

AFRICAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

**THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE
COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA
(COMESA)**

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ABSTRACT

Every continent has at least one major integration movement. Europe has the European Union, Asia has the Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN) and the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), North – America has the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), Latin America has the latin America Association for Common Market (ANCOM), America has the Central American Common Market (CACM). Africa has three major ones; the South African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) which is the research focus.

There are two reasons that make COMESA a more appropriate regional group for study in terms of relevance and interest as compared to other integration movements on the African continent. Nine of the African ten member states of SADC are also part of the member states of COMESA. COMESA is the largest regional grouping in Africa.

The study sets out to analyse the history of regional Integration in Eastern and Southern Africa especially on COMESA. It will also be necessary to establish the limitations of the Legal and Institutional framework and its ramifications for the future of regional Integration. The study further assesses the Institutional and Legal opportunities, challenges and achievements of regional Integration in the context of COMESA.

The study also deals with comparative aspects of the Legal and Institutional perspectives of COMESA with those existing in the EU, NAFTA and ECOWAS. Proposals for reforms that would engender COMESA activities in light of existing and future challenges are covered in the study as critical areas that would offer benchmarks for a cherished regional body.