

# NEPAD NEWS

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## Africa's future depends on its scientists: Time to stop the brain drain

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Africa's future lies in the hands of its scientists. From urbanisation to agriculture, climate change to pandemics, Africa needs science, technology and innovation (STI) to secure a prosperous and sustainable future. The continent must urgently reverse the brain drain of its talented researchers and ramp up its education and expertise, so that Africa's problems can be solved by Africa's people.

At the World Economic Forum earlier this month, a new vision for supporting STI in Africa, led by the President of Mauritius, H.E Ameenah Gurib-Fakim was presented. This is the Coalition for Research and Innovation (CARI), an alliance of African science leaders and international funders who have joined forces to catalyse investment in research and innovation. Through CARI, we want to transform the leadership, governance and funding of African research, so that the leaders of African nations take ownership and set research agendas, and African researchers work equitably with global partners.

### The need for science-led development

Investment in science and R&D can raise economic productivity by boosting innovation and creating new start-ups, SMEs and jobs. A workforce with strong STI skills provides a base for better policy-making, for attracting high-value manufacturing, and for protecting our planet.

In this time of profound economic, demographic and epidemiological transition, science is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Science can help to reduce disease and poverty, and can generate knowledge and translate it into products and services to benefit citizens.

Crucial to this will be greater investment to make a greater impact on the nexus of health, food, water and climate change, and to produce a cadre of leaders with the interdisciplinary skills needed to meet these challenges. This means that Africa must keep hold of its expertise. African scientists and other professionals would be happy to return to or stay in their home countries, if the continent invests to create ecosystems in which they can thrive. *-continues on page 2*

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**"AFRICA'S DESTINY IS IN THE HANDS OF ITS SCIENTISTS, BUT THEY MUST HAVE MORE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT TO SUCCEED."**

H.E. AMEENAH GURIB-FAKI, PRESIDENT OF MAURITIUS

IBRAHIM MAYAKI, CEO OF NEPAD AGENCY

TOM KARIUKI, DIRECTOR OF AESA

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Africa has fewer than 100 scientists per million inhabitants, and will need to increase this to the global average of 800 by training millions of scientists, technicians and engineers to post-graduate levels over the next few years. This will require billions of dollars, but it will be immensely rewarding in meeting the SDGs.

### African leaders increasingly champion science

Fortunately, the tide is turning:

- Countries like South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt and Tunisia have been providing leadership based on scientific outputs.
- Other countries like Kenya are dedicating increased funds for science and innovation.
- Mauritius has used STI to position itself as an international financial hub and a global hot spot for biodiversity.
- Algeria has been implementing a strategy to improve science, and its number of scientific publications has grown from 12,000 in 2008 to 45,000 in 2015.
- The African Union's implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 demonstrates governments' support for science.
- The AU has created a Presidential Committee on Science and Technology, of which President Gurib-Fakim is a member.

This increasing commitment can be leveraged to create endowments, cost-sharing schemes with national governments and public-private partnerships.

### Supporting African science in a less fragmented way

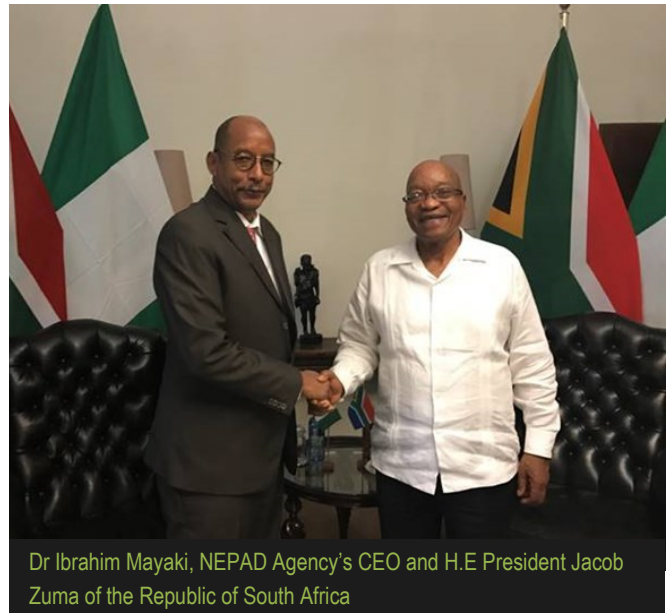
Agenda 2063 calls for "African resources to finance its development," and for a partnership of governments, businesses and philanthropists to "establish an African STI Fund". With African countries still spending a measly 1.3% of the total global spend on R&D, such a dedicated fund for STI across Africa will be crucial.

