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Free access to resources to support production of quality medical products in Africa

The United States Pharmacopeia (USP), in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA –NEPAD), the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the Association of African Universities (AAU), and the Federation of African Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations (FAPMA) announced a new [initiative](#) toward advancing the shared goals of increasing access to quality medicines and vaccines. The United States Pharmacopeia National Formulary (USP-NF) and the USP Education training library will be available free of charge to all stakeholders in Africa working to advance the pharmaceutical ecosystem, including to regulatory authorities, laboratories, academic institutions, and manufacturers.

“Scientific quality standards and a knowledgeable workforce with ability to apply them are important enablers to build trust and confidence in African-produced medical products,” said Ronald T. Piervincenzi, Ph.D., CEO of USP. *“Through our shared efforts, we aim to dramatically advance the production and availability of quality medical products for people throughout Africa.”*

The USP-NF includes more than 5,000 quality standards for medicines, both chemical and biologic; active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs); and excipients (inactive ingredients). It is one of the most comprehensive sources for medicine quality standards in the world.

“Africa’s over-reliance on pharmaceutical imports created unacceptable supply chain vulnerabilities and delays during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Dr. Jean Kaseya, Director-General of Africa CDC. *“We are committed to working with partners like USP to build African manufacturing capacity to ensure that never happens again.”*

This initiative supports several African-led efforts to increase production of quality medical products, including



Africa CDC’s [New Public Health Order](#) and AUDA-NEPAD’s [Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa](#). AUDA-NEPAD, Africa CDC, AAU and FAPMA are collaborating in this effort by engaging their networks to maximize access to these resources.

“Development and growth of the pharmaceutical and vaccine manufacturing sector in Africa is critical to building sustainable and equitable access to health products in Africa,” said Mr. Symerre Grey Johnson, Director for Human Capital and Institutional Development of AUDA-NEPAD. *“With the actualization of the African Medicines Agency coupled with the African Free Trade Agreement and high-level commitments made by the African Union and numerous heads of states, the enabling conditions are primed for this sector to grow.”*

This initiative also builds upon USP’s decades-long efforts to expand access to quality medical products in Africa. Through USP’s own direct investment combined with funding from donors such as the U.S. Agency for International Development and others, USP’s global health programs have spanned collaboration and capacity building with 39 African manufacturers and 33 regional and national regulatory authorities in Africa, including the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization program, the precursor to African Medicines Agency.

“The growth of pharmaceutical manufacturing in Africa hinges on a

dynamic and robust workforce,” said Prof. Olusola Oyewole, Secretary-General of the Association of African Universities (AAU). *“The development of a well-trained human resource pool with access to essential resources, such as those provided by USP, is crucial for educating tomorrow’s workforce, and transforming the continent’s pharmaceutical ecosystem.”*

The announcement was made at the inaugural meeting of USP’s new Africa Regional Chapter, which brings critical perspectives, insights, and expertise that inform priority issues and strengthen USP’s work as a part of its official governance structure. [USP’s regional chapters](#) also provide a forum for regional stakeholders to collaborate to advance common priorities, such as advancing pharmaceutical manufacturing and trade.

“Quality, including the adoption and scale up of accepted quality standards, must be at the heart of Africa’s expanding pharmaceutical sector,” said Emmanuel Mujuru, Chairperson of Federation of African Pharmaceutical Manufacturer’s Association (FAPMA). *“These resources will help African manufacturers move ever closer toward a thriving, quality-focused African pharmaceutical industry.”*

For more information about access to USP-NF and USP’s Education training library, visit www.usp.org/AccessforAfrica.

Supporting healthcare ventures in Africa

A new report led by the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD), highlights key steps healthcare ventures, investors and policy makers can take to foster growth, innovation, and resilience within Africa's healthcare sector.

- 28 early- and growth-stage African healthcare ventures have been supported by the Home-Grown Solutions Accelerator over the last three years.
- 89% of investments in African health tech goes to ventures headquartered in one of the big four countries of Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, or Egypt.
- Localisation is key as realities differ hugely across the continent, with health insurance coverage for instance ranging between 10% in Nigeria to 91% in Rwanda.

AUDA-NEPAD, supported by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has launched a report that provides lessons learned and the strides made over the last three years in accelerating healthcare innovation across the continent.

The AUDA-NEPAD Home-Grown Solutions Accelerator (HGS) aims to accelerate home-grown solutions to strengthen Africa's pandemic resilience, in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063 aspirations.

The pilot cohort that supported five East African ventures was launched in 2021 and has since grown to support 28 early and growth stage healthcare companies. By the end of 2023, businesses that had received acceleration support from the HGS accelerator raised over \$46 million and impacted over 13 million patients in more than 30 countries across the continent.

"The attainment of development goals in Africa is not merely a continental imperative but a global necessity. A thriving Africa contributes to a more equitable global economy, fostering trade, innovation, and partnerships. Addressing challenges such as poverty, education, and healthcare is integral to achieving a more resilient continent"

says H.E Ms Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO of AUDA-NEPAD.

The CEO also highlighted that the Agency's accelerator programme is a testament to what can be achieved when innovation meets determination.

"It is our collective ambition to build resilient healthcare systems that can endure and thrive despite the challenges," she said.

The **report** offers insight on innovation business models, achieving operational excellence navigating investment landscapes and creating a supportive regulatory environment. Here are some of the key points:

Building impactful and sustainable healthcare businesses

"Currently, many of these promising African companies face challenges in scaling operations and impact, particularly cross-border and into adjacent business lines. Our joint report highlights some key lessons for ventures to build impactful businesses and increase their chances of success," says Mathieu Lamiaux, Managing Director and Senior Partner, and Africa Lead for Healthcare at BCG, Nairobi.

Creatively design business

models to meet accessibility and affordability needs in a sustainable way. The accessibility and affordability of high-quality healthcare remain pivotal challenges in Africa, particularly in regions grappling with disparities in wealth, limited infrastructure, and uneven resource allocation. The implication for healthcare businesses, therefore, is to achieve a balance between maintaining affordability and generating sufficient revenue to enable growth and sustainability.

- A notable example is the tiered product offering by **AfyaCare** in Nigeria, which aims to provide accessible healthcare by segmenting its services through the establishment of two hospital brands: one catering to lower-middle income bracket provides basic and urgent treatments at costs low enough to accommodate social health insurance schemes and the second targeting middle to upper-middle-income earners providing additional specialised healthcare concierge services.

Understanding the complexities of market expansion even if operating a scalable technology based healthcare business. The ability to scale quickly has become synonymous with innovation and market dominance, however healthcare ventures should consider reaching critical scale in their home market before launching an expansion campaign. They can then consider adapting their business and/or product/service to the local context and needs.

- **Rology**, a teleradiology player from Egypt and Home-Grown Solutions Accelerator alumnus cemented its position as one of the leaders in its home market, launching an expansion strategy for entry

and growth into Kenya and Saudi Arabia, targeting markets that are ready by assessing the radiology landscape, for example, the number of available radiologists in the market in addition to institutions that aggregated these radiologists, enabling easier reach.

