

CONCEPT NOTE
ACET WORKSHOP
AUDA-NEPAD POLICY BRIDGE THINK TANK CONFERENCE

20 – 22 November 2023
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Background and context

The African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) is hosting a workshop at the AUDA-NEPAD Policy Bridge Think Tank Conference in Addis Ababa Ethiopia from 20-22 November 2023. The theme is:

Building forward better: The role of economic transformation

Economies worldwide are striving to recover from the devastating impacts of the diverse shocks of COVID-19, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the consequences of the climate crisis. These shocks have led to massive external debt, widening fiscal deficits, food and energy insecurity, global inflation, high levels of unemployment, and stalled economic growth. As a result, two decades of progress on development targets are at risk of being reversed. ACET believes that economic growth, while necessary, is not sufficient to enable this recovery and empower attempts to build forward better. African economies need to transform to ensure inclusive growth and sustainable development.¹

ACET’s African Transformation Index 2023 Report shows that more transformed economies are more likely to be resilient to shocks. Unfortunately, many African economies are still struggling to transform and remain vulnerable to persistent negative shocks and their pass-through effects on growth, employment, social outcomes, and social cohesion. A nexus approach is required to explore the interrelationships between economic growth and economic transformation, including the trade-offs and synergies between the two concepts, the challenges that need to be addressed to sustain inclusive growth, and the opportunities available to African economies to “build forward better” in the process.

Objective

The primary focus of this session will be to present and discuss the findings of the ATI 2023 Report for selected African countries. The report explores the challenges, avenues, and opportunities available to these countries to diversify their production and exports, enhance export competitiveness, improve labor productivity, upgrade technology, and ultimately improve human well-being. The session will also explore pathways for policy and development uptake of the findings of the ATI 2023 Report.

¹ ACET defines economic transformation for Africa as “Growth with DEPTH,” which is an acronym for Diversification, Export competitiveness, Productivity increases, and Technological upgrading—all to improve Human well-being through better jobs and livelihoods.

Discussants

Name	Affiliation	Focus
Dr. Tadele Ferede	AAU Economics faculty.	A reaction to the presentation on the ATI finding
Dr. Getenet Almeu	Institute of Development Research at the College of Development Studies at AAU	1. A discussion on channels for possible policy and development uptake of the findings:

Expected Outcome

An Outcome Statement will be delivered from this workshop highlighting three key issues of paramount importance that African economies should focus on in their quest to build forward better post-crisis through economic transformation.

Coordination

This session will be coordinated by Dr Emmanuel Owusu-Sekyere, Director, Research, Policy and Programs, ACET, Dr Habtamu Edjigu, ACET Transformation Fellow, and Dr Emezat Mengesha, Head of Gender, ACET.