

The EastAfrican

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The Africa we want



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A future where Africa stands tall and proud is within reach

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival, which the Nation Media Group launched in Kigali, Rwanda, in 2019, with HE President Paul Kagame as our gracious host. Since then, our Kusi journey through Kenya the following year, Ghana in 2021, and back to Kenya last year has been a revelation that Africa has the wherewithal to come very close to transforming into the global powerhouse of the 21st Century that the African Union's Agenda 2063 aimed for 10 years ago when it was born.

So, here we are, an incredibly rich, gathering of minds, visionaries, and leaders committed to overcoming the hurdles that stand in the way of our continent's progress and shaping its glorious future.

Today, we stand united under the theme of "Africa's Agenda 2063: Making The Dream Come True" as a statement of faith in that possibility.

This event, hosted in collaboration with the Government and people of Botswana, bears witness to our collective determination to reach across borders and rise together to great heights.

Sometimes, when we wake up to the news of the return of coups in West Africa and the Sahel, some can be tempted to wallow in despair. I dare say they shouldn't. The journey to 2063 is a winding road with many forks. For every coup, you have a Liberia, where a one-term president graciously concedes defeat, or a Kenya, where a Supreme Court became only the second in the world to overturn a presidential election result, and everyone dutifully respected it.

Botswana is soon celebrating the 60th anniversary of one the longest-running continuous multiparty democracies in the Global South.

As we explore the aspirations of Africa's Agenda 2063, these trends persuade us to believe that a future where our continent stands tall and proud is within reach. Picture a food-secure Africa, a land that no longer relies solely on rain-fed agriculture but embraces the latest food technologies. It's possible. A continent that not only feeds its people but trades surplus produce with the rest of the world, contributing to global food security.

Imagine an Africa where education is paramount — a continent of highly educated, digitally savvy individuals leading the world in innovation and entrepreneurship. It is possible to realise Africa, which is a leading contributor to solving global problems.

A united Africa, presenting a formidable economic bloc with highly developed infrastructure, where people move freely, utilising a common currency, and where peace and harmony flourish, is a reality we can bequeath to our grandchildren.

In our Africa of 2063, we celebrate the 10th anniversary of eradicating poverty. A continent where economic prosperity is enjoyed by all. It's within our means to realise a united Africa where democracy, political stability, rule of law, respect for human rights, good governance, and patriotism are the cornerstones of our society. We envision governments free from corruption and accountable to the people they serve. This is the Africa we strive for — where every citizen can live with dignity and pride.

Our vision includes an environmentally sustainable and healthy continent. Africa will lead the world in clean and renewable energy, restoring our lands to their pre-independence grandeur. We will be custodians of our environment, ensuring a better future for generations to come.



In our Africa, world-class healthcare services will be accessible to all and the well-being of our people will be our utmost priority.

Botswana lesson

Natural resources will be a source of empowerment for our people — a lesson that Botswana is already teaching us. We envision an Africa where the benefits of our resources flow to the hands of our citizens, not to exploitative cartels on the continent and in the rich world.

We see a future where Africa holds a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, ensuring that our voice is heard and our interests represented.

However, we must acknowledge the one thousand challenges we face on the path to realising the African dream of 2063.

But let us not be deterred. Together, we possess the power to overcome these challenges. Through unity, determination, and a relentless pursuit of our shared vision, we can and will make Africa's dream come true.

As we embark on this remarkable journey, let us remember that our greatest strength lies in our collective will to forge ahead. Together, we will build an Africa that surpasses all expectations — one that embodies our hopes, dreams, and aspirations. Let the Kusi winds blow us ever closer to that north star of our dream.

Holding this Fifth Kusi festival in Botswana helps make the statement, as the young people say, that our African dreams are valid. On behalf of the Nation Media Group, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the government of Botswana and, in particular, to his HE President Mokgweetsi Masisi, for their collaboration and exceptional support in hosting this event. I also express my sincere appreciation to all the participants, sponsors, and partners who have made this possible.

Thank you, and let us begin this extraordinary voyage towards Africa's Agenda 2063.

Dr Wilfred Kiboro,
 Nation Media Group
 Board Chairman.



KUSI IDEAS FESTIVAL

Making the dream come true

Unveiling Thika Cloth Mills: Pioneering Excellence in African Textile Manufacturing

As East Africa gears up for an era of unprecedented textile exports under AGOA, you are invited to rally behind the flagbearer of this progress, Thika Cloth Mills

Introduction

In the heart of East Africa's industrial landscape lies a beacon of ingenuity and craftsmanship – Thika Cloth Mills. With a legacy rooted in quality, innovation, and a commitment to sustainable growth, Thika Cloth Mills proudly embodies the spirit of "Buy Africa, Build Africa".

Buy Africa, Build Africa

As the global marketplace evolves, the call for self-sufficiency and intra-Africa trade has never been more resonant. Thika Cloth Mills stands tall as a testament to the possibilities that arise when we invest in our own capabilities. By choosing Thika Cloth Mills, consumers not only embrace superior quality, but also actively contribute to the growth of the African economy.

East Africa's Textile Powerhouse

Amidst the rising tide of opportunities, East Africa emerges as a pivotal player in the global textile market. Thika Cloth Mills, with its state-of-the-art facilities, skilled workforce, and dedication to excellence, is at the forefront of this movement. The region is primed for exporting textiles under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and Thika Cloth Mills proudly leads the charge.

AGOA Advantage

AGOA, a US trade preference programme, offers East African nations a unique opportunity to export textiles duty-free to the United States. Thika Cloth Mills recognises this as a pivotal moment to showcase the region's textile prowess on the global stage. With a focus on AGOA, Thika Cloth Mills is set to elevate East Africa's textile industry to unprecedented heights.