Operational excellence can serve as a key differentiator especially when in a saturated space.

The healthcare market is becoming increasingly saturated, with ventures duplicating one another's delivery models, leading to increased competition and limited differentiation. As such, a strategic focus on operational excellence is paramount to navigate market complexities and guide success under challenging competitive conditions.

Innovative ways to de-risk investments

"Persistent funding gaps remain for many healthcare ventures across the continent, limiting their ability to scale and achieve impact," says George Murumba, Project Manager at AUDA-NEPAD.

The report highlights that funding remains concentrated in the big four countries Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, and Egypt, and a significant portion of funding (60% in 2022) goes to five of the largest HealthTech companies (out of the 101 companies that received funding).

Despite these challenges, substantial opportunities remain for investors to further support healthcare ventures across Africa to drive resilience against global disruptions within the sector.

Creating an enabling regulatory environment

"By formulating and implementing policies that prioritise healthcare infrastructure development, financial incentives, and regulatory frameworks conducive to entrepreneurship, policy makers provide the essential foundations for ventures to thrive," says Tolu Oyekan, Managing Director and Partner at BCG, Lagos.

Policy makers are key in shaping the venture landscape. They need to speed up regulatory harmonisation to avoid complexity, especially in sectors like healthcare. African governments should collaborate with each other and with ventures and developed nations to improve local policies and regulations. Regulators should simplify approval processes to help life-saving products and services reach the market faster.

The symbiotic relationship among government officials, policy makers, investors, and healthcare ventures stands as a cornerstone for fostering resilience and propelling Africa towards the realisation of its development goals.

[**Download the report**](#)

HGS Core Team to assess 17 shortlisted companies



Following a successful pilot in 2021 that supported five East African HGS, the initiative expanded across Africa in 2022, assisting a second cohort of fourteen HGS. In 2023, it supported a third cohort of nine HGS. Over the years, companies such as [DrugStoc](#), [MdaaS Global](#), [Revital](#), [Rology](#), [Sinapi](#), and [Zuri Health](#) have benefited from the accelerator. They have been supported by a robust network including the World Food Programme, Africa CDC, GIZ, Rwandan Development Board, CSIR, AAIC, Ecobank Foundation, Aga Khan Foundation, World Health Organisation, UNIDO, Afreximbank, and others.

In its fourth year, the 2024 HGS call for applications, which opened on 11th April, received 102 applications over five weeks. Out of these, 68 were deemed valid, and 40 fit to be shortlisted. The applications came from companies headquartered in over 25 countries with operations spanning more than 35 countries across the continent. In addition

to digital enablers, supply chain companies, and manufacturers, we received several applications from biotech players across the continent. Several applications were referred by our esteemed cohort of 28 HGS alumni and our advisory panel. Notably, there was a surge in applications towards the deadline, with 28 applications received on May 14th alone, four times higher than the second highest day of submissions.

Following the closure of applications on 14th May, the core team—comprising members from AUDA-NEPAD, JICA, BCG, and Villgro Africa—narrowed the shortlist to 17 companies. These companies will undergo further assessment over the next four weeks to evaluate their alignment with the accelerator's mandate and their potential impact on the continent. The assessment phase will culminate in a steering committee deliberation on 28th June, where the HGS 2024 cohort will be selected.

Accelerating Climate Change Adaptation in Africa



The Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) signed a landmark memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate on accelerating climate change adaptation efforts across Africa. Building on the AUC-GCA-AfDB Africa-led, Africa-owned [Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program \(AAP\)](#), the partnership will support African member states to respond to the impact of the climate crisis.

The MoU establishes a framework for joint initiatives in such critical areas as access to climate adaptation finance, technical and institutional capacity building, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable land and water management, and disaster risk management inclusive the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative. GCA and AUDA-NEPAD will also collaborate hand-in-hand to ensure full delivery on the \$25 billion ambition of the AAP by 2025 and to build the ground for even more ambitious follow-through beyond 2025.

Speaking at the signing ceremony at the GCA regional office in Rotterdam, GCA CEO Professor Patrick V. Verkooijen said: *“We are delighted to formalize our collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD through this MoU. Together, we will work towards a climate-resilient Africa by leveraging our combined expertise and resources to support innovative climate adaptation actions on the ground. AAP is the world’s largest climate adaptation program and the full delivery on the \$25 billion ambition it by 2025 is crucial to keeping Africa safe from the escalating impacts of the climate crisis. This partnership is a significant step in our mission to accelerate climate adaptation solutions for Africa.”*

Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO of AUDA-NEPAD said: *“This MoU with the Global Center on Adaptation marks a pivotal moment in our efforts to build a resilient Africa. We are going to galvanize and double down on progress to fully deliver the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program, as well as to take it to the next stages with the full engagement of Africa. By pooling our strengths, we will enhance the capacity of African countries to adapt to climate change, ensuring sustainable development and improved livelihoods for all. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration that will drive impactful adaptation initiatives across the continent.”*

Key areas of cooperation outlined in the MoU include:

- **Access to Climate Adaptation Finance:** enhancing access to international climate finance for adaptation projects in Africa.
- **Climate adaptation and training:** providing capacity-building initiatives to strengthen adaptation planning and implementation at the local level.
- **Institutional Support and collaboration:** supporting the programmatic

activities of the AUDA-NEPAD Centre on Climate Resilience and Adaptation.

- **Climate-Smart Agriculture:** promoting climate-smart technologies to improve agricultural productivity and food security.
- **Sustainable Land and Water Management:** scaling up nature-based practices to manage land degradation and drought.
- **Building Resilience and Addressing Fragility and Food Insecurity in Rural Settings:** mainstreaming climate adaptation jobs in youth-led enterprises with innovative climate adaptation and resilience solutions; and supporting access to digital advisory services and scalable investments for improved and resilient livelihoods linked to the energy-water-food nexus in rural areas.
- **Support African Member States on Disaster Risk Management:** increasing integration of disaster risk reduction in regional and national sustainable development frameworks and testing risk-informed preparedness plans.
- **Support for African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative:** providing technical capacity to accelerate agroforestry investments to restore degraded landscapes and build resilient communities.
- **Infrastructure Resilience:** enhancing the resilience of infrastructure projects against climate impacts through capacity building and the identification of priority adaptation projects.

GCA and AUDA-NEPAD will also jointly organize events and advocacy initiatives to promote climate adaptation. This includes participation in such continental and global climate forums as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Africa Climate Weeks and the GCA Annual Climate Adaptation Summit.

Advancing Agenda 2063: AU Considers Feasibility of Development Fund

Last week, senior representatives from the Committee of Fifteen Ministers of Finance (F15) of AU member states, alongside officials from AUDA-NEPAD, the African Union Commission (AUC), and key stakeholders from prominent African institutions, convened at AUDA-NEPAD headquarters. The focal point of their discussions was a comprehensive review of the feasibility study for the AU Agenda 2063 Development Fund.



