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# The Pandemic Triggered the Questioning of Current Governance Systems in Africa

By Folashadé Soulé and Camilla Toulmin

*An interview with Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD).*

*In this interview for INET's COVID-19 and Africa series, Camilla Toulmin and Folashadé Soulé discuss with Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) about how the effectiveness of State responses to COVID-19 in Africa have been very visible, and are leading to far greater public scrutiny of the public sector and prospects for better governance.*

*Dr. Mayaki of the Republic of Niger has been the Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) since January 2009. A former Prime Minister of Niger, from 1997 to 2000, Dr. Mayaki set up the Analysis Centre for Public Policy in Senegal in 2000. He was a guest Professor at the University of Paris XI (2000-2004). He went on to serve as Executive Director of the Rural Hub, based in Dakar, Senegal, before taking up his current position.*

In our discussions with African leaders and thinkers so far, many see the COVID pandemic as laying bare the weaknesses in current economic structures and relationships, and that Africa's COVID recovery offers a starting point for doing things differently. Do you agree, and what lessons do you take from the COVID crisis for changes in Africa's future economic direction? What has to change?

My first point is that such views have a certain truth. However, it also has to be put in perspective. It is true that, due to COVID-19, Africa has known its first economic recession in the last 25 years. It is recognised by multilateral institutions that generally, we had good economic growth rates and well-designed macro-economic policies in most cases. We were doing quite well and sustainability of debt in the pre-COVID period was fundamentally not an issue. However, there were some red flags for certain countries to be more careful, but overall, the situation was not alarming.

The second point is that the economic model we have been following is a consequence of structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 90s, and which was not sufficiently inclusive. We still are the most unequal region in the world. Inequality and youth unemployment are very important issues. The median age in Africa is 19 years and every year we have about 20 million young people coming onto the job market, but only 12 million jobs are created, and these are mainly in the informal sector. So, inclusivity was



not the characteristic of that growth but nevertheless, we did grow. The COVID-19 pandemic accentuated existing fragilities, which you can see mostly in the social sectors – education, health, etc. - and we hadn't invested sufficiently in primary health care. Evidently our capacity to respond to the pandemic was weakened by this limitation. We really need to take primary health care more seriously. Before COVID-19, we had 34-35 million children out of school and evidently this has increased with the pandemic. Pre-existing fragilities have been worsened during the COVID period.

The third point, to which we don't give sufficient importance, which is happening as a consequence of the pandemic, is a questioning of the governance systems we have had till now. Why? The pandemic

created a situation where governments face public opinion and public scrutiny directly, and the effectiveness of the solutions they are promoting can be gauged immediately. If you supplied sufficient masks or not, it was seen. If you had sufficient diagnostic tests, it could be seen. This immediate visibility of the efficiency of the State was immediately sensed by the population. It created a dynamic evolution where trust in public institutions has been reinforced in places where the response has been positive, or severely damaged because the response was not there. This is the most important facet from which will come a new economic model. Till now, governments and States had the monopoly of designing public policies. COVID-19 has led to communities becoming more pre-eminent, so we will likely see more co-

creation of public policies. If it happens well, it will allow a reform of the economic model. If it doesn't happen, we may see violent changes in certain parts of the continent.

*The pandemic has shown the many advantages of coordinated collective action by African institutions, international institutions like the WHO, the World Bank and African governments, in addressing the health crisis early on and looking for financing. What are the key preliminary lessons that can be derived from this collective action and exercise of African agency for the future?*

The first important point is that Africans could give concrete substance to the concept of regional integration. We have been promoting, discussing and reflecting on African integration through investment in physical infrastructure, but in this particular situation and in response to the pandemic, we could see an immediate reaction based on regional integration. You will remember that all the Ministers of Health met in Addis Ababa as soon as the pandemic started in February 2020. We had an organised and structured African Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and they drafted a roadmap which was immediately implemented in all countries, with the CDC outlining what needed to be done; for example, how to collect and report data et cetera. At the African Union level, we started putting in place mechanisms for the procurement of personal protective equipment, and diagnostics, and began thinking about a vaccine even before the COVAX system started. So, the content and purpose of regional integration in that domain was clearly understood by Africans and that has been one of the big lessons of the crisis. We realised we could use the same kind of approach in other domains beyond the immediate health issues. It also opened new reflections for African institutions. The World Bank, IMF, and EU have been helpful by accompanying us, without getting into the detailed discussions and decisions that were led by Africans.

The second lesson is this - most of the time when we design public policy, we bring our ideas and co-construct with donors and partners. However, this time we didn't co-construct in this way but



moved out on our own path which gave a real, tangible sense to what regional integration could do. At the same time, it opened new pathways for reflection in a very concrete manner. Access to vaccines was a real issue so we quickly started talking about vaccine manufacturing and that raised the question about broader manufacturing capacities on the continent. This concrete example has pushed us to reflect on the way we had been proceeding with regional integration. It is true that the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which was looked at rather theoretically by most Africans, even though it was a huge step forward, suddenly made sense. This is because it could enhance the creation of regional value chains, sharing lessons learned about manufacturing, especially from specific countries like South Africa which could produce and link to the other parts of the continent. Regional integration became even more real, once we started looking at the global scene. What we saw was vaccine nationalism, and we saw that global solidarity always starts with national solidarity. That meant that we as a continent really had to count on ourselves. If we look at the numbers of vaccinated people today, we see that in many countries there is a surplus of vaccines and people are talking about boosters. In contrast, in our countries, most people have not even had their first shot. So, there are economic questions about manufacturing, but there are also moral questions that need to be asked.

My other point is around vaccines

and government behaviour. Some governments succeeded very quickly in getting vaccines accepted, while others couldn't convince their populations to get vaccinated, despite having access to various media sources and much more information than in the past. It is therefore interesting to ask why some governments succeeded and others did not succeed in this domain. We have a list of countries where there is a surplus and people are not queuing to get the vaccine, and other places where there is a deficit and people are very keen to be vaccinated. Communities have played a big role here. Generally, the ordinary citizen believes much more in their community and on the views of local groups than what the state and governments are saying.

