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Opinion

Africa has the potential to make renewable energy the engine of its growth



By Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)

In Rio in 1992, representatives of 172 countries met in Rio to define the basis for sustainable development and adopt a set of 27 principles on future development directions. Almost thirty years later, the state of the planet still causes great concern and despite some progress, the results are not enough. For the African continent, the stakes are twofold. While Africa is the region of the globe that contributes the least to greenhouse gas emissions, it is the first to be impacted by climate change. Indeed, the majority of climate models and IPCC have concluded that any temperature rise above 2 to 3 C will have negative effects on productivity in

most parts of the world. Climate change impacts in Africa are in the food security and risk associated with agricultural production; lack of access to safe water and increased water stress; low adaptive capacity and high vulnerability to climate variability and natural disasters such as droughts and floods; negative health impacts, especially increased risk of malaria and Sea-level rise and its impact on low-lying coastal areas.

Without strong political will on the part of world leaders, the structural transformation needed to achieve the goal of a green economy is impossible. While for countries that have completed their industrialization, this transformation represents heavy expenditures and a profound change in their growth model, for Africa the challenges are different. The infrastructure deficit that many of our economies suffer from is proving to be an asset for directly making greener and more sustainable investments. Green industrialisation is a major opportunity for African countries to 'leapfrog' the fossil-fuel-based growth strategies of developed countries, African cities are facing an exponential increase in urban populations, 4% per year according to the UN. For too long poorly planned, African urbanisation has led to the uncontrolled emergence of shantytowns where nearly 60% of urban Africans live in extreme poverty. Today, faced with this

situation, everyone agrees on the urgent need to make the transition to sustainable cities. For the industrialised countries, the colossal challenges facing them: conversion to clean energy, decongestion of roads, etc. are enormous. In Africa, there is no doubt that much remains to be done to provide city dwellers with efficient services, but by directly procuring low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure directly from the market, African cities can make urbanisation a catalyst for the structural transformation of the continent.

The challenge of access to energy has been recognized at the level of the United Nations and the African Union through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 7 of the SDGs aims at achieving universal access to energy by 2030, while Agenda 2063 Goal 1, 7 and 10 has targets for an increase of 50% in electricity generation, 50% distribution and 70% of Africans having access to electricity by 2023. While an average of 56% of the continent's population with no access to reliable energy supply, 633 million people lack access to electricity and 792 million people relied on traditional biomass as their primary energy source for cooking (IEA, 2016). Additionally, predicted trends in energy poor population are expected to rise unless radical transformation take place. It is also important to

highlight that, the large portion of the population without electricity which are mainly rural, has high rate of poverty, as they are not able to utilize the benefits of modern energy to increase their productive capacity to generate income, and better their standard of living.

The exploitation of natural resources drives the growth of many African countries. Short-term gains from resource extraction are neither certain nor permanent. Moreover, dependence on a limited range of economic activities is detrimental. Algeria, Nigeria, and Angola have recently been hit hard by the oil price collapse caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Powerless in the face of significant losses in their export revenues, governments have no choice but to make cuts in public spending or resort to debt. For this vulnerability to be reduced, the diversification of African economies must be at the heart of various national recovery strategies. This is the main condition for resilience. By investing massively in renewable energy production, Africa to leapfrog investments of renewable energy industry in order to manufacture renewable energy products using its vast mineral reserves and expanding universal energy access to the population to build low carbon and climate-resilient growth.

The green transition induces a sustainable and inclusive exploitation of natural resources. Agriculture, which represents a vital part of the majority of the economies of all African countries, has a major role to play in the transition to sustainable

management of our resources. Faced with the challenges of food security and self-sufficiency, improving the productivity of our agricultural systems is imperative to be able to feed the 1.5 billion people who will live in Africa in 2050. However, this intensification must not lead to a decline in our forests, soil degradation and pressure on our water resources. On the contrary, it must promote the adaptability of production systems to climate change and the optimization of labour and land. Two objectives must be prioritised: modernising family farms, which represent 80% of all farms in sub-Saharan Africa, and absorbing the growing workforce. Today, accelerating innovation in agricultural technologies is helping to empower farmers to optimize yields while mitigating the effects of climate change. In the last three years, the number of farmers subscribing to digital agricultural services has increased by 40-45%. This gives them access to a range of services developed by experts such as weather forecasts and agricultural advice. In 2018, AUDA-NEPAD participated in the publication of the report, "Drones on the horizon: Transforming Africa's Agriculture". We come back to the "Third Eye Project" in Mozambique, where the intelligent use of UAVs allowed to increase the agricultural production of 2800 farmers by 41% while reducing the volume of water by 9%. Agritech Africa is full of innovative project leaders who, as in Mozambique, are eager to transform our agricultural systems. African youth are both better educated and more familiar with new technologies than previous generations. They

therefore have a key role to play in integrating scientific and technological innovations into African agriculture. Nonetheless, in order to encourage the emergence of a new generation of well trained and sustainably integrated farmers, the quality and attractiveness of agricultural training offers must be improved. Only then will they be able to take ownership of the innovative solutions developed by agricultural experts and thus drive the development of a powerful African agriculture.