Throughout their visit, these delegates significantly contributed to refining and enhancing the feasibility study. Their objective was clear: to rigorously evaluate the study, integrating crucial insights that would deepen its scope and effectiveness. This process involved a meticulous scrutiny of the study's findings, underlying assumptions, and strategic recommendations.



The initiative to explore the feasibility of the Development Fund stemmed from a directive by the AU Executive Council (EX.CL/Dec.1143-1167(XL)), which mandated a thorough analysis to assess the practicality of establishing such a fund. The envisioned AU Agenda 2063 Development Fund aims to provide a sustainable and predictable financial resource crucial for supporting the comprehensive implementation of Agenda 2063 across the continent.



Upon approval and operationalization, the feasibility study is anticipated to catalyze new global partnerships and bolster resilience, focusing on adaptable and sustainable development strategies in response to evolving global dynamics. The AU Agenda 2063 Development Fund represents a strategic shift towards more dynamic and effective financial mechanisms, designed to advance the environmental, social, and economic objectives outlined in the Agenda 2063 goals.

Battling Dengue: AUDA-NEPAD and Malaysia join Forces

Dengue fever, malaria, and other vector-borne diseases pose significant challenges in tropical and subtropical regions worldwide. To address these issues, the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) has organised a study visit to the Institute for Medical Research (IMR) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Malaysia is employing a novel method to combat dengue by releasing mosquitoes infected with Wolbachia bacteria. This approach has shown great promise and is garnering global attention.

During the opening session, Dr. Nazni Wasi Ahmad of the IMR discussed the institute's innovative approach to dengue prevention. In her presentation, she detailed the methodology used to introduce these Wolbachia strain mosquitoes to communities. She emphasised that effective communication and advocacy were crucial for securing full community buy-in. Additionally, she highlighted the deployment of Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes in Malaysia as a significant step in the country's efforts to control and prevent dengue.

The goal of this study visit is to share knowledge and experiences between experts from Burkina Faso and Malaysia, focusing on understanding Malaysia's dengue control methods, including scientific, technical, and regulatory aspects. The visit will also explore how these methods could be implemented in Africa.

Participants in the study visit include members of the Burkina Faso health and scientific community, such as Ministers, Director-Generals from relevant agencies, IMR scientists, Malaysian regulatory authorities, and key decision-makers involved in vector control initiatives. Their participation demonstrates Africa's dedication to finding new solutions to combat diseases like dengue. By learning from Malaysia, African countries hope to adopt effective strategies to improve



public health and reduce the impact of dengue fever across the continent.

At the opening of the study visit, Dr. Barbara Glover, IVM Programme Officer at AUDA-NEPAD, stated: *"We believe that malaria and dengue should be a thing of the past on the continent. Diseases such as dengue can be controlled with innovative vector control tools. AUDA-NEPAD's Integrated Vector Management programme has planned similar study visits to Brazil and Colombia, bringing together regulators and stakeholders throughout the continent to learn from global experiences in using innovative vector control tools to address vector-borne diseases in Africa."*

In their research article titled *"Uncovering the Burden of Dengue in Africa: Considerations on Magnitude, Misdiagnosis, and Ancestry,"* Emily Mary Gainor, Eva Harris, et al. state that dengue cases in Africa have been documented since as early as 1779. However, there has been fragmented reporting of the epidemiology of this disease and a lack of comprehensive reviews on various considerations relevant to this underreported and overlooked problem on the African continent.

Their research indicates that many sub-Saharan African countries are severely resource-constrained and may face issues with proper diagnostic testing, vector control, and medical attention for dengue. "Not only is dengue medically important and a major cause of morbidity worldwide, but it is also associated with a significant economic burden, in the magnitude of billions of dollars annually," the research article states.

Among the delegation attending the study visit are the Burkina Faso Ministers of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation, Prof. Adjima Thiombiano, and the Minister of Environment, Water, and Sanitation, Dr. Roger Baro. Both ministers agree that innovative vector control strategies are crucial for dengue prevention and control in Africa.

On the margins of the study tour, the team also paid a courtesy visit to the the Minister of Health of Malaysia, Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad. In the ensuing discussions, the Minister highlighted the importance of integrated approaches, unity and diversity in addressing vector borne diseases. Emphasising that unity in development efforts is crucial, he pointed out the need for the approval of all government agencies

and communities in the development and deployment of innovative vector control technologies and interventions. This collaborative approach ensures that initiatives are comprehensive and receive the necessary support from various sectors. The success of Malaysia's strategy, particularly the release of Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes, is attributed to this inclusive and coordinated effort, which could serve as a model for similar projects in Africa.

In addition, the delegation paid a visit to the Taman Seri Keramat community. The discussions with community leaders focused on the challenges and solutions in gaining community acceptance of innovative health measures. Malaysian community leaders shared their experiences in

educating the public about the science behind vector control methods, using evidence from successful implementations in other countries as well as visits to the research laboratories by the community. Continuous feedback and community ownership were identified as key components for the project's success. The delegates from Africa were encouraged to adopt a similar inclusive and feedback-driven approach to ensure the maximum effectiveness of interventions in their own countries. This participatory method not only builds trust but also ensures that the implemented strategies are well-received and sustainable.

The collaboration between AUDA-NEPAD and Malaysia in the fight against dengue represents a significant

step forward in global health efforts. By sharing innovative approaches and knowledge, both regions can enhance their strategies to combat vector-borne diseases more effectively.

The study visit to Malaysia not only underscores the importance of international cooperation but also paves the way for future partnerships and advancements in public health. With continued dedication and the implementation of cutting-edge techniques, there is hope for a future where diseases like dengue are significantly reduced, improving the quality of life for millions across the globe.



AUDA-NEPAD’s “Thoughts to ponder”



Reflecting on our study tour to Malaysia, I came back with a mix of renewed optimism and practical insights. Initially, there was some understandable scepticism among our stakeholders about the practicality of implementing such a scientifically advanced approach within the diverse and complex regulatory environments of Africa. However, seeing the project in action in Malaysia, with

clear success in reducing dengue transmission, was a real eye-opener, and I can confidently say we met our aim for the tour.

Our meetings, particularly with Malaysia’s Minister of Health, were incredibly impactful. He emphasised the importance of an integrated approach, where community buy-in and interagency collaboration are essential. His advice highlighted the need for us to not only introduce new technologies but also to ensure they are embraced by the communities and supported by coherent policy frameworks. This experience has left me inspired and hopeful about transferring these innovative strategies to our contexts in Africa, tackling dengue, malaria and other vector-borne diseases with a community-first approach.

Adding to this enriching experience was our visit to the community of Taman Seri Keramat, where we were able to engage directly with the individuals most impacted by the Wolbachia project and release some Wolbachia mosquitoes into the community. The community leaders shared their journey towards accepting and supporting the innovative vector control measures, illustrating the critical role of education and ongoing communication in overcoming initial resistance. Hearing from the residents about their firsthand experiences—how the project reduced the incidence of dengue and enhanced their quality of life—was both heartwarming and instructive. It brought to life the strategies, statistics and data we often discuss in boardrooms.