*African countries will not be able to achieve their ambitions for economic growth and structural change without access to energy. COP26 has been an important moment to discuss climate and the constraints this places on Africa's energy choices, but this is at a time when many countries are also discovering new reserves of oil and gas. How should fossil-fuel-rich countries navigate their future, given huge needs for energy on the one hand, and risks from stranded assets and climate change on the other?*

Most western countries industrialised using fossil fuels and have benefitted enormously from them over the last 200 years, an era of explosive growth. Historically, Africa has been the least emitter of greenhouse gases, the principal drivers of climate change. This is nothing new. However, African countries have still made strong commitments to the Paris Agreement, in order to do their bit and contribute their part to the global goal of reducing warming to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels. There is, on the one hand, a commitment to an international accord, but there is also, on the other hand, the sense that as we industrialise, we shouldn't make the same errors that others have made. We need "green industrialisation". But the problem is no one in the history of economics has gone through a process of green industrialisation, there is no model. It will need the construction of a fundamentally innovative process, which requires transfer of technology. When African countries want to use gas to be

able to industrialise quickly, there are some global institutions that are critical of this use of gas. But look at California, where their renewable energy supplies rely on gas for base-load power. Within our new economic model, we must think about what kind of transition we want to take. We should not be blinded by severe commitments because we still have 50% of our population who do not have access to energy. Our transition cannot be one that increases extreme poverty. It must not increase the burden on the most vulnerable. We should think of a green energy mix that can allow us to have a reasonable implementation of commitments and at the same time reduce extreme poverty, which has been rising during the pandemic. That's the way we should think about energy. We cannot reject coal. If you reject coal in South Africa today, you will significantly reduce people's access to energy, since coal remains central to the grid. Nonetheless, we should have a mix of energy sources, and think about the use of renewables in an intelligent manner, following a learning curve in coherence with reducing extreme poverty and achieving more inclusive growth. Otherwise, we will be doubly penalised because we fully implement commitments, which doesn't make sense. We need incentives to move towards green industrialisation.

Some initiatives associating with the private sector were launched during the pandemic, such as the mVacciNation digital toolbox with Vodacom, Mezzanine and NEPAD. How do you assess the impact of such joint initiatives? Do you think the African private sector has been involved enough during the crisis? What lessons can be derived for the future?

There are some critical issues here. First, if you look at indicators of innovation and levels of expenditure in R&D in Africa, it is mostly driven by the private sector. Sometimes governments create an ecosystem that allows the private sector to be much more innovative. It happens in Kenya and some other countries. Innovation comes from the private sector, and if governments want to implement innovative solutions, they have to partner with the private sector. That's the spirit with which we went into our partnership with Vodacom, MTN and now Orange for the mVacciNation solution so we could

tap into the innovative capacity of the private sector through these partnerships. We found a very receptive private sector to engage with, not only the big ones like Vodacom but also a full range of start-ups that are emerging from countries across the continent and have enormous energy in terms of innovation. So, this is the context in which the governments are working. Some have pushed in a resolute manner in the creation of an ecosystem that can let these innovative institutions emerge. Some haven't done it at all, but this hasn't prevented these actors to rise up.

We realised that we could as a development agency of the African Union create very concrete partnerships with private entities. The receptivity of many governments has been very high because they realise they need to facilitate quicker, accelerated vaccination programmes, get the data on how vaccination is going, and then correct and adapt it based on feedback. So this is also one of the lessons which can be drawn from the pandemic. The behaviour of central governments has been shaken because they have discovered two things: they recognised their weaknesses and two, they have at the same time understood that there are many innovative ideas happening, structures, products and systems from which they can benefit. But in order to do so, they need to partner with business, which demands a fundamental mental shift. Most civil servants in African countries do not have a private sector culture, so their ability to link with them is somehow limited.

We need to create a space where there can be intercultural interaction between government and business, which allows this partnership with the private sector to flourish. We also have decided to promote this, and we have an initiative called 100,000 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. We know most employment in Africa is in the informal sector - 80% of those employed in Africa are in the MSMEs, and the pandemic hit them very seriously. Our idea was to create a digital platform supported by financial institutions – we have a partnership with ECOBANK and accompany them in managing the financial and institutional stresses which the pandemic has brought. We created a Digital Academy and a digital platform to

allow them better access to finance. Why a Digital Academy? To allow them to move from informal to more formal structures. This partnership with the private sector helps shape and change the behaviour of our states and governments culturally and structurally too. I like the work of Mariana Mazzucato very much, and her book *The Entrepreneurial State*, which describes an approach that is greatly needed in many of our countries.

*As a former Prime Minister of your country Niger, and President of the Sahel and West Africa Club of OECD, we must ask you how you see the future of the region. Ten years on from the overthrow of President Gadhafi of Libya, terrorist and jihadist groups have embedded themselves very firmly in much of Mali, and parts of Niger and Burkina Faso. Neighbouring countries, like Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal, are increasingly concerned with spill-over. Military solutions don't seem to be working. What political and economic measures could bring a better result?*

The first thing the political elite in the Sahel must do is to recognise that they are the principal people responsible for this situation with the jihadists. That's absolutely fundamental. If you think that jihadism is just an import from elsewhere, and the consequence of the extremely negative NATO intervention in Libya - while this does play a role, it is not the main cause of jihadism. If you say it's the acceleration of the influence of particular religious figures, or Middle Eastern countries which have established radical religious education networks, if you believe this you are way off the mark. You are not facing reality. The reality is that our governments in the Sahel have completely neglected the territorial dimensions of planning and implementation of development. If you put two maps of the Sahel one on top of the other, you see those areas where the government has been active to improve health and education, and compare with those areas where jihadism is rife, you realise they have grown in those locations where the government has been absent. We need to recognise this as the elite.

Moreover, our response cannot be based exclusively on military intervention. The response must be the presence of the

State in those zones that feel they have been completely abandoned. Evidently, the presence of the State currently demands a military presence, but the military by themselves are clearly not enough. The fundamental question for the Sahel is the re-establishment and re-founding of the State. There is a lot of writing and literature on this subject, but the re-foundation cannot be done by elites based in ministries in capital cities. Let me give you an example. When I was Prime Minister, we launched a survey before an exercise in national planning to see what the population really wanted. We asked the population of Niger about priorities for health, water, roads, education, health, and so on. Astonishingly, what came to the top of the list as the priority across the country, was not water, health or education, it was justice. It was a system of justice that was equitable, accessible, and not corrupt. They needed this to live their lives with dignity. In this context, you see that a military solution cannot provide all the answers. Clearly, if you have people with Kalashnikovs, you need people on the other side who also have Kalashnikovs. Given the evolution of the conflict, there are people who are now drawing a livelihood from these criminal activities, which have nothing to do with jihadism. It is easy to recruit young people at US\$2 to \$3 per day who become kings and lords in their own right when they hold a Kalashnikov.

