



MAKE AFRICA BORDERLESS NOW!

A People's Manifesto for Unity, Opportunity, and Shared Prosperity



The Colonial Division and the Urgency of Now

In 1884, European powers gathered in Berlin to partition Africa without a single African voice. The borders they drew with rulers across rivers, deserts, and communities were designed for extraction and control, not prosperity. Decades later, newly independent states chose to preserve these colonial lines. That choice created modern Africa's central contradiction: political independence without economic might; sovereignty without scale; and a continent of fragmented potential.

Today, these artificial borders stifle a market of over 1.5 billion people. They restrict the movement of talent and goods, multiply costs, trap capital and restrict the job market. As Africa's population surges toward 2.1 billion by 2040 to host the world's largest workforce, we face a decisive choice:

Will we grow divided and weak, or integrated and empowered? Building a genuine single market is the most transformative project of this century, a direct path to unlocking industrialisation, competitive continental brands, and dignified prosperity for all.

This manifesto, and the movement it fuels, exists to close the gap between Africa's visionary agreements and their urgent implementation

The legal basis for Africa's integration already exists in the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty), which entered into force in 1994. Article 43(5) guaranteed free movement of persons, residence and establishment. Yet it took 24 years, until 2018, for the Free Movement Protocol to be adopted. Sadly, ratification has since stalled. Only four Member States have ratified it, far below the threshold for entry into force. Not even the Protocol's phased approach, beginning with visa-free travel, has inspired urgency. The Protocol also provides for a single African passport and mutual recognition of

professional qualifications. These are all practical tools to unlock mobility, scale enterprises, and create jobs across a true single market.

Africa cannot realise the full potential of economic integration, including AfCFTA, without free movement. Mobility is the very foundation to integration. Africa has to close the gap between treaties signed and promises delivered.

A People-Powered Movement for Implementation

That is why the Africa Prosperity Network, along with its partners, decided to launch the "Make Africa Borderless Now!" campaign in 2026. It is a historic, grassroots movement, which seeks to take the issue of Africa's economic integration from the elitist confines of summits and treaties to be owned and driven by the people. It aims to transform, with greater urgency, the imperative of integration from a leaders' aspiration into a people-driven demand for action.

Our bold goal is to mobilise, within 12 months, over 10 million signatures from Africans and the global diaspora, presenting this mandate directly to Heads of State at the 40th African Union Summit in February 2027.

Inspired by the success of the Jubilee 2000 debt relief movement, which secured 24 million signatures in the late 1990s, we believe in the power of unified public will to turn long-agreed treaties into tangible reality. This manifesto, and the movement it fuels, exists to close the gap between Africa's visionary agreements and their urgent implementation.

Security Through Integration: Dispelling the Myths

A common fear is that free movement weakens security and invites uncontrolled migration. We argue the opposite: a borderless Africa is a more secure, better-governed Africa. To put security into perspective, countries like China and India, each, have populations comparable to Africa's 1.5 billion people and yet have robust security systems that serve to enable free enterprise and consolidate their collective commercial power, while increasing their business competitiveness in the global economy.

Our current patchwork of 54 or 55 separate border systems is itself a security weakness. Criminals exploit gaps between disconnected databases. We propose replacing the illusion of control offered by cumbersome visas with modern, integrated biometric systems. The call is for a common African Union biometric passport or digital ID. Under this model, movement is free but identification is strict and verified at ports of entry. This enables states to consolidate data, share intelligence effectively, and monitor movement in real-time. Sovereignty is not surrendered; it is exercised smarter.

Evidence from integrated markets shows mobility follows economic opportunity, not chaos. As jobs and investment spread across a unified market, pressure on any single nation eases. True security in the 21st century comes from smart integration and data-driven governance, not from colonial-era barriers that only create the façade of control.

The Engine of Integration: Unleashing African Enterprise

Africa's future will be written by its enterprises. From the SMEs that form our economic backbone to the women- and youth-led businesses driving innovation, all face the same core challenge: not a lack of ambition, but the fragmentation of small, disconnected markets.

Enterprises are hamstrung when borders block movement, payments fail to flow, and standards multiply costs. A single, integrated African market is the essential platform on which an SME can grow into a regional champion, a woman entrepreneur can scale her business with dignity, and an African corporation can emerge as a global competitor. Every major world brand was first built on a large, integrated home market. To build our own champions, we must first unite our home.

The 12 Action Priorities: A Practical Blueprint for a Borderless Continent

The blueprint for integration already exists in signed treaties and protocols. These twelve action priorities represent the unfinished business of African unity, now claimed by its people.

1. Abolish Visas for Africans in Africa

Africa cannot integrate if its entrepreneurs cannot move. Visa restrictions raise costs, delay deals, and stifle opportunity. Abolishing visas for Africans travelling within Africa treats mobility as essential economic infrastructure, enabling businesses to explore markets, establish partnerships, and deploy talent freely across the continent.