Expertise in Government Camouflage

Beyond fashion and everyday wear, Thika Cloth Mills stands out for its expertise in crafting camouflage textiles for governments. Trusted by nations for their precision, durability, and effectiveness, Thika Cloth Mill's camouflage solutions are a testament to the brand's commitment to excellence. The company's contribution to national security underscores its versatility and reliability in meeting diverse textile needs.

Call to Action: Cultivate Cotton, Cultivate Growth

As we celebrate Thika Cloth Mills' accomplishments, let us not forget the roots of this vibrant industry – cotton farming. Thika Cloth Mills urges African nations to invest in cotton cultivation, fostering a self-reliant textile ecosystem. By sowing the seeds of cotton, we cultivate



Military uniform.



Religious attire.



African prints.

economic growth, empower local communities, and build a sustainable future for the African textile industry.

Conclusion

Thika Cloth Mills beckons us to join the movement – Buy Africa, Build Africa. As East Africa gears up for an era of unprecedented textile exports under AGOA, you are invited to rally behind the flagbearer of this progress – Thika Cloth Mills. Together, let's weave a future where Africa's textile industry stands as a global powerhouse, rooted in excellence, sustainability, and the spirit of home-grown ingenuity.

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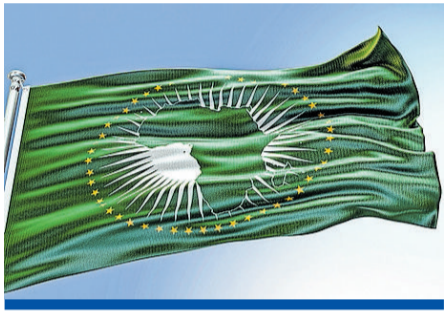


Autoconer 6 machine

50-YEAR AGENDA

The aspirations of African people give

African Union rallies the continent's leading institutions and think tanks to develop a vision for its socio-economic development, prosperity, integration, good governance and peace


BY AFRICAN UNION

On the golden jubilee of the OAU in May 2013, Africa's political leadership acknowledged past achievements and challenges and rededicated itself to the pan-African vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena."

The AU Summit tasked the African Union Commission (AUC), supported by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (Uneca), to prepare a 50-year continental agenda through a people-driven process.

Agenda 2063 was developed through an extensive consultative process involving various African stakeholders, including the youth, women, civil society organisations, the diaspora, African think tanks and research institutions, government planners, private sector, the African media, inter-faith leaders, the Forum for Former African Heads of State and Government, African Islands States and others.

In addition, ideas captured from continent wide sector ministerial meetings and meetings with the Regional Economic Communities are included. Outcomes of these consultations form the basis for the Aspirations of the

African People, the driver of Agenda 2063.

Africans of diverse social formations and in the diaspora affirmed the AU Vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena" as the overarching guide for the future of the African continent. Further, they reaffirmed the relevance and validity of the OAU/AU 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration.

The converging voices of Africans of different backgrounds, including those in the diaspora have painted a clear picture of what they desire for themselves and the continent in the future.

From these converging voices, a common and a shared set of aspirations has emerged:

- A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
- An integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance;
- An Africa of good governance, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
- A peaceful and secure Africa;
- An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;
- An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; and
- Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner.

The aspirations reflect the desire of Africans for prosperity and well-being, for unity and integration, for a continent of free citizens and expanded horizons, with freedom from conflict and improved human security. They also project an Africa of strong identity, culture and values, as well as a strong and



influential partner on the global stage making equal, respected contribution to human progress and welfare – in short, a different, better and dynamic Africa than in 2013.

There are transitions to the aspirations, and each milestone is a step towards attainment of Africa by 2063.

Aspiration #1: A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development

Africa will, by 2063, be a con-

continent of shared prosperity, which finances and manages its own growth and transformation – meaning that:

- African people will have a high standard of living and quality of life and well-being;
- Well educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge society will be broad-based, and where no child misses school due to poverty or any form of discrimination;
- Citizens are healthy,

well-nourished and have long life spans;

• Cities, peri-urban and rural communities are equipped with modern communication, sanitation, education and health facilities and are vibrant, dynamic market economies, people have access to affordable and decent housing including, housing finance together with all the basic necessities of life, and social capital is valued and preserved;

• Economies are structurally transformed to create shared growth through entrepreneurship and decent jobs for all;

• Modern agriculture for scaled-up production, improved productivity and value addition through commodity transformation and services, contribute to farmer and national prosperity and food and nutrition security; and

• The continent embeds principally adaptation processes to maintain healthy ecosystems, preserve the African natural environment—as the largest remaining reserve of pristine waters, old growth forests and land in

The African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Picture: AFP

ASPIRATIONS AT A GLANCE

- A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
- An integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance;
- An Africa of good governance, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
- A peaceful and secure

- Africa;
- An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;
- An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; and
- Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner.

AU's Agenda 2063 fresh impetus



the world.

Aspiration #2: An integrated continent, politically united based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance

By 2063 Africa will have emerged as a sovereign, independent and self-reliant continent—a united and strong Africa that realises full economic and political integration.

Africa will witness the rekindling of solidarity and unity of purpose that underpinned the struggle for emancipation from slavery, colonialism, apartheid and economic subjugation.

We shall take measures to expeditiously end the unlawful occupation of the Chagos Archipelago, the Comorian Island of Mayotte and affirm the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. All kinds of oppression, including gender, racial and other forms of discrimination will be ended.

Africa will by 2063 be:

- A United Africa; and
- Having world-class infrastructure that criss-crosses the continent.

