



HABARI

January 2021 Newsletter

NEPAD@20 Symposium

Building the Africa We Want: NEPAD Turns 20



“An impressive accomplishment of NEPAD has been the strengthening of partnerships with the rest of the world. NEPAD has engaged the G20, G8, OECD, FOCAC, TICAD and the UN system on new development cooperation and aid architecture for Africa. Over 20 years, NEPAD has promoted programmes in areas such as agriculture, health, education and training, the environment, information and communication technology and infrastructure development,” H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the African Union stated at the NEPAD symposium.

On January 28, the African Union

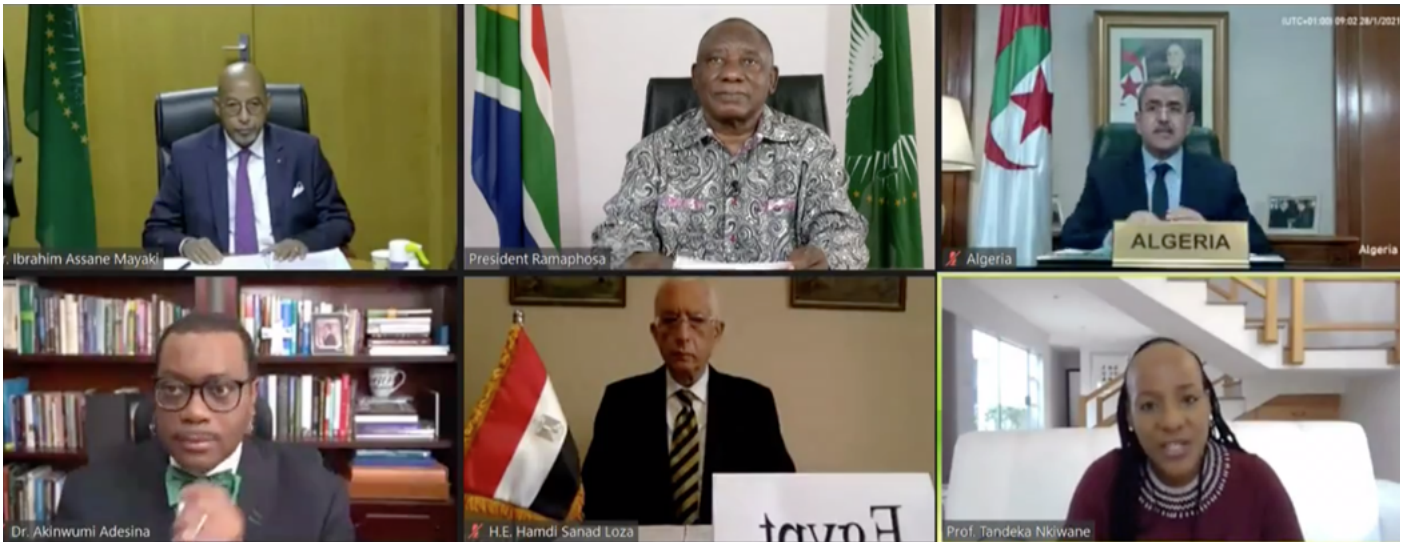
Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) organised a virtual event to mark 20 years of NEPAD’s journey as a leading pan-African development actor.

H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda and Chairperson of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee lauded NEPAD by stating that, *“NEPAD has remained true to its vision. Therefore, it is no accident that NEPAD became the African Union Development Agency in 2018. NEPAD’s track record makes it the ideal institution to help lead the implementation of Agenda 2063 on behalf of the African Union. I thank the partners*

who have helped NEPAD over the past two decades, both in Africa and beyond,” President Kagame said.

Acknowledging the leadership of Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, the CEO of AUDA-NEPAD, President Kagame said that *“Dr Mayaki has led NEPAD with integrity and commitment for more than a decade.”*

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat reiterated in his message that, *“We are celebrating NEPAD today, an instrument that allows us to face our challenges through Agenda 2063 in regional and continental development*



In case you missed it, [watch the symposium here](#)

projects. Its transformation into AUDA-NEPAD is a reflection of its maturity, in responding to development needs on the Continent.”

The NEPAD journey so far has been memorable with institutional strides and programmatic landmarks reflecting the transformational history and performance of the NEPAD entity. The shared commitment and political will of the entire African Union membership for the realisation of the “Africa We Want” in Agenda 2063 as the development vision and long-term plan, validate the birth and rebirth of the NEPAD entity as an agent of renewal and transformation.

Expounding on the birth of NEPAD, Former President of Nigeria H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, said that, “Any river that forgets its source, won’t triumph. Let’s not forget the history of NEPAD as we head towards the Africa we want. By the year 2001, we had a programme we could put forward and launched it. In 2002 we met the G6 and for the first time, Africa had its political, social and

economic programme, one that was all-encompassing and was accepted. What did we do next? To peer review the programme, the idea of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was born. NEPAD and APRM are now the key drivers of Agenda 2063.”