Because Africa is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, it must anticipate these consequences and take the lead on green transition issues. While this requires significant financial and technological resources, improving human well-being and reducing the environmental risks that result from climate change is the priority. The old growth models have undoubtedly helped to initiate a first stage of African emergence, but we are collectively observing their limitations. In a context where governments are working to develop economic recovery plans, let us seize this opportunity collectively to invest more in value-added activities involving more efficient and sustainable management of natural resources. We are by far the continent best endowed with natural resources. Let us ensure, through sustainable resource management policies and stronger incentives for innovation in key sectors, that we set an example for green growth.

AUDA-NEPAD Activities

In Pictures - November 2020



30 November 2020

H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat on a Two-Day Working Visit to the Republic of South Africa

During the two-day working visit to South Africa (between 30 November and 1 December), the Chairperson briefed H.E. President Cyril Ramaphosa, current Chair of the African Union on preparations ahead of the extraordinary Summits on The Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and Silencing the Guns, held virtually on December 5-6, 2020. The two leaders also discussed issues pertaining to the next AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government to be held in 2021.

During the visit, the Chairperson also visited the AUDA-NEPAD headquarters for consultations with the AUDA-NEPAD Chief Executive Officer Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki.

CALESTOUS JUMA EXECUTIVE DIALOGUE WEBINAR SERIES:

BLOCKCHAINS 101

Understanding the basics of blockchains and cryptocurrencies for Africa's financial digitalization

Thursday, 26th November | 1-3pm (GMT) | 3-5pm (SAT)

Calestous Juma Executive Dialogue Webinar Series: Blockchains 101: Understanding the basics of blockchains and cryptocurrencies for Africa's financial digitalization

The third webinar in the Calestous Juma Executive Dialogues series was held on the 26th of November 2020 on the theme: Blockchains 101: Understanding the basics of blockchains and cryptocurrencies for Africa's financial digitalization. Continental experts on blockchains and cryptocurrencies discussed:

- Bitcoins and cryptocurrencies, expounding on whether this is the currency of the future
- How the deployment of blockchains will help solve some pertinent continental challenges.



16th CAADP PP: Malabo Commitments Five Years On

Hon. Angela Thoko Didiza, Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development in South Africa, officially opened the 16th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Partnership Platform (CAADP PP) on 24 November.

The platform was convened under the theme “Malabo Commitments Five Years on: Translating Lessons Learnt into Accelerated Action towards 2025,” setting in motion the need to respond to the challenge that Africa cannot afford to stagnation of progress in agriculture.

Emphasising the need for action towards sustained progress in Africa’s agriculture and food security, Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, gave the following message:

- Political determination in transforming agriculture needs to be at the highest level.
- All stakeholders and development partners need to stick to the Malabo Declaration, and there should not be the implementation of various policies and tools that are often in conflict with one another.
- Our work in agricultural led development needs to be through ‘intelligent and aligned’ partnerships.
- The CAADP strategy needs a more direct positioning of the food system as the anchor for inclusive growth and transformation.
- Data availability and use for planning and implementation is still a weak area.
- CAADP projects and programmes are a sound basis for building data gathering and utilisation capabilities, linking these with national processes of handling planning and development data.



Africa Industrialisation Week

Industrialisation, with strong multisectoral linkages to domestic economies, will help African countries to achieve higher economic growth rates, economic diversification and transformation, and reduce their exposure to external shocks. This will substantially contribute to poverty eradication through employment and wealth creation. Given such importance, 20th November was set aside annually as Africa Industrialisation Day and since 2018, the **Africa Industrialisation Day** was successfully commemorated with week-long events, to highlight the significance of industrialisation to Africa's structural transformation and as an entry point for meeting the objectives of Agenda 2063, and SDGs, 2030.

This year's commemoration of **Africa Industrialisation Week** held from 16-20 November, was highly significant for two main reasons:

1. African economies have numerous challenges to address, many of which are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated crises and which has exposed our industries to unexpected shocks;
2. The operationalisation of the AfCFTA from January 2021 has ignited hopes for a re-configuration of Africa's development narrative. It presents huge opportunities for an acceleration in economic expansion as the domestic, regional and continental enterprises deploy under-utilised industrial capacity in the wake of new and dynamic pathways ushered in by free trade agreement.

AUDA-NEPAD contributed extensively to the dialogue with a number of partner-led sessions. These included:

- The Nexus between Africa's Industrialisation and the AfCFTA,
- RECs Meeting on Leveraging Regional Industrialisation strategies and Plans towards continental strategic policy framework,
- SME development in Africa's industrial sector -Opportunities and Challenges,
- The Contribution of Sustainable Blue Economy Development for Africa's Industrialisation: Maximising the potential for an inclusive and resilient future, and
- Partnerships Coordination towards sustainable and equitable Industrialisation.