A dedicated fund for African scientists would also promote collaboration across borders – essential in a continent where countries share similar challenges but rarely work on these together, such as disease outbreaks. This was a painful lesson of the Ebola crisis, which could have been ameliorated or even avoided had African scientists been supported to work more collaboratively.

Efforts to create a common fund will not begin from scratch. Many global funders already make significant direct investments in cross-African institutions. One example is the Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESA), created by the African Academy of Sciences and NEPAD Agency with support from global partners such as Wellcome, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and DFID. AESA is a transparent vehicle to manage research funding and provide research leadership for the continent. It currently manages more than \$150M of science programmes across the continent.

Through CARI, global funders, private corporations and philanthropists can coalesce to better coordinate spending and support regional science initiatives like AESA, Planet Earth Institute and others. Africa's destiny is in the hands of its scientists, but they must have more resources and support to succeed. We will identify opportunities and build a road-map and business plan to make the case for investment, ready for launch in 2018.

## Open Government Partnership



On January 20, a comprehensive discussion took place at the official residence of the President of the Republic of South Africa in Pretoria, between the NEPAD Agency's CEO, Dr Ibrahim Mayaki and the President of the Republic of South Africa H.E. Jacob Zuma, as well as the Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration Hon. Ayanda Dlodlo.

The conversation focused on the Open Government Partnership, of which South Africa is the current Chair, and the role that the NEPAD Agency could play in developing an African Governance postgraduate course in coordination with the South African National School of Government.

Dr Mayaki highlighted specific areas that the NEPAD Agency could contribute to, in terms of expertise in the area of capacity development and the identification of training needs. Dr Mayaki also elucidated the possibility of mobilising technical support for the Open Government Partnership, given that the NEPAD Agency has applied to be a strategic partner. There are currently 12 African Open Government Partnership member-states, namely: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania and Tunisia.

The President of South Africa emphasised the importance of working together towards strengthening not only Open Government Partnership countries on governance, but also on strengthening regional integration more broadly in Africa.

In addition to the South African President, the NEPAD Agency CEO and the Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration, the meeting was also attended by Ms Lakela Kaunda (Deputy Director-General and Head of the Private Office of the President of the Republic of South Africa), Prof Richard M. Levin (Principal, National School of Government) and Prof Tandeka Nkiwane (Special Advisor to the NEPAD Agency CEO).



L to R: ONSPA Representatives; H.E Prof Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea; Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, NEPAD Agency's CEO; Hon. Andrea Loua, Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Maritime Economy in Guinea; Dr Bernice Mclean, Senior Programme Officer for Fisheries in the NEPAD Agency

## **N** EPAD's role central in reforming fisheries and aquaculture in Guinea

**Conakry** – The NEPAD Agency's successful support towards development of programmes for fisheries reform in Ghana and Sierra Leone, has led to increased interest by a number of countries in Africa seeking assistance to develop their own fisheries policy and governance reform programmes.

This success, as well as NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) intervention in Guinea's fisheries and aquaculture, triggered support to the fisheries and aquaculture policy reforms in the country. Guinea's fisheries and aquaculture sector is now acknowledged as an emerging best practice and success story.

Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of the NEPAD Agency, met with His Excellency Professor Alpha Condé, president of the Republic of Guinea to discuss the organisation's role in contributing to the achievement of 'an increase and consolidation of the *African Voice* on the governance and management of high seas fisheries' - policy objective 4.7.2 of the Pan-African Policy Framework and Reform Strategy, and the new environmental recommendations.

The visit to Guinea in January by the NEPAD Agency included a handover ceremony of laboratory equipment for fisheries sanitation control by Dr Mayaki to the government of Guinea. Dr Mayaki congratulated President Condé for his commitment to the positive reforms in the fisheries sector. He encouraged President Condé to continue providing inspiration to other African leaders in support of implementation of best practices and thanked him for his role as the NEPAD Champion for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa.

In his remarks, the Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Maritime Economy in Guinea, Hon Andrea Loua thanked NEPAD for the support received and also lauded the leadership of President Condé. Hon Loua remarked that the laboratory equipment will go a long way in improving the operations of the National Office for Quality Assurance for Fish and Aquaculture Products (ONSPA).

The NEPAD Agency was also acknowledged for its unwavering support to Guinea towards the reforming of its fisheries sector by President Condé. In its supportive role, the NEPAD Agency works towards enabling the Republic of Guinea to establish institutional mechanisms to strengthen its fisheries and aquaculture policies; capacitate Guinea with fisheries sanitation control equipment, as well as providing technical know-how through the training of competent officials. Moreover, the support aims to empower Guinea with tools to enable technical and financial partners to align their interventions in supporting the development of the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

A key result of the interventions in Guinea, involving close collaboration between the NEPAD Agency, the African Union Inter-Africa Bureau (AU-IBAR), WorldFish and the Government of the Republic of Guinea, was the lifting of the fish trade ban by the European Union on the Fisheries Sector in Guinea in July 2016. Ongoing efforts through the NEPAD intervention will create a conducive and enabling environment to ensure that the fisheries and aquaculture reforms are sustainable over the long term.

The role of President Condé as the NEPAD Champion for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa promises many positive results for improved governance and increased benefits from the development of the Blue Economy for the continent.

# **T**ransforming Africa through **R**egional Integration, **I**nfrastructure and Trade

*Interview with Mr Symerre Grey-Johnson, NEPAD Agency's Head of Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade Programme, on what lies ahead in 2017*

## **NEPAD News: What are the 2017 focus areas for the Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade (RIIT) Programme in 2017?**

Our main focus will be on key projects that are part of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) Priority Action Plan, building on the projects that we pushed in 2016. In 2016 our CEO Dr Mayaki prioritised 9 key infrastructure projects that cut across energy, water, transport and ICT sectors and the team directed its attention on delivery on these projects. Through our work here at the Agency together with our colleagues and counterparts at the African Union Commission, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Development Bank, we have all jointly contributed toward advancing PIDA and infrastructure project implementation in Africa. In 2017 our efforts will be doubled to further produce tangible results that will ensure that more PIDA and infrastructure projects are brought to financial close.

In Southern and East Africa, we will see the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) prioritising the Zambia-Tanzania-Kenya (ZTK) transmission line, a project that we need to bring to financial close. Substantial progress was made on the project last year and sections from Isinya (in Kenya) to Iringa (in Tanzania) have secured financing and are now under construction. Zambia has also secured financing to construct the section from Nakonde to Kasama and to reinforce the section from Kabwe to Pensulo which are the last sections on the Zambian side. Progress is also being made in the financial packaging of the remaining sections in Tanzania. Therefore our collaboration with COMESA, Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya in 2017 will be to organise a Financiers conference to raise finance for these remaining sections.

In the same light, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) will also move towards the implementation of the memorandum of understanding that has been signed by the respective countries. We are now at a very advanced stage of the project where we need to ensure that countries adhere to the memorandum of understanding, of which NEPAD played a critical role in ensuring that it was signed by the countries in the region in 2016. Certainly besides the implementation of the MoU, we will also see a focus towards bringing to financial close sections of the Serengeti-Nakonde Road.