We need to rethink the presence of the State. The army cannot sort out the problem. What we need is the State to be present in a decentralised, locally rooted form. This demands the presence of public services, and engagement with local communities in deciding what is to be done. The State has to be decentralised. It is a new way of thinking. If we don't go in this direction, we will follow the route of Afghanistan – many billions spent and nothing to show for it. States must be present and make difficult but necessary choices in budget expenses. They should no longer prioritize the functioning of ministries that have no capacity to deliver anything in practice. We must help to construct local communities themselves who can then become a rampart and defence against the jihadists. Unfortunately, this essential shift in approach is not well enough recognised and understood. Instead, we see the



multiplication of military actions and the corresponding spread of jihadist and terrorist groups. Too many international actors also participate in the illusion that this is the way to make progress.

Changing course won't be easy. It will be slow and long, but we must follow the right road. We must renew the State, decentralise our budgets, and reinforce community-based actions so that people can judge for themselves that they are

better off under the aegis of the State than jihadist groups. This should be our aim for the medium and longer-term. At the OECD Sahel and West Africa Club, we are trying to create space where people from a wide variety of backgrounds can meet, in what we call the Concertations sahéniennes to ask the real questions and co-construct policies and solutions with actors on the ground.

**Source: Project Syndicate**

# Some Reflections on Africa-China Cooperation and New Financing Opportunities

By Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, CEO, AUDA-NEPAD Agency

**“ What Africa needs is “Intelligent Financing.” Africa will have to position itself so that China’s total imports from Africa, of crude oil and mineral supply which will reach \$300-billion in the next three years, ought to significantly & meaningfully contribute to Africa’s overall economic transformation & benefit the African citizen. ”**

It has been 21 years since the first FOCAC Ministerial Conference was held in the year 2000, coincidentally a year later in July 2001, the 37th Assembly of the then Organisation of African Union (OAU) formally adopted the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as an integrated socio-economic development framework for Africa. NEPAD- a programme of the African Union (AU) that seeks to eradicate poverty and place African countries, both individually and collectively, on the path of sustainable growth and development.

When compared to China with 1.3 billion people and Africa with 1.1 billion people- similar population sizes, China contributes some 15% to the global economy- and this is a result of China’s recent history of consistent investments in mass-industrial production through its well-articulated and executed industrial policy stemming from the 1970s. Therefore, some 21 years later I think we should all reflect and reflect deeply especially in this context of the COVID-19 pandemic, how FOCAC and the NEPAD Programme somewhat as twin platforms ought to take stock and accelerate Africa’s transformation and eradicate poverty through a radical and sustained economic transformation of African Economies.

FOCAC has always been based on win-win partnership between China and Africa, whilst the NEPAD Programme called for African Ownership and African Leadership in Africa’s transformation agenda. As Africa continues to hold much promise, and the past 2 years alone we have seen an Africa that has demonstrated economic resilience, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and recent global approaches. However, may I quickly state that the reaffirmation of this FOCAC Summit to deepen quality investments into Africa, sends a strong signal that Africa has a committed partnership with China.

As I have mentioned in the past and I now re-echo again that the China-Africa partnership aims at an “intelligent partnership” anchored on a principle of mutual benefit between China and Africa. Therefore, in the past 2 decades the China-Africa relationship has grown significantly, with a number of important agreements signed and major projects implemented across Africa.

The theme of the Summit- “Deepen China-Africa Partnership and Promote Sustainable Development to Build a China-Africa

Community with a Shared Future in the New Era translates perfectly the high hopes entrusted on this strategic partnership. Furthermore, I commend the adoption of the 4 Strategic Documents that will guide Africa-China interactions for the upcoming three years: The Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024); the 2035 Vision for China-Africa Cooperation; the Sino-African Declaration on Climate Change; and the Declaration of the Eighth Ministerial Conference of FOCAC. These documents will certainly serve as roadmaps and policy frameworks that will advance Africa’s economic transformation. Certainly, if Africa is to lead its own industrialisation, we must ensure that the 2035 Vision for China-Africa Cooperation can also attract non-traditional financing.

With global regulations reducing the amount of bank capital available for Africa infrastructure, institutional investors (i.e., pension funds, Sovereign Wealth Funds, and insurance companies), have emerged as a potentially mainstream financing source to close the estimated infrastructure finance gap in Africa. As a result, a critical African public sector objective is to mobilize both domestic and global institutional investment for African infrastructure assets, especially those projects which provide the backbone of Africa’s regional integration, trade, investment and competitiveness.

What Africa needs is “Intelligent Financing”. Intelligent Financing will crowd-in quantum amounts of Chinese public funds, Chinese private capital- particularly China’s highly liquid domestic commercial banks, pension funds and other financial entities. Therefore, Africa will have to position itself so that China’s total imports from Africa, of crude oil and mineral supply which will reach \$300-billion in the next three years, ought to significantly and contribute meaningfully to Africa’s overall economic transformation and benefit the African citizen.

Intelligent Financing backed by a comprehensive financial guarantee mechanism will pave the way for more projects to be implemented under the Programme for Infrastructure development in Africa (PIDA). The African Union Commission and AUDA-NEPAD, through PIDA addresses issues like regional road infrastructure, physical and procedural improvements at border crossings, port infrastructure and energy inter-connectors are being addressed with the Regional Economic Communities and at the country level.

It is viewed that in recent years globally- that business and consumer confidence in Africa has improved generally, but investment, trade and productivity have not strengthened as expected for most African countries over the years. And this has a direct impact on both foreign and domestic investments into Africa's development, particularly into Africa's infrastructure.