Funding Africa's Young Restoration Entrepreneurs

The AUDA-NEPAD/AFR100 Secretariat, World Resources Institute (WRI) Africa and UN Environment Programme hosted a webinar on **Funding Africa's Young Restoration Entrepreneurs: Tools and Platforms**. The overarching objective of the webinar is to outline new financing opportunities for forest and landscape restoration and connect entrepreneurial youth working in restoration with the tools and platforms that they need to succeed.

Topics included:

- Funding entrepreneurs: The Land Accelerator, Rural Prosperity Bond and TerraMatch
- Capital flows and access to finance for small enterprises
- Leveraging technology to connect entrepreneurs to the value chain
- Participation and access to markets within the forestry value chain
- Youth access to land.

School Health and Nutrition

4 November 2020

AUDA-NEPAD organised a workshop on the 4th of November 2020 under the theme: **School Health and Nutrition: Vital Services to Reopen Schools Safely**. Education and nutrition are some of AUDA-NEPAD's focus areas under the COVID-19 emergency response and so far, a lot has been done to combat malnutrition, stunting, food insecurity and unequal access to education leading up to the adoption of the agency's Nutrition and Food Systems Strategic Programme (2019-2025). Under this programme, it seeks to support countries to establish harmonised standards, regulations and legislations and to adopt food safety and quality management frameworks that effectively combat food safety hazards plaguing the continent.



'Africa's heritage is tied to its' youth'

By Millicent Kgeledi

Heritage Day came and passed. I was still uncertain on what to put on paper about this day and its commemoration. I mean what should 'heritage' mean to me as an African, as a woman but more specifically as an employee and representative of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, an organization tasked with providing advisory support to African Union Member States in pursuit of their national development priorities.

The Cambridge Dictionary refers to 'heritage' as 'features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, that were created in the past and still have historical importance. With this definition in my mind, I therefore conclude that heritage means the celebration and deep understanding of self, identity, belonging and acceptance and pride in one's history.

In that moment of thought, visions of the Timbuktu Manuscripts in Mali, Egypt's rich history and its contribution to the first written words and Wangari Maathai's Green Belt Movement all went through my mind. My mind raced to the Nile River as a source of economic livelihood of many

families in all the countries that it runs through.

Who can forget the Serengeti with its majestic wildlife? And Africa's minerals which have been its source of pride but equally, its source of woes? My mind 'smiled' as it thought of the pastoralists Touareg of Niger as they move across the land. The sound of the drum echoes in my ears.

I thought about a lot and smiled in pride, but suddenly the smile faded as I thought about Africa's future-its youth. I wondered where they fit in this beautiful puzzle of pride and Africa's heritage.

Then my panic stopped as I started thinking about hope and realisation of an empowered youth through various initiatives that Africa's policy makers aim to achieve through the implementation of various programmes that will empower Africa's Women and Youth. I smiled because of one such programme, the Skills Initiative for Africa programme implemented by the AUDA-NEPAD.

The programme aims to strengthen occupational prospects of young people in Africa. Eight countries

have been selected as pilot countries – Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Togo and Tunisia. SIFA finances skills development projects in several African countries. Projects should contribute to employment-oriented skills development for young people.

The reality is that no matter how much pride we can have in the minerals of the continent, the beautiful flora and fauna and the beautiful diversity found only in this continent, if there is no hope in the minds of the youth of Africa, if all they know is joblessness, lack of skills, poverty and conflict - there won't be much to be proud of.

Some day SIFA will perhaps set the tone for a proud heritage, Africa's positive growth and a youth that will stay on the Continent.

Heritage Day was in September, but perhaps this is a good time to say that the realisation of Africa's Agenda 2063 vision of an empowered youth is not a far-off vision.

Partners for action



The Co-Guarantee Platform and its infrastructure window, the African Infrastructure Guarantee Mechanism (AIGM) had its inaugural innovation exchange with partners on scaling up risk mitigation in Africa.

The inaugural innovation exchange is a series of high-level dialogues that are being organized by the Co-Guarantee Platform with potential investors dedicated to understanding finance challenges as well as devising, testing and scaling up collective risk-sharing solutions.

The event was dedicated to engaging African and international leaders in African development and finance fields in providing their candid views on the impact of COVID-19 on access to finance, and how to improve access to domestic and international finance for African transactions using risk mitigation solutions. Representatives of investment funds, banks, project developers, pension funds and rating agencies provided their input on both challenges and possible risk mitigation solutions.

Over 100 investors participated in the event. The platform's strategic responses represent a new milestone for the African continent and the unlocking of business opportunities in operationalizing Public Private Partnerships, in addition to improving the investment status of Africa's infrastructure and other investment vehicles. This is another positive step towards 'the Africa We Want.'