Lastly, one aspect that particularly resonated with me was the notable presence of women in both the research and implementation phases of the Wolbachia project. As a woman, it was inspiring to see female scientists, community leaders, and health workers playing pivotal roles. Their expertise and leadership not only challenged the often male-dominated field of science and technology but also added a layer of inclusivity and perspective that is crucial for public health initiatives.

Barbara Glover, Programme Officer, African Union Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET)

My experience at the Study Visit on Dengue Control in Malaysia was incredibly enriching. One of the highlights was exploring the complex science behind how the IMR creates Wolbachia mosquitoes. Learning about the intricate processes and innovative techniques used to breed these



special mosquitoes that help combat dengue was fascinating. Another standout moment was witnessing these mosquitoes’ remarkable impact on the Taman Seri Keramat community. Seeing community leaders actively campaign and educate the public about the benefits of Wolbachia mosquitoes was truly inspiring. Their dedication has led to widespread acceptance

and successful rollout of these mosquitoes, highlighting the power of community involvement in public health initiatives.

I also had the privilege of releasing more Wolbachia mosquitoes in Seri Keramat, and in that moment, I felt an overwhelming sense of purpose and hope. It filled me with the belief that Africa can overcome the burden of dengue, malaria, and other vector-borne diseases. This study tour has reinforced my belief in the importance of innovation for a healthier Africa. By learning from Malaysia’s success, I am optimistic that African countries can adopt effective strategies to improve public health and significantly reduce the impact of dengue fever and other vector-borne diseases across our continent.

Nhlawulo Shikwambane, Public Relations and Advocacy Officer



The study tour was such a real opener in regard to the application of innovative vector control tools and technologies. Witnessing and hearing first-hand success story from the community and their representatives was such an encouragement to me that indeed, with an inclusive, collaborative, robust, and efficient rollout framework for innovative vector control tools, malaria and

other vector borne diseases can be a thing of the past in the continent of Africa. Certainly, the roll of the community remains central to the success of applying such an initiative. As I joined the community in releasing the Wolbachia mosquitoes, I could not help but admire the confidence and sense of ownership the community displayed in the use of Wolbachia mosquitoes to control and eliminate Dengue in Malaysia. Undeniably, Africa too can greatly benefit from exploring the application of innovative health technologies for the benefit of its population and economies.

Christopher Okonji, Programme Officer

Spotlight on PIDA Water Projects at the 10th World Water Forum



The 10th World Water Forum, organised by the World Water Council and the Government of Indonesia, opened in Bali, Indonesia, under the theme “*Water for Shared Prosperity*.” Since its inaugural session in 1997 in Marrakech, the Forum has grown significantly, becoming an essential platform for addressing the global water crisis. This edition, with close to 10,000 participants, continued the tradition of fostering international cooperation on water issues.

On May 21st, on the margins of the 10th World Water Forum, AUDA-NEPAD partnered with UNESCO, Water Aid, and Water for People, and convened a side event titled “*Water and Water Infrastructure for Development: Paving the Path for Water Security and Sustainable Development*.” The session focused on strengthening project preparation capacities for increased water infrastructure development and climate-proofing infrastructure, featuring insightful case studies from Malawi and Ethiopia.

The session's primary objective was to enhance the capacity for preparing water infrastructure projects and to integrate climate resilience into these projects. This objective aligns with the broader goals of Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) Water vision, which seeks to promote integrated water resource management and sustainable infrastructure development across Africa.

Africa's Strategic Priorities at the Forum

African nations faced unique challenges and opportunities in water management, necessitating focused discussion at international platforms like the World Water Forum. Africa's strategic priorities included:

- **Building Trust and Enhancing Cooperation:** Ensuring fair and equitable access to water resources through cooperation among African countries.
- **Mobilising Resources:** Making water an investment class to close the funding gap and provide citizens with potable drinking water.
- **Sustainability and Resilience:** Ensuring the sustainability and resilience of water infrastructure through integrated water resources management.

Africa's Participation and Preparatory Work

Under the auspices of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), and various river basin organisations, Africa prepared extensively for this Forum. For example, Egypt led a special session on addressing water issues through scientific research and applied solutions. The African Union Commission convened a discussion on “*Mobilising Political Commitment for Accelerating Climate Resilient Water Investments in Africa*.”

Africa's participation in the 10th World Water Forum was crucial for addressing immediate water challenges and influencing global water policy. The forum presented an opportunity to enhance Africa's voice in the global water discourse and forge partnerships that drive meaningful progress.

Maximising Africa's Blue Economy Potential - A Programme to Strengthen Africa's Seaweed Value Chains

"Seaweed farming is one of the key industries of the Blue Economy in Tanzania in the context of aquaculture... Seaweed farming is a priority of the government to enhance resilience and prosperity of coastal communities, and particularly of the high numbers of women that are engaged in the sector."

The importance of seaweed for Tanzania was highlighted by the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Livestock And Fisheries, Mainland Tanzania, Professor Riziki S. Shemdoe, at the opening of the workshop on Maximising Africa's Blue Economy Potential - A Programme to Strengthen Africa's Seaweed Value Chains.

The capacity building event held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, from 28-31 May 2024, was organized by AUDA-NEPAD and hosted by the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries of the United Republic of Tanzania. Additional partners of the workshop included the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries - Zanzibar, the Zanzibar Seaweed Cluster Initiative, FAO, AU-IBAR, FAO, and WWF, the World Bank. The workshop was financially supported by the Government of Colombia through the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC-Colombia) under the auspices of the South-South Co-operation partnership.

Seaweeds are highly productive marine resources that hold vast potential for contributing to development aspirations in Africa, and particularly to the development of Africa's Blue Economy. Globally, seaweed is one of the fastest growing food production sectors in the world today. They are also used in a wide variety of non-food products, supporting livelihoods and economic growth for some of the most vulnerable populations. Seaweeds also play a significant role in climate change adaptation, sequestering carbon, reducing ocean acidification and eutrophication, and providing critical habitats for commercially important fish stocks. Hence seaweed aquaculture's direct ecological benefits to the environment supports the emerging concept of "restorative aquaculture".



Africa has over the years demonstrated considerable potential for seaweed production in several countries. In total, Africa produced just over 200,000 metric tonnes of seaweed, with the bulk (over 90 percent) coming from Tanzania and Zanzibar. About 11 other African countries are currently involved in seaweed farming and harvesting, commercially or experimentally, for export or domestic utilisation. Recognizing the potential of Africa's seaweed value chains to contribute to blue economy development, livelihoods and economic growth, AUDA-NEPAD has worked since 2021 to engage with various key stakeholders and partners to strengthen the community of practice to identify and address priorities for development, and to raise awareness to realise the potential of the sector.

The experience sharing, training and planning workshop was organized as a response to the priorities identified during an initial stakeholder engagement event organized by AUDA-NEPAD in collaboration with the Zanzibar Seaweed Cluster Initiative

in November 2021 and the Government of Zanzibar. The call was made then for a strengthened community of practice, improved standards and conformity procedures and training in value addition. AUDA-NEPAD has been working since then to engage with key stakeholders and partners to identify and address priorities, mobilize resources and to raise awareness to realize the potential of the sector.