The period between 2010 and 2020, Africa added 122 million people to its labour force promising significant economic activity in key sectors on the condition that political stability becomes the norm and demographic dividend of a youthful and employed population with adequate spending power becomes a reality. Thus, a great opportunity for investment and trade exists for Africa and this decade can certainly become Africa's decade of inclusive growth and prosperity through FOCAC just the same way China did since the 1970s. Africa through FOCAC stands to learn from China's social and economic transformation.

I am pleased that President Xi Jinping on, 29 November 2021 said China would offer another 1-billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines to African countries and would encourage Chinese companies to invest no less than \$10-billion in Africa over the next three years. The pledge of additional vaccine doses on top of the nearly 200-million that China has already supplied to the continent comes as a welcome move to show solidarity with Africa in its fight against the new variant of the coronavirus, known as Omicron, which was first identified in Southern Africa region. Therefore, I have no doubt that the China-Africa relation is genuine, what we now need after some 20 plus years of FOCAC, is significant and quantum amounts of mass-scale investments that will transform all productivity sectors of African Economies, effectively making Africa a significant global player just like China.

[Click here for the outcomes of FOCAC8](#)



## AUDA-NEPAD and AFREXIM Bank sign MoU towards improving trade facilitation in Africa

The African Union Development Agency – NEPAD has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the African Export-Import Bank (AFREXIM Bank), on the margins of the Intra-African Trade Fair recently hosted in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Durban, South Africa.

As the implementing Agency of the African Union, AUDA-NEPAD is to play a critical role in the execution of Flagship Projects of the African Union. It is also the technical Interface of the partners and stakeholders of African Development under the African Union.

AFREXIM Bank has been a key partner of AUDA-NEPAD since 2016 when the MoveAfrica Initiative was launched in Kigali, Rwanda. AFREXIM BANK also played a role in mapping out the Traffic Light System within the same year. The MoU signed by the two entities aims to forge and forster a stronger partnership between AUDA-NEPAD and AFREXIM Bank.

“The partnership with AFREXIM Bank is critical in growing the MoveAfrica Initiative into a programme, which will define the practical aspects of Trade Facilitation in simplifying, harmonising and standardising processes and procedures at border posts. This is in building up on the work that is being done through the Traffic Light System”, said the Chief of Staff of AUDA-NEPAD Jennifer Chiriga, who signed the MoU on behalf of the AUDA-NEPAD CEO, Dr Ibrahim Mayaki.

She highlighted that the MoU will be fundamental when trading under the AfCFTA that kicked off on 1 January 2021.



Signing on behalf of AFREXIM Bank and Intra-African Trade, Mrs Kanayo Awani, Managing Director, Intra-Africa Trade indicated that it is important to deal with facilitation issues and that is why the partnership with AUDA-NEPAD because finance only will not be able to break down the barriers and the borders that divide African countries. Partnerships are key in addressing the bottlenecks and challenges we face in moving goods and services across borders.

“Institutions that are aligned have to work together, our ambition is to support the implementation and success of the AfCFTA and by 2063, we will have the Africa that we want”, she said.

The partnership between AUDA-NEPAD and AFREXIM Bank is key to defining Trade related and Industrialisation programmes at AUDA-NEPAD. As outlined in the MoU the Bank will support AUDA-NEPAD to develop focus on the following objectives:

To upscale MoveAfrica from an initiative into a trade facilitation programme which will be coordinating with RECs on matters pertaining to cross-border logistics integration.

Support to Industrialisation to coordinate with AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities, the private sector, and other key stakeholders in accelerating Africa’s equitable and sustainable industrialisation on the continent.

To support Economic Integration in advancing Africa’s physical and economic integration through Digitalisation and PIDA ICT Projects The parties will establish an implementation team, comprised of officers from both AUDA-NEPAD and AFREXIM Bank as designated in the implementation plan for the satisfactory implementation of the activities detailed in the MoU.

This MoU is another ray of hope in the overall goal of the MoveAfrica initiative aimed at the ease of movement of goods, services and people across the continent.



# 17<sup>th</sup> CAADP Partnership Platform: Ending Hunger in Africa by 2025 through Resilient Food Systems

**W**e should be reminded that hunger, beyond the physical discomfort, is a humiliating experience which deprives individuals their dignity and basic human right. Hunger ultimately affects all aspects of our development agenda as a continent,” Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, the CEO of the African Union Development-NEPAD stated during the plenary session of the 17th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Partnership Platform meeting.

CAADP was adopted by African Union member states in 2003 as a policy framework to accelerate agriculture led growth, while elevating improved food security and nutrition as well as increasing incomes in Africa’s largely agriculture-based economies. It is framed by ambitious goals to be achieved by 2025. In 2014, all African Heads of State re-committed to the continent’s CAADP targets and principles in the Malabo Declaration. The theme of 17th CAADP Partnership Platform was chosen to take advantage of the renewed momentum that has been created by the UN Food Systems Summit, at a moment when the continent is halfway through the Malabo Declaration timeframe.

During the three-day deliberations, it was clear that more than halfway through to the 2025 landmark, the vision encapsulated in the Malabo Declaration still lives on and CAADP is more pertinent today than ever before in ensuring food security and improving the livelihoods of Africa’s populations.

“In order to improve the food and nutrition security in the continent, we need to fast-track the implementation of the Malabo Declaration, our approach to achieve the agricultural vision for Africa,” Amb. Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment at the African Union Commission reiterated. During the partnership platform deliberations, it was observed that most countries in Africa are not on track to meet the 2025 targets on ending hunger,



as set out in the Malabo commitments in 2014. Targets for ending hunger have also been hampered by the impact of COVID-19. Therefore, an urgent call for capacity and systems strengthening in Africa was made.

In addition, “The continental target for bringing down the proportion of the population that is undernourished to 5% or less, by the year 2025 is not on track as well as the continental target for bringing down the prevalence of stunting (% of children under 5 years old) to 10% or less,” Amb. Sacko observed.

She also pointed out that the number of hungry people on the continent rose by 47.9 million since 2014 and by 2020, stood at 250.3 million, or nearly one-fifth of the African population.

The decline in food security on the continent has been attributed to disruptions in input and output markets, compounded by other shocks including the locust outbreaks in 2020, the fall armyworm in 2018 and 2019, extreme weather patterns due to climate change, the rising insecurity in some member states, and more recently, the effects of the COVID pandemic restrictions and consequences.