About the Co-Guarantee Platform:

The Co-Guarantee Platform (CGP) was launched in 2018 as an African-focused means of scaling up the risk mitigation required to mobilize greater finance and investment across the African continent for infrastructure, trade and key economic sectors (for example agriculture, entrepreneurship etc.)

Participants include: The African Development Bank (AfDB) (as promoter and interim secretariat), African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI), GuarantCo, part of the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), and the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC), member of the Islamic Development Bank Group.

Representing the African Union, AUDA-NEPAD is the promotor of the African Infrastructure Guarantee Mechanism as the CGP's infrastructure window. AUDA-NEPAD is providing support aligned with its AU mandate to build coherent approaches to investment mobilization for Africa's infrastructure.

Partners for action

By Mr Clifford Spencer, AUDA-NEPAD Goodwill Ambassador

In 1962 as a very impressionable young boy of just 9 years old I had the life changing experience and honour of meeting with the extraordinary man who became the first President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta. He spent much time describing this great continent and what he believed its people could and would achieve when unified and self-determined.

After a successful farming career and developing a global farming business including stepping into the food industry with my wife and family I received the great honour of an invitation from NEPAD and later AUDA-NEPAD to be a Goodwill Ambassador and support and highlight its various policies and programmes. A couple of years ago I spent a special day with Professor Calestous Juma and discussed Agenda 2063 and he emphasised the importance of supporting this as Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming the continent into the global powerhouse of the future that had been first highlighted to me by Jomo Kenyatta some 56 years earlier. Professor Juma also explained to me the need for accompanying substantial investment to be overseen by Africans for targeted African internal development.

Of a similar vintage to me is my colleague Clive Sinclair-Poulton who was born in Africa in then Nyasaland now Malawi. His background is financial, as both a stockbroker and investment banker who has worked in all parts of Africa both Francophone and Anglophone countries and most recently he set up the Augment division of the GBTF.

We are both fascinated by what we believe is another potential "winds of change" moment but in development finance for Africa that could and should now be taking place and which he explains in his own words to me below:



"The July 2020 UNCTAD report on investments gave a chillier position on FDI's into Africa than a January walk in the Atlas mountains or a July swim off Namibia. This report illustrated that Foreign Direct Investments in Africa in 2019 at US\$45 billion had fallen again, this time by 10%. However the truly discouraging news was that this reduced amount was equivalent to less than 3% of the total world FDI.

In contrast Latin and South America's figures have increased by 10% to US\$153 billion, and now they represent the equivalent of just over 10% of the global Direct Investments.

This bad news further continued by UNCTAD forecasting, that due to Covid and weak oil prices the 2020 figures would be even worse with a further 25-40% decline in African FDI. However this masks a radically new approach to investing which could revolutionise development finance in Africa and in which AUDA-NEPAD could be a major participant.

This has been the increasing trend to invest in projects which merit highly for their Sustainable Development

(SD) also known as ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) levels. There is also an accompanying trend to reduce investments in non-ESG compliant projects as recently highlighted by the UN secretary-General requesting that development banks stop funding fossil-fuel projects.

It is the sheer size and rapid growth of such ESG funding that should attract Africa.”

He further elaborated that “Assets under management in funds that abide by ESG principles have now exceeded US\$1 trillion with \$71.1 billion being raised in the second quarter of 2020. The lead for such investing comes from Europe where assets are forecast to reach around US\$9 trillion by 2025. This reflects investors’ new but growing concerns for climate change, governance and social inequality which pushes these issues into the mainstream.”

The sheer volume of ESG funding looking for quality investments should be of interest to Africa for “markets may not always be right but they are never wrong”. This change of emphasis to sustainability should resonate well in a continent that is a by-word for such practises.

We also believe that there is now the opportunity to create a pan-African investment vehicle which would be in addition to the established single sovereign state debt model. While there will be still a role for this such a singular approach they can be the victim of the subjective prejudices and whims of investors. A single story is prey to fashion, surely it would be better to have a 55 multi-storied anthology which could be an epic?

How then to get a 2020 vision on how best to structure such a process?

A well respected objective pan African organisation is needed to organise such investments-this is obviously a potential role that AUDA-NEPAD could be designed to fill. It could for instance arrange via a subsidiary, ESG financing be it debt or equity which would then invest in African projects that would be ESG compliant. It could use the AU network to source, manage and review such projects

While there are a number of ESG benchmarks such as

those set out by the UN/World Bank (see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>) and as already known by AUDA-NEPAD it could also be proposed that the AU set out its own, specifically African-centric one.

It would be essential that full transparency is followed to ensure that the strict requirements set by the ESG investors are followed. For this reason an independent third-party reporting on how compliant the ESG Fund is with the AU rules. Doing all of this creates the opportunity to leap-frog traditional development finance, which will still have a role to play, and so create a new approach. This would be a unique opportunity to redefine how projects are funded and how development is both financed and managed.

It would also democratise the process so ESG can be funding “of the people, by the people, for the people”. It could reward those countries and companies that follow international best practises.