Two decades since the birth of NEPAD, the symposium was a good platform to reflect on the successes, achievements and challenges in its implementation. It also provided an opportunity to examine the relevance and future of the first continental development agency and the capacities it needs to fast track development across the continent.

Dr Mayaki pointed out that “*The political capital and uniqueness evident in the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee is the greatest asset of AUDA-NEPAD.*”

The CEO of AUDA-NEPAD reflected on the challenges of the organisation. “*Our challenges at the moment will be resource mobilisation. Our resource mobilisation strategy will count*

strongly on our African partners. We also need to extend our capacity in terms of human resources at the agency. The third challenge is increasing interaction with the Regional Economic Communities that we need to keep together,” Dr Mayaki said.

The event closed with a musical performance by Yvonne Chaka Chaka, AUDA-NEPAD Goodwill Ambassador for TB & Nutrition, who remarked that “*One of the greatest achievements of NEPAD is that it has put Africa on the global agenda and has also galvanised international support for the region, towards building the Africa We Want.*”

Key messages from the high-level symposium

Over 20 years NEPAD has implemented several programmes in health, education, infrastructure, agriculture, ICTs and transboundary water and many others. If ever there was a time the aspiration of NEPAD are needed, now is the time.



- H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, Chairperson of the African Union

NEPAD has remained true to its vision. Therefore, it is no accident that NEPAD become the African Union Development Agency in 2018. NEPAD's track record makes it the ideal institution to help lead implementation of Agenda 2063 on behalf of the African Union



- H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, Chairperson of the NEPAD HSGOC

The creation of NEPAD in 2001 was seen as new hope towards attaining development in Africa. One of the greatest achievements of NEPAD is that it has put Africa on the global agenda and has also galvanized international support for the region towards building the Africa We Want.



- Yvonne Chaka Chaka, AUDA-NEPAD Goodwill Ambassador for TB and Nutrition. The Princess of Africa.

Following the struggles against colonialism and racist oppression, there was also the struggle against poverty and economic oppression, in order to have total liberation of the Continent - that's how NEPAD was born.



- H.E. Thabo Mbeki, Former President of the Republic of South Africa

Any river that forgets its source, won't triumph. Let's not forget the history of NEPAD as we head towards The Africa We Want.



By the year 2001 we had a programme we could put forward and we launched it. In 2002 we met the G6 and for the first time Africa had its own political, social and economic programme, one that was all encompassing and it was accepted. What did we do next? In order to peer review ourselves, the idea of the African Peer Review Mechanism was born. NEPAD & APRM are now the key drivers of Agenda 2063

- H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The impact of NEPAD can be observed through:
Political impact - the value ownership was enhanced from the start through partnership and leadership. Partnership at national, regional and global level for Africa to speak with one voice.
Economic impact - economic values is observed through regional integration from continental strategic frameworks that are translated regionally and nationally. E.g. in the frameworks of CAADP for agriculture development, and others in environment, technology et cetera. All there were reflected in the Yellow Book for the founding of NEPAD.



- Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of the African Union Development Agency - NEPAD

COVID-19 has brought about disruptions, but Africa needs to leverage on these disruptions. For instance, through pharmaceutical manufacturing and through the work of Afriam Medicines Agency. The disruptions can also be an opportunity to reset our mindsets - moving away from managing poverty to good governance, e.g. tackling illicit financial flows.



- Mrs Cristina Duarte, United Nations Special Advisor on Africa and Under-Secretary-General of OSAA.

Placing the economic development of women and young people at the centre of NEPAD is in line with the global understand of how we can achieve sustainable development.



- Prof Thuli Madonsela, Advocate of the High Court of South Africa, Law Trust Chair in Social Justice, University of Stellenbosch

NEPAD in my view has achieved a lot. NEPAD has put Africa's agenda on the global scene. The Bank stands ready to continue to support AUDA-NEPAD. Together, we will achieve Agenda 2063 for the Africa We Want.

- Dr Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank



As one of the founding countries, we recognize the transformation of NEPAD into the African Union Development Agency, which allows it to face the challenges on our continent. This will allow us to move towards a new era of the enhancement of our continent.



- H.E. Dr Abdelaziz Djerad, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Algeria

We are celebrating NEPA today, an instrument that allows us to face our challenges through Agenda 2063 in regional and continental development projects. Its transformation into AUDA-NEPAD is a reflection of its maturity, in responding to development needs on the Continent.



