Towards a Developmental Approach to the AfCFTA".

Dr. Davies retired in 2019 after serving two five-year terms as South African Minister of Trade and Industry. He was a Member of Parliament from the time of South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 until May 2019. Before entering Parliament, he was Professor and Co-Director of the Centre of Southern African Studies at the University of the Western Cape and professor auxiliary at the Centre for African Studies at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, Mozambique. He holds an Honours Degree in Economics from Rhodes University and a Doctorate from the University of Sussex in the UK. He has authored and co-authored numerous publications, including recently, *The Politics of Trade in the Era of Hyperglobalisation*:

A View from Southern Africa, published by the South Centre in 2019 and *Towards a New Deal: A Political Economy of the years of my Life*, published by Jonathan Ball in 2021.

This year, the Economic Commission for Africa's Annual Adebayo Adedeji Lecture will focus on the most contemporary development issue on the Continent - the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The AfCFTA is a landmark initiative that has the potential to create a continental free-trade zone with a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD\$3.4 trillion, becoming the largest in the world, if fully implemented.

The lecture was initiated to honour the late Professor Adebayo Adedeji, who was one of Africa's foremost development thinkers and the longest serving ECA Executive Secretary.

About the Adebayo Adedeji Annual Lecture Series

The Adebayo Adedeji Lecture Series is in recognition of the remarkable achievements and contributions of Prof. Adebayo Adedeji to the work of ECA and Africa's development process. Adedeji was a renowned pan-Africanist and visionary leader, who devoted his life and professional career to the service of the Continent. Prof. Adedeji was unreservedly committed to the goal of regional integration in Africa. He played a key role in the formation of regional economic communities like ECOWAS, COMESA, and ECCAS.





2021
ADEBAYO
ADEDEJI
LECTURE

TOWARDS A
DEVELOPMENTAL
APPROACH TO THE AFRICAN
CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE
AREA

As Adedeji himself puts it, *“I’ve spent a quarter of a century of my life promoting economic cooperation. I was a leader of the team in the establishment of ECOWAS. I was very optimistic when I came to the ECA that I would be able to do similar things elsewhere in Africa. So, we started the PTA and COMESA, then in Central Africa. I’ve gone through it. It has been disappointing that these have not achieved much”*. A strong advocate of an inward-looking self-reliant Africa, key regional developmental frameworks like the *Lagos Plan of Action for the Development of Africa* of 1980 and the Final Act of Lagos of 1981, that espouse those ideas, had Adedeji’s imprint. Adedeji also actively supported the formulation of the *Abuja Treaty on the African Economic Community (AEC)* of 1991. As a development thinker, Adedeji contested ideas and provided alternative

development paradigm for the Continent. The famous *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP)* produced by the ECA in 1990 was under Adebayo Adedeji’s leadership.

In retirement, Adedeji continued to offer his services to the Continent in various capacities. He served as chair of the *African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)* Panel of Eminent Persons, and also Chair of the High-Level Panel on the Audit of the African Union in 2007, amongst others.

Professor Adedeji is remembered as an illustrious son, who gave his life, energy, passion and intellectual gift to the Continent.

#AdedejiLecture2021 #COM2021

