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June 2023 Newsletter



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## Launch of Team Africa



Taking a united and strategic approach to address the challenges of fragmented resource mobilisation in Africa, the African Union Commission (AUC), African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD), and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are proud to announce the launch of “*Team Africa Resource Mobilisation Campaign.*”

This joint initiative aims to enhance coordination, foster partnerships, and mobilise resources effectively for financing sustainable development flagship projects across the continent.

During the launch, Mr. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, highlighted the importance of collaboration, stating, “*To realise the Agenda 2063 vision, a coordinated approach is indispensable. Our focus should transcend individual interests, for it is Africa as a whole that stands to benefit. Embracing ‘Team Africa’ will ensure we align our efforts and maximise the impact of our development goals,*” he said.

With a shared vision of promoting inclusive and sustainable development, the Team Africa Campaign recognises the importance of collaboration among key stakeholders. The AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, RECs, member States, civil society organisations, academia and the private sector will work together to identify funding requirements, align programming priorities, and strengthen institutional capacity. This joint effort aims to promote transparency, accountability, and partnership, enabling African countries to mobilise and deploy resources more effectively for

sustainable development.

The resource mobilisation campaign led by AUDA-NEPAD, in close collaboration with AUC and the RECs, has multi-fold objectives:

- **Mobilise resources:** To support the implementation of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 second ten-year implementation plan and AUDA-NEPAD’s programs aligned with the RECs flagship projects. This includes financial resources, technical expertise, and in-kind contributions.
- **Attract investment:** To attract investments from domestic resources, including the private sector and other funding entities, to support the development agenda. The campaign aims to create an enabling environment for investment and showcase Africa’s potential for economic growth and development.
- **Promote ownership:** To foster ownership of development initiatives by African countries and their citizens, promoting the participation of local communities in decision-making processes and aligning development interventions with national priorities and strategies.

The Team Africa Resource Mobilisation Campaign will prioritise key areas of focus, including building inclusive sustainable food systems, infrastructure for regional integration, education and training, health and pharmaceutical systems,

accelerating the digital transformation, trade and investment, peace and security, and migration.

By focusing on these areas, the campaign aims to catalyse regional integration, enhance human capital development, improve access to quality healthcare, ensure reliable internet access for all, and address the root causes of migration through economic development and youth empowerment.

The launch of Team Africa followed a roadmap of engagements, including a joint Validation and Finalisation Workshop on the margins of the AUC Mid-Year Summit. These engagements provided opportunities for feedback, collaboration, and refining the joint resource mobilisation campaign.

Team Africa represents a significant milestone in Africa's journey towards sustainable development. It demonstrates the commitment of African countries, regional bodies, and development partners to work together, leverage resources, and promote regional integration for the collective benefit of the continent. Through collaboration, innovation, and joint ownership, Team Africa aims to bring transformative change and drive Africa's development agenda.

Concluding the event, Ms Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO of AUDA-NEPAD, emphasised the urgent need for African regions to unite. With determination, she declared, *"The future lies in our actions today. As Team Africa, we are resolute in driving transformative change across the continent. Together, we will forge a path to success, embarking on a long and fruitful journey ahead."*



# Empowering Africa's Children: AUDA-NEPAD and UNICEF Unite for Positive Change



same time, a focus on transforming education is at the forefront, with emphasis on STEM education and skill development to equip young Africans for meaningful careers.

Ms. Laila Gad, Director for the UNICEF AU Liaison Office, emphasised how the partnership seeks to support the African Union and its member states in achieving positive impacts on health and education for the children and youth of Africa. She outlined the partnership's catalytic role in bringing on board other stakeholders into the acceleration of the implementation of the Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.



To ensure effective implementation, AUDA-NEPAD and UNICEF have committed to co-convene key events at global and continental levels to showcase progress and gather further support for their joint initiatives.

The partnership between AUDA-NEPAD and UNICEF represents a powerful force for positive change, working towards the well-being and development of African children and young people.

In an effort to foster the well-being and development of Africa's children and young people, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have joined forces through a landmark partnership. This collaboration, formalised by a Memorandum of Understanding signed in September 2022, aims to champion the rights of Africa's youth and pave the way for transformative initiatives that will positively impact their lives over the next three years.

