



CALL FOR PAPERS

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS  
2023 **IRSK**  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THEME

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY IN AN ERA OF POLY-CRISIS AND GEO-STRATEGIC COMPETITION IN THE COMESA REGION

DATE: October 26th – 27th 2023,  
LOCATION: Nairobi, Kenya



## Introduction

For decades, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) region continues to experience a myriad of crises and challenges that have far-reaching implications on its growth and development. The simultaneous occurrence of several catastrophic and disastrous events relates to among others conflicts, natural and man-made disasters, economic meltdowns, environment, migrations, globalization, and humanitarian emergencies. In addition, extra-regional interests (geo-strategic) and competition continue to contribute significantly (either negative or positive) to the nature of the political, economic, and security architecture in the region. A combination of these factors has led to the development of fluid inter-state and diplomatic relations among and between the regional states with far-reaching consequences on the present and future of peace, security, regional integration and development in the sub-region. It is against this background, this year's IRSK annual conference is focused on *'International Relations and Diplomacy in an Era of Polycrisis and Geo-Strategic Competition in the COMESA Region.'*

A plethora of theoretical, conceptual and practical perspectives underlie the implications of the different developments on international and diplomatic relations within COMESA. The nature and form of inter-state and diplomatic relations has implications on the peace, security, stability and development of the region. It is therefore important to critically analyse and succinctly capture the implications of the complexity brought about by these factors influencing interstate and diplomatic relations in the subregion. The central theoretical assumption guiding the conference theme is that through a combination of a variety of theories and methodological instruments, we would be able to understand, explain and analyse the causes and consequences of the complex relations that exist among and between states in the COMESA region. It means eclectic and multidisciplinary approaches are important to analyse these factors and their

implications for regional peace, security, stability, integration and development. In addition, plausible policy suggestions will be made on how to promote peace, security, stability, integration and development in the sub-region. Effective and sustainable solutions to these crises and challenges require a deep understanding of the issues, approaches, mechanisms, dynamics, and methodologies.

In this regard, the conference aims to address three distinct but inter-related questions i) How are the various political, economic, and security developments taking place globally and regionally affecting interstate and diplomatic relations in the COMESA region; ii) What should collectively or individually be done to ensure that states, regional organizations and mechanisms are able to deal with any would-be negative implication of these developments to promote peace, security, stability and development. iii) What are the consequences and/or implications of a failure to effectively address these challenges?

Based on the three questions above, the conference will critically interrogate theoretical, conceptual and methodological instruments adopted to deal with these crises and challenges and policies needed. These are to be embedded in elaborate, innovative, and empirical examination in order to spur academic and policy discourse.

## Conference Tracks

The IRSK, COMESA & ACCORD invite well-researched scholarly and policy papers based on the above theme from scholars, policymakers and practitioners. The papers should be original, well researched and analytical, with realistic and relevant policy recommendations and should neither be published nor under consideration elsewhere.

The conference will be organized around two distinct tracks:

### 1. International Relations

#### a) Foreign Policy and Statecraft

- Grand Strategy
- Great Power Competition
- National Interests

#### b) Peace and Security

- Regional Stability
- Conflict Management
- Peacebuilding
- Terrorism
- Transnational Organized Crimes

- Climate Security

**c) International Law**

- Treaties & Conventions
- Contemporary Issues in International Law
- International Humanitarian Law
- Public International Law

**d) International Political Economy**

- Globalization
- Sustainable Development
- North-South Relations
- South-South Relations
- International Monetary & Financial System
- Debt

## **2. Diplomacy**

Spans various topics across bilateral and multilateral diplomacy including:

**a) Economic Diplomacy**

- Commercial Diplomacy
- Economic Partnership Agreements
- Regional Integration and Cooperation, and
- Science Diplomacy

**b) Diaspora Diplomacy**

- Migration and Settlement
- Remittances
- Identity

**c) Cultural Diplomacy**

- Soft Power
- Smart Power
- People-to-People diplomacy
- Media

**d) Environmental Diplomacy**

- Sustainable Development,
- Environmental and Climate Change
- Water (Hydro) Diplomacy and Blue Economy

To allow for initial review, kindly submit your Abstract to the IRSK email address below by 15<sup>th</sup> of July, 2023.

## Submission Guidelines:

The guidelines for submission are as follows:

- a) Manuscript Submission Format. All text must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1.5 line spacing. Margins should be at least 1 inch on all four sides.
- b) Abstract. Articles will be preceded by an abstract of between 200-300 words describing the purpose, methods, general findings and recommendations of the study and should contain a minimum of five (5) key words listed in alphabetical order.
- c) Cover Page. The complete manuscript title, name(s) and addresses of author(s), institutional affiliations and status should be clearly stated on this page.
- d) Numbering. Pages should be numbered consecutively.
- e) Biography Page. Please provide a short biography (fewer than 100 words) for yourself and each author, if the paper is the work of more than one author.
- f) Referencing: The APA Style Version 7 (2020) referencing style is to be used
- g) Word count: Between 6,000 – 8,000 words.

## Important Timelines

- Submission of Abstracts by 15th of July, 2023.
- Feedback on reviewed Abstracts by 30th of July, 2023. (I honestly think we do not need a month to review 250300 words abstract)
- Submission of full Papers by 1st of September, 2023.
- Submission for Peer review by 30th of November, 2023.
- Publication of peer-reviewed papers in the first quarter of 2024.

## Conclusion

Submission of Abstract and Papers in soft copy (MS Word) should be addressed through the following email address [conference@irskkenya.or.ke](mailto:conference@irskkenya.or.ke).

## Registration Fees

The conference registration fees are as follows:

<b>International Participants</b>	USD 100
<b>Non-Members</b>	KES 10,000
<b>IRSK Members</b>	KES 8,000
<b>Students</b>	KES 4,000

Payments should be made through one of the following methods:

### Bank Transfer

Bank: National Bank of Kenya Ltd.

Branch: Kenyatta National Hospital Branch

Account Name: International Relations Society of Kenya Account

Account Number: 01020248155100

Swift Code: NBKEKENXXXX

Bank Code: 12

Branch Code: 025

### **M-Pesa Pay Bill**

Business Number: National Bank of Kenya Ltd.

Account Number: 01020248155100

Payment should be made on or before 15th September 2023

## **Partnering Organizations**

### **1. International Relations Society of Kenya (IRSK)**

IRSK is the professional body for the international affairs and diplomacy fields in Kenya. The Society serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas, networking, and programmatic initiatives among those involved in the study, teaching, and practice of international relations and diplomacy. IRSK works to promote policy dialogues on international affairs and diplomacy between various parties, carry out pertinent and substantial research, and engage in conversation and collaboration with various actors at national, regional, and international levels.

**[www.irskkenya.or.ke](http://www.irskkenya.or.ke)**

### **2. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)**

COMESA was established in 1994 to replace the former Preferential Trade Area (PTA). It is the largest Regional Economic Community with a total of 21 Member States. COMESA's main focus is to promote economic prosperity through regional integration. Its objective also includes the promotion of peace and security in the region as espoused in Article 3(d) of the COMESA Treaty. The program on peace and security specifically focuses on governance, conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction.

**[www.comesa.int](http://www.comesa.int)**

### **3. African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)**

ACCORD is a civil society organisation working throughout Africa since 1992, to bring creative African solutions to the challenges posed by conflict on the continent. We impact political developments by bringing conflict resolution, dialogue, and development to the forefront as an alternative to protracted conflict. As part of its strategic objectives, ACCORD aims to generate, document, and share knowledge that positively impacts conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation.

**[www.accord.org.za](http://www.accord.org.za)**

