

Geneva and the African institutions

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Geneva hosts meetings and representations of African institutions: the African Union maintains a permanent delegation to the United Nations in Geneva, the regional economic communities and the African development banks are present there during conferences, and many of the international organisations' programmes devoted to Africa are run from the city.¹ The trade negotiations of the World Trade Organization, in which African cotton has been one of the emblematic dossiers, take place there with the participation of the African delegations.

The creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, whose treaty was signed in 2018, opens up prospects of economic integration that Geneva's players are following closely.² An integrated African market would alter commodity flows, value chains and the continent's financing needs, with consequences for Geneva's commodity trading, banking and advisory sectors.

These institutional relations complement the economic and financial ones. They make Geneva a place where Africa represents itself, negotiates and plans its future, and where the financial centre's players can understand the continent's direction. They also require of the financial centre a consistency between its role as an institutional partner and its commercial practices, which African and Geneva civil society does not fail to point out.

1 Notes

1. African Union, "Geneva" (au.int/fr/office/geneva): Permanent Delegation of the African Union in Geneva, working in coordination with the African Group at the United Nations Office, the WTO, the World Health Assembly and the Human Rights Council; H.E. Girma Amente, Permanent Representative since September 2025; UN

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Geneva, “African Union”, directory of missions (ungeneva.org/en/blue-book). ↩

2. “La Suisse mise sur une Afrique chaotique, mais prometteuse” (Switzerland bets on a chaotic but promising Africa), Le Temps, March 2018, which mentions the signing of the treaty establishing the Continental Free Trade Area. ↩

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