The overall objective of the workshop was to identify ways to grow and strengthen Africa's seaweed value chains and further support the coordination of efforts and stakeholders involved in the industry by strengthening the community of practice and facilitating dialogue among key stakeholders on improved seaweed production, processing and marketing, while moving towards women's empowerment.

Participants included representatives from the Government of Colombia, AU agencies, RECs, and AU Member States (Tanzania, Zanzibar, Kenya, Somalia, Madagascar, Tunisia and Eritrea). Leaders from seaweed production and



processing initiatives, researchers, the private sector and non-state actors working in the seaweed sector (from Tanzania, Zanzibar, Mozambique and Korea) also contributed to the workshop, both physically and virtually.

The workshop provided an interactive and brainstorming experience for a diverse array of participants from the African and global seaweed value chain sectors. Sessions were conducted through presentations, deliberations, experience sharing and planning and networking interactions. Best practices and approaches on gender mainstreaming and transformative approaches in the aquaculture sector were shared and opportunities for their application to the seaweed sector were showcased. Technical presentations shared updates on current initiatives, challenges and innovations in the seaweed industry both in Africa and Korea. The event also provided a useful training platform for value chain actors and key officials on biotechnology advances, voluntary sustainability standards, improved quality infrastructure, and trade in seaweed. A field visit to two seaweed production and processing sites in Bagamoyo, served to give participants first-hand insights on seaweed farming, processing, value addition and trade.



Participants learning from Ms Fatuma Geoffrey Man, co-founder of the Healthy Seaweed Café, about processing seaweed food products,



AUDA-NEPAD is leveraging on the key outcomes from the workshop to support a sustainable way forward for coordinated and evidence-based action to drive greater awareness and investment into growing and scaling Africa's seaweed value chains.

Director of Blue Economy of the Federal Government of Somalia, Dr Raisa Mohamed, exploring some of the food products produced by the Healthy Seaweed Cafe

Transforming Healthcare in Africa through the AUDA-NEPAD Primary Health Initiative

The AUDA-NEPAD on 24 May 2024, launched the ambitious Continental Primary Healthcare (PHC) Programme for 2025-2030. This initiative addresses the critical shortage of health workers and seeks to improve healthcare outcomes across Africa by empowering Community Health Workers (CHWs). With the goal of achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and advancing the African Union's Agenda 2063, this programme represents a significant step towards a healthier and more prosperous Africa.

According to a 2018 WHO report, Africa is expected to face a shortfall of 6.1 million health workers by 2030. This deficit severely impedes access to healthcare, particularly in underserved and vulnerable populations. Addressing this shortfall is essential for achieving Universal Health Coverage and improving health outcomes across the continent.

CHWs are pivotal in bridging the healthcare gap, especially in underserved regions. Recognized by the WHO as crucial to strengthening Continental Primary Healthcare, Community Health Workers play a vital role in delivering healthcare services at the grassroots level. The AU's Agenda 2063 envisions an integrated and prosperous Africa with enhanced access to quality healthcare, emphasizing the expansion and empowerment of CHW programmes.

The AUDA-NEPAD Continental Primary Healthcare Programme will be implemented in three phases over five years, focusing on 25 African countries within the AU's five Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The selection of countries will consider healthcare infrastructure needs, disease burden, existing CHW frameworks, and regional representation.

Phase 1: Building the Foundation (Year 1)

- **Workforce Development:** Training and upskilling Community Health Workers.
- **Digital Health Infrastructure Assessments:** Evaluating current infrastructure and identifying areas for improvement.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships:** Engaging governments, NGOs, and private sector partners.

Phase 2: Empowering PHC Workers and Implementing Digital Solutions (Year 2)

- **Digital Health Training:** Providing CHWs with training in digital health technologies.
- **Pilot Programmes:** Implementing pilot programmes to test and refine digital health solutions.
- **Data Security Measures:** Ensuring the security and privacy of health data.



Phase 3: Scaling Up and Ensuring Sustainability (Years 3-5)

- **National Rollout of Digital Health Solutions:** Expanding successful pilot programmes nationwide.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** Offering ongoing training and development opportunities for CHWs.
- **Innovative Financing Mechanisms:** Exploring new ways to fund and sustain healthcare initiatives.

By empowering Community Health Workers and integrating digital health solutions, the programme aims to:

- **Enhance Healthcare Access and Quality:** Improve the reach and effectiveness of healthcare services.
- **Improve MNCAH Outcomes:** Focus on maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health.
- **Strengthen Health Systems Resilience:** Build robust health systems capable of withstanding future challenges.
- **Drive Progress Towards Universal Health Coverage and the SDGs:** Contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

The AUDA-NEPAD Continental Primary Healthcare Programme is a comprehensive initiative that seeks to build a sustainable and equitable healthcare foundation in Africa. Through strategic investments, policy reforms, and multisectoral collaboration, this programme aims to leave no one behind in the journey towards better health and well-being for all Africans. By enhancing the capacity of Community Health Workers and integrating them into mainstream healthcare systems, Africa can make significant strides towards a healthier and more prosperous future.

Strategic Retreat: AUDA-NEPAD and DIRCO unite to propel Agenda 2063



From June 19-20, AUDA-NEPAD and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa (DIRCO) are holding a retreat to discuss South Africa's critical role in AUDA-NEPAD's strategic work, including its implementation of the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063.

South Africa plays multiple roles in AUDA-NEPAD: as the host country, as a member of its governance structures, and as one of the five founding countries of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In this regard, South Africa has significant responsibility and influence in guiding AUDA-NEPAD to ensure the realization of Agenda 2063.

At the opening session, Dr. Msingathi Sipuka, Chief of Staff of AUDA-NEPAD, emphasized the various roles the Government of South Africa should play in shaping AUDA-NEPAD's strategic direction, including providing necessary operational support. "As we envision the future of AUDA-NEPAD, South Africa is an integral part of that future," said Dr. Sipuka.

Over the next two days, the retreat will address different areas of AUDA-NEPAD's mandate, including accelerating the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative, implementing the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan, strengthening national statistics data and systems with South Africa's support, collaborating through AUDA-NEPAD Centres of Excellence, and discussing operational issues such as the host agreement.

In his remarks, Mr. Luvuyo Ndimeni, Chief Director of the African Union, Branch: Global Governance and Continental Agenda at DIRCO, commended AUDA-NEPAD for its role in the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan (STYIP) of Agenda 2063 and expressed his enthusiasm for the upcoming discussions on how South Africa can best support AUDA-NEPAD.

AUDA-NEPAD and Norad Partner to Accelerate Soil Health for Sustainable Food Systems in Africa



The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) and the Government of Norway have joined forces to launch a transformative partnership aimed at enhancing soil health for sustainable food systems across Africa. The partnership marks a significant milestone in addressing the pressing issue of soil health on the continent.