The AUDA-NEPAD and UNICEF recently held a Partnership Meeting in Johannesburg from 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023 to mark a significant step forward in this collaborative effort. Representatives from both organisations convened to discuss key priorities, including education, health, nutrition, and the impact of trade on Africa's young population. The meeting emphasised

the alignment of these priorities with Africa's Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) agreement.

In his remarks during the Meeting, AUDA-NEPAD Director of Human Capital and Institutional Development, Symerre Grey-Johnson highlighted the importance of the partnership's human capital development focus as part of achieving the #Agenda2063 goals. He stated, *"The future of our continent hinges on the strength of our human capital. And building that human capital begins with securing the health and cognitive capacity of our children."*

Two critical priorities emerged in the partnership's agenda: malaria control and education. The partnership aims to reduce malaria cases by 20% through strategic interventions, such as supporting the approval and local production of malaria vaccines. At the

By addressing critical issues such as malaria control and education transformation, the partnership is laying the groundwork for a brighter and more prosperous future for the next generation of African leaders. With a unified vision and collaborative approach, AUDA-NEPAD and UNICEF are steadfast in building a better Africa for all.

## Voices in Unison: Pan-African Women's Day Commemoration



Pan-African Women's Day, observed each year on July 31st commemorates the first Pan-African Women's Conference held in Dar es Salaam in 1962. It was on this occasion that the Pan-African Women's Organisation (PAWO) was formed to promote gender equality, women's rights and empowerment with a view of ensuring that women's contributions to Africa's struggle for independence is fully recognised and integrated in the African narrative.

In collaboration with the Department for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities of the Republic of South Africa, AUDA-NEPAD organised an event on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa to reflect on progress made, challenges and opportunities towards gender equity and women's empowerment in Africa.

All speakers highlighted that Gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) are a prerequisite for realising the aspirations, goals, and targets embodied in Agenda 2063. Representing the CEO, Dr Janet Byaruhanga indicated that the event seeks to provide a platform for sharing African good practices and experiences in addressing gender disparities and

promoting women's empowerment. She further reminded guests that AUDA-NEPAD's initiatives, such as the NEPAD Spanish Fund and WYFEI, have made significant strides towards the mission of empowering women so that they can continue to be the driving force behind Africa's economic growth.

*"Our mission is to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment remains steadfast",* said Dr Janet

Speakers at the event included Mrs. Victoria Lehau Maloka, AUC Directorate of Women, Gender and Youth, Adv. Mikateko Joyce Maluleke, Director General, Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities- South Africa, Mrs. Sara Hamouda, Agenda 2063 and SDGs Expert, APRM. The commemoration created a space for collaboration and networking among key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, international partners, gender experts, women leaders and students.

The commemorative event served to honour the women that have defined and shaped the development agenda of the Continent.



# Pioneering Africa's AI Future: Convening of African AI Experts to Finalise the AU-AI Continental Strategy



In line with the commitment to promote innovation and technological development, the African Union High-Level Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET) and the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) are convening a consultative meeting with African Artificial Intelligence (AI) experts from the 7th to the 11th of August in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The objective of this meeting is to finalise the drafting of the AU-AI Continental Strategy encompassing legislative, regulatory, ethical, policy, and infrastructural frameworks.

Africa envisions a future where AI becomes a catalyst for unprecedented growth and progress across the continent. As articulated in pivotal frameworks such as The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030), Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024), and Agenda 2063, AI has immense potential to positively impact diverse sectors. Recognising this potential, APET released a report

in February 2023 titled "Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Africa's Socio-Economic Development," highlighting the crucial role of AI in shaping the continent's future.

By embracing AI technology, Africa can unlock new economic development, healthcare, education, agriculture, infrastructure, and governance frontiers. AI-driven innovations have the potential to transform healthcare delivery, enhance agricultural productivity, and bridge the digital divide, empowering communities with access to quality education and financial services. Furthermore, AI can streamline governance, promote e-governance, and foster transparent and efficient public service delivery. Considering the immense potential that AI holds for the continent, this consultative meeting will pave the way for a comprehensive strategy that will revolutionise Africa for the better.

