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Beyond women entrepreneurship at SLAY Festival



L to R: AUDA-NEPAD staff: Assia Megfour, Unami Mpofu and Buhle Hlatsway

Johannesburg - “The entrepreneurial landscape is not for quick gains and huge profits overnight. There are many barriers to entry which one must overcome, and more so as a young woman. I encourage the young women here today to get trained in business management, understand how to develop a business plan, how to do financials and the market within which they are working,” said Fati N’zi-Hassane, AUDA-NEPAD Supervisor of Human Capital and Institutional Development Division during her opening remarks at the SLAY Festival.

On 7 March 2020 in Johannesburg, African Union Development Agency-NEPAD in partnership with She Leads Africa organised the popular innovation, culture and entrepreneurship event titled SLAY Festival. The event was part of its flagship project “100,000 SME’s by 2021” which is in line with the African Union Commission Chairperson’s “1 million by 2021” initiative. The initiative aims to provide concrete opportunities for 1 million youth by the year 2021.

AUDA-NEPAD seeks to create concrete opportunities for 100,000 SME’S by 2021 by focusing on engaging various stakeholders to avail sustainable financing mechanisms including the establishment of financial mechanisms for youth and women-led SMEs. The organisation realises that there is need to get more young women in entrepreneurship and that without building their capacities and allowing them to network as young women in the same space, they would remain fearful of entering the entrepreneurial space.

Young women only form 23% of SMEs in Africa and have a 68% funding deficit for their businesses, hence the “100,000 SME’s by 2021” project is committed to supporting sustainable youth-owned and youth-managed SME’s especially for young women.

Over 1,200 excited young entrepreneurs from across the continent attended the successful career seminar. The entrepreneurs had opportunities to learn from Africa’s influential people, network with other smart young women and attend learning sessions and masterclasses to build their financial management and entrepreneurship skills. Since launching SLAY Festival in 2017, more than 5,000 women have benefited from this campaign.

“It was an incredible privilege to collaborate with AUDA-NEPAD to bring SLAY Festival to South Africa for the first time. Our community of millennial South African women was looking for opportunities to build their skills, start new businesses and impact their communities. Working with AUDA-NEPAD enabled us to bring business experts directly to our community and connect them to vital resources to scale across Africa,” said Afua Osei, Co-Founder of She Leads Africa.

Senior Programme Officer at AUDA-NEPAD, Unami Mpofu gave a masterclass on business and financial management. She reiterated the importance of having a habit and discipline of saving and managing resources as it is key to growing and sustaining a business.

The event was also graced by high profile inspirational speakers such as businesswomen and media personality Bonang Matheba, who spoke on reaching and sustaining success.

“Intent is important, make sure you are not a jack of all trades and master of none, start by mastering one thing and moving onto another once you are done. Save money, respect money, and teach yourself about money,” Matheba stated.

Project Selection for PIDA PAP2 in West Africa

Accra - "West Africa has been a major beneficiary of PIDA thanks to the financial support for the implementation of major projects in the infrastructure sector. I would also like to pay tribute to the African Development Bank, our bank for the decisive role in the implementation of the PIDA-PAP in general and in the development of West Africa in particular by financing projects in all sectors," said H.E Mr Pathe Gueye ECOWAS Commissioner for Infrastructure.

The Commissioner was acknowledging the collaborative effort from the different partner institutions in successfully implementing PIDA in ECOWAS. The African Union Commission held a regional consultative workshop for West African Member States and their Specialised Institutions for the project selection process of the second phase of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), also known as PIDA PAP 2 (2021-2030).

The three-day workshop, which took place on 26 – 28 February 2020, provided ECOWAS, its Member States and Specialised Institutions with the necessary information and tools to prioritise gender-inclusive, environmentally friendly and smart infrastructure projects that will create jobs and economic opportunities for the African people.

The AUC in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD, AfDB and UNECA have developed an integrated corridor approach as a strategic basis for the PIDA Priority Action Plan 2 which captures specific goals of addressing youth employment and education. PIDA PAP 2 also focuses on gender-inclusive socioeconomic development, smart innovation and technologies, environmentally sustainable communities and economies, and regional connectivity through world-class infrastructure that links people, markets, and facilitates trade, as outlined by Agenda 2063 Aspirations 1, 2, and 6.

Mr Yagouba Traore, Chief of Infrastructure Information Unit at the AUC in his opening speech indicated that ECOWAS and its Member States will be able to identify priority projects according to the selection criteria and submit their proposals to the AUC with the support of the Task Force. He added that the AUC will promote infrastructure development at the highest level as well as the related political and regulatory frameworks necessary to achieve the objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area and improve the lives of African populations.

Once the project selection phase is complete and PIDA PAP2 is developed, it will then be submitted to the African Heads of State and Government for adoption during the AU Summit in January 2021.

Ultimately, 58 projects are expected to be selected – 10 projects in Northern Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa regions, and one additional project for each of the 8 Islands States. The sectoral requirement is expected to be filled as at least one project in each region is to be part of the transport, energy, ICT or trans-boundary water resources sectors.



Family photo from the workshop

A weekly digest of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD news and information

AUDA-NEPAD to develop a model and new tools for resilience to future drought shocks



Windhoek - Droughts have decimated communities and livelihoods in Africa for long. In 2019-2020, over 45 million people across Africa, mostly in Eastern and Southern Africa, are food insecure due to prolonged droughts.

Namibia is recovering from what has been described as the worst drought in more than six decades. The drought resulted in widespread crop failure, with the harvest of staple crops - maize and mahangu (millet) only reaching 2% of the annual average. More than 80 000 cattle valued at about \$25 Million died due to lack of grazing and water scarcity.