In the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the focus will be on enhancing the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor with extension to Dakar. NEPAD and partners have supported the Early Stage Project Advisory Services for the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Development Programme. An Inception Report for the Advisory Services consultancy was validated in November 2016, and in 2017 the Feasibility and Detailed Engineering Design Study will take effect. The Central Africa region will also see continued work on the Kinshasa-Brazzaville Bridge Road and Rail Project as well as the possibility of one or two projects being brought on board.

We also worked closely with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, IGAD, on their masterplan which links to the PIDA projects. UMA, the Arab Maghreb Union, is a new comer with the signing of the financing agreement in November 2016. In 2017, RIIT Programme will focus on about seven to eight projects with the aim of bringing about three or four of them to financial closure through the intervention of the NEPAD Agency at the institutional level, and will work with the AUC, RECs and development partners including stakeholders and countries concerned.



Mr Symerre Grey-Johnson, Head of the RIIT Programme at the NEPAD Agency

## **Will the Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade Programme be structured differently to redouble its efforts and deliver on its 2017 workplan?**

Most of 2016 was spent on working on the mentioned projects but also ensuring that the team has a common understanding and appreciation of our method of work. We also filled key technical positions in 2016 to enable the Programme to deliver effectively and efficiently on its deliverables. Currently the staff complement within the team is about 26. In each of the Regional Economic Communities, with the exception of UMA, NEPAD has technical advisors focusing on infrastructure, particularly on PIDA. With regards UMA, we will be bringing on board a technical expert hopefully within the first quarter of the year. Recently we also brought on board a regional expert in the CCTTFA, which is the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency.

In a nutshell, the Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade Programme will be structured slightly differently to deliver faster, better and much more effectively. It is for this reason that we will strengthen the sectoral clusters where most of the technical backstopping takes place. The clusters are Energy and Water; Transport; ICT and Gender (which are both cross-cutting), and the Trade Facilitation cluster. The Programme's work will be channelled through the clusters in which our regional experts will also be involved, and that is where the project selection will also take place together with the RECs.

We will also strengthen our Instrument Managers and intensive the delivery of the Continental Business Network which has been in place since 2015. We also plan to hire a Procurement Officer who will be directly supervised by the Agency's Procurement Head. We hope that the disbursements or sub-delegation to the RECs under the PIDA Capacity Build Programme will also continue to yield positive results toward infrastructure project implementation in 2017.

In essence, 2017 will be a significant year for us and the team is excited and ready to see continued and concrete delivery of results by NEPAD. We are particularly excited about the rollout of the NEPAD Renewable Energy Access Project which was launched last November. We are also working with keen interest on the formulation of the NEPAD Cyber and Digitalisation Project. So yes 2017 is a critical year for RIITP with new projects and initiatives coming on-board.

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### **How will the realisation of the Programme's workplan contribute to Africa's transformation?**

When we look at the Programme and take regional integration as the chapeau, beneath that we have infrastructure, whose framework is PIDA. PIDA's governing architecture is the Institutional Architecture for Infrastructure Development in Africa, IAIDA for short. On the other side of regional integration we have trade, where we will work closely with the African Union on a programme called Boosting Intra-Africa Trade.

"Through careful project selection for 2017, we are hopeful that we will make huge strides with regards to energy provisioning," Symerre Grey-Johnson, Head of the RIIT Programme at the NEPAD Agency



Therefore, through careful project selection for 2017, we are hopeful that we will make huge strides with regards to energy provisioning, together with the work we are doing in NEPAD on the provisioning of renewable energy access and the hydro-energy projects and so on. Through these projects, we will be able to add more megawatts onto national grids and push for more interconnection and transmission of energy across national borders.

We will also contribute towards trade facilitation on the Continent, through the regional transport projects which involve building and restoring roads and railways. MoveAfrica, our flagship programme on trade facilitation will see also the introduction of the traffic light system, enabling the free flow of trade and improved logistics together with Japan through JICA on the One Stop Border Post project.