- H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission

President Kagame calls on African countries to support NEPAD in order to better fulfil its mission



President Ramaphosa addresses the NEPAD 20th Symposium



AUDA-NEPAD Impact

PIDA Jobs Outlook: Shining the spotlight on job creation through corridor development

According to the African Development Bank (AfDB), the youth account for 60% of all unemployed Africans. As gloomy as the situation may look, it seems there is hope at the end of the tunnel through the game-changing African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The pact has ignited hope that this statistic can be altered and skewed positively towards the economic progression of the young people on the continent.

To better understand the extent of the challenge of unemployment on the continent, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) launched the PIDA Job Creation Toolkit during the 5th PIDA Week held in Egypt, Cairo, in 2019. The PIDA Job Creation Toolkit is an innovative tool for tracking the impact of regional infrastructure development projects on the African labour market.

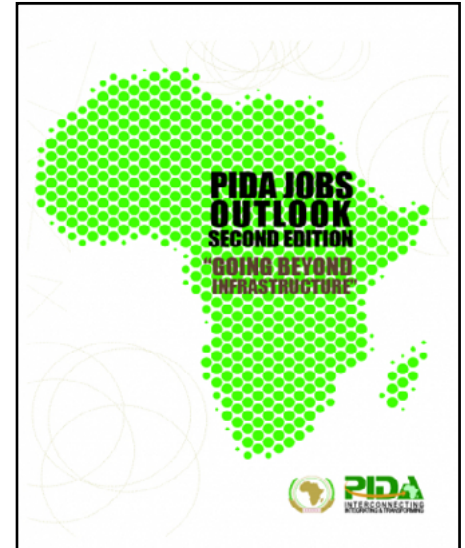
AUDA-NEPAD has since published two PIDA Jobs Outlook reports, with the latest report launched during the just-ended virtual 6th PIDA Week during a plenary session titled “Shining the spotlight on job creation through Corridor development”. Honorable Ebrahim Patel, South Africa’s Trade, Industry and Competition Minister, led the discourse by placing emphasis on the interdependence between infrastructure development and regional economic development to enable and facilitate the

AfCFTA. In his opening address, Minister Patel cited that “trade and infrastructure development are dependent on infrastructure investment. Economic activities such as driving the production of more goods, require infrastructure. Particularly the ‘big four’, namely electricity, transport and logistics, communication technology and water...Infrastructure development is critical for the future of the continent.”

Following the minister’s address, Dr. Towela Nyirenda-Jere, Economic Integration Division, AUDA-NEPAD; Dr. Bernice MacLean, Industrialization Division, AUDA-NEPAD and Maikel R. Lieuw-Kie-Song, ILO took center stage for the panel discussion, deliberating the 2nd PIDA Jobs Outlook, Industrialization and Job Creation, Optimizing employment outcomes from infrastructure investment, respectively.

Providing an overview of the Job Creation toolkit, Dr. Nyirenda-Jere noted that the tool has the following functionalities:

- Estimating the number of jobs created by the infrastructure project during its life cycle from project preparation to commissioning;
- Maximising jobs by suggesting steps to be taken such as skills developments and policy inclusivity to create



secondary jobs resulting from anticipated improved infrastructure services;

- Building scenarios for job creation in infrastructure projects through features such as suggesting female suppliers for procurement needs in the supply chain in support of SDG 5- Gender, as Africa has a female entrepreneurship rate of only 27% and;
- Providing Case studies to serve as a reference for users for the toolkit.

While there has been a slow pace in the implementation of infrastructure projects on the continent due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the toolkit continues to offer relevant and valuable information to assist in determining the potential number of direct and indirect jobs that infrastructure

projects would generate in their lifecycle. This toolkit could also be used by governments in estimating jobs to be created to stimulate their economies post- COVID-19.

Alluding to the strong interdependence between infrastructure and regional economic development to enable and facilitate regional trade, Dr. Nyirenda-Jere said; “Infrastructure should be developed to act as a catalyst for other economic opportunities such as the AfCFTA.”

Weighing in on the discussion, Dr. MacLean further articulated the importance of the interdependence between AfCFTA and industrialization on the continent. According to Dr. MacLean, “An integrated multi-sectoral approach is needed with targeted investment in skills development and training to catalyze the African

expertise and know-how that will boost entrepreneurship and employment opportunities and local industrialization and trade over the long-term.” Concluding her remarks, Dr. MacLean said; “By 2020, Africa will have the largest workforce in the world. Our youth possess the resilience, innovation and tech-savviness required to drive the implementation of Africa’s ambitions leveraging from the digital age.”