The upcoming meeting builds on the success of previous gatherings in Dakar, Senegal, and Kigali, Rwanda, where AI experts laid the foundation for the AU-

AI Continental Strategy for Africa. With this strategy's finalisation, Africa is set to accelerate its AI journey, taking the lead in the global AI revolution.

During a planning meeting, Prof Aggrey Ambali, Senior Advisor of the Office of Science, Technology and Innovation at AUDA-NEPAD emphasised the urgency of adopting AI in Africa, stating that, "AI presents a unique opportunity for Africa to leapfrog into a prosperous future. By leveraging appropriate AI technologies in a responsive manner and fostering an enabling ecosystem, we can unlock Africa's immense potential and address its socio-economic challenges in a sustainable manner."

Together, with continental AI experts, this consultative meeting marks a pivotal moment in Africa's pursuit of AI-driven socio-economic growth. As the continent unites to shape a cohesive AI strategy, AUDA-NEPAD and APET remain steadfast in their commitment to fostering an inclusive, innovative and digitally empowered Africa.

# Celebrating a Decade of Infrastructure Transformation in Africa: PIDA Pre-Launch Ceremony Unveils Promising Report



The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) jointly hosted a momentous pre-launch ceremony in Nairobi, signifying ten years of remarkable progress in transforming Africa's infrastructure landscape.

The event marked the successful completion of the highly anticipated "PIDA First 10-Year Implementation Report" and the visionary "2nd PIDA Priority Action Plan (2021-2030) Projects Prospectus".

The ceremony, held during the 5th African Union Mid-Year Coordination Meeting, attracted distinguished guests, including H.E. Mrs. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO of AUDA-NEPAD, H.E. Mr. HORIUCHI Toshihiko, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Mission of Japan to the African Union and Mr. NAKAMURA Toshiyuki, Special Advisor to JICA President and Former Senior Vice President of JICA. Their presence underscored the significance of this milestone achievement.

In her opening remarks, H.E. Mrs. Nardos BEKELE-THOMAS emphasized the critical role of infrastructure development in stimulating growth, fostering global integration and elevating living standards. She highlighted that supporting Africa's infrastructure is not only supporting the continent but also the world.

One of the report's noteworthy findings, as highlighted by H.E. Mr. Toshihiko, was that AU member states emerged as the primary financial contributors. This revelation reaffirms PIDA's unique standing as an infrastructure policy framework designed by Africa, for Africa.

Mr. NAKAMURA Toshiyuki, Special Advisor to JICA President, acknowledged PIDA's alignment with the principles of ownership and corridor development, which JICA has steadfastly supported through the TICAD process. He expressed confidence that the report's successful completion would act as a catalyst for enhanced resource mobilization for PIDA projects.

PIDA, a strategic continental initiative spearheaded by the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), aims to accelerate infrastructure development across Africa by addressing the continent's infrastructure deficit and promoting regional integration, economic growth, and sustainable development. Encompassing sectors such as transport, energy, water, and ICT, PIDA fosters economic development, trade, and connectivity. By 2040, PIDA has set ambitious targets, including the implementation of cross-border infrastructure projects to bolster connectivity, trade, and access to reliable and sustainable services. The initiative is also expected to have a significant impact on increased investment in infrastructure projects, improved regional integration, job creation, and sustainable economic growth in African countries.

The official launch of the "PIDA First 10-Year Implementation Report" is scheduled for September, during the 4th Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, and Energy (STC-TTIIIE) in Zanzibar, Tanzania. As the journey to drive infrastructure development across Africa continues, the world eagerly awaits the transformative outcomes of PIDA's decade-long dedication to revolutionizing Africa's infrastructure landscape.

# African Energy Experts Forge a Common Strategy to Transform the Continent's Power Infrastructure

**Significant strides have been made in the establishment of the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM) and the development of the Continental Power Systems Master Plan (CMP), paving the way for major developments to come in the energy sector.**

The importance of a well-coordinated strategy to modernise Africa's power infrastructure cannot be overstated. It is projected that the demand for electricity in the continent will triple by 2040, industrialisation, rapid urbanisation, the growing middle class, and climate change, among other driving factors.

