



ESWATINI
STANDARDS AUTHORITY

CONCEPT NOTE

13TH CONTINENTAL ESSAY COMPETITION

Join the 13th 🌍 Continental Essay Competition and explore how harmonised standards are building a fairer, more prosperous Africa. Your ideas can make a difference!



🌍 Continental Essay Competition Winner 2025
Vuyelwa K. Simelane from Eswatini

ESSAY THEME

“The role of harmonised standards in reducing Technical Barriers to Trade and in promoting fair and just trade within the Intra-African and Global Trade.”

THEME IN BRIEF

The core theme is the crucial role of harmonized standards in facilitating fair and just trade across Africa, especially in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). We note that while traditional trade barriers, such as tariffs, have been reduced, new "Technical Barriers to Trade" (TBTs) have emerged. These TBTs, which include varying product standards, regulations, and certification procedures, significantly hinder intra-African trade. By adopting a unified, continent-wide approach to standards, Africa can dismantle these barriers, making it easier for goods to move between countries and boosting economic integration. This is directly tied to the broader African Union 2025 theme of "**Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations**," as it seeks to create a more equitable and prosperous economic environment for all.

A key point to highlight is the negative impact of diverse regulatory policies and standards across Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The current low volume of intra-African trade, which stands at only 16% compared to other continents, is a direct result of these inconsistencies. Companies, particularly micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), face high costs and complexities when trying to navigate different regulations in each country. Harmonizing standards, therefore, is not just a technical fix; it's a strategic imperative to unlock the immense potential of the AfCFTA. Reducing TBTs could double the increase in intra-African trade, far exceeding the gains from tariff reductions alone.

Furthermore, we link the use of harmonized standards to the effective management of value chains. Globally, harmonized standards are recognized as essential tools for companies to participate in complex supply chains. The current "heterogeneity" of standards in Africa makes intra-African value chains costly and contentious. By adopting a coherent regulatory framework, Africa can create a more predictable and efficient trading environment. This enables African enterprises to more easily join regional and global value chains, increasing their competitiveness and driving economic growth. The goal is to move from a fragmented market to a unified one, where economies of scale can be exploited and trade flows increase.

WHAT ESWASA IS LOOKING FOR

➤ Introduction

We are looking for an introduction that goes beyond simply stating the topic, including a **clear, concise, and compelling opening statement** and demonstrate a deep understanding of the theme's significance.

➤ Problems Towards the Theme: A detailed& Evidence-based Analysis

Comprehensive grasp of the challenges. We are looking for a **grounded analysis, supported by data and specific examples**, not just general statements; can you identify the root causes of the problem and understand its multifaceted nature

➤ Solutions& Policy Framework: A strategic& Action-oriented Proposal

We would like to read a clear path forward, **outlining concrete, actionable solutions and demonstrate an understanding of the existing institutional framework.**

➤ Conclusion: A forward-Looking& Impact Driven Summary

Provide a **precise, powerful and inspiring final personal statement**, reinforcing the importance of the theme and its potential for transformational change.

ESWASA invites students enrolled in institutions of Higher Learning in Eswatini (Colleges/ Universities) to submit their essays on the theme: **“The role of harmonised standards in reducing Technical Barriers to Trade and in promoting fair and just trade within the Intra-African and Global Trade”** to info@swasa.co.sz

BASIC ESSAY REQUIREMENTS

- Length of essays: Essays should be between **1000 and 1200 words**
- Presentation: **Essays should be double-spaced and presented in Century Gothic, size 12**
- Language of essays: Essays must be submitted in **English**
- Information on the author: Authors may use up to 50 words to describe themselves. Information should include their names, course and year of study, town and country in which your university is located. **N/B: this will not be part of the 1000- 1200 words**
- Contacts of authors: **Authors should provide us with their postal, physical, telephone and email addresses** on the first page of the essay, together with the title of the essay and information on the author.

Kindly attach a copy of your **Identity Card** or **Passport** and a completely filled Registration Form (ARSO/CACO/EC/Form 1/2025)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS



Read the
Concept Note



Research and
Analyse
Information



Draft the
Essay for
Submission



Fill the Registration
form & Submit it
together with the
Essay to the **NSB**

➤ Eligibility to Participate

Open to Citizens of the Kingdom of Eswatini only, **below the age of 35 years, living in Eswatini and studying in a university/college recognised by the Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC).**

➤ Selection of Winners in Regions

The selection of winners at the regional level will be done according to the UNECA clustering of African states as follows: Central Africa, Eastern Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa. Please refer to www.uneca.org

➤ Announcement and Selection of Winners

Winners will be selected through a **fair and impartial selection process by ESWASA**. The decision of the judges shall be final on the awarding procedures and process.