Therefore, it was agreed that being midway through to complete the Malabo round, Africans need to appreciate the urgency of expediting the CAADP

implementation by giving a new impetus to its domestication by the countries and the Regional Economic Communities.

“For me, the issue of accountability has been a major takeaway,” Hon. Angela Thoko Didiza, South Africa’s Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and Chair of the Bureau of the 3rd AU STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment disclosed. The CAADP Partnership Platform is the main African Union continental agricultural platform for policy dialogue, lessons sharing and accountability among the stakeholders to advance in the transformation of agriculture on the continent and ensure food security, as well as resilient food systems.

The 17th CAADP Partnership Platform deliberations were well attended by African ministers, non-state actors and African Union development partners including, among others, the African Development Bank, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, FAO, the International Food Policy Research Institute, USAID and the World Bank.

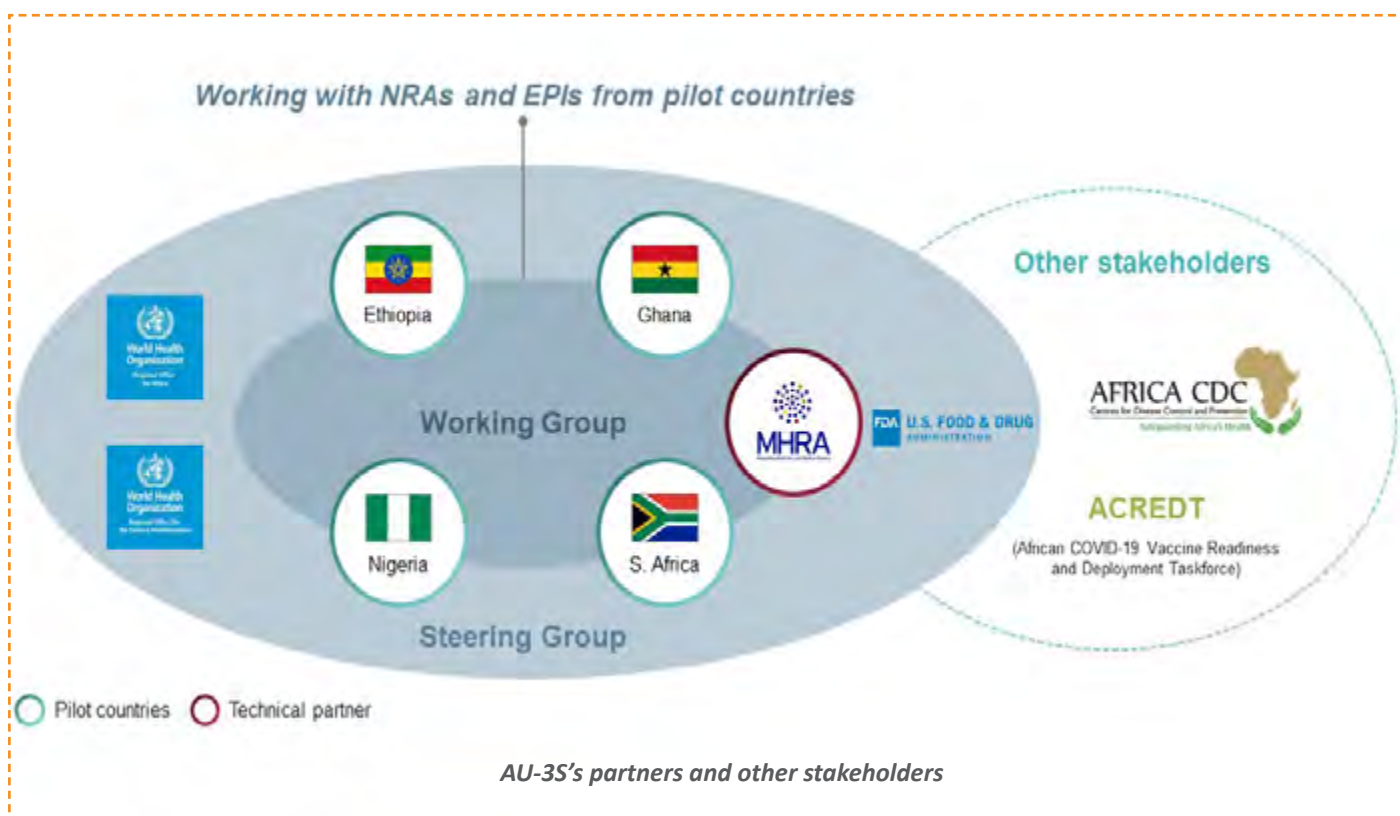
## AU-3S: Strengthening safety surveillance in Africa

### Vision for African Union Smart Safety Surveillance (AU-3S)

AUDA-NEPAD launched AU-3S in early 2020, with a ten-year ambition to strengthen the continental safety surveillance of new and innovative health products in priority disease areas for Africa: malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and other emergency diseases such as COVID-19 and Ebola. AU-3S aims to address the challenges of low adverse event reporting, siloed safety surveillance systems, and limited safety expertise on the continent. AU-3S's AfriVigilance system, a centralised continental database covering the end-to-end safety lifecycle of priority medical products, will enable African ownership of and decisions on African safety data.

