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Global Warming is at the Heart of AUDA-NEPAD Priorities

By Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, AUDA-NEPAD CEO

The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD integrates the fight against global warming into a global perspective of the continent's economic development.

The latest United Nations Climate Summit highlighted the differences in approach between polluting countries, major industrial powers and countries suffering the consequences, particularly those in Africa. AUDA-NEPAD, in its DNA, has this environmental dimension.

Since its creation, we have constantly integrated into each of our programs, the sustainability and protection of our biodiversity. Since October 2001, with the launch of the Environment Initiative, mechanisms have been put in place to combat global warming, such as combating land degradation, wetland conservation, the sustainable conservation and use of marine and coastal resources, and the cross-border conservation and management of natural resources.

AUDA-NEPAD is committed to the implementation



of Agenda 2063, which sets out a common continental strategic framework to promote inclusive growth and support sustainable development. We will not wait 50 years to act. The first deadline is therefore 2023.

The protection of biodiversity, the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, water security and renewable energies: for each of these challenges, strong proposals have been adopted, enabling States to draw up a clear and quantified roadmap. In concrete terms, by 2023, the proportion of land used in an eco-sustainable manner must reach at least 30% of the total. Transboundary natural resources will now have to be integrated as natural capital in the negotiations. Water security requires better management of rainwater and irrigation, including the promotion of the use of recycled wastewater for agricultural or industrial purposes. In addition, we will support all actions to reduce the share of fossil fuels in total energy production to minus 20% and to increase the share of renewable energies in total energy

production by at least 10%.

This illustration of the objectives to be achieved by 2023 shows the African Union's commitment to building environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economies and communities, as called for in Goal 7 of Agenda 2063.

To support these initiatives, all public and private funding mechanisms will be involved. At the national level, between 75% and 90% of the financing of Agenda 2063 will be done through the mobilisation of domestic resources. At the continental level, the African Development Bank has already announced a doubling of its financial commitments for climate action, bringing its contribution to \$25 billion between 2020 and 2025.

Spending on climate change adaptation measures is not a sunk cost. According to the latest report of the United Nations World Commission on Adaptation, investing \$1.8 billion in these measures could generate \$7.1 billion in benefits between 2020 and 2030. The United Nations thus confirms that the antagonism between economic development and the fight against global warming is no longer economically justified.

In this regard, the African Union Development Agency continues its efforts by continuing to innovate in strategic growth-generating sectors while meeting its responsibilities in addressing the global challenges of mitigating the effects of global warming and adapting to these changes. ■

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Africa is taking Ecosystems and Landscape restoration in its own hands

"We know there is a path to prosperity for all and a healthy environment in Africa—but we're not on it. Shifting course quickly and at scale is the challenge of our generation. It's what AFR100 Initiative is all about." —Wanjira Mathai Chair, Green Belt Movement, Kenya

The AFR100 Initiative (www.afr100.org) together with its partner countries, local communities and various technical and financial partner, are at work to rehabilitate, regenerate and restore millions of hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes that presently serve the wellbeing and livelihoods of Africans and their future generations.

Rural communities in Africa depend predominantly on forests for everyday upkeep and survival. Throughout the continent rural communities depend on the forest for their livelihood as they collect; batches of firewood for fuel, exotic foods such as bush meat, mushrooms, fruits, nuts, berries and herbs to eat and sell locally. Therefore, forests carry within them the well-being and livelihoods of the populations in the African continent.

An important function of forests in Africa, is its job creation potential. The timber production sector employs tens of millions of people. Non-timber forest products are also harvested and traded as medicine, decorations, essential oils and skincare products. The rural population receive around a quarter of their income from the collection and direct trade of plant seeds, shoots and roots, mushrooms, wildlife and insects. In Africa, we use a lot of palm oil in our products, which is derived from the palm tree forests. Some families make their living by picking fruits from these palm trees

and using them to make and locally trade Palm wine - an alcoholic drink that is popular in the West Africa region.

However, the predicament that arises is that with this high demand of services from our forests, we are faced with an increased rate of deforestation and a rapid degradation of our forest landscapes in Africa. How do we as Africans, take this matter into our own hands and create sustainable strategies to deal with the challenges that come with the results of our own actions, for the benefit of the current and the imminent generation? A Continental response to the above challenges is the Africa Forests and Landscapes Restoration Initiative (AFR100).

Rural smallholder farmers and households suffer the most from degraded land as their activities are largely dependent on stable weather patterns, healthy soils and tree cover, as well as water. Framework conditions such as governance of natural resources and policy coherence often do not favour restoration at scale, and numerous other barriers impede progress. These barriers include weak institutional coordination, inadequate devolution mechanisms to local resource users, and insufficient economic incentives for local and foreign investments in sustainable land management.

