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The African Union's first ever Development Agency



Interview with Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, AUDA-NEPAD CEO

The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD is the first ever development agency of the African Union.

Question: Please take us through the journey that led to the creation of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD.

Dr Ibrahim Mayaki: The African Union Assembly of July 2018 approved the establishment of AUDA-NEPAD as the technical executive agency and development anchor of the continent with its distinct legal identity and defined by its own statute, to deliver on the development priorities articulated by the African Union. Its establishment is part of the overall institutional reforms of the African Union.

At the 31st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of African Union Heads of State and Government in Nouakchott, Mauritania, a decision was officially adopted to transform the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency into the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD).

The vision of AUDA-NEPAD is to **'Harness knowledge to deliver the Africa we want.'** The mission of the organisation is to provide a platform for African countries in order to ensure the effective and integrated planning, coordination and implementation of programmes and projects aimed economic integration and development, and embracing of AUDA-NEPAD's principles and values.

Q: Since your coming to the helm of NEPAD as CEO in 2009, how has the organisation grown?

Dr Mayaki: When I joined the organisation as CEO in 2009, it was at a time when NEPAD, as a Secretariat, was being integrated into the African Union, following the 2003 AU decision taken in Maputo. Let me go back a bit more in the organisation’s history and add that it was in 2001 in Lusaka, where the adoption of NEPAD as a flagship programme of the African Union took place. NEPAD was adopted as a home-grown African initiative to address Africa’s main development challenges.

Following the African Union reforms for increased efficiency, come 2019, AUDA-NEPAD has now been created as a development agency, having grown in leaps in bounds, in terms of impact on the continent, with a footprint in 53 of the 55 continent’s countries, through varying degrees and programmatic work. The role therefore, of AUDA-NEPAD, is to gather the necessary knowledge that can inform policy design, to move at regional and national level and make sure that our strategies of integration are well-implemented. Let me add that the fact that the name ‘NEPAD’ has been maintained in the name of the agency, (that is ‘AUDA-NEPAD’), is affirmation of the commitment and support by African Union Member States and stakeholders, for the African Union Development Agency, with its own mandate, to build on the gains made by NEPAD.

The new AUDA-NEPAD mandate gives the organisation a wider role in terms of providing knowledge-based advisory support to African Union Member States with regards to development strategies and capacity development, to support them in driving their development.

Q: What exactly is the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD going to do?

Dr Mayaki: Our knowledge-based advisory support to countries will be carried out through the coordination and execution of priority regional and continental projects. This is in order to promote real integration towards the accelerated realisation of Agenda 2063, which will help to strengthen capacity and bring about sustained transformation.



Regarding implementation, the Agency will work within the framework of Agenda 2063 and the broader global Sustainable Development Goals. We will focus on packaging knowledge and delivering results at country level through National Development Plans.

Our focus areas are: Knowledge Management; Human Capital & Institutions’ Development; Technology, Innovation and Digitalisation; Industrialisation; Environmental Sustainability, and; Economic Integration. Emphasis is on integrated planning that will take a multisectorial approach, working with African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities and development partners.

In closing, I would like to add that the birth of AUDA-NEPAD, as the driver for Agenda 2063, has come at the right time, as the continent needs to accelerate its growth, which can only be sustained through economic regional integration, built on an ‘original’ African owned and led pathway for ‘the Africa we want.’ ■

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The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD

The Executive Council of the African Union adopted the statute, rules of procedure and structure of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) at the 35th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, in Niger, on 4 and 5 July 2019.

The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, with its clearly defined mandate and legal identity, is now the first development agency of the African Union, with its new mandate being:

- (i) To coordinate and execute priority regional and continental projects to promote regional integration towards the accelerated realisation of Agenda 2063;
- (ii) To strengthen capacity of African Union Member States and regional bodies; advance knowledge-based advisory support, undertake the full range of resource mobilisation, and serve as the continent's technical interface with all Africa's development stakeholders and development partners.

The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD is responsible for implementing the continent's major projects for regional integration, with the close collaboration of both the public and private sectors. Working towards Africa's integration, the Agency will also play a fundamental role in the realisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

The new AUDA-NEPAD mandate gives the organisation a wider role in terms of providing knowledge-based advisory support to African Union Member States with regards to development strategies and capacity development, to support them in driving their development.

Moreover, the Agency will play a critical role in disseminating best practices and support countries' efforts in developing their capacity and leverage on regional and global partnerships.

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Mechanisation for Agricultural Transformation

In order to raise agricultural land and labour productivity, to generate rural employment and make it more attractive and to achieve future growth and poverty reduction agendas, governments must embrace technological, policy and institutional innovation opportunities afforded by mechanisation.

Successful mechanisation along the value chain will have to be a priority in any future development and growth agendas for African smallholder agriculture. Its success depends on organisational innovations such as reliable services and cooperation arrangements for and with farmers.