2. Open Africa's Skies Now

Closed skies keep Africa expensive and disconnected. Fully implementing the Yamoussoukro Decision and the Single African Air Transport Market will slash airfares, connect cities directly, and turbocharge trade, tourism, and logistics, expanding markets and creating jobs.

3. Launch One African Biometric Passport & Digital ID

Enterprises need speed, trust, and certainty. A single or common African biometric passport and interoperable digital ID will simplify travel and business establishment, support secure digital services, **ensure security**, and lower verification costs, turning seamless movement into a driver of secure economic activity.

4. Activate the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol

With African enterprise increasingly digital, we must activate the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol to create one continental digital market. This enables businesses to sell services and content across borders, scale without physical relocation, and compete globally from an African base.

5. Make Cross-Border Payments Seamless Across Africa

Intra-African trade requires frictionless finance. The full operationalisation of the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) and continent-wide mobile-money interoperability will reduce transaction costs, keep value circulating within Africa, and save billions lost annually to foreign currency conversion.

6. Unlock African Talent Through Mutual Skills Recognition

African enterprises need skills, which are readily available among Africans at home and beyond. Mutual recognition of professional and vocational qualifications will allow firms to recruit continent-wide, deploy staff across markets, and build the specialised, competitive teams needed for global success.

7. Harmonise Standards to Create One African Market

Multiple national standards force businesses to treat Africa as 55 or so separate markets. Harmonising regulations ensures goods approved in one country can be sold across the continent, unlocking manufacturing, agro-processing, and light industry, and enabling enterprises to scale into true continental brands.

8. Establish One African Customs Union

The AfCFTA cannot reach its potential without a customs union. The Abuja Treaty's 2028 deadline for this must be honoured. A digitised, unified customs system will reduce delays, boost industrialisation and cross-border trade, lower costs for SMEs, and attract global manufacturers to set up operations in Africa.

9. Build Continental Infrastructure That Connects Africa

Enterprises cannot scale on disconnected infrastructure. We must invest jointly in roads, rail, ports, energy, and digital networks. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam shows what is collectively possible. Innovative financing, such as the proposed One-Dollar-a-Day African Infrastructure Fund, can mobilise citizen savings, pension funds, and private capital into bankable projects that physically unite the continent.

10. Enforce Integration Through the African Court of Justice

Markets require rules, and rules require enforcement. Operationalising the supranational African Court of Justice, as provided for in the AU Constitutive Act, will provide a huge incentive for investors because of the certainty and protection for enterprises against arbitrary barriers. It will ensure that the single market rules and regulations have to be applied and uniformly so across member states.

11. Put SMEs, Women, and Youth at the Centre of Trade

Women and youth-led SMEs dominate African trade yet face the highest barriers. Full implementation of the Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade is essential to

ensure access to finance, simplified procedures, safe mobility, and true continental market access for our most dynamic entrepreneurs.

12. Negotiate as One Africa on the Global Stage

Fragmented Africa is a price-taker; integrated Africa is a rule-maker. Negotiating as one bloc on the big issues, such as trade, digital governance, and climate action, establishes Africa's global stature, enhancing our efforts towards self-determination and socio-economic development.

A New Pan-Africanism: Owned and Driven by the People

This is a new kind of Pan-Africanism. It moves from summit halls and political rhetoric into markets, factories, studios, farms, and digital platforms. It is owned and driven by the people: by the entrepreneurs, workers, creators, and youth whose future is at stake.

The **“Make Africa Borderless Now!”** movement does not weaken our nations; it strengthens them by giving our enterprises the scale to generate wealth, innovation, and jobs at home. The Berlin Conference divided Africa without Africans. This generation will surely succeed if the treaties and protocols that our leaders have signed up to over the years are implemented. That will give the people and enterprises the practical tools of open markets, seamless mobility, and shared opportunity.

The time for a united, prosperous, and borderless Africa is now. The people are ready. The plan is clear. The moment is here.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

This is not a spectator's moment. This is our collective moment to act.

When the campaign launches across the continent and diaspora in 2026, we call on every African and friend of Africa to become a builder of this new reality. Sign the petition. Share the demand. Mobilise your community. Let us transform 10 million signatures into a continental roar that the continent's 50-plus governments cannot ignore.

Let us move from debating borders to erasing them. From accepting fragmentation to demanding integration. From hoping for unity to enacting it. The lines that divide us are not our destiny. Our destiny is union. Get ready. Stand up. Speak out.

Together, let us **MAKE AFRICA BORDERLESS NOW!**



Make Africa Borderless Now!
Join the movement, sign the petition:
<https://makeafricaborderlessnow.com>

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