Wrapping up the panel discussion, Maikel R. Lieuw-Kie-Song, cited the significant uses of the PIDA Jobs Toolkit, and the role it can play in the AUDA-NEPAD and ILO partnership in collaborating to deliver the ILO Employment Impact Assessments. According to Lieuw-Kie-Song “Employment Impact Assessments, can provide important qualitative dimensions such as the average wage, which is

a ratio of wage to national average or national median or construction sector average.” Lieuw-Kie-Song concluded by concretizing that job creation remains an imperative in Africa and optimistically articulating ILO’s support of the PIDA strategy to stimulate investment in infrastructure on the continent.

[Click here to access your copy of the PIDA Jobs Outlook: Second Edition.](#)

Up close and personal with Dr Towela Jere

The recently concluded PIDA Week brought together various stakeholder across the continent and globally. The focus was on Infrastructure development in Africa. As a Communications focal point assigned to PIDA Week, I used the opportunity to speak to Dr Towela Nyirenda Jere on this event, its objectives and the expected outcomes. Here’s what she had to say

Millicent: Dr Towela, a lot was said during this week about Job creation in the infrastructure space, how exactly will this concluded PIDA Week feed into this challenge of unemployment that Africa’s youth continue to face?

Dr Towela: We recognise that infrastructure has the ability to create and catalyse jobs across the continent: jobs are created that provide direct employment to those who actually design and build the infrastructure and indirectly to those who provide services and materials for the construction. Beyond that, the infrastructure catalyses jobs in its operational phase through secondary and

spill-over effects and this is where the biggest benefits can be realised. For Africa’s youth, apart from infrastructure should afford them several opportunities, including the opportunities to be skilled to support infrastructure build, being developed as entrepreneurs that can provide services to the infrastructure sector and being equipped to use entrepreneurship to reap the benefits of the infrastructure once built. Our role coming out of PIDA Week is to take on board the various recommendations and ideas that emerged and apply these in our implementation and delivery model for PIDA projects.

Millicent: The Minister of International Relations, Naledi Pandor warned against corruption in implementing these mega Infrastructure projects. She indicated that the delay in implementing these projects is sometimes due to corruption in the various stages of project implementation. What is AUDA-NEPAD's role in addressing this issue? What do you think needs to be done?

Dr Towela: As the mandate-holder for advancing PIDA implementation, we have to work with project owners and project sponsors to ensure that the projects are implemented efficiently, effectively and economically. In providing early stage project preparation support through the Service Delivery Mechanism, we undertake due diligence to identify the bottlenecks and potential solutions to mitigate against the risks posed. AUDA-NEPAD therefore supports project owners to put in place the relevant institutional and project governance structures that could help to reduce the risks of corruption and corrupt practices.

Millicent: One of the speakers said "the money is there for these projects, the challenge is not the money but the investors are sometimes hesitant to involve themselves in these projects. Why do you think that is the case? What needs to be done?"

Dr Towela: One recurring theme in most of the PIDA Week discussions has been that of project preparation. It is indeed true that financing is available which can be accessed for project implementation however, key to unlocking these funds is adequate project preparation. Well-prepared projects lead to bankability, giving investors and financiers the

confidence to invest. The challenge that projects and project owners face is that there is very little money made available for project preparation, and more especially for early stage project preparation. AUDA-NEPAD is working to change the narrative by excellence in project preparation through the PIDA Quality Label (PQL) which is a recognition given to projects that have met certain requirements. The PQL will serve as the gold standard for project preparation so that investors can have the assurance of project bankability. At the same time, AUDA-NEPAD is pushing for more funds to be set aside for early stage project preparation as this is where a significant number of projects fail to take off.



“ AUDA-NEPAD therefore supports project owners to put in place the relevant institutional and project governance structures that could help to reduce the risks of corruption and corrupt practices. ”

Millicent: A communique was read at the closing of PIDA Week. But people say, we cannot eat declarations, we cannot live on declarations. What is so different about this communique? How will it benefit the ordinary youth, the ordinary SMEs, the ordinary woman?