### AU-3S's rapid COVID-19 response has delivered significant benefit to date

With the launch of COVID-19 vaccination programmes in Africa, there was an urgent need for robust safety surveillance. AU-3S's COVID-19 response has focused on supporting the safety surveillance of COVID-19 vaccines in four pilot countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa. Together, these countries represent around 30% of Africa's population. In addition to these countries, AU-3S works with other partners from peer regulatory agencies and WHO regional offices:



### AU-3S's COVID-19 response has achieved great impact to date

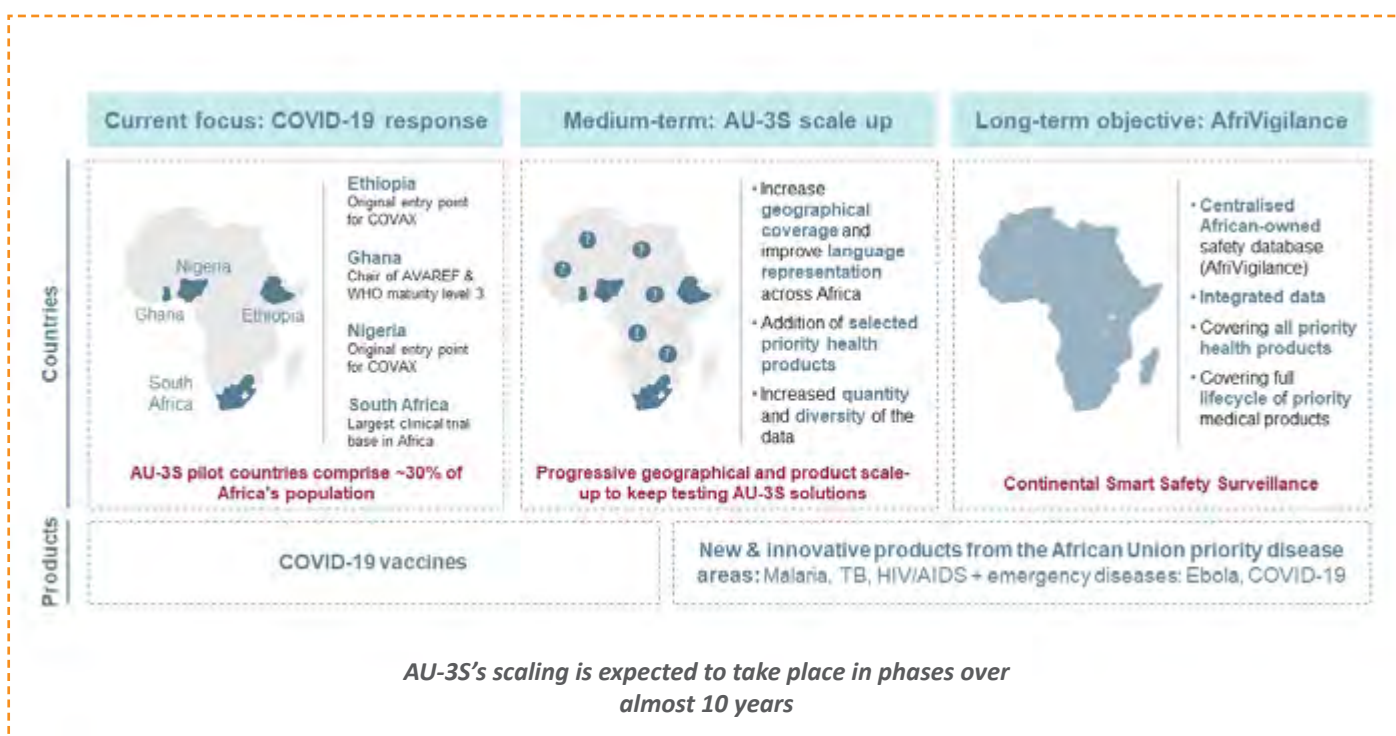
- Through AU-3S's creation and promotion of an adverse event reporting form for the Med Safety App, over 400 million Africans are covered by digital safety surveillance tools. Around 32,000 new users of the Med Safety App were added in 2021, and over 8,500 total safety reports have been submitted through the App. AU-3S continues to support countries to decentralise the data entry of paper forms, to reduce workload and ensure the regulatory authorities have near-real time visibility of reports.
- AU-3S has enabled cross-country safety data integration from all four pilot countries, and signal detection on this African data – the first of its kind on the continent. As of 15 November, the system contains more than 20,300 safety reports.
- The AU-3S Joint Signal Management Group, a multi-country group of safety practitioners and experts who validate, prioritise, and assess potential safety signals, was launched in 2021. This enables African-led, evidence-based decision making on

safety data. Both regulatory authorities and immunisation programmes are represented in the JSM Group, improving communication and increasing joint analysis of safety data. Based on the analysis of the combined data, the AU-3S JSM Group reiterates that the benefits of the AstraZeneca, Janssen, Pfizer, and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines outweigh the risks of vaccination.

- To advance safety knowledge and capabilities on the continent, AU-3S facilitated 14 trainings hosted by the MHRA. An average of 100 attendees participated in each session and reported a 95% satisfaction rate. E-learning modules are publicly available on the AU-3S website.
- More than 125 in-country and cross-country experience sharing sessions were held by AU-3S. Information was shared in over 100 continental guidance documents, publications, videos, templates, and other media. In addition, AU-3S had around 60 additional touchpoints with other continental initiatives and stakeholders.

### Future of the AU-3S programme

AU-3S is preparing to expand to more African countries to achieve greater geographical and language representation. Looking ahead, additional vaccines and medicines will be included in the programme to extend its benefits to other priority disease areas. In parallel to this expansion, AfriVigilance will be implemented to realise AU-3S’s vision: sustainable safety surveillance for Africans, by Africans.



For more information about this exciting initiative, please refer to the [AU-3S website](#) and the [second edition of the AU-3S Spotlight newsletter](#). If you have any comments or questions, please reach out to AU-3S’s Programme Manager, Mr Hudu Mogtari, at [HuduM@nepad.org](mailto:HuduM@nepad.org).

## Moving The Needle On Youth Unemployment In Africa: From learning to Employment

Africa is no stranger to crisis. With two out of three people globally impacted by food insecurity living on the continent, the region is grappling with humanitarian crises, civil unrest and natural disasters. Now, it has been disproportionately affected by the global Covid-19 pandemic. The resulting economic factors are already hampering progress and prospects, causing widening inequalities between and within nations; worsening current fragilities and further exacerbating the jobs crisis.

The formal sector creates only one job per four young people entering the workforce, leaving an overwhelming portion of the population scrambling to find work. In most African countries, the unemployment rate for youths is double that of adults, while 60% of Africa's unemployed are youths.

With this mandate at heart, the Africa Creates Jobs Conference recently concluded, with an inherent focus on action and driving a responsive and agile skills and jobs agenda for economic growth in Africa. The name change from African Talks Jobs to Africa Creates Jobs further illustrated a new direction and impetus toward moving the needle on youth unemployment on the continent.

