

African Union to reveal details on issuance of African passport

Moussa Faki Mahamat, African Union (AU) Commission chairperson has revealed that the AU will present specific details on the production and issuance of the African passport in February 2019, which will aid the free movement of Africans across the continent.



jackmac34 via [Fxabay](#)

Mahamat revealed that the AU will soon provide specific details on the production and issuance of the African passport, which will aid the free movement of Africans across the continent.

In his New Year message to the continent Mahamat said: "In February 2019, at the 32nd Summit of our Union in Addis Ababa, the Commission will present, for adoption, guidelines on the design, production and issuance of the African passport, the materialisation of which will take us one step closer to the long-held dream of complete free movement across the continent."

The Pan-African passport was launched in July 2016, at the opening ceremony of the 27th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, Kigali, with the intention to facilitate the free movement of people within the continent. Chad president and then chairperson of the AU, Idriss Deby Itno, and President of Rwanda Paul Kagame received the first passports from Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the then Chairperson of the AU Commission.

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The passport has however remained the privilege of heads of government and diplomats, much to the disappointment of many African citizens.

The introduction of the African passport was expected to bring about increased migration of Africans within Africa, and pave the way for the AU's 2063 Agenda for "a continent with seamless borders" to help facilitate the free movement of African citizens. However, the latest news from the Chairperson of the AU Commission is encouraging and gives a specific time, location and occasion where the specific details for adoption, guidelines on the design, production and issuance of the African passport will be revealed.

Enabling the free movement of people

The project also aims to improve intra-African trade and to ease the movement of domestic goods between member states. The African passport would allow African countries to profit from intra-Africa tourism.

Tourism is one of the most promising economic sectors in Africa, and the industry has the potential to boost economic growth on the continent. The 4th Pan African Forum on Migration (PAFoM) which was held in Djibouti, in November last year revealed that enabling the free movement of people on the continent is key to boosting intra-African tourism. The AU has been pushing its objective to double intra-Africa tourism by 2023, as part of the 10-year implementation plan (2014-2023), which fits into the broad AU Agenda 2063.

The news also raises the hopes of many people across the continent that the African passport will allow them to travel without visas to most if not all of the 54 member states that make up the AU. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB) Index, Africa remains largely closed off to African travellers and on average: "Africans need visas to travel to 55% of other African countries, can get visas on arrival in only 25% of other countries and don't need a visa to travel to just 20% of other countries on the continent".

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