Aspiration #3: An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law

By 2063, Africa will have undergone a deepening of the culture of good governance, democratic values, gender equality, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law. This aspiration reflects the desire for an Africa where women, men, youth, the elderly and all races of the continent will enjoy fundamental freedoms and rights to participate in the development of modern societies in the continent.

By 2063, Africa will be:

“Africa will witness the rekindling of solidarity and unity of purpose that underpinned the struggle for emancipation from slavery, colonialism, apartheid and economic subjugation

- A continent where democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law are entrenched, and it will fully adhere to and observe the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and the Protocols thereto; and
- Characterised by institutions capable of designing and implementing, empowering multi-sectoral processes and leadership that is transformative at all levels.

Aspiration #4: A peaceful and secure Africa

By 2063, Africa will emerge as a peaceful and secure continent, a conflict-free continent with harmony and understanding among communities at the grassroots level. Inter-state and intra-state wars will be fully eliminated and mechanisms put in place to prevent and/or immediately resolve any kind of inter-community conflict; and organised crime, terrorism (a major hindrance to peace and development) and other forms of criminal networks, such as piracy fully controlled. Africa will be a drugs-free continent, with no human trafficking. Diversity — ethnic, religious, economic and cultural, among others — will be a source of wealth and accelerated economic growth rather than a source of conflict.

A prosperous, integrated and united Africa, and an Africa based on good governance, democracy, and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law are the necessary pre-conditions for a peaceful and conflict-free continent.

A peaceful and secure Africa will be achieved through ensuring that by 2063, Africa will have in place:

- Entrenched culture of peace;
- Security and safety for all citizens; and
- Appropriate majority contributions in defending the continent's security and interest.

Aspiration #5: An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics

Africa, as the cradle of hu-

man civilisation, is custodian of a cultural patrimony that has contributed enormously to human progress. African cultural identity, values and ethics as a critical factor in Africa's re-emergence on the global stage in the decade of the 2010s, will be promoted and strengthened by 2063. African people are imbued with a sense of their fundamental cultural unity, which has fostered a sense of a common destiny and African identity and Pan-African consciousness.

By 2063, Africa will be a continent where:

- Pan-Africanism is fully entrenched; and
- African cultural renaissance is preminent.

Aspiration #6: An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and

youth, and caring for children

By 2063, Africa will be a continent where all citizens will be actively involved in decision-making in all aspects of development, including social, economic, political and environmental. Africa will be a continent where no child, woman or man will be left behind.

Well before 2063, Africa will be a continent where gender equality is the norm in participation and access to social and economic opportunity, benefits and contributions for all segments of the continent's population. Economic growth and development outcomes, social and political discourse will be plural, such that viewpoints from all, regardless of sex, political affiliation, religion, ethnic affiliation, locality, age or other factors, serve to strengthen, broaden and deepen partic-

ipation in all spheres of life.

The Africa of 2063 will be a continent where:

- Gender equality is embedded in all spheres of life;
- Engaged and empowered Youth is the norm; and
- Children are nurtured and cherished.

Aspiration #7: Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner

Africa will emerge as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner with a bigger role in world affairs.

By 2063, Africa will:

- Be a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence; and
- Take full responsibility to finance her growth and transformation; and will not be donor-dependent.

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- Microphone: -40dB ± 3dB
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SCORECARD

The continent is on course to recover the 'lost decades'

With 60 percent of its 1.4 billion people under 25 years old, making it the world's youngest continent, Africa has to invest in its young people to turn its youth bulge into a blessing


PETER KAGWANJA

Africa is on the cusp of yet another "lost decade," even as it celebrates 60 years since the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and its successor, the African Union (AU), and 10 years of the implementation of 'Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want'.

Discernibly, a new wave of coups and civil wars, occurring within the wider ideological canvass of the return of Cold War geopolitics and now sweeping across the continent, is disrupting development, stifling investment, and eroding the economic gains made since 2000.

Africa's economies are on a downward trend, decelerating from 4.8 percent in 2021 to 3.6 percent in 2022 and 2.5 percent in 2023, according to the World Bank.

The continent risks plunging back to the "lost decades" of the 1980s and 1990s. A lethal mix of low commodity prices, mismanagement, corruption, coups, civil wars, and the ruinous Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) imposed by the International Monetary Fund destroyed the welfare system, hampered the continent's development, plunged populations deeper into poverty, and eroded the economic gains made during the post-colonial years.

In 2000, *The Economist*, capturing the mood of investors, wrote Africa off as a "hopeless continent."

A two-pronged strategy enabled Africa to rise like a phoenix from the ashes of the 'lost decades' in a radical, practical, and palpable way.

First, Africa steered away from its dependency on Western donors and took a new independent philosophical path to reforms, recovery and modernisation defined by the twin concepts of 'African Renaissance' and 'African solutions to African problems.' Both concepts carried the promise that Africa can triumph over its myriad challenges and achieve cultural, scientific, and economic renewal for its people.

Second, Africa adopted a new legal and normative framework to undergird its surgical reform of extant pan-African institutions to effectively prevent, manage and resolve conflicts, attract local and foreign investments and foster a conducive environment for economic growth and sustainable development.

The Constitutive Act (2000) created the AU as a successor to the OAU. The move was more than just a mere deletion of "O" in the OAU. It ushered in a new normative order that allowed the AU to intervene in the internal affairs of countries to stop crimes against humanity, violations of human rights, and gen-

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A two-pronged strategy enabled Africa to rise like a phoenix from the ashes of the 'lost decades' in a radical, practical and palpable way



ocide. This was in contrast to the OAU, which was required to respect the territorial sovereignty of each of the member states. On this norm, Africa erected its African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

An intricate mechanism for Africa to act and address threats to stability, peace and security, APSA is a rich tapestry of specialised agencies: the Africa Peace and Security Council, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force, the African Union Peace Fund, the Regional Economic Communities, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Africa Peer Review Mechanism, and the Common African Defence and Security Policy.