During the conference, stakeholders who shape skills and employment agendas discussed key challenges within the labour ecosystem. The message was clear: Africa must unite in the spirit of "Ubuntu" - with a coordinated response that embodies the values of togetherness and acknowledges the impact of collective actions on individuals and society at large.

"As Africans, we're taught about Ubuntu, but our humility and modesty is destroying us," shared Professor Mthunzi Mdwaba during his keynote address. "Our humility stops us from coming to the table with ideas. This deprives us of what is deservedly ours." Professor Mthunzi Mdwaba, an accomplished businessman, organised business activist, academic and thought leader, added, "Covid has revealed that Africa has a flawed economic



structure that we haven't addressed. Our reality is flawed because the solutions we allow to be proposed to us and then imposed on us are not homegrown and this is why they are likely to always fail."

A resounding theme of creating African solutions for African issues, guided over 700 stakeholders from within the employment ecosystem. "We are here to have a dialogue of purpose," AUDA-NEPAD's Unami Mpfu stressed. "We know the problems: Let us present the solutions. We are here to make progress towards a job and skills resolution, to have the Africa we want."

A culmination of five regional workshops, held between August and November 2021, the ACJ! 2021 Continental Dialogue saw stakeholders earmark best practices as a foundation to form a roadmap toward helping regional leaders direct policies and scarce resources in ways that would ultimately bolster long-term, inclusive job growth.

### Bringing the Youth to the Table

It is no surprise that both economists and policymakers find Africa's rapidly growing employment gap an emotionally charged

impasse. The issue is further aggravated by a rapidly growing youth population, for whom the lack of formal jobs forces them to engage in the informal sector: characterized by uncertainty, lack of social safety nets and massive inefficiencies in terms of productivity and income growth.

"This conference comes at a very opportune moment when Africa is at a turning point within its demographic structure," shared Professor Sarah Mbi Enow Anyang Agbor, who currently serves as the FAWE Africa Board Chairperson (2021 – 2023) and is the African Union Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology. Amidst growing attention on the need to provide solutions for Africa's youth, she noted the importance of holding the conference at this time. "Our youth need results – they need deliverables," she urged.

Professor Agbor called for a redirected focus on the education and skills development ecosystem; one that took cognisance of the labour market's needs, in preparing young people for a productive life. In echoing her sentiment, Dr Thomas Helfen, of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), pointed out the importance of

finding and pursuing the appropriate policies and strategies to address the growing challenges and barriers to the development of youth skills on the continent. A 'fit-for-purpose' labour force is needed, he said, urging stakeholders to close the skills gap between supply and demand.

Many of the policy discussions taking place at the global and continental levels have focused on youth - their educational needs, engagements, and livelihoods. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consider the youth essential partners for achieving inclusive and peaceful societies. Add to this, The African Youth Charter calls for states to prepare youth with the necessary skills for participation in political and decision-making processes.

Active youth participation is the way forward. "Where partnerships often fail is because there is no sharing of data," Belinda Lewis of Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator explained to participants. "We need to include young people in the conversations, formally or informally." In this light, the open dialogue over the two-day virtual conference ensured that the youth's views were consistently represented in debates affecting them the most.

### **Skills & Qualifications are at the Heart of the African Renaissance**

Team Leader Skills & Employability at AUDA-NEPAD, Unami Mpofo lead an animated discussion on day one around enhancing employability, "We need to give young people the skills to adapt and be resilient," she urged. "We need to have in place mechanisms in which we can grow our economies and slot in the necessary skills. In order to do this, we need to build a responsive skills system." Stressing one of the continent's key challenges to growth and development, she called for a transformation of the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems across the continent. Conversations revealed a profound mismatch between skills and job opportunities. "Training and education that equips young people with the skills employers require are imperative. A lack of funding has prevented TVET systems

across the continent from meeting present and future skill requirements," she added.

### **The Economy Is Informal So Jobs Are Informal**

Various stakeholders present at the conference, including policy-makers and employer organizations, acknowledged that informality in all its forms represents a major barrier to sustainable development. More than 86 percent of all employment in Africa is informal and the sector is the main source of employment and the backbone of economic activity.

Low productivity characterizes informal businesses, resulting in low and irregular earnings. This is aggravated by a lack of access to basic services such as water and electricity, a dedicated space to operate, and access to high-value markets.

Speaking on the impact of technology on the future of work, Professor Mdwaba pointed out that during Covid most people were on digital platforms, but stressed, "We did not spare a thought that like access running water, the majority of our people cannot connect online." Most people find themselves in the informal economy not by choice, but due to the lack of opportunities in formal employment and the absence of other means of earning a living.

"There are immense skills that are untapped in the informal sector and we need to drive policies to recognise these skills beyond the traditional framework," Richard Muteti, Kenya National Federation of JuaKali Associations shared, as he called for action and a drive toward evaluation of skills and experience. "When you assist the informal sector gain access to market, their lives improve dramatically."

In the informal sector, women make up a disproportionate share of workers, almost 90 percent, from street vendors and domestic workers to subsistence farmers and seasonal employees in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors. What was established throughout the talks was the need to build capacity and provide better service and support within the informal sector, especially for marginalised groups.

"Women need to become part of the skills revolution in Africa," Daniel Antwi of the Africa SkillsHub urged stakeholders. "There is no denying women lead-businesses create more jobs. Once you help one woman, you help a community."

Throughout the workshops and discussions, what stakeholders agreed on was the fact that youth unemployment could not be solved in isolation from the major economic challenges facing nations today. From a dire need for a skills revolution on the continent to sharing of expertise and best practices to the need for structural change and reform, the consensus was to move from talking to action. Professor Agbor, said it aptly when she relayed, "The youth of Africa are tired of the rhetoric and we must match words with action."

It is time to no longer see Africa as a continent of crisis, but one of opportunity. One that embraces the spirit of togetherness and will take the Covid-19 crisis as a learning experience from which to grow. And ACJ is the driver of that change.

# Land Accelerator Africa: Investing in African Land Restoration Entrepreneurs



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COVID-19 has put a strain on the systems that sustain livelihoods across Africa: The World Bank estimates that the pandemic will push an additional 30 million people in sub-Saharan Africa into extreme poverty. The resulting supply chain disruptions and falling incomes have also led to surges in food insecurity. As people are forced to look for food elsewhere, forests, grasslands and other ecosystems are put under increasing pressure.

