



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

CONCEPT NOTE

Launch of the Africa Centre for the Study of Russia
25nd February 2026 | Chandaria Auditorium, University Towers, The University of Nairobi

1. Background and Rationale

The 21st century is witnessing a dramatic reshaping of global power dynamics. Africa, long considered a peripheral actor, is increasingly recognized as a central player in the future of international relations — by virtue of its strategic geography, demographic vitality, and economic promise. In this shifting landscape, the relationship between Africa and the Russian Federation is emerging as one of profound importance.

Against this backdrop, the University of Nairobi is proud to announce the establishment of the **Africa Centre for the Study of Russia (ACSR)**, domiciled within the Department of Diplomacy and International Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The Centre is conceived as a hub of scholarship, dialogue, and collaboration that will examine Africa–Russia relations in all their dimensions: political, economic, security, cultural, and intellectual.

The creation of the ACSR is not merely an academic milestone. It is a timely intervention in Africa’s intellectual sovereignty — ensuring that Africa narrates, interprets, and shapes its engagement with Russia and the wider world from its own vantage point.

2. Objectives of the Centre

The Africa Centre for the Study of Russia seeks to:

- **Advance Research & Scholarship:** Undertake rigorous interdisciplinary research on Africa–Russia relations.
- **Foster Policy Dialogue:** Provide a platform for diplomats, policymakers, and academics to engage in evidence-based discussions.
- **Promote Knowledge Exchange:** Collaborate with global think tanks, universities, and research bodies for shared learning.
- **Train the Next Generation:** Equip African scholars and practitioners with the intellectual tools to shape foreign policy and diplomacy.

- **Inform Public Discourse:** Disseminate knowledge to media, civil society, and the broader public, fostering informed debates on Africa’s role in global affairs.

3. The Launch Event

The launch of the Africa Centre for the Study of Russia on **25th February 2026** will be a landmark event, graced by:

- Ambassadors and representatives of diplomatic missions.
- Senior government officials and policymakers.
- Scholars, researchers, and students.
- Representatives of leading think tanks and civil society organizations.
- Members of the media and the public.

The event will feature keynote addresses, panel discussions, and reflections on the place of Africa–Russia relations in today’s changing world order.

4. Why This Matters

The launch of ACSR is more than an institutional ceremony — it is a national and continental statement. It asserts Africa’s commitment to:

- Producing knowledge that shapes policy, rather than consuming narratives produced elsewhere.
- Engaging the world as an equal partner, rooted in intellectual self-confidence.
- Expanding the frontiers of African scholarship to new horizons of global inquiry.

This is not simply about studying Russia. It is about **studying the world through Africa’s own eyes**, building capacity, and nurturing voices that will define our continent’s destiny in international relations.

5. Expected Outcomes

The launch of the Centre is expected to:

- Create a platform for sustained Africa–Russia academic and policy dialogue.
- Strengthen the University of Nairobi’s leadership in international studies.
- Catalyze collaborations with local and international partners.
- Inspire a new generation of African scholars to engage critically with global affairs.

6. Conclusion

The Africa Centre for the Study of Russia represents an intellectual frontier for Africa — a bold step toward a future where our scholarship, diplomacy, and voices take their rightful place in shaping world affairs.

The launch on 25th February 2026 is not only a celebration of an academic achievement; it is a national and continental call to dialogue, reflection, and vision. It is an invitation to all who believe in the power of knowledge, diplomacy, and partnership to shape a better tomorrow.

“By studying others, Africa discovers itself; by understanding the world, Africa shapes its future.”