On the 3rd -5th July 2023, energy stakeholders convened in Cotonou, Benin, to chart the path forward for the CMP and AfSEM initiatives, aiming to provide Africa with a reliable and sustainable power supply to meet the growing demands of its population.

Major developments are on the horizon as the CMP work plan enters its final development phase to produce an optimised integrated generation and transmission expansion plan for 2023-2040. Four important deliverables were discussed during the 3-day workshop, i.e. the Baseline and Reference Case Planning Scenario Results, the Additional Planning Scenario and Sensitivity Analysis Results Report, the Economic Cost Benefit Analysis of Power Generation and Transmission Investments, and the Transmission Network Studies Report.

These outputs represent significant progress for both AfSEM and CMP's objectives to curb the electricity deficit and allow a well-balanced sharing of affordable, reliable, and clean energy resources to facilitate the realisation of the continent's ambitious Agenda 2063 including the ongoing operationalisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

This bottom-up, participatory process is vital for the successful implementation



of the African Union's far-reaching visions for a unified electricity market in Africa. It also fosters a common understanding of the CMP modelling activities among the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), Power Pools, the European Union (EU) modelling partners, and other key African institutions.

The delegation also undertook a site visit to the West African Power Pool (WAPP) Information and Control Center to take stock of the progress made in the Region. The Power Pool, which is a specialized agency of ECOWAS aims to integrate the national power systems in ECOWAS into a unified regional electricity market with the goal of providing in the medium and long term, regular and reliable energy at a competitive cost to the citizenry of the region. The delegation commended the progress made by the Power Pool and indicated that WAPP serves as a testament of what can be replicated by the power pools.

The final day of the 3-day meeting saw the experts committing to the successful implementation of both CMP and AfSEM with the overall goal of the realisation of the visions of the African Union's Agenda 2063, AfDB's New Deal for Energy in Africa, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the IRENA- led initiative for Clean Energy Corridors in Africa.

The meeting concluded that the implementation of the CMP and AfSEM should be aligned to the transformative socio-economic development agenda of the Continent.

## **About AfSEM**

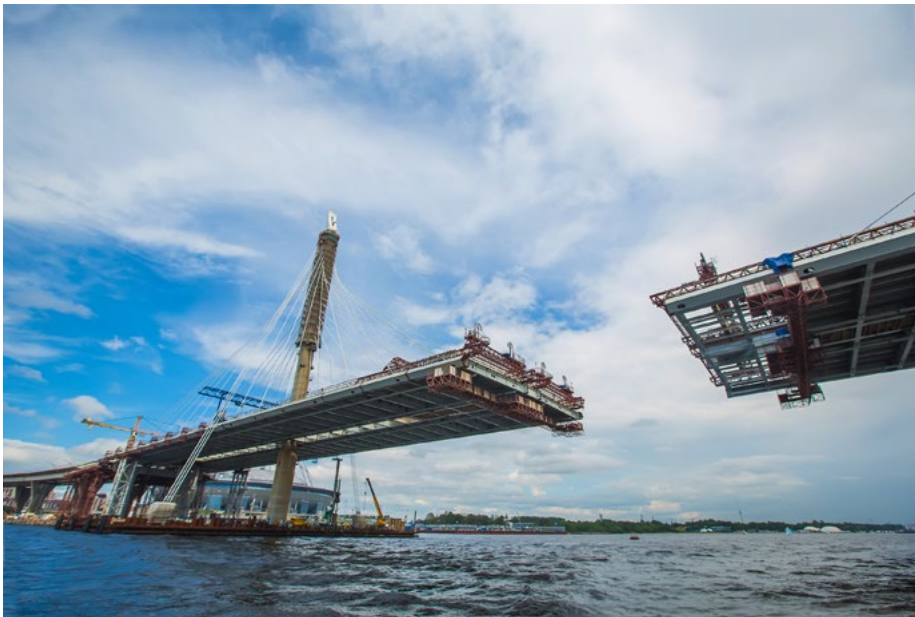
The African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM), launched by the African Union in June 2021, aims to enhance access to reliable and sustainable electricity across Africa. It aims to create the world's largest interconnected electricity grid by 2040 through policy harmonization. The AfSEM enables intra- and inter-regional electricity trading, enhancing energy security, economic growth, and climate change mitigation. With a vast electricity market, growing population, and significant GDP, it presents an attractive investment climate for electricity infrastructure development.

