**PRESS RELEASE**

**COMESA and Partners to Host Second Edition of the IRSK Annual Conference**

***Monday 16 September Lusaka, Zambia****:* - The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in collaboration with the International Relations Society of Kenya (IRSK), the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS) based at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa will host the Second Annual IRSK Conference.

The conference will take place on 20 – 22 November 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Themed "**Fostering Integration and Cooperation in the COMESA Region through International Relations and Diplomacy**, this second edition of the IRSK Annual Conference represents an exciting convergence of theory and practice in international relations and diplomacy and seeks to make a meaningful contribution to the promotion of peace, stability, and prosperity in the COMESA region.

The conference will bring together key stakeholders, including government officials, diplomats, policymakers, scholars, business leaders, media, and civil society from the COMESA region and beyond. It will feature a blend of insightful keynotes, roundtable discussions, research presentations, book launches, workshops, and networking events all designed to foster collaboration and facilitate knowledge sharing among participants."

With close to 200 participants from over 30 countries expected to attend, the IRSK Annual Conference is poised to be a landmark event for stakeholders within the COMESA region. The participants will include a mix of seasoned experts and emerging voices in international relations and diplomacy, providing a rich tapestry of perspectives and experiences.

The objective of this conference is to explore possible solutions to the multifaceted challenges and competing priorities that the region faces by facilitating discussions and outcomes that are truly holistic and inclusive.

From the 1st Joint conference held in 2023, the 30 papers presented were published by COMESA in a special edition while other papers were published in the African Journal on Conflict Resolution by ACCORD.

Registration for the conference is now open to participants and tickets can be purchased online <https://gig.co.ke/event/gev_830/ticket/> **Participants are responsible for all their logistics including flights, accommodation and visa.**

The conference's outcomes shall be converted into actionable strategies and policies that will help pave the way for a more integrated and prosperous COMESA region.

**About the Partners**

**The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA**) is a Regional Economic Community established in 1994. It brings together 21 African Member States with a population of over 655 million people into a cooperative framework for sustainable economic growth and prosperity through regional integration. Website: [www.comesa.int](http://www.comesa.int)

**The** **International Relations Society of Kenya (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.irskenya.or.ke](http://www.irskenya.or.ke) Email:conference@irskenya.or.ke and info@irskenya.or.ke

**The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)** is a civil society institution working throughout Africa since 1992 to bring creative African solutions to the challenges posed by conflict on the continent. ACCORD impacts 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 on conflict prevention, management, resolution, and transformation. [www.accord.org.za](http://www.accord.org.za) Email: paidamwoyo@accord.org.za

The **African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS)** at the University of the Witwatersrand is the leading hub for African-generated knowledge on the US. Established in 2018, ACSUS addresses the gap in dedicated US studies in sub-Saharan Africa. It remains the first Centre of its kind on the continent to offer a nuanced, analytical African perspective on the US. ACSUS provides extensive, multi and interdisciplinary insights into topics such as political diplomacy, internal US dynamics, diasporic matters, and the US's role as a global political leader. <https://www.africa-usforum.africa/>

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