Tidjane Thiam, the renowned business man and the African Union’s special envoy on Covid-19 recently wrote:

“High-quality businesses that adhere to sound ESG practices will outperform those that do not. Countries with high-quality leaderships, that engage with ESG-aligned companies will do better than countries that do not. ESG is here to stay and that is good news for all of us.”

This generational shift in investing attitudes is neatly in synch with the current entrepreneurial exuberance of Africa, it just needs a clearing house to manage the fair needs of both the investee and investor. It could be a time where, if positioned properly the underinvestment in Africa since my audience with Jomo Kenyatta, could be addressed and rectified.

Action with impetus is required to get these kind of procedures in place so as to follow the investors momentum and access the “wall of money” and whilst we don’t forget that the market is never “wrong” it does rebuff late arrivals.

If these proposals are followed and prove successful then many of the “Aspirations” set out in Agenda 2063 would be achieved.

AUDA-NEPAD in the press

November 2020

Inclusive governance and regional focus will help drive Africa's industrialization



Dr. Mayaki: UN-AU relations are not only critical but a necessity today in Africa. Thankfully, the UN has had a close interaction with the AU, and in instances, jointly implemented missions on the continent. As an example, I was part of a group selected by Madam Zuma [Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, former chair of the AU Commission] to join a delegation of the former secretary-general Ban Ki-moon to the Sahel region. This collaboration delved into how to tackle the problems of the Sahel. Secretary-General António Guterres has gone a step further, with the UN signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the AU on operationalizing joint projects.

At AUDA-NEPAD we actively interact with the UN system, particularly with the office of the Special Adviser on Africa, which is managed by Cristina Duarte, a former finance minister of Cabo Verde.

How do you envisage the UN work in Africa in the future?

As you know, multilateralism is a product of the motivation of Member States to cooperate better and to delegate some form of capacity to the UN system to solve problems such as hunger, conflict, abuses of women's rights, etc. However, geopolitically, multilateralism is being criticized — multilateralism is not as strong as it used to be, which has evidently constrained the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN. A significant consequence is the financial cost of UN operations. If we look at the constraints and the challenges that the

Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki is the CEO of the African Union Development Agency- New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD). He spoke to Africa Renewal's Kingsley Ighobor on the African Union-United Nations partnership, COVID-19 response, Africa's development and other issues. These are excerpts from the interview.

Africa Renewal: What is your assessment of the UN and AU relations?

UN system faces, we need to be mindful that we are using available resources the best way possible. The fact that the World Food Programme was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize illustrates this.

Globally, we are observing resilience of the international system, which will allow a new type of multilateralism to emerge. Many countries strongly believe in strengthening multilateralism. The AU, countries in Latin America, in Asia—China and Japan—are strong supporters of multilateralism. Europe is as well. In this context, I foresee a UN that will be renewed in its thinking and can operate even when its financial means are constrained.

How relevant is Africa within the multilateralism space?

Africa is extremely relevant. International relations experts will tell you that Africa plays a critical role with its 54 Member States that are represented in the UN—in terms of numbers, but also in terms of thinking. We should never forget that during the negotiations for the SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals], there was strong input from Africa, especially from the AU. The African group used Agenda 2063 to flag Africa's interests to ensure the SDGs reflect the objectives and the rationale of Agenda 2063.

Additionally, there has been growing representation of African experts that head several international agencies. You see Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at WHO [World Health Organization]; hopefully, the World Trade Organization (WTO) will be managed by Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Nigeria's former finance minister; Gilbert Fossoun Hounbo, a former prime minister of Togo, is the President of IFAD [International Fund for Agricultural Development]. The more Africans are present in these positions, the more the continent's voice is being heard within the international system.

How significant would it be for an African woman to head the WTO, in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)?

There are two areas of significance should an African woman lead the WTO, in the AfCFTA context. The first is viewed through the gender lens, where we

need to level the playfield and address women's under-representation in leadership roles in emerging institutions.

Additionally, it is a recognition of African expertise to drive the continental free trade agenda, through the recognition of an African woman with very high credentials. She [Okonjo Iweala] was number two at the World Bank, the first woman finance minister of Nigeria and she is currently playing a critical role at Gavi [the Vaccine Alliance], working on vaccines. The establishment of the AfCFTA means that Africans are serious about trade and would need all the expertise on the ground for its effective implementation.

You established the AUDA-NEPAD COVID-19 Response Plan of Action. How is that going?

Arguably, the COVID-19 pandemic is a new turf for institutions globally. Our first strategy was to react immediately, in terms of shaping a response by adapting our workplans and our activities to the pandemic. So, everything we are currently doing in health, agriculture, infrastructure, etc. is mainstreamed along with the COVID-19 response. As we are considerably still not out of the woods, the institution hasn't focused on a "post-COVID-19 response" but is rather supporting mitigation and control efforts.