This ambitious 3-year Programme is designed to support AU member States in implementing the resolutions of the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit, currently convened in Nairobi, Kenya from 7-9 May. The initiative aims to leverage policy, practice, and research to effectively manage soil health and advance agricultural sustainability in Africa.

Ms. Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong, Director of Agriculture, Food Security, and Environmental Sustainability at AUDA-NEPAD, emphasised the importance of the partnership in facilitating the domestication of the summit resolutions by AU Member States. She expressed gratitude to the Government of Norway for its

unwavering commitment to the African Agenda and, longstanding partnership with AUDA-NEPAD.

On behalf of Norway, the Minister of International Development, Honorable. Anne Beathe Tvinneim underscored the significance of the partnership in implementing summit outcomes. Highlighting Norway's chairmanship of the Development Partners Coordination Group, the Minister emphasised the importance of projects yielding tangible results. "The partnership with AUDA-NEPAD is deemed critical in achieving meaningful impact on the ground, particularly in optimising data and information for active monitoring and evaluation of policies and farming practices' impact on soil health", said the Minister

The launch, held on the margins of the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit, aligns with the summit's focus on investing in healthy soils for healthy diets, healthy people, and a healthy planet. Against the backdrop of a worsening climate crisis, the importance of healthy soils in increasing productivity, enhancing

resilience, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions cannot be overstated.

AUDA-NEPAD partners with Nord Monitoring soil health is paramount to tracking progress and ensuring accountability to summit commitments. As Lisinge-Fotabong emphasised, sustained support and innovative approaches are imperative for the long-term investment in soil health restoration, despite the few immediate benefits.

AUDA-NEPAD and Norway look forward to realising the transformative potential of their partnership in advancing soil health and sustainable food systems across Africa.

Creating an Enabling Environment for Biosafety Regulation in Rwanda

Rwanda is committed to implementing its newly passed biosafety law in line with best practices. To support this, the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA), with AUDA-NEPAD's assistance, hosted a three-day workshop in Kigali from 6 to 8 May 2024. The workshop focused on enhancing biosafety regulation by developing relevant orders as stipulated in the law. Attendees included representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB), and other key ministries.

Central to the agenda was the review of the draft Prime Minister Order establishing the National Biosafety Committee and the draft Ministerial Order determining modalities for permit application, requirements, and procedures. These orders are crucial for implementing Rwanda's biosafety law, creating an enabling environment for biosafety regulation.

Participants engaged in constructive discussions, aligning the drafts with the national biosafety law and standard best practices. Moving forward, the drafts will be improved based on feedback, validated, translated into the official languages, and submitted for approval. These follow-up actions emphasise the need for continued support and capacity strengthening of the regulators and relevant stakeholders on biosafety regulation in Rwanda.

AUDA-NEPAD, through the African Biosafety Network of Expertise, reiterates its continued support in ensuring that an enabling environment for biosafety regulation is created and sustained in Rwanda. This will contribute to increased agricultural productivity and better food nutrition thereby boosting the country's capacity towards overcoming its food safety and insecurity challenges, hence such support will fast track the delivery of Africa's transformation as encapsulated in Agenda 2063.



Boosting African Development through National Footprint Structures

The recently concluded African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) Technical Retreat, held from May 22-24, marked a significant milestone in advancing Africa's socio-economic development. This gathering brought together NEPAD Offices and Focal Points to discuss the proposal of establishing AUDA-NEPAD's national footprint structures, a move aimed at accelerating the implementation of Agenda 2063, Africa's blueprint for transformative growth.

The AUDA-NEPAD has been a cornerstone in addressing Africa's critical challenges such as poverty eradication, sustainable growth, and women's empowerment. Over two decades; the institution's vision has evolved, adapting to the continent's changing needs while maintaining its focus on Africa-led development.

In line with Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.852 (XXXVI) of the African Union Heads of State and Government Assembly, which called for AUDA-NEPAD to explore with Member States the potential for expanding its national and regional presence, AUDA-NEPAD aims to strengthen its footprint through an expanded presence across the continent. Through this proposal the agency seeks to consolidate its role of a trusted development partner, providing timely, responsive, and needs-based support. To this end, the primary purpose of this initiative is to propose the establishment of national and regional AUDA-NEPAD offices, which will institute and increase the Agency's presence in the diverse regions and nations and position it strategically to address the unique challenges and opportunities presented by individual Member States. AUDA-NEPAD seeks to bring the Agency closer to the African people to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of individual countries' plans, priorities, and development challenges.

Speaking at the opening of the retreat, H.E. Ms Nardos Bekele-Thomas re-emphasised the AUDA-NEPAD's commitment to bringing development closer to Africans, ensuring that its interventions are not only effective but





also resonate with the unique needs of each community. *“This retreat marks a pivotal step towards realising a more integrated and prosperous Africa, where every citizen can reap the benefits of sustainable development,”* she said.

The core functions of the proposed AUDA-NEPAD country offices include:

- **Programme and Project Implementation:** Overseeing and managing resources to ensure initiatives align with the organisation’s goals.
- **Coordination and Collaboration:** Enhancing partnerships with local governments, NGOs, and stakeholders to boost the impact and sustainability of development initiatives.
- **Substantive Support:** Providing technical assistance and expertise to member states for effective project implementation.
- **Government Relations:** Aligning

with national priorities and garnering support for AUDA-NEPAD initiatives.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly assessing the progress of programmes to foster transparency and accountability.
- **Resource Mobilisation:** Seeking funding and support from local donors and the private sector to sustain and expand programmes.
- **Adaptation to Local Context:** Tailoring global or regional strategies to local socio-economic and cultural conditions.
- **Capacity Building:** Enhancing the skills and resources of local partners and institutions.
- **Policy Dialogue:** Engaging with national authorities to shape policies that align with the organisation’s mission.

- **Communication and Reporting:** Providing updates and feedback to ensure alignment with organisational objectives.

The Retreat has underscored the importance of a decentralised, collaborative approach to development. By establishing national footprint structures, AUDA-NEPAD is poised to deliver more effective, context-specific interventions that directly address the needs and priorities of African countries.

Through these efforts, AUDA-NEPAD aims to create a more resilient and prosperous Africa, capable of overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities for growth and development. The outcomes of the retreat will be presented to the AUDA-NEPAD Steering Committee for further deliberation and approval, ensuring that the next steps align with the broader strategic goals and mandates set by the Heads of State and Government.

Transforming Africa: Strategic Insights and Collaborative Efforts at the African Development Bank Group Annual Meetings



The African Development Bank Group Annual Meetings, held from 27 to 31 May 2024, centered on the theme “Africa’s Transformation: The African Development Bank Group and the Reform of the Global Financial Architecture.” The event was a critical platform for addressing Africa’s economic challenges and exploring strategic solutions. H.E. Ms Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO of AUDA-NEPAD, actively participated, providing key insights and engaging in bilateral meetings to foster trade and development across the continent.