## **About the CMP**

The Continental Power Systems Master Plan (CMP), led by AUDA-NEPAD with support from EU-GTAF, IAEA, and IRENA, aims to establish a continent-wide planning process for power generation and transmission in Africa. It links regional power pools and member states to identify priority energy infrastructure, promoting electricity trade between regions and harnessing renewable energy resources. The CMP facilitates the implementation of the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM) to enable efficient electricity trading and support Africa's energy transition.



# AUDA-NEPAD and AUC host a meeting with RECs on Africa's Infrastructure Development



On the margins of the African Union (AU) Mid-Year Summit, the AU Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency - NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) successfully organized a coordination meeting with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to discuss the acceleration of infrastructure development and regional integration in Africa.

The meeting, held in Nairobi, Kenya focused on agreeing on joint actions to accelerate the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).

Insufficient infrastructure constantly hinders Africa's economies and the continent's efforts to fully participate in the global economy. The coordination meeting marked a significant milestone as the first phase of PIDA (PIDA PAP I) completed ten years of implementation and transitioned into the second phase (PIDA PAP II) which is focused on an Integrated Corridor Approach and inclusivity. The second phase features 69 projects selected from all regions of the continent. The aim was to ensure that corridor infrastructure interconnects and complements each other while integrating social and

sustainability features into the planning process.

Mr. Idriss Amine Adoum, the Director of Infrastructure, Industrialisation, and Trade at AUDA-NEPAD, highlighted the importance of PIDA in addressing Africa's infrastructure challenges. He stated that through PIDA, progress has been made in improving connectivity and fostering regional integration. He highlighted that there are however, still obstacles to overcome, such as limited financing and inadequate capacity for project preparation.

"This coordination meeting aimed to bring the key players together to explore innovative solutions impactful infrastructure development," he said.

Insightful discussions were held during the meeting, focusing on reviewing progress made, achievements and lessons learnt from implementing PIDA projects. Attendees explored innovative financing mechanisms, instruments, and partnerships to mobilize additional resources for infrastructure development. The participants also shared best practices, experiences, and knowledge on infrastructure development and regional integration.

AUDA-NEPAD reported significant progress made, including the

presentation of 22 projects to financiers at the Dakar Financing Summit, from which ten projects received strong interest with potential financing opportunities. A roadmap was also developed to guide further actions.

Dr. Kamugisha Kazaura, the Director of Infrastructure and Energy at the African Union Commission, emphasized the importance of coordination, stating, "By strengthening coordination and synergy among AUDA-NEPAD, AUC, RECs and other key players, we can achieve greater efficiency and impact

The meeting represented a vital step towards enhancing infrastructure development, promoting regional integration, and driving Africa's socio-economic growth. It showcased the commitment of AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, RECs, and other stakeholders to work together, harness resources and overcome challenges for the benefit of the continent.

Looking ahead, participants at the meeting agreed to identify ways to address the challenges impacting the implementation of PIDA projects. Factors such as country-level debt burdens, the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and inflationary pressures that have undoubtedly affected infrastructure development.

To ensure that 2040 targets, it is essential to explore strategies that can accelerate the implementation process- this includes enhancing project preparation, mitigating risks and finding innovative solutions to mobilize funding and resources.

## AUDA-NEPAD's MSMEs Initiative Launched in Comoros

**"We are committed to supporting MSMEs' growth in our country and are confident this program is going to improve the entrepreneurial quality of our entrepreneurs and their enterprises vis a vis sustaining the performance of the economy of our country," stated the Chair of the AU and the President of the Union of Comoros, His Excellency Azali Assoumani as he graced the launch.**

**O**n July 29, 2023, AUDA-NEPAD launched its 100 million MSMEs initiative in Comoros. The initiative's delivery approach revolves around three pillars: the MSME Academy, Financing Support Programme, and the Marketplace. These pillars are designed to provide comprehensive support to MSMEs across the continent, enabling them to enhance resilience, access new markets, and leverage technology to tap into the vast African market, comprising 1.3 billion consumers.