Control efforts required that our work, to an extent, aligns with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). We did not invent a response plan in a vacuum; rather, we interacted with the Africa CDC, flagged our mandate and our capacity to implement different programmes on health, agriculture, etc., and then inserted our activities into the Africa CDC roadmap. This ensures that our response plan is fully coherent with the response plan of the AU based on the Africa CDC strategy.

Our efforts so far have yielded positively. Against initial expert projections, Africa has managed the pandemic quite well, if you consider the current numbers globally in terms of deaths. A city like New York has roughly the equivalent number of deaths as in Africa with a population of about 1.3 billion.

In terms of policy response, we have put together the critical elements to help stop the spread of the virus. But we need to continue; we should not relax.

How serious have the socioeconomic effects of the pandemic been for Africa?

In response to the pandemic, the suppression and mitigation measures that governments had to adopt have had varied impacts on health services, formal and informal economies, and social setups. The consequences of these impacts have been varied based on levels of extremity of the measures taken by African governments, levels of disease exposure as well as the strengths of the economies pre-pandemic.

Evidently, we cannot forego a socioeconomic strategy for a health strategy, in addressing the pandemic. The intelligent approach is a mix of both strategies. You must have the tools to fight the virus and the tools to fight its socioeconomic consequences. How did African countries mix both strategies? Many countries established safety nets.

To address unemployment as a consequence of the measures to stop the spread of a virus, micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are being explored as a viable economic recovery tool, which currently employs more than 80 per cent of Africans.

At AUDA-NEPAD, we designed a program we call 100,000 SMEs to further support this sector. We certainly need millions of MSMEs, but by starting with 100,000, we wanted to test our capacity to support them, in partnership with Ecobank and other African banks.

Our intervention is to help these MSMEs cope through the application of digital tools to better understand the situation and adopt managerial behaviour that facilitates access to finance and markets. This programme can then be replicated by governments at national levels.

You have been at the helm at AUDA-NEPAD for over a decade. How do you assess the progress Africa has made in terms of development?

During my tenure at AUDA-NEPAD, Africa admirably doubled the size of its economy — in the last 15 years. At the policy front, what comforts me is that many decisions were taken in the last years, especially since 2016, at the AU level, to make the AU Commission more efficient, towards policy development and implementation continentally.

We have also adopted critical frameworks, one of which is the AfCFTA, to support continental trade. Regrettably, if we had implemented more continental frameworks, let's say 10 years ago, we would have limited the social and economic consequences of the pandemic because the impact of the disruption of global value chains would have been less severe.

At AUDA-NEPAD, we have made great strides. AUDA-NEPAD is the only development agency at the continental level in the world. I am of the firm belief that in the next 10 to 15 years, AUDA-NEPAD will have a scope of activity quite like that of the African Development Bank, and it will be a fully owned African agency.

What are some of the challenges during this period? For example, many countries in Africa are still in conflict.

You are correct. I would, however, like to mention that less than 7 percent of Africans live in regions where there are conflicts, meaning that more than 90 percent live in regions where there is peace, although that does not reduce the seriousness with which we take conflicts. You can add the challenge of food insecurity. We have the locust invasion in East Africa. There are consequences of climate change. We have flooding, which impacts land. Deforestation is also a challenge for the continent.

What reforms does Africa need going forward?

Much-needed reforms on the continent must be guided by two main streams. The first stream is governance that is more open to local communities, to civil society and to the private sector. And by the private sector, I do not mean big multinationals. I am referring to MSMEs. A governance system that is open to these actors will ensure that Africans' interest is defended.

The second type of reform is to have leaders who think regionally because national solutions are not optimal solutions. We need leaders who strengthen the creation of regional value chains, leaders receptive to the free movement of people and goods across borders, and leaders who are conscious of industrialization being the catalyst for development.

Most African leaders today will leave power within the next 10 years. We need to transition to leadership that can adapt to the needs and the constraints of the continent.

The world is entering critical periods, beyond this pandemic. We will see the exacerbation of competition for resources. Let me give you one example: Africa is the region with the highest proportion of arable land in the world. In the next 30 years, according to FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations], we might face a global food crisis. Africa has the capacity to feed itself and the rest of the world, but we do not want to see Africa being exploited as it was during colonialism, because of terms that are not favourable to Africans. Therefore, we will need strong leadership.

How could Africa retain its intellectual capital?

Kwame Nkrumah used to say he was not worried about Ghanaians going to the UK, to the US, to Europe because they will bring back scientific knowledge and entrepreneurial capacity. I'm not worried about brain drain. Why? Because if I look at my own country, Niger, and others like Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana, Africans who have acquired skills outside are coming back more and more. And they are helping shape institutions when they return. They bring another voice, another vision, and another energy. So, we may have one million Africans going out but about 700,000 will come back, which is a huge added value.

To retain their expertise on their return, we need enabling environments where the skills learned can be better implemented. We need supporting policies

and adaptive regulatory environments, as well as supporting infrastructure, that encourage more of these experts to utilize their skills on the continent.


But in the health sector, for example, African medical practitioners go abroad, leaving hospitals lacking adequate personnel.