Under the African Union's 2014 Malabo Declaration, AU member states have explicitly committed themselves to making investments in 'suitable, reliable, and affordable mechanisation and energy supplies' in order to double productivity by 2025 (Commitment to Ending Hunger, 3(a)). In spite of this commitment, however, only a few countries have actually included mechanisation in their National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs).

Benefits of specifically including mechanisation investment strategies in countries' NAIPs include the development of the policy and regulatory frameworks that are necessary for incentivising private investment in the development, supply and maintenance of agricultural equipment and related technologies, in addition to facilitating the leveraging of public funds for mechanisation within agricultural value chains.

The failure to accelerate and sustain growth within the agriculture sector will have major impacts on African countries as well as on global food markets. By missing out on the opportunity to capture a larger share of the growing demand from continental and global agricultural markets,



Africa will miss the opportunity to create wealth and employment opportunities. Currently, Africa is the continent with the least mechanised agricultural system in the world. African farmers have ten times fewer mechanised tools per farm area than farmers in other developing regions, and access has not grown as quickly as in other regions. 50-85% of farm work continues to be done manually, without the support of animals or machinery. Only 10% of total power for land preparation in sub-Saharan Africa comes from engine-powered machines, usually using fossil fuels.

Furthermore, the use and power of tractors in Africa has barely increased over the past 40 years. In 1960, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania each had more tractors in use than India. By 2005, India had 100 times more tractors in use than the three countries combined. In 1980, meanwhile, there were just two tractors per 1,000 hectares; by 2003 this had fallen to an average of just 1.3. By comparison, there were 7.8 tractors per 1,000 hectares in 1980 in Asia and the Pacific region – by 2003 this had jumped to 14.9.

On the other hand, substantial and visible progress and growth in some African countries and in some sectors is reason for optimism. However, more needs to be done to meet future food demands and to further accelerate agricultural transformation. It will, therefore, be crucial to analyse and address the technological, policy and institutional innovations that are required in order to improve agricultural land and labour productivity more quickly, as well as to learn from those African countries for which adoption of sustainable mechanisation has contributed to socially sustainable mechanisation pathways and agricultural growth.

Africa needs to further develop its own agricultural machinery industries in a way which makes use of the region's inventiveness while also taking account of its specific contexts. The industry may grow as a mix of small, creative start-ups, some of which may work in partnership with established international corporations. The private sector can play a crucial role in bringing to scale the design, development, and provision of technologies that are proven to be impactful. Increased cooperation between the private sector and research institutions, meanwhile, is needed in order to strengthen domestic mechanisation efforts. This can be achieved by developing locally appropriate and affordable machines and technologies. Substantial investment in public-private partnerships must therefore be made in order to foster research and development, vocational training and skills development programmes, as well as to stimulate innovation along the value chain.

It is a promising sign, that between 2005 and 2014, several African countries were able to increase the uptake of mechanisation along the entire agricultural value chain; in this way they increased their agricultural output and generated new off-farm employment opportunities. Their experiences can help other governments develop country-specific mechanisation strategies and policies that favour collaboration between the private sector, research institutions and the governments themselves. ■

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Tackling the Tuberculosis Crisis in Zambia

Tuberculosis (TB) still remains a major public health problem in Zambia and one of the top ten causes of mortality. Recently, Zambia is facing an emerging problem of Multi-drug Resistant TB (DR-TB) and although treatment success rates have improved, treatment is still low and is attributed to the lack of adequate support structures.

TB detection rate currently stands at 62 per cent. A baseline study on national TB health systems in Zambia has raised important concerns regarding the nature of TB services in Zambia. While Zambia has made important milestones in the control and management of TB, the study has identified a number of important gaps that need to be closed for the country to be able to completely eliminate TB by 2035.

To be able to respond to these and other challenges, the World Bank, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC), are supporting the implementation of the Southern Africa TB and Health Systems Support (SATBHSS) Project and Zambia is one of the countries of focus. The project is designed to respond to key constraints in the control of TB and other occupational lung diseases by supporting the implementation of international best practices and scaling up promising interventions in affected countries.

Within the development of this project, a results framework was developed, including indicators to monitor progress throughout the project. This study

was intended to create such indicators to be used to monitor and evaluate project performance during and at the end of the project period. The study also collected some of the key indicators in the M&E framework of the National TB strategic plan that was launched by the Government. It outlines lessons learned that can be applied for future in-country capacity building to address TB interventions in Zambia and regionally.

Key findings:

- Although TB and HIV share common epidemiological patterns and presents opportunities for joint programming, the implementation of measures to reduce the burden of TB among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) face some barriers including delays in diagnosis and low yield of results.
- In the mining sector where the risk of TB is known to be high, current legislation requires that any mine worker diagnosed with either TB or silicosis should not work in a scheduled area of the mine. This, however, has become a barrier to mine workers seeking care within the mine health institutions for fear of losing employment. This law also forces some workers to conceal their TB statuses which exacerbate the risk of transmission to other mine workers.