### **Do you have any concluding remarks?**

Our Programme does not work in isolation in the NEPAD Agency. We work closely with the Project Management Centre on project planning and reporting. We also work with Capacity Development, the Gender team, the Communications Unit and certainly the office of the CEO. To sum up, our programme delivers as part of the broader NEPAD Agency family and we are most thankful for all the support our CEO continues to give the team.

## **Africa must reach, test and treat vulnerable, most neglected populations to end TB by 2030**

**Maputo** — The Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Dr Mustapha Sidiki Kalolo has urged Member States to make it a prerequisite to reach, test and treat all the vulnerable populations. This is in areas where TB control is the weakest, including mining communities, areas with high HIV incidence, cross-border areas and transport corridors if Africa is to end TB by 2030 in line with the Catalytic Framework to End AIDS, TB and Eliminate Malaria in Africa by 2030.

This was indicated by Dr Benjamin Djoudalbaye who was speaking, last month, on his behalf at the official regional launch of the US\$ 122 million World Bank funded project called Southern Africa Tuberculosis and Health Systems Support Project in Maputo, Mozambique. The project is aimed at strengthening the health sector's response to Tuberculosis and Occupational Lung Diseases and is implemented in four countries: Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia.

"We cannot end TB by 2030 if we do not step up our efforts where it matters most. I commend the Project Countries for their commitment to tackling TB and strengthening health systems, and the World Bank for this bold investment to address TB at its epicenter in Africa", said H.E. Dr. Mustapha Sidiki Kalolo.

The official regional launch represents a milestone in the project's life-cycle and serves as a summit of policy makers and experts from the project participating countries, as well as affected neighboring countries that have demonstrated leadership and interest in working together to explore innovative ways of confronting the Southern Africa's TB challenge. The NEPAD Agency and East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) shall work together on the project to provide regional coordination and technical support in project implementation.

During the launch, World Bank Country Director for Mozambique, Mark Lundell commended Southern African leaders for demonstrating the highest level of commitment and leadership towards ending TB and the excellent cooperation across health, mining, labour and many other sectors. This is a common position shared by the World Bank in line with its goal to support the most vulnerable as part of its thrust to ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity in the world. "The World Bank recognises that TB control is a major public health challenge and represents an economic development issue in the sub-region, and therefore needs to be tackled forcefully," Mr Lundell said.

Accounting for a third of the countries with the highest TB burden globally, Southern Africa is at the center of the dual epidemic of TB and HIV/AIDS. Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho and Zambia are no exceptions. These countries have high levels of TB/HIV coinfections and related mortality as well as increased risks of multidrug-resistant TB against a backdrop of large-scale and growing mining sectors which are a contributor to this health challenge.

The project has three mutually reinforcing components: innovative prevention, detection and treatment of TB; strengthening the region's capacity for disease surveillance, diagnostics and management, and; supporting regional learning, innovation and project management.

# Water hyacinth - the uninvited guest in Lake Victoria

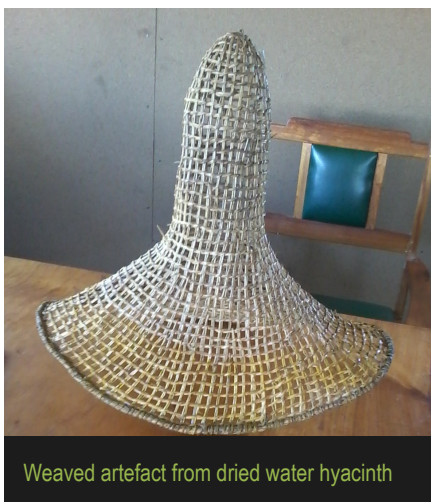
The mention of Lake Victoria immediately brings to mind a picture of a large fresh water body with a crystal clear surface - contrary to reality.