In May 2013, Africa adopted 'Agenda 2063: The Africa We

Want' as a strategic framework to deliver on development, unity, freedom, collective progress, shared prosperity, and a blueprint and master plan for transforming the continent into the global powerhouse of the future. The first 10-Year Implementation Plan (2013–2023) prioritised infrastructure, education, science, technology, arts, culture, and peace as the flagship projects of Agenda 2063.

A decade later, Africa's grand strategy had worked miracles. In December 2011, *The Economist* changed the tune, declaring Africa a "hopeful continent" and coining the term "Africa Rising" to explain rapid economic growth across the continent since 2000.

Between 2005 and 2015, Africa's economy grew by 50 percent, in contrast with a world

average of 23 percent.

In 2023, the AU produced two reports that documented the achievements and shortcomings in the implementation of the first 10-year plan of Agenda 2063. Over a dozen flagship projects are still in progress.

As part of these achievements, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was established in 2018. The AU has declared 2023 "The Year of AfCFTA." If fully implemented, the AfCFTA has the potential to pull 50 million people out of extreme poverty by 2035.

Progress has also been recorded in infrastructure, especially expanding Africa's road networks and integrated high-speed train networks to connect the continent's seaboard by 2063 and linking Africa to global markets.

Efforts have also been made to actualise the African passport and the free movement of people.

As the downside to the First Ten-Year Plan, Africa failed dismally to silence the guns by 2020 as planned. Its security architecture could neither anticipate, prevent, nor de-escalate civil wars in Ethiopia and Sudan, coups in West Africa and the Sahel, or insurgencies in eastern DR Congo, Somalia, and Nigeria.

As the continent embarks on its Second Ten-Year Plan (2023–2033) of Agenda 2063, it should give pride of place to the implementation of the Grand Inga Dam project, estimated to generate 43,200MW to support Africa's transition to clean and affordable energy.

With 60 percent of its 1.4 billion people under 25 years old, making it the world's youngest continent, Africa has to invest in its young people to turn its youth bulge into a blessing. Dealing with the youth bulge calls for strategic partnerships to develop skills and create jobs, combat threats to peace and security, and foster an enabling environment for development while avoiding the ideological trappings of the new Cold War, especially between America and China.

Ultimately, Africa has to put its act together to ensure that a new bout of coups and civil wars does not plunge it back to another "lost decade."

Prof Kagwanja is former Government Adviser (2008–2013), and currently CEO at the Africa Institute, Adjunct Professor at the University of Nairobi and the National Defence University—Kenya.

Kenyan children and parents celebrate good results in a national exam. Africa has to invest in its young people to turn its youth bulge into a blessing. Picture: File

GENDER AGENDA



Africa needs more women in fintech

Over the past decade, fintech has driven a significant increase in financial inclusion, including of women, in Africa. But if the industry is to continue to expand and strengthen access to financial services and credit, it needs not only to serve women, but also to be shaped by them



NICK BARIGYE

The fintech revolution is sweeping across Africa, creating wealth and opportunity from Cairo to Cape Town. But, like the broader tech sector, the fintech industry suffers from a fundamental weakness: too few women.

Africa does have something to boast about on this front: the share of fintech companies founded by women is double the global average. Unfortunately, the figure is still just 3.2 percent. Moreover, while 30 percent of tech professionals in Sub-Saharan Africa are women, the share of women in fintech remains well below the industry average.

This does not mean that fintech has not had an impact on women. On the contrary, it has rapidly accelerated finan-



cial inclusion for African women, from private individuals seeking to formalize their household finances to small businesses whose owners want to expand. In Rwanda, for example, fintech platforms drove a 27 percent increase in women's access to financial services from 2012 to 2016. In Kenya, mobile banking has increased overall financial inclusion from only 26 percent in 2006 to 84 percent in 2021.

But Africa still has a long way to go.

As of 2020, only 37 percent of women in Sub-Saharan Africa had a bank account, compared with 48 percent of men.

The problem persists even in Rwanda – a regional leader in gender equality. In 2008, Rwanda became the first country in the world to elect a female-majority parliament, and today it boasts some of the world's highest rates of female participation in politics and the labor force. But, despite the progress on financial inclusion that fintech has enabled, more than

three-quarters of the Rwandan women still lack access to a bank account.

The inability to access financial services puts business owners at a significant disadvantage. According to the World Bank, women-owned small and medium-size enterprises in Africa – a significant share of all SMEs – face a \$42 billion credit gap. This limits their ability to expand and create jobs.

With flexible, innovative, and targeted solutions, fintech companies can help to close this gap. One reason why women might struggle to access financing is that they lack a financial history or credit record – the basis of traditional assessments of creditworthiness. But fintech companies can avoid this issue by using alternative data sources, such as mobile-phone usage and social media activity, which have been shown to support accurate assessments of creditworthiness. These approaches must obviously be balanced with robust privacy and encryption solutions, ensuring that trust flows between lender and borrower.

Another common barrier to financial inclusion – particularly in rural areas – is the lack of documentation, such as government-issued IDs or proof of address, required to open traditional bank accounts and access credit. But fintech companies can allow women to access financial services using their mobile phones, making use of digital identity-verification technologies, such as biometric authentication.

Fintech companies can also develop financial products tailored to the needs of people who are typically excluded from the formal financial system. For example, the Ugandan company Ensibuuko, working with commercial and nonprofit organizations, designed an innovative system of digital credit especially for farmers. Given that agriculture is the sector in which most African women are active, such initiatives could go a long way toward closing the gender gap.