The baseline study has identified high impact areas for strengthening in-country capacity for (1) TB Surveillance, Diagnosis and Support, (2) Quality of Service Delivery, and (3) Occupational TB Services.

The following are some of the key policy recommendations of the study:

TB Surveillance, Diagnosis and Support

1. Strengthen community outreach activities to improve active case finding and contact tracing.
2. Strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework especially at the lower level for better management of TB data.
3. Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and algorithms for systematic screening and TB assessment of contacts in order to improve the management of contact tracing.
4. Strengthen the system of administering Isoniazid preventive therapy (IPT) to People living with HIV (PLHIV) who have latent TB infection.
5. Strengthen the provision of nutritional and psychosocial counselling support to Drug-Resistant TB (DR-TB) patients to accelerate treatment.
6. Strengthen data management in collaboration with stakeholders working outside the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Programme (NTLP) to accelerate TB detection.
7. Accelerate the renovation of TB laboratories in health facilities to improve TB detection.

Quality of Service Delivery

1. Strengthen behaviour change communication activities to spread information about TB to vulnerable groups.
2. Shorten TB tests turnaround time, especially in rural areas, as a way of encouraging TB patients to go for TB tests.
3. Improve TB drug supplies to avoid stock-outs.
4. Strengthen capacities of health facilities to effectively deliver the required support to TB patients.
5. Improve TB patient privacy by ensuring that every health facility has a dedicated TB corner.
6. Ensure that services are administered by personnel trained in TB treatment.

Occupational TB Services

1. Strengthen TB screening for miners and close gaps in the data concerning the total number of miners in the country.
2. Improve TB services in non-mining sectors of the economy; currently, occupational health and safety institute (OHSI) services are more accessible to mining companies and less to other industries that may face similar risks of contracting TB.
3. Address specific legal requirements that may act as barriers to seeking care among TB patients in the mining sector.
4. Strengthen provision of TB services for ex-miners; most miners relocate to hard-to-reach places, making it difficult for the OHSI to continue screening former miners.
5. Increase frequency and quality of mine inspections for TB. ■

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How Africa should prepare for the New Industrial Era

By Dr Ibrahim Mayaki

Is the industrialisation that Africa so strongly advocates just taking time to happen or indefinitely postponed? Is the continent today likely to enter a new industrial era, without any prior expansion of manufacturing? These questions should be asked. By focusing on a model that dates back to the rise of manufacturing in Europe with electricity at the end of the 19th century, we would almost forget to see what is happening before our eyes. Africa, which has moved directly to mobile phones without developing the fixed-line network, has made a unique technological leap. His invention of the electronic wallet has changed the daily lives of millions of mobile phone users who are not necessarily banked.

The “Fourth Industrial Revolution”, as defined by Klaus Schwab, a German economist and founder of the World Economic Forum (WEF), is driven by artificial intelligence, 3D printing, virtual reality, blockchain and “cobotics”, the interaction between a man and a robot system. It follows the three previous revolutions, induced by the advent of the steam engine in 1760, then electricity and mass production at the beginning of the 20th century, before the advent of computers in the 1960s.

Today, there are countless remarkable African inventions such as Askwar Hilonga’s, the

Tanzanian who solved the problem of access to drinking water by setting up the NanoFilter. Indeed, this is a cheap water filter based on nanotechnologies, or the Zimbabwean service that “uberises” household waste collection. In other words, a truck platform travels to 32 cities across the country at the request of users who want to dispose of their waste for a small fee. From Dakar to Djibouti, logistics hubs are being developed throughout the continent.

Some Experts such as Carlos Lopes think it is mistaken to complain about the lack of factories in Africa. Because industrialisation also takes place in the services sector, the one that dominates most of the continent’s fast-growing economies. This is not bad news in itself: tourism, for example, is part of the industry, as are the creative industries, which also create jobs. The proof? Nollywood, this huge Nigerian film factory, is the second largest employer in the country after agriculture with 1 million people.

“Industrialisation is not limited to manufacturing. It refers to a whole ecosystem of modern transactions, capable of serving sophisticated economic fabrics and value chains”

Manufacturers no longer provide jobs in Europe, nor in Africa, as robotics develops. It is therefore

necessary to consider this secondary sector, which is often considered as a “necessary step”, a required condition for development. Do we know what impact artificial intelligence will have tomorrow, as well as new technologies that are still beyond our imagination today? The “leapfrog” that has occurred in telecommunications could be replicated in many areas, including those on which current delays act as barriers – such as access to electricity and refrigeration.

Industrialisation is not limited to manufacturing. It refers to a whole ecosystem of modern transactions, capable of serving sophisticated economic fabrics and value chains. From this perspective, several countries are already industrialised in Africa, apart from leading countries such as Egypt and South Africa. Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Mauritius, Rwanda, Togo... These are all countries that have undergone structural transformation of their economies, with massive investments in a more modern and partly industrialised productive fabric. As for countries with large rural populations, which will remain so for the next 30 years, any industrialisation will necessarily involve the diversification of the rural economy. ■

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