

The African Development Bank has released the 2014 edition of its African Development Report. Launched in the Bank's new headquarters in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, this new installment focuses on the theme of "Regional integration at the service of inclusive growth".

Since the independence decade of the 1960s, regional integration has played an essential role in the continent's development and this report aims to discuss its relevance, 50 years later, in a changed and globalised world.

In six chapters, this publication makes a critical examination of the developments over the last five decades in terms of economic and political integration by exploring the importance and role of regional economic communities; the impact of regional infrastructure; the implications of the interregional migration of factors of production; regional financial integration and the platforms required to raise its impact on regional commerce and economic growth; and how best to link Africa to global production and trade through regional value chains.

Among the challenges faced by the African continent detailed in this report, particular emphasis is placed on the development of distribution networks, institutional challenges and infrastructure. But the research also highlights that the main challenge facing Africa is the implementation of recent policies rather than their formulation and that a strong political will and an enhanced institutional capacity will be paramount to achieve the goals it has set out.

The research concludes that closer economic and political integration is still relevant for the continent but that it needs to be stepped up in order to stimulate sustained, inclusive growth.