But if the fintech industry is to continue to expand and strengthen financial inclusion, it needs not only to serve women, but also to include them. This would benefit the women employed, the industry as a whole, and many of its clients. Women investors are twice as likely to invest in women-owned businesses than their male counterparts are, and women may be better equipped to design and deliver fintech services to women clients.

The fact is that women are more favourably served by institutions in which women hold power. This is true of any industry or service: as a recent Nature article pointed out, the fact that women are missing from policymaking and budgeting decisions related to health care most likely contributes to the underfunding of health issues faced by women. Fintech is no different.

The challenge now will be to support women's participation – and leadership – in the fintech industry. Whether in the boardroom or on the farm, women must help shape the future of African finance.

Nick Barigye, CEO of Rwanda Finance Ltd, is a former managing partner of Karisimbi Business Partners ©Project Syndicate



In 2008, Rwanda became the first country in the world to elect a female-majority parliament

PICTORIAL

Kusi 2022: Exploring African responses to climate change



Nation Media Group Board Chairman Wilfred Kiboro (L) welcomes US Ambassador Meg Whitman to the 4th Kusi edition in Karura, Nairobi. With him is Group CEO Stephen Gitagama (second left) and former External Affairs manager Clifford Machoka.



The chairperson of the Council of Governors, Kirinyaga Governor Anne Waiguru, plants a tree in Karura forest where 4th Kusi edition took place.



Mr Wilfred Kiboro (C) with Equity Group MD James Mwangi (L) and Safaricom's Peter Ndegwa. Picture: Pool



Environment Cabinet Secretary Soipan Tuya makes a speech. Picture: Pool



NGM directors Wangethi Mwangi (L) and Francis Okello. Picture: Pool



Some of the participants at the Kusi dinner.



Left: Youth perform at the festival. Picture: Pool

INTRA-AFRICA TRADE



A united Africa would be one of the greatest forces for good of the world

As Kwame Nkrumah said, the solution to African problems will only be found in African unity. Divided we are weak



PHYLLIS WAKIAGA

The moment for Africa to become a serious player in global value chains is now or never. With solid political momentum behind the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), we have a window of opportunity to improve regional value chains and further upgrade into Global Value Chains (GVCs).

Launched in January 2021, the AfCFTA was positioned as the trade agreement to transform the economic trajectory of Africa and position the continent as a force within the Globe. The Free Trade Area brings together 55 countries with a pop-

ulation of over 1.3 billion, a combined gross domestic product valued at \$34 trillion and is estimated to bring over 30 million people out of poverty. Since its launch, the AfCFTA Secretariat has made progress, the most recent being the launch of the Rules of Origin manual and e-tariff book in July 2022.

Africa barely trades with itself currently. According to an UNCTAD report, Africa interregional trade currently stands at 15 percent compared to 47 percent in America, 61 percent in Asia, and 67 percent in Europe. Africa and Asia however are the only continents with rising interregional trade since 2008, providing us with an opportunity to turn the tide. The AfCFTA can accelerate this growth by developing regional value chains as a foundation for global value chains.

Africa's integration into manufacturing value chains is also dominated by export of primary products with only 1.9 percent of global manufacturing taking place in the continent. The Economic Complexity Index (ECI), an indicator of a nation's productive capabilities

that also indirectly looks at the mix of sophisticated products a country exports, indicates that the continent still produces primary products with relatively low sophistication.

According to the ECI 2021, countries like Japan, Germany, Singapore, the USA, and China rank 1,3,5, 12 and 17, respectively. These are countries producing sophisticated products and enjoying rapid economic growth. Most African countries are at the bottom section of the ECI, with South Africa at 70, Kenya at 90, Senegal at 96, Ethiopia at 97, Cote d'Ivoire at 124, Ghana at 117, and Nigeria at 129. According to economists, countries can only increase their score in economic complexity by becoming competitive and increasing the number technology-intensive and high value-add industries.

The World Bank report *Rethinking Policy Priorities in the Context of Global Value Chains*, highlights an opportunity to rethink Africa's policy priorities, leverage the AfCFTA and other trade agreements to expand access to external markets. What would it take for Africa to grow value-added exports, strengthen participation in manufacturing value chains and upgrade to knowledge-intensive industries?

We need to develop and implement export-oriented in-

dustrial policies at National level that are pro-AfCFTA with regional value chains in mind that can bolster scale and complementarities for processing high-value exports. The policies will require AfCFTA rules of origin that are simple, flexible, transparent, business-friendly, and predictable to improve access to regional inputs. Integration will also be driven by reduced trade barriers, reliability and efficiency of logistics and coordinated trade facilitation services. Africa further needs to target entry of value-added products into high-growth markets like Asia, Europe, and America, further integrating the continent into global supply chains.

The second priority would be to address competitiveness and productivity. A positive step in the right direction will be development of policies that address market failures and distortions to facilitate entry, survival, and growth of firms, reduce business costs, ease licensing and addressing business environment challenges. This includes reforming State-owned agencies to minimise market distortions, providing a much-needed level playing field for growth.

Another priority is to invest in cross-cutting enablers like digital, energy, transportation, and logistics infrastructures

with financing and public-private partnerships. These investments in continental and regional projects will have spill over effect across borders. A reliable online payment system is also needed to enable cross-border e-commerce and deal with the complicated payments compounded by foreign exchange restrictions and controls.

Trade agreements are not self-executing. They require the right political economy and participation of the private sector to succeed. The private sector in Africa accounts for approximately 80 percent of total production, 67 percent of investment, 75 percent of credit, and employs 90 percent of the working-age population. The political economy and influence of private sector will consequently be key drivers for the success of AfCFTA. This requires a paradigm shift from a nationalistic to a continental mindset because a wider African market makes sense for business models, growth and sustainability.