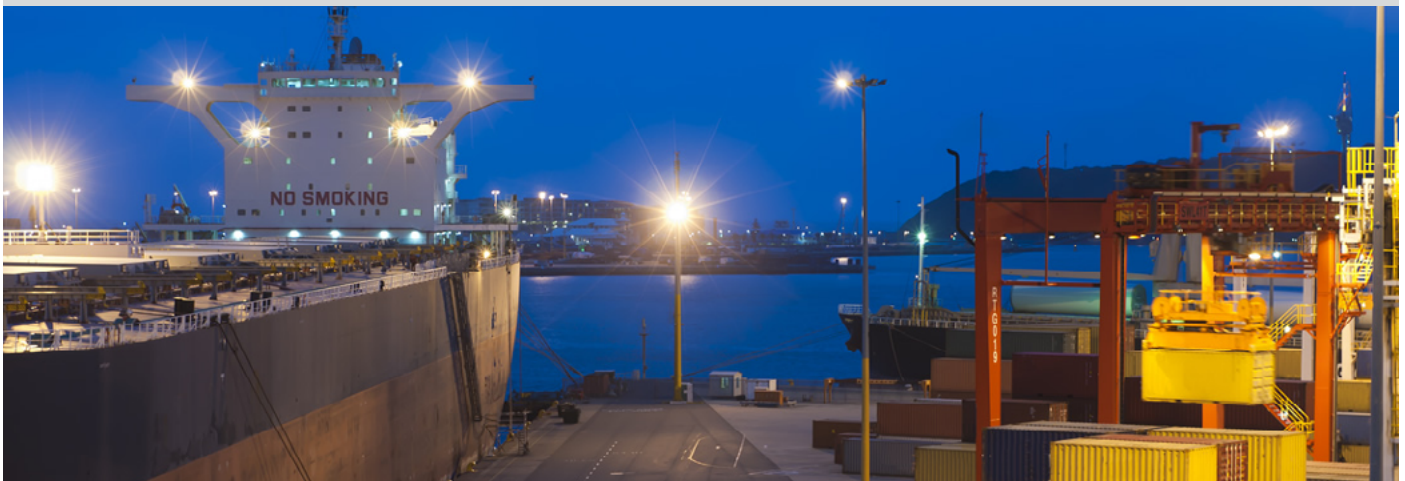
Dr Towela: Indeed it is true that people cannot eat or live on declarations however, the importance of documents such as the PIDA Week Communique is that they help us to frame common understanding of the issues and point us in the direction of concrete actions that we can jointly take with our stakeholders and partners. The Communique also provides us the context for the various activities that we will undertake as part of implementation this year and will serve as a way of checking ourselves against the implied "commitments". In this way, the Communique becomes one of the tools that helps us to advance PIDA implementation for the ultimate benefit of the ordinary youth, SME, woman, etc in Africa.

Millicent: We heard a lot about PCI during this PIDA Week, which projects are spearheaded under this initiative?

Dr Towela: The Presidential Infrastructure Champions Initiative (PCI) was started under leadership of the South African presidency. PCI is an opportunity for African heads of state and governments to become actively involved in the development and implementation of regional and continental infrastructure projects. Participating heads of state choose which projects they will

- ICT: increase global connectivity and boost intra-African broadband connectivity
- Transport: slash transport costs and boost trade
- Water: ensure water and food security

For each of these broad objectives there are measurable indicators, aligned with Agenda 2063, which help us to track and monitor progress. Furthermore, with the current focus on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), PIDA is now positioned to support the AfCFTA by advancing



champion, and the current portfolio has projects drawn from each of the 4 PIDA sectors. The champions bring visibility, unblock bottlenecks, coordinate resource mobilization, provide leadership and ensure rapid project implementation. Further details on the projects can be found on the virtual PIDA Information Center (vPIC) <https://www.aupida.org/presidential-infrastructure-champion-initiative-pici/>.

Millicent: Lastly, if a stranger who knows nothing about PIDA and its objectives had to ask you – “how will PIDA benefit me as an ordinary African?” What would you say?

Dr Towela: The benefits of infrastructure development in general and hence PIDA in particular cannot be over-stated. Considering that PIDA is defined to address infrastructure needs in 4 sector - Energy, ICT, Transport and Water - there are broad objectives for each sector:

- Energy: reduce energy costs and increase access.

regional integration through the Integrated Corridor Approach. The Integrated Corridor Approach emphasizes projects that improve rural-urban connectivity, promote synergies across infrastructure sectors, maximize job creation and climate friendliness. Ultimately, all Africans should find benefit in the various services and opportunities that PIDA implementation will bring; the key will be to continue keeping our eyes on the prize and working together across institutions, countries, regions and the continent at large to achieve these shared objectives.

Millicent: Thank you for your time Dr Towela and for a well organised virtual event in a space that is increasingly becoming digitalised you managed to bring together different stakeholders who continue being committed to Africa’s Infrastructure transformation and we hope that with all this commitment, the vision of Agenda 2063 closely tied to infrastructure development and industrialisation will be realised.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Africa's Youth Within the 4th Industrial Revolution

Authors: APET Secretariat

Youth employment and entrepreneurship are crucial components for socio-economic development that can be utilized to address poverty and socio-economic disparities within the African continent. Africa's policy and decision-makers have the responsibility of creating a conducive environment for secure human development index (HDI) at national, regional, and continental levels. However, the 2020 HDI report[1] revealed that Africa's citizens need effective access to excellent healthcare, affordable education, and job opportunities. This can significantly improve life expectancy, sustain effective education and training, improve livelihood, and equitably distribute the gross national income per capita, in alignment to United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Unfortunately, so far, only Mauritius has been able to reach an HDI value of 0.804, followed by Seychelles. Other African countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, Botswana, Libya, South Africa, Egypt and Gabon have HDIs ranging between 0.703 and 0.796. Even though these HDIs are a step in the right direction, Africa still has to catch up to Europe, the United States, Canada and other continents that have their HDI ranging between 0.800 and 1.000. Thereby, significantly reduce inequality and address poverty across the continent.