The launch in Comoros presented an opportunity to introduce the initiative to policymakers, stakeholders, and potential partners who support MSMEs in the country.

Speaking during the official launch, Kossi Toulassi, Head of Industrialization, Trade and Markets at AUDA-NEPAD, explained that the team will spend three days in each city (Moroni, Anjouan, Moheli) to provide training to local entrepreneurs. "Going to the smaller towns outside of the capital is important as rural areas are often unlooked and small business owners aren't given opportunities to benefit from these types of initiatives/programmes. Through these 3 pillars, we are effectively supporting MSME's and addressing the most pressing challenges faced by entrepreneurs on the continent", said Kossi.

Prior to the main launch in the capital, Moroni, three business skills training workshops were conducted for MSME entrepreneurs in the country's three





### **President Azali Assoumani attending the Business Skills Training Workshop in Moroni**

islands: Moroni on July 17-20, Moheli on July 21-23, and Anjouan on July 25-27. Over 200 MSME entrepreneurs attended the Moroni edition. The training covered essential modules on Business Management skills, Digitalization trends and techniques, Financial Management, and Stakeholder Engagement strategies.

President Assoumani expressed enthusiasm, citing that the launch and training would contribute to transforming the country and the entire continent. He emphasized the critical role of a strong, innovative, creative, and value-creating private sector in fostering development.

The President also encouraged young people who have chosen self-employment to fully commit to strengthening their businesses, highlighting their significance to Comoros' economy.

The training in Moheli was officially launched by the Governor of Moheli, H.E Mohamed Said Fazul, who expressed gratitude to AUDA-NEPAD for providing invaluable training to over 150 local entrepreneurs. He urged young entrepreneurs to launch their projects and businesses, encouraging them to explore opportunities beyond traditional government jobs.

Similarly, the Governor of Anjouan, H.E Anissi Chamssidine, stressed the importance of finding African solutions to Africa's problems during the final leg of the training on the island. He commended AUDA-NEPAD for the initiative and believed it would strengthen the working relationship between AUDA-NEPAD and the Comoros government.

AUDA-NEPAD aims to empower entrepreneurs in Comoros, particularly women, and youth, through the launch of the 100 Million MSMEs and business skills training. This empowerment is expected to enable them to capitalize on the opportunities provided by the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

# Aquaculture Africa 2023 Conference: Zambia Government commits to hosting



Preparations for the upcoming 2nd Annual International Conference and Exposition of the African Chapter of the World Aquaculture Society (AFRAQ2023), were given a boost following signing of the hosting agreement by Zambia's Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

The signing the Government of Zambia is fully committed to collaborate with WAS in ensuring smooth organisation of the event.

The hosting agreement was signed by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Dr. Anna Songolo in the presence of the Minister, Hon. Makozi Chikoti, also witnessed by other senior officials from the Ministry. And from WAS's side, the President of the African Chapter of WAS co-signed the agreement. Representatives from the Africa Union and Southern Africa Development Community also witnessed this historic occasion.

More and more institutions, companies and organisations continue to express their interest to participate at AFRAQ2023. Zambia, being one of the fastest aquaculture producer countries in Africa, with vibrant aquaculture value chains in action, is undoubtedly the ideal place to be on November 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> 2023!

The African Chapter of the World Aquaculture Society secretariat is hosted at the AUDA-NEPAD headquarters in South Africa. This strategic partnership represents a significant step towards fostering sustainable aquaculture development across the African continent. By leveraging the expertise and resources of both organizations, the secretariat aims to promote knowledge exchange, research collaboration, and capacity building initiatives in the aquaculture sector. Together, they aspire to drive innovation,

address environmental challenges, and empower local communities through responsible aquaculture practices.

The African Chapter's presence at the AUDA-NEPAD headquarters signifies a shared commitment to enhancing food security, economic growth, and ecological conservation in the region.