➤ Continental Winners

Continental winners will be announced during the Africa Standards Day Celebration held yearly during the **32nd ARSO General Assembly Events in Kampala, Uganda — June or July 2026**

COPYRIGHT AND ELIGIBILITY



1. Copyright Statement

Please note that by entering the competition, you have assigned copyright of your essay to the organisers of this event, who may publish it in whole or in part on their respective websites, websites of national standards bodies, and a wide range of publications for circulation both inside and outside Africa.

Ensure that your essay is **eligible** by ensuring the Essay Submitted has **never been published in any form or shown, or accepted for other competitions.**

Note that Participants are only allowed to submit one essay.

1. Plagiarism Note **

Please note that **AI-generated essays upon review on the AI Checker will be inadmissible and will be automatically disqualified if the Score is more than 20% as per the AI Plagiarism Checker Software.**

** Kindly note that you shall sign the Disclaimer Notice on your Registration Form for the Essay.

COMPETITION WINNERS

ESWATINI NATIONAL WINNERS

#		ADDITIONAL PRIZES
1 st	E5 000	➤ SZNS ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems training ➤ Publishing of the Essay on the ESWASA Website ➤ Essay forwarded to the Regional/ Continental competition ➤ Stationary hamper
Prize		
2 nd	E2 000	➤ SZNS ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems training ➤ Publishing of the Essay on the ESWASA Website ➤ Essay forwarded to the Regional/ Continental competition ➤ Stationary Hamper
Prize		
3 rd	E1 500	➤ SZNS ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems training ➤ Publishing of the Essay on the ESWASA Website ➤ Essay forwarded to the Regional/ Continental competition ➤ Stationary Hamper
Prize		
4 th	E1 000	➤ SZNS ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems training ➤ Publishing of the Essay on the ESWASA Website ➤ Essay forwarded to the Regional/ Continental competition ➤ Stationary Hamper
Prize		
5 th	E 500	➤ SZNS ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems training ➤ Publishing of the Essay on the ESWASA Website ➤ Essay forwarded to the Regional/ Continental competition ➤ Stationary Hamper
Prize		

REGIONAL/CONTINENTAL WINNERS



1st Continental Winner

\$1,000

- Economy Class Return Air Ticket and Accommodation to the General Assembly in Uganda in June | July 2026
- Recognition and Awarding During the General Assembly
- Publishing of the Essay on the ARSO Website



2nd Continental Winner

\$800

- Recognition and Awarding During the General Assembly
- Publishing of the Essay on the ARSO Website



3rd Continental Winner

\$500

- Recognition and Awarding During the General Assembly
- Publishing of the Essay on the ARSO Website



ESWATINI
STANDARDS AUTHORITY

13th ARSO CONTINENTAL ESSAY COMPETITION



SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
20th March 2026



Theme:

“The role of harmonised standards in reducing Technical Barriers to Trade and in promoting fair and just trade within the Intra-African and Global Trade”

Who can participate:

This competition is open to citizens of Eswatini who are 35 years old or under and enrolled in a University or College recognised by the **Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC)**.

Entry Requirements:

- Essays Length:** Essays should be between **1000 and 1200 words**
- Presentation:** Essays should be **double-spaced** and presented in **Century Gothic, size 12**
- Language of Essays:** Essays must be submitted in **English**
- Information on the Author:** Authors may use up to 50 words to describe themselves. Information should include their names, course and year of study, town and country in which your university is located. **N/B: this will not be part of the 1000- 1200 words**
- Contacts of Authors:** Authors should provide us with their postal, physical, telephone and email addresses on the first page of the essay, together with the title of the essay and information on the author. Also, kindly attach a copy of your **Identity Card** and a **completely filled Registration Form**

Visit the **ESWASA website**

<https://www.swasa.co.sz/> to download the
Concept Note and Registration Form
(ARSO/CACO/EC/Form 1/2025)

Further Information:

Contact ESWASA Marketing Unit
+268 2518 4633/ 4610 or
email inhlefakudze@swasa.co.sz



STANDARDS TRAINING

Stand a chance to
WIN
a share of
**OVER
E80 000**
in
CASH & PRIZES





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Who can participate:

This competition is open to citizens of Eswatini aged 35 years old and enrolled in a University or College recognised by the **Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC)**.

To Enter:

To win, write an Essay of between **1 000 to 1 200** words in line with the theme and send it to info@swasa.co.sz

Visit the **ESWASA** website <https://www.swasa.co.sz/> to download the **Concept Note and Registration Form** (ARSO/CACO/EC/Form 1/2025)

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20th March 2026



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Contact Us



Phone

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info@swasa.co.sz



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Matsapha Industrial Site



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Matsapha, Eswatini

Thank You!!