

PAN AFRICAN LAWYERS UNION

اتحاد المحامين الأفارقة



UNION PANAFRICAINNE DES AVOCATS

UNIAO PAN-AFRICANA DOS ADVOGADOS



#PALUAGM2022 #TheAfricaWeWant #SisiNdioTuko



## Concept Note

**2022 Annual Conference and Triennial General Assembly**  
*Mount Meru Hotel and Conference Centre, Arusha, Tanzania*  
*Monday 27 – Thursday 30 June 2022*

### **1 Introduction**

The **Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU)**, the premier continental forum of, and for, lawyers and lawyers' associations in Africa, will be hosting its Annual Conference and Tri-Annual General Assembly, from **Monday 27<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022**. It will be a hybrid event, with the physical sessions taking place at the **Mount Meru Hotel and Conference Centre, Arusha, Tanzania**, and simultaneously online, on Zoom or a similar platform.

The events will bring over 300 participants, drawn from across the African Continent and the Diaspora, including but not limited to individual lawyers and law firm executives; leaders of national and regional lawyers' associations (both bar associations and law societies); counterparts from international and regional lawyers' associations from across the world; officials from national governments, intergovernmental and international organisations; representatives of civil society organizations; and select members of the public, including youth and students.

### **2 Background and context: #SisiNdioTuko**

Several positive developments have taken place in Africa over the last decade, which require support, as well as further introspection, reflection, organising and action. In terms of the economic, social, and cultural development of the continent, its leaders have adopted the African Union's Agenda 2063. This agenda, which contains seven aspirations and twenty goals, is considered as the masterplan, for long-term development on the continent. The continent's leaders have also adopted, and have been engaged in implementing, the first ten-year Implementation Plan for Agenda 2063.



Further, African States have adopted, and brought into force, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) with a raft of legal instruments and institutions, which include a Protocol on Freedom of Movement in Africa, and re-energised work on the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). African institutions, including the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Export–Import Bank (Afreximbank) have contributed to African countries’ growth and innovation in general; they have supported the rollout of the AfCFTA with innovative tools and services; and, most recently, developed agile and innovative tools and facilities, to assist African peoples’ businesses, and governments, in coping with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war. Citizens of the continent are not left out, as they have, through innovations, established for-profit and non-profit institutions across the continent. Citizens have been active both before, and in the wake of, COVID-19, for instance in the financial technology (FinTech) spheres, electronic government services including electronic judicial services, among others.

Notwithstanding these good efforts, our continent continues to face challenges relating to good governance; rule of law; armed conflicts; the effects and politics of climate change; institutional and infrastructural development deficits; and a skewed international financial architecture, that is not fit for purpose, certainly in the current epoch. This situation has been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has derailed progress on development in the continent. Whereas the African people proved resilient, their economies and societies have been battered by the effects of the pandemic. Most African governments have incurred huge amounts of sovereign debt, on terms and conditions that are not fully available to the public. While some of the resources have been laudably used in COVID mitigation and development efforts, a significant amount is feared to have been lost due to corruption and inefficiencies in government delivery services.

Africa- at the national, (sub) regional, and at the continental levels- is **not** short of legal, policy and strategic instruments, including continental commitments and master plans, that would address some of these issues in a principled, coordinated, and effective manner. These platforms and possibilities could potentially strengthen Africa’s hand, when it goes to the global stage to negotiate, or advocate, for a fairer world order and a reformed international financial architecture. While the efforts so far, are appreciated, it is also recognised that more work needs to be done, to move the continent forward. The organised legal profession on the continent (through PALU) is willing to build on its past legacy and step up to this renewed challenge, and to work with other actors towards the same objectives.

It is with all the above in mind that PALU chose the theme of this year’s Annual Conference: **“The Africa we want: From Aspirations to Reality.”**



The theme, is a challenge to PALU, its partners, members, and friends of the continent to: -

- Take stock of developments to date, and celebrate that which has been done well, while honestly confronting that which could have been done better.
- Re-evaluate the continent's existing assets, in its people (human, technical and financial assets, and our social capital) and organize ourselves beyond lamentations, into proactively and innovatively working and collaborating to practically achieve that which we have set for ourselves in our aspirations.
- Identify progressive strategies for building and strengthening the legal profession, encouraging its independence and diversity, and adherence to professional ethics, for the promotion of integrity in the legal profession geared towards Africa's development

'**Sisi ndio tuko**' is a Swahili phrase that is literally translatable into 'We are the ones who are here.' A more apt translation, albeit colloquial, would be 'we are the ones we have been waiting for!' PALU as an individual institution, with the support of our partners and members, is challenging and encouraging African individuals and institutions, to take up the mantle themselves, and embody and drive the change and development that they wish to see.