Water hyacinth (justifiably referred to as the world's worst aquatic weed) carpets the water surface as it dances from one spot to another depending on the direction of the wind. Water hyacinth is a free floating perennial water plant that forms large dense green blankets on the water's surface. It is capable of rapidly covering whole water ways ranging from dams, rivers, lakes and irrigation channels. It can double in mass every five days, forming new plants on the ends of the stolon. The hyacinth grows from seeds which remain viable for 20 years or more.

When the water hyacinth finds a home, it brings with it numerous negative effects. They include the elimination native aquatic plants; reduction in the infiltration of sunlight; reduction of gaseous exchange on the water surface; blocking boat landing and thus hindering fishing activities. The plant also alters the habitats of aquatic organisms, changing the temperature, PH and oxygen levels of water and reducing the quality of water brought on by decomposing plants.

Water hyacinth is difficult to control in fresh water aquatic environments, especially when access is limited by the presence of the weed itself. Early detection and rapid response has been credited to offer the greatest likelihood to successfully control and the possibility of complete eradication. It is essential that any new infestations are controlled as soon as possible, since, if allowed to become established, the seed bank rapidly expands.

Several measure have been employed, both biological and mechanical, to manage the menace on Lake Victoria. The use of weevils, *Neochetina eichhorniae* has been credited as being successful in destroying large water hyacinth infestations. The adult weevil, black in colour and 5mm long, feeds on the leaves, leaving small scars. It also lays eggs in the bulbous leaf stalks and the larvae tunnel through the plant tissue which is then attacked by bacteria and fungi. This causes the plant to be water logged and the hyacinth ultimately dies.



Weaved artefact from dried water hyacinth

Unfortunately, biological control cannot be solely relied upon for the effective control of water hyacinth. It only provides some reduction in flowering and growth rates of the plant. Biological control therefore works best when coupled with other available control techniques.



Water hyacinth clogging Lake Victoria

One adverse side to biological control is that when water hyacinth sinks and rots, it leads to water discoloration and releases a foul smell, affecting the quality of water used for domestic purposes by residents along the shores of Lake Victoria.

Another method employed in the elimination of water hyacinth involves the use of harvesters. Mechanical harvesting is used in instances where there are large infestations. Though costly, it has been approved as the most effective method. It takes roughly between 600 to 900 hours to harvest one hectare of dense water hyacinth. This method is most effective when used prior to the hyacinth's flowering and before the seed sets.

Another method attempted on Lake Victoria was the manual removal of plants from the lake. Physical removal is considered an effective form of hyacinth control from small areas of water such as dams and drains. On a large scale, manual removal is less likely to be successful as its effect is only felt when the rate of removal is faster than the rate of growth.

On the bright side, water hyacinth can have its benefits and uses, such as the creation of employment. Some youths around the Lake Victoria area have learnt to split and dry the plant which they use to make different products such as furniture and artefacts.

In addition, water hyacinth is also mixed with cow dung to produce bio gas that is used as a source of fuel in hotels, especially around the Dunga beach area. Finally water hyacinth can also be used as mulch in gardening. When decomposed, the plant offers a source of rich and highly affordable manure.

**Story submitted by Mary John Asin**



NEPAD Agency and JICA meeting on the Africa KAIZEN Initiative and Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa

## **N**ew commitments to the Africa KAIZEN Initiative and IFNA

**Midrand** - “There is no need to reinvent the wheel. What needs to be done is to build on what KAIZEN has already achieved in industrialisation and accelerate that in Africa,” stated Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, the NEPAD Agency’s CEO, on the proposal for the NEPAD Agency to host the Africa KAIZEN Initiative.

A delegation from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), led by Mr Tomoki Kobayashi, Director, Planning and TICAD Process Division, Africa Department, visited the NEPAD Agency on 23 January to deliberate on new commitments on the existing partnership between the two institutions.

Dr Mayaki opened the discussions by stating that the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI), held last year, was the key milestone for enhanced NEPAD-Japan partnership. The Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa (IFNA) was launched to combat hunger and malnutrition on the continent and the Africa KAIZEN initiative was also proposed in the meeting. The NEPAD-JICA partnership is now expanding and deepening in the fields of infrastructure with focus on OSBP, Industrialisation and nutrition.