This year’s report outlined crucial strategies to tackle the continent’s economic issues, such as slowed GDP growth and rising debt levels. Key recommendations included:

- 1. Utilising the AfCFTA:** Enhancing intra-African trade and economic connectivity through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is vital for economic growth.
- 2. Sustainable Practices and Technological Innovation:** Promoting sustainability and innovation in agriculture and mining sectors to diversify economies.
- 3. Infrastructure Investments:** Significant increases in infrastructure investments are essential to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063.

H.E. Ms Bekele-Thomas emphasised that transforming Africa into a global economic powerhouse requires a collaborative, whole-of-society approach. She highlighted the need for a unified and inclusive development strategy to position Africa as a global economic leader. “Let’s work together to make Africa a resilient and thriving economic frontier,” she urged.

As AUDA-NEPAD progresses into the second decade of Agenda 2063, leveraging past initiatives and expediting the implementation of critical programs are crucial for enhancing socio-economic conditions in Kenya and across the continent.

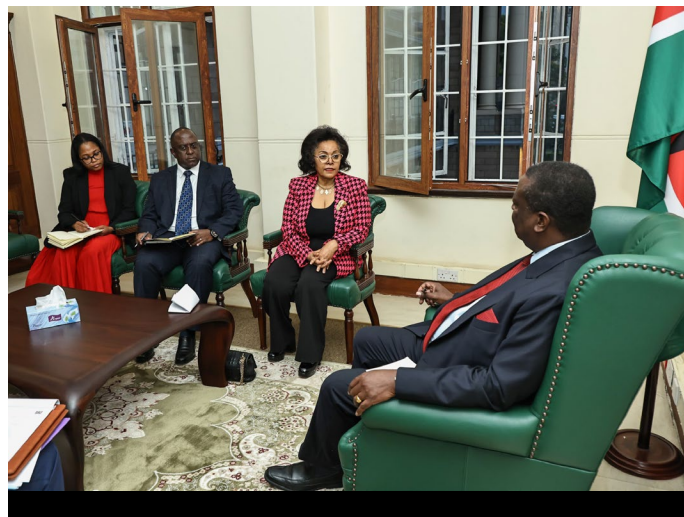
Bilateral Engagements and Strategic Partnerships

On the sidelines of the annual meetings, Ms Bekele-Thomas engaged in several bilateral discussions to strengthen trade and development initiatives:

- Meeting with Trade and Development Bank (TDB) Officials:** Key outcomes included designating focal persons from TDB to be part of AUDA-NEPAD’s Technical Steering Committee and facilitating ongoing communication for the implementation of PIDA-PAP II.
- Meeting with the CEO of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), Ms. Boitumelo Mosako:** Both parties agreed to reinstate dedicated institutional focal points for technical partnership dimensions and to convene another meeting to enhance cooperative initiatives, focusing on early project preparation in Southern Africa.
- Meeting with Honourable Musalia Mudavadi, Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Kenya.**
- Meeting with AIF Special Envoy Yacine Fal:** AUDA-NEPAD committed to participating as a strategic partner in the Africa Investment Forum (AIF) event in December 2024 in Rabat.



Meeting with Trade and Development Bank (TDB) Officials



Meeting with Honourable Musalia Mudavadi



Meeting with the CEO of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)



Meeting with the CEO of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)

On the margins of the AfDB Annual Meeting with representatives of African Development Finance Institutions H.E Ms Nardos Thomas Bekele, AUDA-NEPAD CEO, joined conversation and reflection on *“Debt accumulation and the future of development finance in Africa”* Indeed Africa’s loans in default reached the highest record in three decades. In 2022, the amount of impaired loans increased to US\$ 149.4 billion from US\$ 112.2 billion in 2021 and US\$ 100.2 billion. The event provided an opportunity for participating Heads of African Development Finance Institutions to reflect on the implications of debt accumulation and the future of development finance in Africa.

In addition, the CEO was part of a panel discussion on Using Strategic Foresight to Rethink GDP For an Inclusive and Equitable Global Financial Architecture . on 30 May .

“We must continue to leverage strategic foresight to integrate African perspectives into the global economic narrative. By doing so, we ensure that Africa’s voice is not just heard but heeded in crafting a globally inclusive and equitable

financial system. This approach is not merely aspirational; it is essential, with reports indicating that with appropriate policy interventions, Africa could achieve an additional \$1.2 trillion in GDP growth by 2030”, said Ms Nardos Bekele-Thomas.

Conclusion

The African Development Bank Group Annual Meetings showcased the importance of strategic insights and collaborative efforts in addressing Africa’s economic challenges. With a focus on sustainable practices, technological innovation, and infrastructure investments, and through strengthened partnerships, Africa is poised to transform into a resilient and thriving economic frontier.

The commitment to a unified approach and the active engagement of key stakeholders underscore the continent’s potential to become a global economic powerhouse.

2024 AUDA-NEPAD, LUCE & Sida Annual Review Meeting

The annual review meeting of Phase 4 of the African Science, Technology, and Innovation Indicators (ASTII) Programme for its second year took place in Lund, Sweden, from May 13 to May 17, 2024. This gathering allowed AUDA-NEPAD, Lund University, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to assess the progress and impact of the ASTII Programme. The meeting brought together key stakeholders, including members of the ASTII Phase 4 consortium, to review achievements, address challenges, and strategize for the future. This pivotal initiative aims to enhance scientific and technological capabilities across Africa, fostering evidence-based policy development with internationally comparable core research and innovation indicators.

and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) of 2006, before the adoption of STISA-2024. Initially, ASTII was designed into two parts: the establishment of the African Observatory of Science, Technology, and Innovation (AOSTI), now operational in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, and the capacity-building component managed by the ASTII team under the Office of STI in the AUDA-NEPAD CEO's Office.

ASTII has also aligned itself as a monitoring instrument of the implementation of the 10-year AU-EU Innovation Agenda (2023-2032), which prioritises public health, green transition, innovation and technology, capacities for science, and cross-cutting issues. The AU-EU Innovation Agenda, adopted on July 19, 2023, aligns with Agenda

opportunities for startups. Swedish firms and universities have expressed interest in supporting African startups through incubation and joint ventures. The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Sweden, known for its international diversity, presents a valuable opportunity for African startups looking to enter the Scandinavian market.

The collaboration also extends to education and innovation management. Ongoing discussions involve inviting faculties to share model courses and support innovation management programs. Sweden's approach to innovation, influenced by cultures like Silicon Valley, emphasises collaboration between universities, corporations, and startups. This model promotes a system



This significant engagement aimed to evaluate the progress of the fourth phase of ASTII (2021-2025). ASTII was initiated by African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government following recommendations from Ministers responsible for Science, Technology, and Innovation at their previous conference, the African Ministerial Conference on Science, Technology, and Innovation (AMCOST), which preceded the current AU Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (AU-STC-ESTI). This initiative was also a prominent Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) program under the previous STI framework, known as Africa's Science

2063, particularly Aspiration 1, which envisions a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, and Aspiration 6, which calls for an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth. This joint agenda seeks to enhance the capacity for scientific collaboration between universities in Europe and institutions across the AU, promoting mobility among researchers and staff, and facilitating joint ventures and startup collaborations.