These issues have led to increasing awareness regarding the potential for forest landscape



The AFR100 Initiative: An Ecosystem Approach To Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR)

Every year nearly three million hectares of forests and land are lost on the African continent with an estimated three percent of GDP lost annually from soil and nutrient depletion. This results in nearly two-thirds of Africa's land that is degraded with millions of people facing hunger, malnutrition and poverty, who in order to survive have to further deforest and often overexploit the continent's natural resources. These actions not only intensify the effects of climate change, but also severely hinder economic development and threaten the ecological functions vital to African Countries' economies.

restoration (FLR) to generate numerous benefits for people and support progress towards multiple national and sustainable development goals (SDGs), such as food security, poverty reduction, land rehabilitation, regeneration and restoration, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience. Within this context, dozens of national governments have made commitments to restore deforested and degraded lands as part of global and regional restoration initiatives, including the New York Declaration on Forests, the Bonn Challenge, Initiative 20x20, and the AFR100 Initiative. The Bonn Challenge targets the restoration of 150 million hectares by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030, which is supported by the AFR100 Initiative, a country-led effort to place

100 million hectares of deforested and degraded landscapes under restoration across Africa by 2030.

There are numerous opportunities for African countries to scale up FLR by restoring both deforested forest lands and degraded agricultural and pastoral landscapes where the tree cover has been depleted. Africa is unique in that it has the largest restoration opportunity of any continent in the world, with more than 700 million hectares of degraded landscapes that can be restored. Experiences in multiple countries, including Malawi, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Niger, to name a few, have demonstrated that FLR delivers a wide range of benefits and can be achieved on millions of hectares. Successful experiences with proven restoration practices such as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR), etc. improved management of smallholder woodlots, reforestation, evergreen agriculture with intercropped trees, and associated sustainable land and water management (SLWM) practices, such as water harvesting and erosion control have been documented, along with practical steps that can be supported to catalyze their adoption at scale.

A Vivid Example of Restoration Effort Africa: The Great Green Wall Initiative (GGWI)

The Sahel is a region with very sensitive human and environmental dynamics. It is a very fragile ecosystem where the signals of climate change have been most apparent. The region has gone through major drought periods, and rain shortage is identified as an ongoing crisis for the Sahel.

In response to this plight, the African Union launched the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel initiative (GGWI) in 2007. The objective of this African-led initiative is to restore Africa's degraded landscapes, by planting an 8,000km-long line of trees and plants across the entire Sahel, from the Atlantic coast of Senegal to the east coast of Djibouti. The initiative aims to curb desertification and transform millions of lives in one of the world's poorest regions. The Sahelian community is heavily dependent on natural resources for agriculture and/or livestock production as these are their main source of livelihood. However, most of the agriculture is rain fed, which makes production challenging due to the region's low rainfall patterns. The increasing demand

for natural resources is resulting in a continuous pattern of land degradation in the Sahel.

Challenges and Solutions on implementing forest landscapes restoration

The fact that 28 African countries as have joined the initiative and have committed to restore a total of 113m ha of degraded forest lands as well as the progress already made in the first 4 years is extremely promising for AFR100. However, AFR100 does face challenges which need to be addressed in the upcoming years in order to be successful so that all countries can reach their goals in FLR implementation. It is noticeable that technical and financial partners are not equally present in partner countries. While some countries have the support of more than 10 technical and financial partners, such as Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania, other countries have no or only 1-2 technical and financial partner to assist them, such as Benin, Ivory Coast and Mozambique. AFR100 will need to work on ways to improve technical and financial assistance for countries where technical assistance absent or underrepresented.

AFR100 is working to bridge this gap by organising knowledge exchanges such as webinars that we have planned between our partner countries and financial partners in order to enhance access to funding opportunities. Another way AFR100 bridges the financing gap is through, for instance, the annual Land Accelerator, an AFR100-Partner-led endeavour to train entrepreneurs from African countries through business planning and incubation sessions during which participants also have a chance to pitch their initiatives to prospective investors.

In conclusion, we can agree that significant additional work is needed to take stock of the successful cases of FLR, expand communication, advocacy and outreach, and support the implementation of comprehensive strategies and concrete plans to trigger the widespread adoption of forest landscape restoration practices. The AFR100 Initiative will accelerate restoration to enhance food security, increase climate change resilience/adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation, combat drought, desertification and rural poverty. ■

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Decent Rural Jobs Project: Students' Graduation in Benin



"The values, skills and capacity acquired through the African Union Development Agency–NEPAD's sponsored Decent Rural Youth project have laid a solid foundation for us to navigate through the world of entrepreneurship and rural enterprises," commented Ms Moulikatou Adjibola. Ms Adjibola is one of the graduates at the Songhai Regional Centre, under the AUDA-NEPAD project who summed up the sentiments of the rest of the 128 students at the graduation ceremony in Porto-Novo, Benin. The ceremony marked the end of the training of the third cohort of youths in the country.

The project, supported by UN Food and Agriculture organization (FAO) is currently implemented in Benin, Cameroon, Malawi and Niger. It has produced about 800 students thus far, specialising in various agriculture and agribusiness value chains in the four countries.

During the ceremony, the special guest of honour, Mrs Françoise Assogba Komlan, Secretary General of

the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, informed guests that the AUDA-NEPAD project has added value to Benin's efforts youth upliftment. She stressed that the President of the Republic H.E Patrice Talon and her ministry would work with development partners, to ensure that the students are further supported to create viable and sustainable businesses.