During the introductory session, Grow Africa’s Executive Director, Mr William Asiko presented the work of Grow Africa that has a partnership of over 200 companies and governments in 12 countries. Grow Africa essentially aims to increase private sector investment in agriculture and accelerate the execution and impact of investment commitments, building a case for working with smallholder farmers.

Prof Aggrey Ambali, NEPAD’s Head of Industrialisation, Science, Technology and Innovation, outlined the principles of cooperation between the two institutions as speed and ownership, joint communication and joint implementation.

Mr Hiroyuki Tomita, Director, Private Sector Development Group, Industrial Development and Public Policy Department stated that, “The Africa KAIZEN Initiative will see JICA and the NEPAD Agency expanding KAIZEN through the whole of Africa.” KAIZEN, a Japanese term that means “improvement,” targets productivity enhancement through the implementation of a standard set of tools that are easily adaptable and scalable. The implementation of KAIZEN began in Japan, shifting to Asia and is now being implemented in 7 countries in Africa.

The Africa KAIZEN Initiative will work towards the expansion of KAIZEN, in which the NEPAD Agency will take the lead in the continental rollout, with centres of excellence to be set up in selected countries. The Africa KAIZEN Initiative will also collaborate with other KAIZEN regional networks outside of Africa globally.

IFNA works towards accelerating international efforts to alleviate hunger and malnutrition on the African continent. IFNA caters to African political leadership’s demand for accountability on ending hunger and improving nutrition, as expressed in the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, which commits AU Member States to “mutual accountability for action and results.”

The meeting concluded with an affirmation from both JICA and the NEPAD Agency to strengthen their existing partnership by renewing the current memorandum of understanding to include IFNA and the Africa KAIZEN Initiative.



Potato field in Maseru, Lesotho

As a member of the African Union, Lesotho is committed to enhancing, not only the agricultural sector, but the whole economic sphere as well as reducing high levels of unemployment through agriculture

## **P**otato market to be 'localised'

**Maseru** - Potato Lesotho Association (PLA) is set to take over the lucrative potato market in the country and to stop the 'erosion' of millions of *maloti* spent on potato imports from neighbouring countries. PLA is the mother body of all potato growing associations in the country.

A representative of PLA, Matooane Mokhachane, during a recent tour and open day of potato projects at Marakabei, Thaba-Tseka, revealed that research conducted many years ago shows that potatoes could grow favourably in certain parts of the country such as Marakabei, Semonkong and 'Melikane.

Mokhachane said Lesotho spends M3.3m on potato imports on a monthly basis, and declared that the PLA is ready to take over that market to benefit local potato farmers.

To get things right, Mokhachane said farmers have grouped themselves within the association so that some members could concentrate exclusively on seed production while others focus on the planting and cultivation of the crop.

He reiterated that potato farming in Lesotho could create a lot of opportunities for the Basotho nation as potatoes grow favourably in many parts of the country and do not attract diseases due to the good response of the plant to climatic conditions.

Mokhachane indicated that it is high time that Lesotho commercialised its agricultural sector as a whole so that agriculture can be seen as a source of living and a great contributor to the country's fiscus.

Tšabo Foka, an assistant marketing officer for the Maseru district in the Ministry of Small Businesses Development and Co-operatives,

told PLA members at the open day that it is the responsibility of his ministry to ensure that there is market for the agricultural produce for all Basotho in the country and that, such a market is protected. The officer appealed to farmers to unite so that they could be in a position to supply larger quantities of their produce for a long period of time.

Tšabo said his Ministry is working together with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) to have a database of what the farmers produce, as well as the quantities of their production in the entire country. Tšabo also advised farmers not to sell themselves short and not to let any business opportunities slip through their fingers.