One of the key outcomes of the partnership between Africa and Europe has been the exploration of collaborative

where tertiary institutions, large companies, and new businesses work closely together to foster innovation, combining their respective strengths to create a vibrant ecosystem supporting the development of emerging technologies, products, and services.

The conversation also addressed the challenges of transforming organisations to adapt to the rapidly changing global economy.

In this context, the AUDA-NEPAD Policy Bridge Tank (APBT), in support of the ASTII programme through a joint assignment to digitalise the ASTII survey



process via the UL-Brazil-Africa Trilateral Development Cooperation Project, plays a crucial role. It emphasises the value of data measurement and collection in bridging policy gaps and sharing good lessons during the G20 platform of think tanks (Think20 or T20). This approach views academic learning as revealing its impact over time, much like a seed growing into a mighty tree, with unseen roots anchoring progress. Successful policy implementation varies by country and context, with coordination being crucial for development; small efforts can lead to significant outcomes.

The review also highlighted the importance of regional collaboration and digitalisation efforts among key partners, focusing on STI measurement. The project has made strides in supporting AOSTI and implementing innovation management strategies. However, challenges with the technology platform were noted, and efforts are underway to address these issues. Collaboration with regional economic communities (RECs) and other stakeholders has been crucial in enhancing industrialisation and policy development across the continent.

Looking forward, early evaluation and strategic planning were identified as vital for the continued success of ASTII. Conducting an external evaluation at least one year before the project's closing was proposed to provide valuable insights for future proposals and ensure alignment with evolving needs and challenges.

Image: H.E. Ambassador of Jainaba Jagne, Permanent Representative of Gambia to the AU in Addis Ababa

On the margins of this annual review meeting, participants in the 2024 cohort were encouraged to enhance capacity by sharing relevant ideas and engaging with each other, embracing the opportunity to participate in knowledge exchange and networking. Beyond this, the stimuli to play a transactional role in transferring knowledge for transformation is fundamental as the participants collaborate, exchange insights, and participate actively, contributing to a dynamic learning environment that fosters growth and meaningful impact. The cohort is expected to benefit from the presence of ASTII alumnae from The Gambia, including H.E. Ambassador Jainaba Jagne, the Permanent Representative of Gambia to the AU in Addis Ababa, who joined Lund University to engage with the 19 AU representatives and Lund University team members. The AUDA-NEPAD delegation, led by the Director of Human Capacity and Institutional Development (HCID), Mr. Symerre Grey-Johnson, also agreed to involve additional ASTII alumni to celebrate the AU Theme of the Year with key EU institutions in connection with the AU-EU Innovation Agenda setup.

The annual review underscored the considerable progress and challenges faced in implementing ASTII Phase 4. By focusing on early evaluation,

strategic planning, enhanced reporting, and strengthening personnel and partnerships, the project is well-positioned to continue making a meaningful impact on STI across Africa, with plans to introduce an executive module for least developed countries in collaboration with Nordic countries on innovation, transformation, and resilience for sustainable development. This collaborative effort sets the stage for sustained progress and development in the years ahead, aligning with the broader objectives of enhancing Africa's scientific and technological landscape and the second ten-year implementation plan (STYIP) of Agenda 2063.

AATF and AUDA-NEPAD Sign MoU to Improve Agricultural Productivity and Supply Chains through Genome Editing Innovation



The African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and the African Union Development Agency- New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to foster a broader understanding of and support for genome editing as an important tool for enhancing agriculture and overall development outcomes such as adapting to climate change and reducing poverty, food, and nutrition insecurity through disease resistance and fortification of crops

The partnership agreement will support the development and enactment of supportive policies, development of innovative products, capacitation of institutions (human and infrastructure) and development of science-based regulatory frameworks to encourage trade and investments in 15 African Union countries.

According to Ms Nardos Bekele-Thomas, the Chief Executive Officer of AUDA-NEPAD, the agreement with

AATF will promote a science-based approach to product development and regulation to ensure a coherent policy framework to innovation that can ably support industrialisation. This will foster innovation and prevent regulations from unduly hindering emerging tools such as genome editing in member states working with Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas further noted that Africa's greatest chance at attaining inclusive growth and development is through a science-led industrialisation that effectively utilises the Continent's own scientific knowledge working with industry.

Dr. Canisius Kanangire, the Executive Director of AATF, noted that the partnership agreement with AUDA-NEPAD will enhance efforts to foster public trust in agricultural research and biotechnology to promote the development of locally tailored, science-driven genome editing innovations.

"We now have the opportunity to

increase awareness among citizens about the impact of genome editing, thereby generating demand for products developed through biotechnology, which will boost productivity, improve household incomes, and bolster food and nutrition security. This partnership will enhance trust and confidence between researchers and farmers, the main users of agricultural research outputs," Dr. Kanangire pointed out.

One of Africa's pioneering genome-editing initiatives is the Striga Smart Sorghum for Africa project, which aims to develop sorghum varieties that are resistant to striga. Striga poses a significant threat to sorghum production, affecting up to 50 million hectares of cropland and negatively impacting the livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers across the continent.

Up-Coming Events



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The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) will participate in the Infrastructure Africa Week 2024, taking place in Cape Town from July 16-17. This event offers AUDA-NEPAD a platform to showcase its support for AU member states and regional economic communities in developing infrastructure projects. During the event, AUDA-NEPAD will highlight the achievements and milestones of PIDA PAP 11 projects and present various projects in the deal rooms.

Register for the event: <https://www.infrastructure-africa.com/register/>

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The Africa Skills Revolution Launch Event, a collective initiative aimed at unlocking the transformative power of TVET to build a brighter future for Africa's youth. The webinar will be held virtually on World Youth Skills Day, July 15 at 13:00h (GMT+2).

Driven by AUDA-NEPAD and supported by Humana People to People this launch event will mark the start of different initiatives aiming to empower the next generation of African leaders. It aims to foster a visionary dialogue where African youth articulate their visions for the future of the continent, influencing policy, promoting innovation, and driving socio-economic development with TVET at the center. Register for the event: <https://bit.ly/4cCBSMO>



Support to the African Regional Group of Rome-based Agencies (ARG) to **Raise the African Voice** at

COFI36

08 – 12 July 2024

Rome, Italy

The FAO Community of Fisheries Sessions represent a valuable opportunity for FAO Members and non-members alike to come together to raise concerns, table suggestions and work together to focus the work program of the FAO on shared areas of priority and build momentum in the field of fisheries and aquaculture. AUDA-NEPAD will participate in the sessions with the objectives to:

- Participate in the FAO Committee on Fisheries (July 8-12) to support the African Regional Group of Rome-based Agencies (ARG) to raise the African Voice and agree on common positions for input into the agenda items
- Prepare guidance and common African position papers for each COFI 36 agenda items to be presented in plenary by Member States
- Support Member States through the provision of fisheries, aquaculture and blue economy experts
- Provide other technical assistance requested by the African Regional Group
- Highlight African priorities in relevant events to be held in the margins of the COFI 36th Session.

Find out more: <https://www.fao.org/cofi/en>

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