The 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) is offering Africa's youth innovation and entrepreneurship opportunities that can effectively address Africa's inequality and poverty. However, there is a need for Africa's youth to be empowered such that they are prepared to overcome the technology skills shortages and competencies among the millennials[2] entering the job market through transformative entrepreneurship and innovation.[3] Notably, Africa remains a relatively youthful continent, with a median age of about 19 years. The median is only expected to reach about 25 years in 2046. As such, young people will continually constitute about half of Africa's population of several countries across the continent for the next three to five decades.[4] Therefore, the African Union High-Level Panel on Innovation and Emerging Technologies (APET) believes that 4IR enabled innovation and





entrepreneurship can significantly address Africa's high youth unemployment and education system.[5]

Notably, Africa's 4IR advancement will be enabled by infrastructural investment in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This is because ICT enables entrepreneurial and innovation opportunities for the youth. Furthermore, it will also be enabled by improved regulatory and policy frameworks so to increase labour absorption and job creation strategies. Therefore, addressing the ICT infrastructure will bring career, innovative, and entrepreneurial opportunities for Africa's youth. Thus, there is a call for ICT public and private sector service providers to facilitate internet and broadband accessibility and affordability across the continent. Such efforts will increase 4IR technology illiteracy challenges across the continent and equip the youth with quality technological infrastructure

4IR-linked technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, blockchain, digital technologies, and 3D printing are disruptive technologies transforming socio-economic development systems. This transformation growth rate is anticipated to be exponential, factorial, and unpredictable. Therefore, to sufficiently prepare, African countries will need to reskill their youth in order to promote entrepreneurship and create job opportunities. Furthermore, the mastery of ICT applications and tools can significantly enable[6] mobile technologies. In addition, such efforts can develop new business models, micro-markets, and e-commerce platforms for Africa's youth entrepreneurs and innovators. As such, digital technology platforms can help youth promote their products, link with local and international manufacturers, and access global markets.

In conclusion, for the increased absorption of 4IR technologies to enable youth's innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation, African governments and the private sector are encouraged to equip youth with ICT skills and infrastructure. For instance, Rwanda is promoting for one-laptop-computer-per-child policy for primary school learners. Furthermore, public-private partnership can also enable cost-effective and accessible internet connection and broadband. Additionally, African governments are encouraged to create enabling evidence-based ICT policies aimed at empowering Africa's youth for innovation. Undeniably, the world is predominantly becoming a digital-based economy, dominated by digital financial services. Consequently, this leads to an increased dependency on ICT and 4IR-enabled technologies. Thus, the African continent ought to alleviate youth computer and technology illiteracy, secure 4IR technology-driven workforce, and invest in the 4IR technology for robust socio-economic development. Consequently, Africa can accomplish the socio-economic development aspirations of African Union's Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024) and Agenda 2063.

Smart Agriculture through Mobile Technologies in Africa

Authors: APET Secretariat

It is estimated that approximately 94% of farms in developing countries utilise mobile phones[1]. Mobile digital devices such as mobile computers and smartphones, digital cameras, pagers, personal navigation device, and wearable computers have allowed Africa's farmers to access and share information with different stakeholders. These mobile digital devices can be connected to remote sensing data devices that alert farmers well in advance on forthcoming climate and weather conditions such as droughts and floods. In additions, mobile digital technologies have also enabled farmers obtain crucial information on soil quality with respect to nutrients levels, water levels, pests and disease spread, among others, captured from various sensors, satellites, and drones. On the other hand, mobile technology, propelled by the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and the transition towards technology transformation in the 4th Industrial Revolution, has enabled previously disadvantaged Africa's farmers connect with agri-food services and products that were historically inaccessible. As a result, the rapid adaptation and adoption of smartphones across the African continent have enabled smallholder farmers to access public sector services offered by African governments and private sectors services such as digital financial services offered by banking and other financial institutions.