Aller Aqua Ltd is the Gold Sponsor of AFRAQ2023. Additional sponsorship and exhibition opportunities are still available. More information is available on <https://www.was.org/meeting/code/AFRAQ23>. You are also welcome to contact the organisers for further queries: [mario@marevent.com](mailto:mario@marevent.com) and [worldaqua@was.org](mailto:worldaqua@was.org) or [africanchapter@was.org](mailto:africanchapter@was.org)



# Empowering Comoros: AUDA-NEPAD's Strategic Technical Retreat in the Union of Comoro



importance of the mission and set the tone for productive discussions. In-depth technical engagement was held on key thematic issues, including the blue economy, climate resilience, industrialization, human capital development, Science, Technology, and Innovation, financial ecosystems, infrastructure development, private sector engagement, and issues related to energy, water, and agriculture. These discussions allowed participants to identify challenges and opportunities in each thematic area. Drawing on its expertise, AUDA-NEPAD provided technical initial advisory services to address the challenges and proposed next steps for actionable measures.

Throughout the discussions, the importance of AUDA-NEPAD's assistance in mobilizing financial and technical resources was emphasized. The discussions also highlighted the need for comprehensive support to realize the vision of the Comoros Emergent Plan 2030 and address the specific challenges faced by the country, particularly in the context of post-COVID-19 recovery.

The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) conducted a mission from July 2nd to 4th, 2023, led by its Executive Secretary, H.E. Mrs. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, to engage with the Government of the Union of Comoros. This mission provided an opportunity to discuss the country's development priorities within the framework of the Comoros Emergent Plan 2030 (CEP 2030) and to highlight the main continental priorities for 2023 in collaboration with the National Support and Coordination Unit of the Comoros presidency of the African Union.

AUDA-NEPAD expressed its commitment to support the President of the Union of Comoros during their term as the Chairperson of the African Union in achieving the continental priorities defined on February 18th, 2023, including issues related to peace and security, the African Continental Free Trade Area, climate, the specificities of island states, the blue economy, women, youth, and the digital economy. The proceedings also highlighted the importance of advancing the African common position on continental challenges in international instances and forums, as well as promoting the Moroni Declaration for action on the Ocean and Climate in Africa at both continental and international levels.

The scoping mission began on July 2nd, 2023, with an official ceremony opened by the Minister of Economy, Industry, Investments, responsible for Economic Integration, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, responsible for the Diaspora and the Arab World, and featured an address by the Executive Secretary of AUDA-NEPAD. The proceedings were presided over by the Minister of Posts, Telecommunications, Digital Economy, and Information of the Union of Comoros. The speeches emphasized the

The Technical Retreat resulted in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between AUDA-NEPAD and the Government of the Union of Comoros, outlining the discussions, resolutions, and roadmaps adopted within the PCE 2030 framework, as well as the identification of areas of collaboration for the development of continental priorities.



## Malawi reviews biosafety applications for field trials of insect-resistant and herbicide-tolerant GM maize



**O**n 3-4 July 2023, in Lilongwe, Malawi, AUDA-NEPAD's biosafety flagship programme provided technical support to Malawi for the review of its applications for confined field trials (CFTs) of genetically modified maize. About 20 participants, including members of the National Biosafety Regulatory Committee, attended the meeting.

Malawi continues to expand its biotech crop technological portfolio by introducing new GM crops and traits. The country has received three applications for the conduct of CFTs of GM maize, bearing traits for insect resistance, herbicide tolerance, and a combination of both insect resistance and herbicide tolerance traits.

In the past few years, maize farming in African countries has been heavily affected by the fall armyworm and other pests that destroy crops thus undermining productivity. Up to now, the efficacy of bio-pesticides and chemicals tested against these pests has proved low, hence the need to also test other technological options to preserve and increase crop yield.

During the meeting, a presentation was made on the outcome of the preliminary review that was undertaken in September 2022 with the support of AUDA-NEPAD. An expert commissioned to review and provide expert opinion on the applications also presented his findings and recommendation, for the Committee to further assess and decide on the applications. Finally, the members of the NBRC held closed sessions for deliberations and the drafting of decision documents.

The technical support of the AUDA-NEPAD Biosafety Programme in the review process is critical to ensure full compliance with national biosafety legal instruments and international best practices. The key mandate of AUDA-NEPAD's Biosafety Programme is to support African countries to safely harness modern biotechnology to help enhance crop productivity and improve food security and nutrition in the continent. This mandate is aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063 Aspiration 1, which envisions "a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, and Goal Number 5, which targets "Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production."

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