As Kwame Nkrumah said, "The solution to African problems will only be found in African unity. Divided we are weak. United Africa could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world."

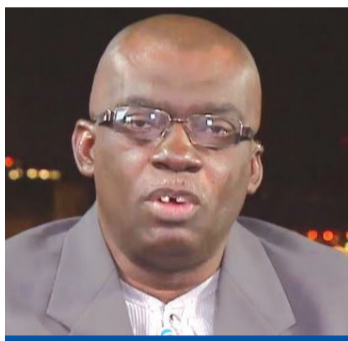
Phyllis Wakiaga is the Industrialisation Practice Senior Private Sector Development Advisor at Tony Blair Institute for Global Change

Trade agreements are not self-executing. They require the right political economy and participation of the private sector to succeed

PAYMENTS SYSTEM

Cross-border payments to boost Africa trade

The Pan-African Payment and Settlement System enables seamless financial integration and opens business opportunities for African economies


JON OFFEI-ANSAH

In a groundbreaking move to reshape Africa's financial landscape, the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) has emerged as a centralised financial market infrastructure that facilitates secure and efficient cross-border transactions across African borders.

Working in collaboration with Africa's central banks, PAPSS provides a robust service connecting commercial banks and licensed payment service providers across the region as "participants".

Since its announcement at the 12th Extraordinary Summit of the African Union in 2019, PAPSS has been hailed as a key instrument for implementing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), paving the way for enhanced intra-African trade and financial integration.

Afreximbank, in partnership with the African Union (AU), played a pivotal role in developing PAPSS, which aims to minimise risk and streamline cross-border transactions, significantly reducing the dependency on hard currencies.

This revolutionary financial market infrastructure is set to boost Africa's economic growth and underpin the implementation of the AfCFTA, serving as a continent-wide platform for processing, clearing, and settling intra-African trade and commerce payments through a multilateral net settlement system.



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (R) with Afreximbank CEO Mike Ogbalu III at the launch of the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) in Niamey, on July 7, 2019.

Picture: AFP

tem.

With its operational rollout announced by African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and AfCFTA Secretariat, PAPSS is set to be a game-changer for the African continent. By saving over \$5 billion in payment transaction costs annually, the platform will foster financial inclusion and facilitate seamless cross-border payments in local currencies, bolstering intra-African trade and reinforcing economic development.

Prof Benedict Oramah, president of Afreximbank and chairman of the PAPSS Management Board, expressed his pride in realising the long-envisioned dream of implementing PAPSS.

"With the implementation of PAPSS, Africa can expect to begin to reap the fruits of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. Afreximbank is proud to have contributed to the realisation of this multi-decade dream," he said.

He emphasised that PAPSS collaborates with existing regional and national payment systems, complementing them to better integrate African economies for the collective benefit.

Wamkele Mene, secretary-gen-

eral of the African Continental Free Trade Area, lauded the establishment of PAPSS as a pivotal development in facilitating affordable and efficient cross-border trade transactions, a crucial aspect of AfCFTA's implementation. With greater capacity for conducting cross-border transactions, Africa can now unlock numerous opportunities for enhanced intra-African trade.

He said: "The introduction of PAPSS provides Africa with greater capacity to conduct

cross-border transactions and expand the scale of both active and latent opportunities for enhanced intra-African trade."

PAPSS CEO, Mike Ogbalu III, envisions the payments system as a fundamental rail connecting African markets, enabling seamless trade for individuals, businesses, and governments across the continent.

"PAPSS will provide fresh impetus for businesses to scale more easily across Africa, essentially eliminating the borders that have balkanised us

ABOUT THE SYSTEM

Afreximbank, in partnership with the African Union developed Pan-African Payment and Settlement System, which aims to minimise risk and streamline cross-border transactions. Afreximbank has already approved \$500 million, with an additional \$3 billion estimated to bolster the continent-wide implementation of PAPSS.

Afreximbank has signed a memorandum of understanding with Access Bank Group, Ecobank Group, KCB Group, Standard Bank Group, and UBA Group to facilitate cross-border transactions.



and robbed us of our economic prosperity for so long," he added.

Following the successful pilot phase in the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ), PAPSS is now advancing discussions with other national and regional institutions to expand its continent-wide connectivity.

Afreximbank, as the main Settlement Agent, provides settlement guarantees on the payment system and overdraft facilities to all settlement agents, further accelerating expansion and ensuring settlement finality.

To further support the clearing and settlement in WAMZ countries, Afreximbank has already approved \$500 million, with an additional \$3 billion estimated to bolster the continent-wide implementation of PAPSS.

In a remarkable step forward, PAPSS has signed memorandums of understanding with five African multinational commercial banking groups: Access Bank Group, Ecobank Group, KCB Group, Standard Bank Group, and UBA Group.

This collaboration seeks to revolutionise cross-border transactions across Africa, leveraging the extensive networks of subsidiaries and representative offices across major economic centres.

By integrating PAPSS into their existing systems, these commercial banks aim to enhance efficiency, transparency, and reliability in intra-African settlement, driving financial inclusion and continental economic development.

The joint efforts of PAPSS, Afreximbank, African central banks, and participating commercial banking groups are setting the stage for a more integrated and efficient African banking landscape.

With PAPSS poised to unleash its potential continent-wide, Africa stands on the cusp of a new era of financial prosperity and boundless cross-border opportunities.

Customers of the partnering banks will soon experience the benefits of PAPSS, as the service becomes available in their countries towards year-end.