Hundreds of entrepreneurs in Africa are tackling these challenges through locally led, market-driven green businesses that protect and restore farmland and forests. Restoration businesses balance profitability with social and environmental impact by sequestering carbon, combating desertification, and helping communities adapt to the effects of climate change, while securing local food systems and creating jobs in struggling rural landscapes. Investing in them is key to creating a more sustainable future and will help achieve the goals of the AFR100 Initiative, a pan-African effort to begin restoring 100 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.

That's where the [Land Accelerator Africa](#), led by World Resources Institute (WRI) with support from the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and Fledge, comes in. It is a training and mentorship program for restoration entrepreneurs that aims to build pitching, communication, financial and supply chain management skills, provide networking opportunities and boost companies' investment readiness.

The accelerator has now worked with 204 entrepreneurs from 34 countries in total, including 100 local businesses from 27 countries for its third cohort in 2021 ([details here](#)). Each graduate is receiving a \$5,000 innovation grant to help them scale up their businesses. Even prior to the Land Accelerator, this year's

cohort made massive impacts on their communities and the environment. They report that their businesses have restored over 90,000 hectares of land, grown over 11 million trees, and employ over 9,000 people in total.

A selected group of 15 leading entrepreneurs have now benefitted from customized support to improve their business models and understand the realities of the funding landscape from a team of expert mentors. This support is helping kick off the second phase of AFR100, debuted this November at the UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland by African ministers and investors ([more information here](#)).

The Impact Day was held on November 18th, 2021 in Nairobi, Kenya. It was a hybrid event with 43 physical attendees, among them investors, entrepreneurs, donors, and other partners. The online meeting had a total of over 250 participants.

The Impact Day was graced by Chief Administrative Secretary (CAS) Ministry of Environment & Forestry Hon Mohammed Elmi joined by Mamadou Diakhite, AUDA-NEPAD Acting-Head of Environmental Sustainability and the AFR100 Secretariate Manager and World Resource Institute's Dr. Susan Chomba, Director of Vital landscapes.

## AUDA-NEPAD and AU-IBAR Media Training on Fisheries and Aquaculture Governance



**F**isheries and aquaculture sectors play a significant social and nutritional role in the well-being of millions of Africans. Still, for lack of awareness of its importance, the fisheries sector is at risk because fish resources from natural sources such as oceans, lakes, rivers, and floodplains are rapidly approaching their limits.

Against this backdrop, the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD and the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) have convened a media training workshop from 9-12 November 2021. The workshop brings together the African media fraternity to increase their understanding and raise awareness on fisheries and aquaculture under the FishGov-2 project.

In his opening remarks, Dr Islam Seif, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industrial Development in Zanzibar, indicated that “This workshop will provide an opportunity for the meeting of minds, showcasing of experiences and opening of a regional and global dialogue on sustainable fisheries in Africa.”

Addressing the participants, Dr Clement Adjorolo, AUDA-NEPAD FishGov- 2 Project Manager, noted that the SDGs and Agenda 2063 vision is the basis for the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS).

The PFRS facilitates the transformation of Africa’s fisheries and aquaculture for food, livelihoods, and wealth.

Dr Adjorolo further noted, “AUDA-NEPAD, guided by its mandate, is fully committed to working with media partners to advance effective communication and advocacy for sustainable development of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for ‘The Africa We Want,’” said.

At the continental level, AU-IBAR and AUDA-NEPAD work together to provide leadership on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, steering these sectors within the PFRS, including keeping the media across the continent well-informed regarding the governance of these important sectors.

The training workshop provided critical and accurate information for developing media reports on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Subsequently, Mrs. Patricia Mweene Lumba, AU-IBAR Senior Knowledge Management Officer, said that the AU-IBAR and AUDA-NEPAD avail themselves as partners to advance media information literacy alongside partners such the East African Community (EAC). AU-IBAR and its implementing partners of the Fisheries Governance 2 project are committed to investing and supporting science journalism in Africa.

Ms Hellen Moepi, an AU-IBAR Fisheries Officer, highlighted that the FishGov-2 project will partner with African Union Centres of Excellence, Regional Economic Communities, Regional Fisheries Bodies, and the continental networks. This partnership will ensure the effective implementation of key policy instruments and strategies in the sector.

The role of Regional Economic Communities cannot be downplayed as it sets a common voice in international trade and cooperation. Therefore, it was promising to note the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and EAC committing to support AUDA-NEPAD and AU-IBAR for greater awareness on Fisheries and Aquaculture.

Dr Motseki Hlatswayo from SADC said, “empowering journalists to create more public awareness on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and the meaningful impact they make on the livelihoods of Africans is significant”. Dr David Balikowa representing, the EAC, highlighted that fisheries, aquaculture, and the blue economy are central to the socio-economic transformation of the EAC Region.



For the African continent, the year 2021 was a period of coping with and implementing recovery strategies from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which added to the strain on our stretched systems. Nonetheless, the continent's overall response was to continue to work in solidarity.

As the continent's development agency, we at the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) have had a footprint in more than 50 of the 55 African Union Member States. This year allowed us to achieve greater results towards our commitment for attaining the goals of Africa's Agenda 2063 for the Africa we want.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have pushed forward with speed and scale to tackle the immediate health crisis and socio-economic impact at continental, regional, national and community levels. To this end, we developed the AUDA-NEPAD [signature solutions](#) in the following areas:

- Health Systems
- Food Systems
- Economic Growth and Jobs

We also continued to work with our partners in shaping a common African position in global forums in the above-mentioned signature solutions for our continent, for which our [resource mobilisation strategy](#) was also developed.

This festive season, we would like to acknowledge the support accorded to us by all our partners and stakeholders towards supporting Africa in delivering on its development ambitions.

We wish you well this holiday season and send you good wishes for the New Year.

**Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki**

**CEO of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD**







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### Did you know?

There are sixteen landlocked countries in Africa. These countries are all located in the interior of the continent and have neither access to the Atlantic Ocean nor to the Indian Ocean. Two of these landlocked countries, the tiny countries of Eswatini and Lesotho, are located within South Africa.

# HABARI

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