Harnessing the growth of mobile digital technologies can significantly help farmers access crucial information and data required to address specific farming management systems and underlying constraints. Therefore, there is a need for African farmers to transition from the traditional farming management methods into modern and digital agricultural technological management processes, combined with knowledge-based advisory services. Notably, adopting such technologies can facilitate transformative agricultural development through collaborative agricultural knowledge exchange and learning. Furthermore, it has been reported that[2] low agricultural productivity results from inefficient agricultural management systems and this negatively impacts Africa's food security and productivity. Notably, this is characteristic of the limited adoption of existing and emerging modern digital technologies within Africa's agricultural sector.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, Africa's farmers have continually accessed digital services through their mobile smartphones. This includes financial services, product services, agri-food products' logistical tracking, and real-time prices of their products at local markets. Consequently, the up-to-date tracking of their agricultural commodities (dairy, grains, livestock) has enabled well managed and sustainability sales by farmers. Moreover, such robust logistical management systems enable better pricing of agri-food products by farmers. Furthermore, such well-documented data provides decision-makers, policymakers, financial and regulatory institutions, and trading bodies with reliable information on price variations. Consequently, digital technology services effectively prevent price volatility and speculation that negatively impacts low-income households. In addition, farmers have also accessed weather and

geographical data, crop pests/diseases and mitigation strategies, and length of the growing seasons through mobile digital devices. [3] Most importantly, mobile smartphones are enabling African farmers to access trading opportunities through various intra-country trade platforms such as the African Continental Free Trade Area and access to reliable agri-food product transportation services. This is because mobile digital technologies are improving product traceability with critical information on transportation and storage.

The African continent has accomplished tremendous progress with respect to the utilization of mobile smartphones towards improving agricultural productivity. However, there remains several fundamental challenges that include inadequate mobile smartphone infrastructure, thus, limiting numerous African farmers' widespread utilization of mobile digital applications for agri-food purposes. For instance, numerous parts of the African continent have limited cellphone network and internet coverage. In addition, reliable broadband remains limited in rural areas where most of the agricultural activities occur. Thus, African governments and network service providers are encouraged to target rural areas, more especially agricultural areas, in order to improve the profitability of Africa's agricultural activities. Moreover, this can also improve regulatory frameworks that can focus on enabling infrastructural improvements, broadband cost-effectiveness, operational reliability, and access to internet services.

Limited technical and operational



knowledge and literacy within most African farmers remain one of the significant hindrances towards the adoption of mobile agricultural digital technologies. Therefore, African governments are encouraged to formulate digital technology literacy programmes and applications targeting farmers, more especially farmers lacking basic education. Such efforts can improve digital technology literacy on farmers; thereby, improving productivity and food security within the continent. Moreover, interventions on cost-effectiveness on internet and data costs need to be urgently addressed to improve access to previously disadvantaged farmers. Most importantly, decision-makers and policymakers are encouraged to support rural communities towards adopting modern digital technologies suitable for precision agriculture.

In conclusion, for Africa to achieve the aspirations pertaining to Agenda 2063's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and the Food and Agricultural

Strategic Frameworks, there is a need for African farmers to adopt better digital technologies that will improve agri-food operational and business management systems. Interestingly, it has been demonstrated that adopting mobile digital technologies in Africa significantly improved agricultural productivity from 32% up to 44% between 2012 and 2018.[4] Furthermore, it has been projected that such improvements will reach 50% by 2025. Therefore, such improvements emanating from the adoption of digital technologies can encourage African farmers, private sector, and governments to seek more digital technology applications that can boost precision agriculture. Finally, access to emerging markets using mobile digital technologies can deliver a significant contribution to food security, improve efficiency, and reduce negative environmental impacts due to farming.

Partnerships

NEPAD Affirms Close Ties to the African Development Bank As It Assesses Achievements and Challenges After Two Decades

African leaders and representatives from the development community, civil society and private sector came together on Thursday for a symposium to celebrate two decades of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a flagship program of the African Union.

Participants commended the African Development Bank highly for its role in financing infrastructure and agricultural programs on the continent.

NEPAD has endured multiple global crises since its inception, the most recent being the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The organization was relaunched as the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) in 2018, which participants noted was a turning point in its evolution.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Chairperson of the African Union, said: "The coronavirus pandemic has had a severe impact on African economies, on public health and indeed the African Union itself. It has served as a stark reminder of our global interconnectedness because, in the end, what affects one, affects us all."

Ramaphosa added that it was more critical than ever that countries increase collaboration, in particular as they undertake the "massive task" of procuring and distributing vaccines.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame,

Chairperson of AUDA-NEPAD's Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee, urged member states to honour their commitments to the institution.

"NEPAD's track record makes it the ideal institution to implement Agenda 2063 on behalf of the African Union," President Kagame said via recorded message. "I call on member states to continue supporting the multiple partnerships that AUDA-NEPAD has developed."

Kagame singled out AUDA-NEPAD's agreement with the new African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat as being of particular importance. He said: "Honoring our statutory commitments as member states is not only our duty. It is good value for money."

