

**IGU COMMISSION ON AFRICAN STUDIES**  
**IGU THEMATIC CONFERENCE: EGYPT 2025**

The following is a list of some of the Sessions under which papers, which respond to the conference theme: Geo-Spatial Technology, Global Changes and Sustainability

**1. African borders and borderlands**

Session Abstract

There is a growth and renewed interest in the study of African borders and borderlands. This has generated lively debates on the artificiality (or lack of it) of African borders, the role of borders in fueling conflict and instability and also the potential African borders as resources for peace and regional development and integration. This session builds on this momentum on the study of African borders and borderlands and invites papers, which address a variety of issues around these places and spaces. These include *inter alia*; African borders, regional and continental development and integration, trade agreement, borders and development in Africa, cross border informality and socio-economic development, African borders, bottom up and alternative models of regional and continental development and integration, theoretical perspectives on African borders etc.

**2. Africa and climate change**

Session Abstract

There is a wealth of literature on climate change and its impacts, and so are the debates on climate change adaptation and mitigation. Clearly debates on issues around climate change are raging. This session is located in this context and thus invites papers that will interrogate the various aspects of climate, but with a specific focus on Africa. These include among others, the use or deployment of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) to respond to drought, impact of drought on Africa, response to drought etc.

**3. Africa and natural resource use/management**

Session abstract

There are many debates around the issue of resource use and management in Africa. Some schools of thought emphasize that African resources continue to be exploited by developed countries of Western Europe and North America at the expense of Africa. There is the belief that this lead to and sustains poverty and underdevelopment of Africa, despite the fact that he continent may have a variety of resources that should propel its development. Against this background this session invites papers that will engage with the many dimensions of this debate around the mis(use) and/or management of natural resources in Africa

**4. African development challenges and trajectories**

Session abstract

Africa faces many development challenges (poverty, diseases, famines, civil wars, terrorism, clandestine immigration, poor governance, economic marginalization, digital divide, etc.). All these challenges constitute obstacles to its development. Most of these challenges are endogenous and stem from the bad forms of political and economic governance initiated on the continent. Awareness of these problems arises through appropriate questioning and the ardent desire to see things evolve favorably. If we consider that change is one of the modalities of socioeconomic development, we can assume that a change in behavior and practices can then offer better trajectories and development opportunities to the African continent. The economic literature and the example of developed and emerging countries indicate that development is based catalysts and on long-term construction efforts; which is often lacking in Africa. It is nonetheless questionable whether there are any examples of success on the continent that could

serve as models for other countries. This session aims to foster rewarding cross-reflection between researchers from Africa and researchers from other continents. Such an approach will make it possible to analyze in depth the specific development challenges facing Africa. The idea is to arrive at an objective and rigorous diagnosis that will serve as a basis for exploring opportunities to improve development practice on the continent. The idea is also to take advantage, through exchanges, of the experiences of the more advanced continents in terms of development.

## **5. Conflict, war and development**

### Session abstract

The causes of conflict in Africa are many, just as they are complex. This session targets expanding this debate by focusing on the porosity of African borders and their (possible) effect in fueling war and conflict on one hand, and the possibility of being sources of peace, on the other hand. It is understood that the people who cross the borders may be uprooted by one or a combination of several factors. Nonetheless, it is worth investigating how the porosity of African borders might exacerbate war and conflict and the way in which this impacts on regional integration on one hand, and the extent to which regional and continental integration could contribute towards cooperation, peace and well-being in Africa on the other hand. Papers that engage with among others, but not limited to initiatives and innovations that can be put in place or are already being employed on the ground, within the current regional and continental integration debates and practices to bring peace and development will be considered.

## **6. Environmental issues and challenges in sub-Saharan Africa**

### Session abstract

The Paris Agreement negotiated at a conference attended by 196 parties attending the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, the 21<sup>st</sup> annual session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21), in Paris in 2015 marked a major milestone in global efforts to address environmental and climate related challenges facing the world. The signing of the Agreement by 174 countries in New York a year later on 22 April 2016 confirms the resolve of the global community to practically come to terms and address environmental challenges. Sub-Saharan Africa is not spared as it faces some of the most serious environmental challenges in the world. The list of such challenges including increasing temperatures, deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, etc. is massive. The Paris Agreement offers hope in efforts to address these problems. In order to effectively address them, however, it is important to understand their nature.