I agree with that. Today, the emergency wards in Belgian hospitals are managed mostly by Cameroonians. And you have a lot of nurses from Botswana and Malawi in UK hospitals. But we should draw a tactical rather than a strategic lesson from that. The tactical lesson is, we should pay them more. Malawian doctors who go to the UK are paid maybe 10 times more than what they were earning in Malawi. The best way to retain human capital is to create the conditions that allow trained professionals to stay and as previously alluded, these would require enabling environments. Therefore, it's a tactical response. But strategically, I'm not worried. Professor Calestous Juma, for example, left Kenya and went to teach at Harvard but what he brought back to the continent was enormous.

What message of hope would you give Africans during this trying period?

To shape our own destiny, we should stop applying broad measures and approaches that are defined by others without referencing the African context. The UN can be a partner, the World Bank can be a partner, the IMF can be a partner, but we should have our own strategies and implement them. Today, in terms of strong leadership, we have a critical mass that can shape Africa's destiny based on Africa's interests. Nobody will develop Africa like Africans. We are the ones to design our strategies and shape our destiny.

AFRICA RENEWAL - November 2020

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AUDA-NEPAD in the press

November 2020

Africa: Lessons learned so far from the COVID-19 pandemic



It took only six months to shatter both our habits and our assumptions. Those who thought that Africa would lag behind as well as those who saw us as invincible were wrong. Let's take a look at the last few months, at what we've learnt and what we still have to learn.

Many wonder whether the continent has thwarted all predictions regarding the spread of the virus. Even the experts, imagining the worst, got it wrong: the virus spread at a slower rate in Africa than it did in Europe or across the Americas.

According to the AfDB, real GDP in Africa is projected to contract by 1.7% in 2020, dropping by 5.6 percentage points from the January 2020 pre-COVID-19 projection. This contraction in the economy could result in losses of up to \$145.5bn.

We will therefore need to be resilient to what we cannot change and efficient in our economic development strategies by building on our strengths and addressing our weaknesses.

Our ability to stand together

As early as February 2020 and the reporting of the first COVID-19 cases, AU member states met to devise a continent-wide strategy, including financial support and stimulus measures. Very quickly, international private and public stakeholders, led by The African Union, set out to plan a successful way out of the crisis by taking strong decisions, including debt relief and innovations in the mobilisation of private sector financing.

The AUDA-NEPAD (the African Union Development Agency)

joined the efforts led by Africa CDC in the implementation of the strategic paths which were taken. They set up a working group, Africa Task Force for Coronavirus (AFTCOR), comprising technical teams, the WHO and Africa CDC.

A health crisis response plan was drawn up to tackle the problems at source on key issues such as health service delivery, human health resources, research and development, local innovation and manufacturing, and food and nutrition security, etc. Countries subsequently rapidly implemented public health and social measures (PHSM) to contain the COVID-19 epidemic. These measures are likely to have slowed the spread of the virus, and the number of cases in Africa remained lower than initially forecast.

Our need to fast-track regional integration

The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has to be accelerated to prevent shortages by rationalising local production. Several studies show that the AfCFTA could boost regional income by 7%, i.e. an additional \$450bn, and lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty by 2035.

Removing tariffs and border controls would facilitate the transit of goods and people. The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the need to expand the road network,

which proved vital for the delivery of food in the early months of the crisis, as sea and air links had been completely closed.

The Harmonisation of Standards for Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices in Africa initiative is an example of the economic and supply security gains of the AfCFTA. Signed jointly by Afreximbank, the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) and the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO), the initiative aims to increase intra-African trade in pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and equipment.

The standards for face masks and hydro-alcoholic gels were widely used by African SMEs to develop locally manufactured personal protective equipment.

Our need to end inequalities in access to education

According to UNESCO, over 250 million students across the continent are still unable to go to school, even though governments are gradually reopening schools and lifting the COVID-19 containment measures. There is a risk for vulnerable populations in both rural and urban areas, especially girls, of further widening inequalities in access to education. Decades of efforts to universalise schooling are in danger of being compromised if we do not address the obstacles preventing everyone from going back to school.

Several countries introduced remote learning, including through radio, television and online programmes, when schools closed down. However, these solutions are not accessible to all students. Today, across the continent as a whole, almost 90% of students still do not have computers and 82% have no Internet access. This situation highlights the shortcomings and inequalities of education systems, hence the importance of deploying technologies and innovations, as well as curricula, adapted to the rapidly changing workplace and learning challenges.

To support these programmes, the AfDB and the AU are releasing an African Education Fund of nearly \$300m. It aims to stimulate investment in Africa's human capital, mainly in technical and vocational education and training. We demonstrated solidarity, wisdom and discipline in the application of health regulations at the height of the crisis, and we must maintain the momentum to get the continent back on track. The next six months will be decisive, and it is up to us to make the most of them to avoid exposing the weakest and wiping out decades of progress in lifting entire regions out of underdevelopment.