During a presidential dialogue, African Development Bank President Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina said that over the past 20 years, the Bank's strategies had been designed with NEPAD in mind.

"The Bank's support has spanned many areas, such as regional integration, agriculture, trade, infrastructure, education, knowledge and the environment," Adesina said.

The African Development Bank President cited the Bank's key role in the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), including financing of US\$9

million for capacity building and technical assistance. "The African Development Bank stands fully ready to continue to provide strong support and to help to mobilize a lot more support for AUDA-NEPAD as you continue your new strategy, and of course the African Union Commission. Together we will achieve the Africa we want, better and much faster," Adesina said.

Two of the founding fathers of NEPAD, former South African president Thabo Mbeki and former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, recalled the genesis of the institution in 1963 as a platform to lobby for independence, as well as its rebirth in 2002 as the African Union, with NEPAD as its economic blueprint as development took center stage.

Outgoing AUDA-NEPAD chief executive Ibrahim Hassane Mayaki said the African Development Bank had supported the agency from the start and was its prime financier of infrastructure projects. He listed three challenges confronting his agency, namely resource mobilization, human resources constraints and its interactions with regional economic communities.

"Our challenge will evidently be resource mobilization, but we have built, thanks to the support of all our partners, a certain level of credibility which can allow us to implement that element of our mandate, which is called full resource mobilization," Mayaki said.

Message from Yvonne Chaka Chaka, AUDA-NEPAD TB & Nutrition Goodwill Ambassador



1. Building the Africa We Want: Why NEPAD was born twenty years ago: The creation of NEPAD in 2001 as a programme, and the NEPAD Agency as the implementing arm of the African Union, was seen as a new hope towards attaining development in Africa. One of the greatest achievements of NEPAD is that it has put Africa on the global agenda and has also galvanized international support for the region, towards building the Africa We Want.

2. In 2018, history was made when Africa established its own continental development agency: The important decision taken by our leaders to transform the NEPAD Agency into the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, made it the first-ever continental development agency of its nature. This was an affirmation by African countries and citizens on the important role played by NEPAD. For the first time ever, Africa now has its own continent-wide development agency, the engine for driving us towards the Africa We Want.

3. The need to do more: As NEPAD turns 20, one of the key successes that stand out for me is the focus on food security, health and nutrition

that has been put back fully on the agenda for the continent's development. As Africans, we cannot hold our heads high with dignity if majority of our people still go to bed hungry and lack access to adequate health care. The situation has been made more ardent by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is why I stand here before you today, as the AUDA-NEPAD Goodwill Ambassador for Nutrition and TB.

4. The importance of rallying together for the good of all: Ladies and gentlemen, if we do not believe that the many challenges which our continent faces will first and foremost be resolved by us, the African citizenry, we will never attain the goals we set for ourselves in Agenda 2063. "We are the ones we have been waiting for," there is no other. We are the ones who we build the Africa we want.

5. We each have a role to play: Even as commemorate the 20th anniversary of NEPAD, looking at its successes and challenges, let us not drop the ball on ordinary African citizens as we each have a role to play in ensuring that we uplift the lives of the under privileged. Building the Africa We Want is possible – it starts with you and I!

Announcements



AUDA-NEPAD

Photo Contest

The Africa We Want.

AUDA- NEPAD Communications Unit will run a Photo Contest from **28 February, 2021, to 31 March, 2021**, to encourage African youth to innovate and be creative in showcasing the mandate of the AUDA-NEPAD as tied to the agenda 2063 Vision.

The Youth will be encouraged to capture in photographic format, the success stories of Agenda 2063 implementation and the vision thereof. The contributors will be expected to be innovative and creative in presenting the images they have captured.

The contest will be tied to the Agenda 2063 slogan, **“The Africa We Want”** and will specifically focus on Youth participation. The contest is open to all African youth aged 13 to 35. Full information will be shared on the AUDA-NEPAD website, from **16 February 2021**.

The prizes for the first, second and third prize winners shall be electronic gadgets

28 February - 31 March, 2021

AUDA-NEPAD
AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Launch of Agenda 2063 Media Network Page

The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD has set up on its website, an Agenda 2063 Media Network page. The page will feature all blog articles and opinion pieces from journalists who are members of the network. Journalists will use the space to engage on current affairs, the work of the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD and any other development related topics. The bios of all the journalists who are part of the Agenda 2063 Media Network will also be available on the page for ease of reference.

[Click here to access the page](#)

Did you know?

The oldest existing University in the world is located in fez, Morocco, northern Africa. The university of al-Qarawiyyin also written as Al-Karaouine was founded in 859 AD by a woman and the interesting thing is, it's still in operation to date — making it the oldest continually operating educational institution in the world.



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