We will continue to provide a platform for legal professionals across the continent, to explore and agree on the best ways of ensuring that the legal profession maintains its critical role in the sustainable development of the continent. PALU believes that for a united, just, and prosperous continent, there is need for strengthening the institutions of the legal profession: at continental, (sub) regional and national levels, and even down to devolved/ decentralised units or institutions. Institutional development is a key ingredient to ensuring that organizations are better positioned to harness their respective memberships to achieve their mandates and to contribute to Africa's development agenda.

As an organisation, we are keen to have our members adequately equipped with key skills, and facilitations to, network and collaborate with each other, to fully assist the clients, they serve in this era of rapid global change, including technological change. Furthermore, considering the post-COVID-19 era, and the era of a new war in Europe with global ramifications, it is our goal to help our members and their clients to have the right mindsets, and develop or harness the requisite tools to enable them to promptly recover from the twin economic shocks and continue to innovate for the future.

### **3 The 2022 Annual Conference**

The conference and allied activities and side events will provide a platform for the legal professionals and their friends to cross-pollinate ideas and strategies; and engage each other on means through which they can



promote economic enterprise and growth through legal practice, across the continent. These discussions would be enabled by expert moderators and panellists, drawn from across the continent and diaspora. To facilitate this program, the conference is split into five main streams, as follows:

- **Business Law** – This pillar is aligned with our Section on Business Law (SBL). This year, we will bring together the continent’s leading lawyers, to showcase developments and opportunities in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), arbitration, court-annexed mediation, company law, extractive industries, and real estate, amongst others. It will thus be the premier forum for the continent’s corporate, commercial and trade lawyers.
- **Legal Practice** – This pillar is aligned with our Section on Legal Practice (SLP). This year, we will bring together the continent’s leading lawyers and other professionals and service providers to showcase innovations in law firms and law-based business in the era of COVID, developments and opportunities in technology and other progressive approaches to legal practice. Thus, we will contribute to lawyers’ professional development, capacity-building, and law firm growth strategies.
- **Public Interest and Development Law** – This pillar is aligned with our Section on Public Interest and Development Law (SPIDEL). It will bring together lawyers and non-lawyers, civil society, and other key stakeholders, to discuss issues relating to human rights litigation and advocacy, challenges to the rule of law and democracy, restitution of African art, as well as evaluating the continent’s relationship with international law.
- **Specialist Workshop on Economic Governance** - This year, PALU has incorporated a fourth pillar, as part of its economic governance activities. We have embedded, a two-day, specialist Workshop on Economic Governance in Africa. It will explore developments in laws and institutions for fostering **Beneficial Ownership** in Africa. It will also explore options for transparency, fairness, and justice in the management of **sovereign debt** in Africa, and developments and opportunities for combatting **Illicit Financial Flows** from Africa.
- **Special Seminar on an Introduction to the East African Community (EAC)** – The main conference will be preceded by a one-day, intensive “**Introduction to the EAC**” Seminar, which will bring together a delegation of Congolese lawyers, civil society activists and other stakeholders, to learn about the EAC, its laws, methods of working and opportunities therein. The special seminar will cover introductions to the basic law of the EAC, as well as its policy and bureaucratic, legislative, and judicial organs, respectively. While the core target is our Congolese comrades, the Seminar will be open to other conference participants that might wish to interact with them, or to brush up their knowledge of, and contacts at, the EAC.



#### 4 The 2022 Council Meeting

The conference will also incorporate the 2022 meeting of the Council of PALU, which is comprised of the Presidents of its institutional members (national and regional lawyers' associations). The Bar leaders will review developments on the continent, and at PALU, over the last twelve months, review the Activity Report and audited accounts of PALU, and will also superintend the election of the Executive Committee (Board) that will lead PALU for the next three years. The Council deliberations offer the leadership of the Bar in Africa, an opportunity to explore ways of working collaboratively to develop the legal profession and the rule of law on the continent.

#### 5 The 2022 Triennial General Assembly

At the end of the Conference, PALU will convene a town hall style plenary, on the future of PALU. At the plenary, all members – individual and institutional – can give inputs for the next five-year Strategic Plan of PALU. This will be crowned by the Triennial General Assembly, that will receive the reports of the PALU Council and conclude the process of election of the Executive Committee (Board) of PALU.

#### 6 Extra-curricular activities

As is the PALU tradition, the serious deliberations will be interspersed with fun activities that allow the lawyers, and their friends, to exhale, relax and network, in more pleasant contexts. This will include cocktails, a Young Lawyers' night out, Karaoke, and a gala dinner. At the end of the conference, we will hold a Golf Tournament and city and shopping tours. There are also optional activities such as Safaris to the game parks, and the paradise Island of Zanzibar.

#### 7 Conclusion

The main language of the conference is English and French. Simultaneous interpretations facilities would be available at both online and in-person venues. Some of the physical sessions will include working visits to various institutions, such as the African Court on Human and People's Rights, African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC) and the East African Community (EAC). For this reason, we encourage lawyers to carry their formal professional attire.

