

## AUDA-NEPAD Africa Policy Bridge Tank 2024 Inception Conference: African Futures

*Concept Note For Parallel Workshop On*

### **The Future of Africa's Industrialization: Advancing Economic Diversification, Developing Value Chains, and Facilitating Structural Transformation Across the Continent**

#### **Context:**

Industrialization is universally acknowledged as the key driver of economic growth and development, fostering job creation, technological innovation, and economic spillovers into various sectors. Despite Africa's immense potential for industrialization, the continent grapples with impediments hindering the seamless flow of goods and services, increasing production and trade costs, and diminishing competitiveness of African products on both regional and global markets. Although endowed with abundant natural resources, the continent is predominantly a commodity exporter. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) underscores the critical need to bolster manufacturing and industrial production, to capitalize on opportunities within this unified market. Regrettably, strides in transforming and leveraging economic potential remain inadequate. African economies remain highly reliant on unprocessed commodities for export revenue, with the continent contributing less than 2% to the world's total manufacturing output.

As countries attempt to curb the devastating effects of climate change, there is a growing consensus that African governments must adopt a more proactive stance in promoting industrial development. This involves not only creating conducive conditions for industrialization—such as investing in infrastructure, cultivating a skilled workforce, and fostering an improved investment climate—but also identifying and supporting emerging industries. African Union Member States must expedite economic and structural transformation by expanding manufacturing capacity and strengthening value chains through export diversification, tariff reduction, and the removal of non-tariff barriers. Harmonizing standards and regulations, enhancing trade facilitation, and investing in infrastructure are imperative steps needed to propel this transformation.

This workshop, on the theme "**The Future of African Industrialization: Advancing Economic Diversification, Developing Value Chains, and Facilitating Structural Transformation Across the Continent,**" is designed to confront existing challenges. It aims to look into the future and provide policymakers and stakeholders with tangible strategies to promote sustainable and inclusive industrial development. The workshop seeks to stimulate discussions that lead to actionable insights, fostering a future where Africa's industrial landscape aligns with the principles of economic diversification, value chain development, and structural transformation.

#### **Objective:**

The primary objective of this 90-minute policy workshop is to engage stakeholders in a collaborative exploration of policies and processes essential for realizing Africa's industrialization goals. The workshop will focus on generating actionable recommendations to guide policymakers, development partners, member states, think tanks, and the African Union in advancing industrialization in the context of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

#### **Approach:**

The workshop will adopt an interactive approach, encouraging active participation and exchange of ideas among participants. It will begin with a 15-minute overview provided by the Nkafu Policy Institute to set

the stage for the discussion. Subsequently, two expert discussants will share their perspectives on the policies and processes crucial for Africa's industrialization, each allotted a 10-minute speaking slot.

### Structure:

1. **Opening (5 minutes):** Welcome and introduction to the workshop's objectives and format.
2. **Overview – Setting the Stage (15 minutes):** Nkafu will present a comprehensive overview of the future of Africa's industrialization, highlighting key challenges, opportunities, and its role in achieving the African Union's Agenda 2063.
3. **Discussant 1 (10 minutes):** The first discussant will share insights on necessary policies and processes for successful industrialization, drawing on their expertise and experience.
4. **Discussant 2 (10 minutes):** The second discussant will provide a different perspective, emphasizing the multifaceted approaches required to address industrialization challenges.
5. **Interactive Discussion (45 minutes):** The majority of the session will be dedicated to an open, interactive and moderated discussion with the audience. Participants will be encouraged to share their views, ask questions, and propose recommendations. There will be small group discussions (mini-SWOT) on the theme. This segment aims to be a dynamic exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices.

**Moderator:** **Dr Denis Foretia**  
*Executive Chairman – Nkafu Policy Institute, Cameroon*

**Discussant #1:** **Mr Charles Boamah**  
*Former Senior Vice President, African Development Bank Group*

**Discussant #2:** **Mr Paul Tasong Njukang**  
*Minister Delegate to the Minister of Economy Planning and Regional Development in charge of Planning.  
Republic of Cameroon*

### Expected Outcomes:

- Identification of key policy recommendations for Africa's industrialization.
- Enhanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities in fostering economic diversification and value chain development.
- Strengthened partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders committed to advancing industrialization.
- Development of a set of actionable strategies aligned with Agenda 2063 for member states, development partners, think tanks, and the African Union. This will be captured in a policy brief.

The workshop seeks to inspire innovative thinking and collaborative efforts, laying the groundwork for a concerted and informed approach to Africa's industrial future. By encouraging active participation and dialogue, we aim to create a platform for shared learning and impactful recommendations that can drive tangible progress in the continent's industrialization journey.

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