Offei-Ansah is the publisher of Africa Briefing magazine. This article was first published in Africa Briefing

FOOD VALUE CHAINS

Africa's new billionaires will be in food value chains, not oil

Agriculture is the next frontier in creation of wealth in the race to make the continent able to feed its 283 million people who go hungry each year



AKINWUMI ADESINA

If there is any area in which Africa has comparative advantage, it is in agriculture. It has 65 percent of all the remaining uncultivated, arable land in the world. It has abundant and low-wage labour. Its burgeoning population, estimated to rise to 2.5 billion people by 2050, is a huge consumption market.

They do not drink oil. They do not smoke gas. They eat food!

And here is the major headline: The size of Africa's food and agriculture market will be worth \$1 trillion by 2030.

So, think differently and invest differently. The new millionaires and billionaires of Africa will not come from the oil and gas industry, they will be from food and agriculture.

Yet, despite significant progress and successes being recorded recently in agriculture, Africa still has 283 million people who go hungry each year.

When the Russia-Ukraine war broke out, Africa faced the risk of a potential food crisis, as prices of wheat and maize – imported largely from both countries – skyrocketed.

Africa was at risk.

Recently, the Financial Times had a screaming headline that the world will soon go into another food crisis, as India, the world's largest producer, has banned the exports of rice,

bringing back the memories of the global rice crisis of 2008.

Africa cannot continue to be at risk. That is why in January, the African Development Bank, and the Government of Senegal, in partnership with the African Union, organised the Feed Africa Summit. The summit, attended by 34 heads of state and government, made decisive resolutions to enable Africa's feed itself. I am delighted that we have collectively mobilised \$72 billion towards implementing food and agriculture delivery compacts from this Summit — an unprecedented effort globally.

Africa must become a global player in food and agriculture.

Africa, think big, help feed the world. To do so, Africa must end the export of raw agricultural commodities. We must recognise that the fastest way to poverty is via the export of raw commodities, while the highway to wealth is from export of value-added products.

That is why Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZs) are important.

They provide critical infrastructure to support agro-industrial development in Africa, to unleash the power of its agricultural potentials, with the establishment of food processing and manufacturing companies within the zones.

The zones will support the transformation of the agricultural sector, raise productivity, scale economies and efficiencies of food and agricultural value chains.

They will allow Africa to process its own cashew instead of exporting raw nuts. They will create manufacturing capacities to process cotton into textile and garments, instead of exporting the raw material.

They will allow the processing of coffee into brewed coffee, tea



A greengrocer in Kenya's Nyeri town.
Picture: File

leaves into branded tea, cocoa beans into chocolates, cassava into flour and fructose, and fruits and vegetables into fresh or packaged horticulture produce exports.

They will open new income-earning opportunities from the processing of beef instead of African cows emigrating on hoofs, while the rest of the world exports processed beef.

The SAPZs offer the infrastructure enabled platforms for Africa to turn its massive agricultural lands into real sources of wealth. To support the establishment of SAPZs, the African Development Bank has provided financing of \$853 million, and mobilised more than \$661 million from other development partners.

Our valued partners include the Islamic Development Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Arab Bank for Economic Development, the European Union, and the Korean Export-Import Bank. We are also working with the African Union to support the Common Africa Agro-Parks Programme.

Our collective effort has mobilised \$1.5 billion in support of the establishment of 25 SAPZs in 11 African countries.

At the World Food Prize in Des Moines, Iowa, US, recently, the President of Ethiopia and the Vice-President of Nigeria joined me for a session on the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones.

The standing-room-only session on the SAPZs was the high point of the World Food Prize. Right in the heartland of US,

THE NUMBERS

The size of Africa's food and agriculture market will be worth \$1 trillion by 2030.

The African Development Bank and its partners Afreximbank, Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, and Arise Integrated Industrial

Platforms are leading efforts to create Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZs) across the continent. The institutions aim to raise at least \$2 billion in financing and investment commitments from members of the alliance and partners over the next five years for the initiative.

investors were excited about the investment opportunities in the SAPZs. To expand SAPZs across African countries, and take advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Area, we must scale up resources, partnerships and alliances.

The number of partners joining hands to rapidly scale up the SAPZs across Africa is expanding, including the private sector. That is exciting.

The African Development Bank is pleased to announce the launch of the Alliance for Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones together with founding partners Afreximbank, Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, and Arise Integrated Industrial Platforms.

The Alliance has the goal of mobilising at least \$2 billion in financing and investment commitments from members of the alliance and partners over the next five years. Meeting this financing goal will deliver an additional 15 to 20 SAPZ projects in various countries across the continent.

The alliance will raise funds

through various investment windows for project preparation, project development and construction, and financing for tenant companies.

By doing so, the alliance will bridge the critical financing gap, complement existing initiatives, and mobilise resources towards our common goal of enhancing agricultural value addition in Africa.

The alliance will also provide project preparation finance, equity and debt investments, technical assistance, and project tracking and oversight.

It will help with improving administrative, policy and investment incentives.

The momentum of transformative change is in Africa's favour.

It's time for Africa to be a player in global food and agricultural value chains. It's time for Africa to fill airplanes and ships with processed and value-added foods and agricultural commodities, for trade around the world.

Never again should Africa be at risk.

Dr Adesina is president of the African Development Bank



Africa must become a global player in food and agriculture.

Africa, think big, help feed the world.

AFRICAN CULTURE

Versatile approach to realise Africa we want

The continent should take advantage of and build on its rich diversity in the quest for prosperity and change the attitudes of its people on economic growth issues

As the mother continent and first inhabited region on earth, Africa is characterised by vast lands and one of the largest populations on the planet with rich human heritage and cultural diversity. The broad history of Africa tells the world about the story of her civilisations, ranging from the first artists who left impressions on their rock shelters to the scholars who built great universities in the Sahara.