**THE AFRICA REPORT -
November 2020**
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AUDA-NEPAD in the press

November 2020

More than 70 Regional Infrastructure Projects lined up for Second Phase of Program for Infrastructure Development Program (PIDA)

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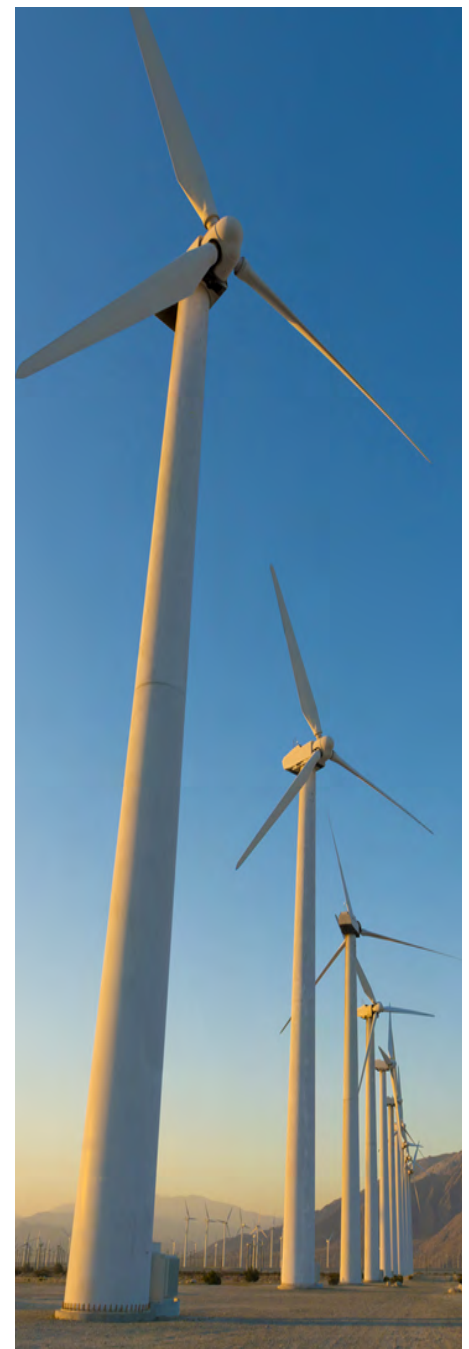
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CNBC AFRICA - November 2020

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AUDA-NEPAD in the press

November 2020

The Southern Africa Tuberculosis and Health Systems Support Research and Publication Interventions

The Southern Africa Tuberculosis and Health Systems Support (SATBHSS) project is a regional project launched in 2016 with the aim of strengthening the health sector's response to Tuberculosis and occupational lung diseases. It is implemented in four Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States: Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. The African Union Development Agency – NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) and East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) collaborate to provide technical support in project implementation in the participating countries.

The project has placed emphasis on rolling out a standardised package of occupational health services and mining safety standards across the four countries. Project countries have in this regard spearheaded studies in different areas of occupational health and safety, with the view to create and share regional knowledge and support evidence-based policies and interventions. Publication of study results in peer-reviewed journals is an important step for communicating findings while providing an opportunity for the findings to be evaluated by the research community. Furthermore, development and dissemination of policy briefs communicates research findings to a diverse group of stakeholders for better translation of research into improvement of OHS (occupational health and safety) policies and services.

This has been identified as a major gap in the region and in the project countries. It is hence fundamental that focus is given on improving research and publication writing skills for increased knowledge exchange and utilization to address OHS challenges. This will increase project scalability and influence OHS and TB policy landscape not only in Southern Africa but in the continent and worldwide.

A series of training sessions are therefore being organized to equip OHS practitioners from project countries with knowledge on research and publishing results. The first session will be convened from 14 to 18 November 2020. The training sessions will use a practical approach and it is expected that countries will use their existing research topics to develop them further based on the knowledge obtained during the training.

MAIL & GUARDIAN - November 2020

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AFRICAN YOUTH ART CALENDAR CONTEST

WINNING PRIZES: VARIOUS ELECTRONIC GADGETS

The top 12 submissions (6 photography and 6 art illustration) will be used as the images of the AUDA-NEPAD 2021 Calendar.

- There shall be TWO categories of contestants – Photography and Art illustration

- Open to all African youth aged 13 to 35

Submit your entry to ArtCalendarContest@nepad.org
Visit www.nepad.org for full contest information, rules and terms and conditions

ENTRY DEADLINE: 15 DECEMBER 2020

Africa has a story to tell

Protecting wildlife in Africa: The Maasai People



Values of respect, sustainability and protection of the environment, including wildlife have always existed amongst Africans.

The Maasai people of Kenya and Tanzania, for instance, have been protecting and living in relative harmony with wildlife for hundreds of years.

The Maasai have strict policies against killing wild animals. Indeed, each clan is associated with a specific wild species which they often keep close to them.

HABARI

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