The impact on the rural community was compounded by high food prices, and declining livestock prices. With the loss of livelihoods for 1.5 million subsistence farmers and pastoralists and more than 720 000 people (36 percent of the country's population) reported to be food insecure, a state of emergency was declared by the country's president.

To build onto a number of emergency measures implemented by the government of Namibia, AUDA-NEPAD is engaging with the Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders in the country to explore medium to long-term pro-active measures to combat future droughts.

"Reducing the impacts of drought and other natural disasters by helping Member States' build climate resilience through Climate Smart Agriculture and other approaches are key to our mandate," said Manyewu Mutamba, Senior Programme Officer at AUDA-NEPAD.

This engagement will result in the development of an intervention model and tools to build resilience to future drought shocks which will assist the government of Namibia and other African countries in designing and implementing resilience-building interventions in drought-prone regions.

"Currently, we are seeing an increasing number of droughts with unprecedented severity, which are exacerbated by climate change. This is worrisome for Namibia as we're prone to the vagaries of drought. We welcome interventions like the one by AUDA-NEPAD to help countries cope effectively with the impacts of drought. On March 13, 2020, we will host the inauguration of the Neckartal Dam. It is the largest water storage dam in Namibia, three times the size of Hardap Dam. We look forward to it bringing great relief against drought in the region," said Sofia Kasheta, Deputy Executive Director within Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Forestry in Namibia thanking AUDA-NEPAD for visiting her country.

AUDA-NEPAD's model and new tools will help dryland & drought-stricken countries on the continent to adapt and become resilient to future droughts and other extreme weather events. The model and new tools will seek to leverage local knowledge in drought mitigation and help secure resources to improve land quality to sustain the performance of African economies.

Forests & Wildlife: Africa's diversity for shared prosperity and security



Skukuza, Mpumalanga—The 22nd Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC22) and the Sixth African Forestry and Wildlife Week commenced this week in Skukuza, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa.

The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) gathers heads of forestry and wildlife from 53 member countries in Africa. It is a statutory body of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) to advise on the formulation of forest and wildlife management policy and to review and coordinate its implementation at the regional level; to exchange information and, generally through special subsidiary bodies, advise on suitable practices and action regarding technical problems; and to make appropriate recommendations concerning the foregoing.

This year's theme "**Forests and Wildlife: Africa's Diversity for shared prosperity and security**" has purposely been selected by AFWC bureau members to highlight the richness and diversity of Africa's resources and to fully capture their importance and key role in sustaining the livelihoods of millions of people, creating job opportunities for youth and women, contributing to water-energy-food security and nutrition, building a foundation for resilience, nations' economies and prosperity.

The 6th African Forestry and Wildlife Week will be held simultaneously with the Commission Session to showcase progress and advancement in African forestry and wildlife sectors. It will further enable networking, collaboration and exchange of experience and knowledge among policymakers, technicians, practitioners, academia, civil society and development partners from different countries from local to regional and international levels. The Week will include several exhibitions, multisectoral dialogues, and side events including AUDA-NEPAD led African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100).

"The UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration and Family Farming raise expectations and can become a driver for sustained commitments to Forest Landscape Restoration within the AFR100 and beyond. We, in the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD are tremendously pleased with the current growing number of 29 Member States, both technical and financial partners who have committed over 125 million hectares of the 100 Million hectares original restoration goal. Forest Landscape Restoration is more than just planting trees, it's about growing trees and more. It involves multiple stakeholders, helps to clarify and protect communal land tenure rights, addresses poverty, and ensures complementarity of land-uses across landscapes, among others" said Mamadou Diakhite, Head of Food Security Programme at AUDA-NEPAD.

Created in 1959, the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission is one of six Regional Forestry Commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest and wildlife issues on a regional basis. The forum meets every two years. The Commission is open to other countries and organisations as observers. The other commissions cover the regions of Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean, Near East and North America.

A healthy mind and body help keep the office 'alive'

Midrand - 'New Year,' 'New Me,' 'New Decade' filled with plant-based living, limiting screen time, CBD oil, vaccines, zero waste, and et cetera. The beginning of 2020 is unique in many ways. Unlike in the past years where health was focused on fragmented goals such as dieting for weight loss, the trend this year is taking care of oneself in every aspect.

On March 06, 2020, the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD held a "Health and Wellness Day" aimed at enhancing the quality of life of all staff members.

The day served as a reminder to staff on the need to promote actionable, worthwhile wellness practices in the office. Staff members were also made aware of their health status and identify any changes they need to make to adopt healthier lifestyles.

The 5th Health and Wellness Day since 2015 (organised by the Human Resources Division), the day has become a popular annual event among AUDA-NEPAD staff. The event provides a good opportunity for all to perform Health Risk Assessments, Lifestyle Risk Assessments and Voluntary HIV Counselling and Testing, to mention but a few.

"The primary benefits of the voluntary assessments are to assist employees to identify and act on conditions before they become acute and more expensive to treat," said Dora Mwaiseghe, Senior HR Office.

Below are a couple of health and wellness trends which will most likely dominate health and fitness trends in 2020.

The connection between wellness and sustainability

There is increased awareness of our health. Likewise, people are more aware of the need for maintaining the health of the planet.

Sustainability has been a buzzword in the light of intense effects of climate change and it will continue to be.

From embracing organic foods, opting for eco-friendly packaging, minimising food waste to emphasising healthier soils, sustainability will be an integral part of wellness in 2020.

Wearable technology

Members of the AUDA-NEPAD Running & Walking team often share their stats with us every week from their favorite wearable technology devices. In recent years, varied wearable technology including smartwatches, GPS tracking devices, fitness trackers and sleep monitors have emerged.

These fitness devices that have dominated the market are here to stay, well at least in 2020. They enable users to input biological data to monitor weight, calorie intake, sitting time, distance walked and create customised fitness programmes.



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