Mr Vincent Oparah, AUDA-NEPAD's Project Manager for the Skills and Employment for Youth Programme expressed satisfaction that the overall objectives of the project have been achieved in the four countries.

According to Mr Oparah, the project was designed to give hope to the "missing middle" in the rural areas -both male and female youths. "It is pleasing to witness the results of the project, through which the students are now able to produce different commodities, as well as being able to process them, in minimising post-harvest losses," Oparah exclaimed.



Niger Parliament passes National Biosafety Law

The parliament of Niger approved the country's biosafety law in a plenary session on 17 October, 2019 in Niamey. Among others, this law provides for safety measures in research and development with respect to modern biotechnology, and for transboundary movement of living modified organisms (LMOs) and products thereof. It also includes provisions for risk assessment, risk management and risk communication concerning living modified organisms or other modern biotechnology products.

«This law allows us to honour our commitments to the international community, thereby improving the living conditions of our citizens”, said Mr Almoustapha Garba, Nigerien Minister of Environment.

“At government level, everything will be done to ensure a prompt adoption of the implementing measures and to ensure the strengthening of the capacities of the various services responsible for their application, to the benefit of the people of Niger and humanity as a whole. The enforcement of this law is essential for biodiversity and the protection of the environment,” the Minister said.

The adoption of this law comes after a series of capacity building activities undertaken by national institutions in charge of biosecurity and biosafety, with the support of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD.

Among these activities were an important stakeholder seminar on the biosafety bill organised in June, 2019 and a parliamentarians’ technical seminar on the biosafety bill held in early October, 2019. Both of these meetings were initiated by the Ministry of Environment of Niger and the Centre National des Études Stratégiques et de Sécurité (CNESS) and were fully supported by AUDA-NEPAD through its specialised regulatory capacity building program, the African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE).

On behalf of the Director General of the Songhai Regional Centre, Fr. Godfrey Nzamujo, Mr Charlemagne Sintondji acknowledged the challenges that youth are faced with today. The challenges, according to Mr Sintondji, require radical changes in mind-sets. He thanked AUDA-NEPAD and FAO for involving Songhai Regional Centre in this initiative. He pledged the support of the Centre to continue to monitor the progress of the young entrepreneurs.

Other attendees to the ceremony include government officials, development partners, civil society organizations and members of the media. The event was concluded with an exhibition showcasing products manufactured by the students. ■

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Zambia's Occupational Health and Safety Regional Centre of Excellence

African Union Development Agency-NEPAD is supporting the Government of Zambia to fully operationalise the Centre of Excellence at the Institute for Occupational Health. The Centre of Excellence has adopted a multi-sectoral approach to address occupational diseases and injuries.

The centre is also collaborating with research and training institutions to strengthen its capacity in research and training as well as the private sector. Its vision is to be "a world-class Centre of Excellence in the provision of occupational health and safety services." This is envisaged to be achieved through providing quality and sustainable occupational health, safety, environmental and research services for the benefit of workers and members of the community.

The centre is a result of the collaborative effort of the Ministry of Health through the Occupational Health and Safety Institute; the Ministry of Mines through the Mine Safety Department; the Ministry of Labour through the Occupational Health Services Department, and; the Worker's Compensation Fund Control Board.

The Centre of Excellence is established in order to:

- (i) Prevent and reduce occupational accidents and diseases;
- (ii) Promote and undertake occupational health and safety research;
- (iii) Undertake evidence-based occupational medical surveillance;
- (iv) Provide compensation, rehabilitative and return-to-work services for workers in respect of occupational accidents and diseases;
- (v) Develop and manage an integrated management system to enhance productivity, organization performance and sustainability; and
- (vi) Build national and regional capacity for occupational health and safety.

Since its establishment in 2018, the Centre has been equipped with state of the art equipment for the diagnosis of occupational lung diseases including state-of-the-art digital B reader equipment replaced the old x-ray film readers and digital X-ray machines. The Centre of Excellence is therefore a regional knowledge hub for the reading and interpretation of digital X-ray films for the diagnosis of occupational lung disease. It will also include occupational

hygiene and silica dust laboratory analysis services; a complete package of medical surveillance; and referrals for treatment, rehabilitation, and compensation. The Centre of Excellence is already offering regional and national trainings for doctors, radiologists, occupational hygienists and occupational health and safety inspectors. Areas of focus for the trainings include classification of radiographs for pneumoconiosis, occupational hygiene, and occupational health and safety inspection. These trainings are being offered in collaboration with the South African National Institute for Occupational Health, University of Witwatersrand School of Public Health, Copperbelt University, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the USA, Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene, Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB), University of Pretoria, and the AUDA-NEPAD. ■

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Featured Numbers in this month's issue of Habari

800

The number of students trained thus far, specialising in various agriculture and agribusiness value chains in Benin, Cameroon, Malawi and Niger, under the AUDA-NEPAD Decent Rural Youth project

\$25 billion

The African Development Bank's commitment to double its financial commitments for climate action between 2020 and 2025.

100 million

The number of hectares of land for reforestation and restoration across Africa by 2030.

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