The treasure of Africa's unique identity encompasses iconic natural places such as Serengeti, Table Mountain, and Victoria Falls and the origin of the history of humans from the fossil hominid sites of Olduvai Gorge and Sterkfontein to the pyramids of ancient Egypt. The high walls of her great forts and castles from the colonial era recite sad stories of slavery and remind us of the long history of Africans' struggle for independence and liberation.

Africa's rich history and culture are so diverse that it varies not only from one country to another but also within regions and countries.

The culture of each ethnic group holds together the authentic social fabric of traditional practices and rites, art, music, and oral literature through which identities are built. As such, diversity of cultures, religions, languages, and traditions should not be addressed as a barrier to development, rather the continent should take advantage and build on this rich diversity in its quest for prosperity and change the attitudes of its people towards issues related to economic growth, social development, and relation with the environment.

What matters most is the ability to use Africa's legacy of cultural resources to trigger the development and economic transformation of the continent to realise the vision of The Africa We Want by 2063.

Discovering the treasure

The first step to harnessing the potential of Africa's culture is to create global economic opportunities and raise awareness of Africa's massive contribution to modern life and global culture.

Music and fashion are good examples of the global impact African culture tends to have. Many modern icons in the music industry have incorporated African instrumentation, ideas, and ideals into their music.

There are various forms of music most of which have either originated from Africa or at least have been affected by African music on some level. Many modern instruments have evolved from ancient African forms, and many other

types of music have adopted similar techniques in terms of rhythms, patterns, harmony, or simply the evolution of melody.

On another hand, the modern fashion industry often borrows very heavily from African culture in the design of the latest fashion trends.

Today's music and fashion industries undoubtedly owe an immense debt of gratitude to Africa's culture and creativity. It, therefore, becomes evident that the rich culture of Africa has not only contributed but also continues to sustain development in many industries in modern societies.

The collective consciousness of opportunities towards the potential of African cultural resources can go a long way in reinforcing pride and confidence in local products as well as triggering innovation and creativity.

Furthermore, it could open an avenue for unleashing innovative resources to enable people, particularly youth and women to lead full, productive, and meaningful lives by raising their income and improving their standards of living in terms of income, health, education, and security.

Indigenous solutions for global questions

With an increasing human population, trees and forest reserves globally are cleared every day to make way for agriculture in fertile lands and to meet the increasing needs in food as well as urban planning to meet housing demands.

The current increasing rate of natural resource degradation and loss of species has a major adverse effect not only on human beings but on all life on the planet. The loss of species in the ecosystem comes with the loss of economic benefits and social well-being, especially within rural populations. It is well documented that formal mechanisms of natural resource conservation and protection have not yet halted the aggressive land degradation and deforestation.

However, long-standing practices such as traditional agroforestry, a method still employed in many African communities, could provide a solution that balances agriculture and maintenance of forests and trees across landscapes.

If the question is how to conserve and protect biodiversity, an answer to this would be to revisit the wealth of culture before industrialization and the introduction of modern forms of conservation models. African traditional beliefs, environmental ethics, and socio-cultural practices in the conservation of natural resources can contribute to addressing the global questions of biodiversity



Revellers wave at the Itanda Falls on the second day of an annual four-day international music festival, in Jinja, on September 16, 2022. Picture: AFP

conservation and environmental rehabilitation and protection.

Apart from economic aspects, African communities have a close and intimate cultural connection with their lands, forests, trees, and surrounding biodiversity. The benefit of the ethical and responsible use of the planet's resources and ethics remains apparent in many cultural and social systems of traditional Africa, especially in sedentary and pastoralist farming communities where their practices directly impact the conservation of valuable biodiversity in their immediate environments.

Over time, Africans have developed elaborate and resilient traditions associated with the conservation and management of environmental resources. The conservation of environmental resources and ecosystems is an integral part of the indigenous African culture. This culture can enlighten policymakers, inspire research and innovations and provide a solid foundation for sus-

tainable use of ecosystems and development. There is a great potential to scale up the environmental experience in Africa by empowering rural communities to develop their traditional practices to scale up innovative solutions for forestry management and farming. Ecological practices, traditional knowledge, and beliefs should be properly preserved and retained so that they can be modelled, scaled, and replicated through generations to maintain their valuable contribution to addressing serious environmental and developmental challenges.

Furthermore, African environmental culture can expose environmental injustice and assist local communities to protect their environment by seeking environmental justice. It can create awareness within countries and globally about malpractices and irresponsible actions of transnational and local industries which damage the environment.

Governments, development agencies, and donors have a role to play in strengthening cultural-based solutions through enabling policies; sharing experiences across communities and national economic sectors; provisions of financial and non-financial resources; and enhancing research and development.

The main reason for conflict and civil wars in Africa is the desire to acquire power and secure resources for one group, tribe, or ethnicity at the expense of others. The issue of identity has mixed with culture, heritage, and the control of economic resources to create political tension and violence.

In all cases, violence has led to the breakdown of social order, and societies at large, and the tragic loss of human lives. Consequently, infrastructure has been destroyed, education and health services have suffered, and the environment has been damaged. Wars and con-

AT A GLANCE

- Africa's rich history and culture are so diverse that it varies not only from one country to another/
- The continent's iconic treasure trove include natural scenery the Serengeti, Table Mountain and Victoria Falls as well as historic sites of Olduvai Gorge, Sterkfontein and the pyramids of Egypt.
- Africans have elaborate and resilient traditions linked to the conservation and management of environmental resources.
- There is a great potential to scale up the environmental experience in Africa through empowering rural communities
- Wars and conflicts consume the scarce resources which could be utilised to boost education, health services, social protection, and infrastructure needed for development.