

## **Pamla Gopaul**

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I welcome you to this conference on a topic of utmost importance—the role and significance of the AUDA-NEPAD Economic Analysis and Foresight Unit, specifically focusing on the flagship programme of the Africa Policy Bridge Tank (APBT). As the lead of APBT, I am honored to stand before you today to initiate a meaningful dialogue that delves into the intricacies of our work and its impact on the regional and continental developmental agenda.

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I will now provide a comprehensive overview of the Africa Policy Bridge Tank and its pivotal role in supporting the Economic Analysis and Foresight Unit. Our programme is designed to offer substantive expertise in technical, policy, and developmental areas crucial for key African objectives. As a bridge tank, we stand at the intersection of knowledge production and policy implementation, striving to accelerate the generation and dissemination of research-based content to facilitate and drive the successful implementation of AUDA-NEPAD programmes and projects.

Our unique position makes us a significant player in the regional and continental developmental landscape. The Africa Policy Bridge Tank is distinctive, as there is no other initiative with a similar mandate across the continent. We address the policy needs of different countries, acting as a linchpin in the implementation of the Think Tank agenda. Our advisory services extend to member states and regional economic communities, supporting regional integration to align with the AU Agenda 2063.

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Moreover, we play a vital role as a continental technical interface with partners and stakeholders, engaging in a full range of resource mobilization to ensure the sustainability and growth of our impactful initiatives. Our optimal goal is to actively integrate the knowledge content generated by think tanks into national and regional development plans, fostering a meaningful contribution to Africa's socio-economic transformation.

As we convene today, the conference provides an opportunity for us to explore how the AUDA-NEPAD Policy Bridge Tank Programme, alongside its Technical Advisory Group Members, consisting of the continent's strongest Think Tanks, can benefit the African Union. Leveraging their strengths and areas of expertise, our discussions will shed light on the specific support required by various departments, focusing on crucial matters such as infrastructure, industrialization, trade, agriculture, and more. This collaborative effort aims to build a robust and resilient economy capable of withstanding future shocks and crises.

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I would like to take a moment to highlight some of the remarkable achievements of the Africa Policy Bridge Tank. Our contributions have been substantial, as evidenced by our involvement in shaping influential reports such as the 2021-2023 Africa Dynamic Development Report, the 2022-2023 Africa Innovation Outlook Report, the AfDB Book on Key Actions to Achieve Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa, and the TICAD 30 Year review, to review and improve the Japan/Africa Cooperation specifically to strengthen the purpose of TICAD in support of African ownership.

Furthermore, we have published impactful policy papers advocating for a G21, strengthening Africa's development through current and emerging global and regional forums, and exploring Africa's agency in a world order of multi-dimensional crisis. We believe in the work of the continent in shaping its purpose and navigating the intricate challenges of our times, while envisioning a new era for Africa within the G20. We have also been instrumental in working on a paper, using foresight analysis and scenario building that will be presented on the margins of the AU February Summit on assessing the impact of trade on children and young populations.

We have also using foresight analysis to inform the report of the 2nd ten year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 and ... to be expanded slightly .....

Beyond publications, we have actively convened policy dialogues, research initiatives, and training sessions on critical topics such as Africa's futures and foresight analysis, amplifying Africa's voices on global financial structures, and reflecting on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Our convening of policy dialogues, research initiatives, and training sessions on critical topics further reinforces our dedication to fostering a culture of informed decision-making. Whether it's discussing Africa's futures and foresight analysis or amplifying Africa's voices on global financial structures, we aim to equip decision-makers with the knowledge and insights needed to navigate the complexities of the ever-changing global landscape.

These achievements underscore the Africa Policy Bridge Tank's commitment to producing knowledge that not only informs but also shapes policies and actions that drive the continent forward. We understand that in the complex landscape of African development, robust and forward-thinking strategies are required. It is not just about responding to challenges but anticipating them, preparing for them, and building a foundation that can withstand the tests of time.

As we reflect on these achievements, it is essential to recognize the conference's significance as an opportunity for long-term thinking. We are not merely here to discuss current challenges and successes; we are here to emphasise the importance of economic analysis and foresight thinking in shaping the future of our continent. This conference serves as a platform to highlight our achievements thus far, providing a clear roadmap for the future.

As we commence the conference, let us remember that this gathering, as mentioned by Kossi, is an integral part of a broader strategy for long-term impact, by leveraging on existing expertise from our Think Tanks, and the collaboration with ISS is a clear demonstration of this, together with our partners.

I now hand over to my colleague Mr Lukovi Seke who will share a success story, demonstrating the impact and strides we are making and why it is pertinent for you as policymakers and think tanks to accompany us in accelerating implementation through evidence-informed research and data for development.

I thank you.