## **7. Geopolitics and the geographies of war and terrorism**

### Session abstract

Discussion of the war on terrorism is heavily skewed towards occurrences in the Middle East and the Afghanistan-Pakistan area. Africa has, however, had a fair share of terrorist incidences that have geopolitical consequences and work examining. For example, Osama bin Laden once operated in Sudan. Other figures that have attracted international attention in the recent past include Joseph Kony of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) affecting Uganda and the Central African Republic; Abubakar Shekau and the Boko Haram affecting Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad, among others. The Lord's Resistance Army has been implicated in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a theatre in which the United Nations as well as neighboring countries including Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda have also been alleged to be fully involved. Other hotspots include the Horn of Africa in which the USA has been involved. Terrorist acts in Europe are also sometimes linked to terrorist cells in Morocco and Algeria. This session seeks to examine the complex intricacies of war as it relates to geography and politics in Africa and the outside world.

## **8. Globalisation, Africa and marginality**

### Session Abstract

The impacts of globalisation are contested, especially so in Africa, where there are debates on the disruptive, destabilising and marginalising effects of this process. But, there are also some instances where globalisation has received a relatively good report. Against this background, this session invites papers, which provide a sophisticated analysis of the impact of and response to globalisation in the Third World, but with a specific focus on Africa. Papers, which engage with these themes from a variety of angles, are particularly welcome.

## **9. Migration, development and regional integration**

### Session Abstract

Human mobility is an age-old phenomenon. Yet, migration is of late taking centre stage in the media, academia and policy spheres. Given its prominence on the agendas of not only national governments but also regional and even intercontinental platforms such as the EU-Africa summit, it is perhaps prudent to revisit the debate on migration and its relationship with development. In what ways should migration and development, as apparently pressing issues in the contemporary global political economy, be approached and addressed? Do they need special tools of analysis and a complete reframing to obtain new and fresher views of the phenomenon?

## **10. Post development geographies in Africa**

### Session abstract

Although global population growth appears to be stable, the largest portion of the global population growth takes place in Africa. The demographic contrast of global population growth results in a number of significant spatial challenges. The failure to provide for populations in the various countries in African has led widespread poverty and inequality on the continent. Despite a number of strategies (including the SDGs and African Union Agenda 2063) that aim at eliminating poverty and reducing the levels of inequality across the continent, millions of Africans continue to live in multidimensional poverty and increasing levels of inequality.

This session welcomes a wide spectrum of research that inherently follows post development approaches that seek to achieve socio-economic change through enabling the active participation of its citizens who will drive their own futures that will include the reduction of the levels of poverty and inequality on the continent for a sustainable future. This session invites papers on (but not limited to) the following topics/ approaches: participatory rural appraisal in rural areas, sustainable livelihoods approach, asset-based community development, socio-economic change and quality of life, spatial variations in poverty and inequality, empowerment of communities through entrepreneurship programmes, skills transfer and lifelong learning, land reform and restitution, environmental awareness, responsibility and conservation, spatial population dynamics, household food security and nutrition, indigenous knowledge systems, community based tourism, gender and women's empowerment, research related to the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, Global partnerships for sustainable change.

## **11. Regional Integration in Africa and Changing Global Balances**

### Session abstract

Africa is proceeding with the ambitious integration agenda of establishing a continental free trade area (CFTA) by the end of 2017 and the African Economic Community (AEC) by 2028. The commitment of African leaders to continental integration has been strengthened by numerous rounds of CFTA negotiations over the years, involving Ministers and negotiators from the 54 member states of the African Union (AU). A free trade area (FTA) for Africa could set Africa, respective AU member states and populations on a path of transformation from dependence on the export of commodities to manufactured products. The drive for a Pan-

African FTA follows progress in developing regional free trade pacts, and feeds into the CFTA ambition. Hence this session invites papers that engage, but are not limited to the following: To what extent is regional integration in Africa a model of economic transformation and development? What are the alternative approached to regionalism in Africa? What progress has Africa has made concerning regionalism?

## **12. Urban Transition in Africa**

Session abstract

Urban transition assumes many dimensions, such as among others, the changing character and composition of urban Africa. This session therefore, invites proposals, which interrogates the various dimensions of urban transition in Africa. In particulars, proposal which are theoretically or empirically grounded are welcome.

## **13. Water resources management and governance**

Session abstract

Water is a scarce resource in many parts of Africa. Because of this, water supply and sanitation for most parts of the continent's population is a huge challenge. The challenge is manifested in the inability of most countries to provide adequate services for water supply and sanitation. This session will address, among other things, the governance of water resources, sustainable water supply, stakeholder participation in the management of water resources, etc.

==\*\*\*\*==