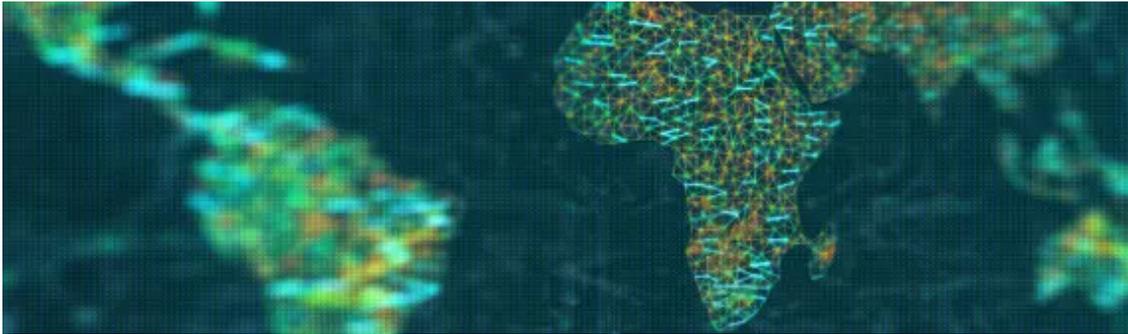


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AfAA launches African arbitration tool



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The African Arbitration Atlas aims to tackle the lack of visibility for the continent’s arbitration industry.

The African Arbitration Association (AfAA) has launched an online tool that provides an overview of arbitration legislation and international arbitrators in Africa.

The African Arbitration Atlas went online in January and allows users to search for legislation and arbitral institutions by country or see which countries use the UNCITRAL model law, or are signatories of the New York Convention, **International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes** or Organisation pour l’Harmonisation en Afrique du Droit des Affaires (OHADA) – the West and Central African regional organisation that provides a legal [and dispute resolution framework](#).

Dr Rukia Baruti, AfAA secretary general tells *ALB* that developing “an open-source on-line resource containing African States’ key legislative instruments pertaining to arbitration” was in line with AfAA’s overall objectives “to promote African international arbitrators” and “facilitate and encourage” their appointment.

Plenty of resources and attention hves been put into the development of arbitral centres across the continent, but [persuading international parties to use](#) them and to appoint African arbitrators, instead of foreign centres and arbitrators, [has progressed slowly](#).

AfAA was founded in 2018 and the second edition of its International Arbitration Conference will take place online in April, following the inaugural edition [held in Kigali in 2019](#), which focused on promoting Africa’s arbitral centres.

“While there are a number of arbitration institutions in Africa, not many can be regarded as arbitration centres that have their own rules and provide dependable dispute resolution services,” says Baruti. “There are a few that do and are therefore popular with both African and non-African parties,” she adds, namechecking the **Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration** (CRCICA); OHADA’s **Common Court of Justice and Arbitration**; the **Kigali International Arbitration Centre**; the **Nairobi Centre for International Arbitration**; and the **Tunis Centre for Conciliation and Arbitration**, but those remain less popular than the **London Court of International Arbitration** (LCIA) and **ICC International Court of Arbitration** for international disputes emanating from Africa.

Th better centres, as “one of the main challenges is being able to differentiate between the th at provide fully fledged, reliable, dispute resolution services and those that don’t”, although there is a stronger

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economic development, while an EAIAC webinar hosted last week [looked at the impact of](#) the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Baruti, an arbitrator who has appeared before the ICC and LCIA as well as the CRCICA, is admitted as a solicitor in England and Wales and previously worked for now-defunct London-headquartered firm SJ Berwin. She previously founded and ran African International Legal Awareness, an organisation which, from 2011 to 2019 worked to promote and improve Africa's legal sector.

"There are several qualified African arbitrators and a number of international arbitrations emanating from Africa, yet the number of African arbitrators appointed in these arbitrations is disproportionately small," she says, due to "the ingrained poor perception by both African and non-African parties, of the capabilities of African arbitrators in conducting international arbitration".

Overcoming that perception is the biggest challenge, and inspired the 2019 establishment of [the African Promise](#) to encourage the appointment of African arbitrators.

January [saw the launch of](#) the African Corporate & Government Counsel Forum, an association for African in-house lawyers, at an online event.

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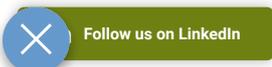
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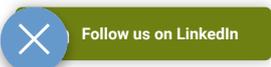
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