Asked what measures they take to encourage youth to take part in agriculture, Tšitso Marabe from MAFS said they were mobilising youth at all resource centres around the country to take agriculture as a business and a source of living even after school. He also refuted allegations that agriculture is for the uneducated youth who failed to make it to tertiary institutions.

This is in line with the aims of the Comprehensive Africa's Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), which was launched in Lesotho in May 2011. CAADP aims to uplift food security by having countries invest a minimum of 10 percent in the agricultural sector, in order to attain six percent growth of food every year.

As a member of the African Union, Lesotho is committed to CAADP as a means of enhancing, not only the agricultural sector, but the whole economic sphere as well as reducing the high levels of unemployment through agriculture.

**Story submitted by Majara Molupe**



# Towards a development model for Africa based on Human Capital

*Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki  
Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Agency*

Previously, I have made reference to the facilitation that NEPAD is doing to attract investment into African projects. However, Africa needs much more than money and infrastructure. In order to transform its economies in a world fuelled by information and driven by knowledge, Africa needs to build on its knowledge capital.

The objective of this article is to articulate the need for growing a knowledge-based economy in Africa, whereby research, knowledge and innovation become central in paving the way to our development. A knowledge-based economy refers to an economy in which the production, exchange, distribution and use of knowledge is the main driver of economic growth, employment generation and wealth creation. Investing in education and knowledge generation and distribution in Africa means investing in human capital.

Universities and higher education have always been part of Africa's history. The University of Al Qarawiyyin in Fez, Morocco, opened in 859 AD, is considered the oldest university in the world. Al-Azhar University in Egypt, part of the larger complex of institutions associated with Al-Azhar mosque, currently enrolls 2 million students.

This legacy is not, however, responding adequately to the challenges of modern Africa in either quantitative or qualitative terms. Unless deliberate and bold initiatives are implemented to reinvigorate higher education, science, technology and innovation on the continent, Africa risks losing out in the new economy.

Here are some worrying statistics based on current offerings. While a child in an OECD country has an 80 percent chance of going to university, in Africa, it is only 6 percent. Limited support to research and development, outdated curricula and limited direct links between science and industry mean that we lack a competitive edge on a global level. Our universities need to produce knowledge, cutting edge research that allows us to solve everyday local problems and improve our lives across the continent.



“Universities and higher education have always been part of Africa’s history. The University of Al Qarawiyyin in Fez, Morocco, opened in 859 AD, is considered the oldest university in the world. Al-Azhar University in Egypt, part of the larger complex of institutions associated with Al-Azhar mosque, currently enrolls 2 million students,” Dr Ibrahim Mayaki.

This stride is in line with the significant shift in Africa’s development paradigm. Our attention is increasingly on Africa’s participation in its own development planning, on Africa’s ownership of its own development initiatives and the capacity building of our professionals.

We need to build our own knowledge triangle between education, research and industry. In turn, this will create a solid connect between knowledge generation, its utilisation, its transformation (including its products) into economic growth via the production of knowledge-intensive goods and services. This triangle needs, of course, to be supported by frameworks of good governance and appropriate government policies.

In 2017 we will need governments to champion and engage in human capital development, by prioritising education and making funds available for formal schooling. There is also a key role for private firms and national innovation systems to play in encouraging investments in research and training.

The role of intellectual capital cannot be underestimated in the rise of Africa in the 21st Century.

## Upcoming Events

- 21 – 22 Feb 2017: NEPAD SANBio / BioFISA II Annual Event, Boksburg, South Africa**
- 27 - 31 Mar 2017: Fifth Steering Committee Meeting of the NEPAD/GEF/UNEP-SIP Project & RECs Technical Meeting, Abidjan, Ivory Coast**
- 6 - 10 Mar 2017: Management and Technical Meetings of African Forest Landscape Restoration (AFR100), Bonn, Germany**

See also: [www.nepad.org/events](http://www.nepad.org/events)

## Contact Us

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## Proverb

**“Knowledge is like a garden, if it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested.”**



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