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SPECIAL PULLOUT!

Africa Health Strategy

2016-2030

THE YEAR OF
NUTRITION



Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition & Food Security on the African continent:

Strengthening Agro-Food Systems,
Health & Social Protection Systems for
the Acceleration of Human, Social &
Economic Capital Development

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initiative transforms
the lives of over 8
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**Strengthening Resilience in
Nutrition & Food Security on
the African continent:**

Strengthening Agro-food systems,
Health and Social Protection Systems
for the Acceleration of Human, Social
and Economic Capital Development

“Food is a political weapon...Africa's foremost defence is self-sufficiency in food. Until we attain a substantial measure of freedom from food dependency, we are vulnerable to manipulation by the wealthier nations

H.E Jerry Rawlings
(former President of
Ghana)

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For every event or situation in life, there is a proverb that will capture the essence of it. I came across several African proverbs that in a few words convey the importance of our African Union theme for 2022, YEAR OF NUTRITION: “Strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent: Strengthening agro-food systems, health and social protection systems for the acceleration of human, social and economic capital development”

The first proverb ***“Your food is supposed to be your medicine and your medicine is supposed to be your food”*** simply captures in one sentence that our physical and mental wellbeing starts from the food we eat. Not just the quantity, but the quality of food we consume must provide the essential good nutrition to sustain life as well as ensure our mental and physical productivity. The second proverb ***“Even the best cooking pot will not produce food”*** builds on the sub themes; reminding us that we must invest in sustainable food production systems that provide adequate food, deliver more diverse and affordable diets and can economically sustain those that are at the heart of producing the foods we eat.

This edition of the AU Echo we provides various views on how we can address the issue of Nutrition on the continent if we are to achieve the Aspirations and goals of Africa’s Agenda 2063. Furthermore, we highlight African Union programmes and strategies such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Africa Health Strategy 2016-2030, the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy 2015-2025, the Cost of Hunger in Africa Study, the AU Sustainable School Feeding Programme which, are amongst the several key initiatives that form the bedrock of achieving Africa’s nutrition goals.

The issue of nutrition and food security goes beyond the physical food and our productive systems and

plays a role in how the continent and its people are seen. Africa has 60% of the world’s arable land, Africa should be able to feed itself! The narrative about Africa’s ability to meet its food security goals is a narrative that has long been sold along with the other stories that have been used to paint the continent with one brush stroke.

At the heart of every human experience are the stories we tell ourselves. Stories about our past and present; stories about how we understand the world around us and stories that helps us to visualise the futures we hope for. These stories become the persistent narratives and define the perceptions we carry about ourselves and others. *Challenging perceptions and changing the narratives about Africa is a key element of building a common value system that will support the achievements of the Aspirations of Agenda 2063 especially as relates to building a strong cultural identity and fostering the unity that will enable Africa to become an influential player in the global arena.*

How Africa is viewed by the word and even how Africans view themselves is built on decades of information that was largely dictated by interests that aimed to negate the role of Africa and relegate the continent and its people including people of African descent in the diaspora. Changing these narratives is key to turning the tide on first how we see ourselves as Africans; and is also a call for us as Africans to challenge the tales we tell ourselves including the “othering” of our fellow Africans reinforcing the negative stereotypes that have limited our abilities to integrate and remove barriers that have prevented the social and economic integration that would transform the continent if we first saw ourselves as African’s and stood as one entity facing the world determined to chart our own destiny. In this edition of the AU Echo we highlight the works of one of our media partners African No Filter an organisation working in the media space to challenges the narratives about Africa and create a more balanced view of Africa as well as foster a better understanding amongst Africans of the role we have to play in changing the narratives about Africa.

In this Year of Nutrition, our work and the success of our endeavours will play a key role in changing the narratives about Africa.

Leslie Richer, Director | Directorate of Information & Communication

African Union Priorities on Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment as Envisioned in Agenda 2063

Africa has noted that despite positive achievements registered recently in decision-making, women, as the largest proportion of our population; still remain vulnerable, at-risk and impoverished due to the challenges caused by social, economic, cultural and political marginalisation, gender-based violence and discrimination against women, terrorism, conflict, and fundamentalism. Africa is committed to resolve and end violence against women and girls, and improving access to, and control of, finances, land, education, health, information, services, sciences and technology and decision-making in political governance and business enterprises in Agenda 2063 and continental, regional and national Gender Architectures.

Agenda 2063 envisages a non-sexist Africa, an Africa where girls and boys can reach their full potential, where men and women contribute equally to the development of their societies.

The vision of Africa expressed in Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 is one of an Africa whose development is people-driven, especially relying on the potential offered by its women and youth.

Under this vision, it is envisaged

that there will be gender equality in all spheres of life and an engaged and empowered youth. Women are key contributors to global economies and play a critical role in the development of their societies. Without the equal and effective participation of women in all spheres of socio-political and economic life, the vision of Agenda 2063 might not be realised.

By 2063, all forms of violence and discrimination (social, economic, political) against women and girls would have been eliminated and they would fully enjoy all their human rights. This means

Agenda 2063 envisages a non-sexist Africa, an Africa where girls and boys can reach their full potential, where men and women contribute equally to the development of their societies.

Merhawit is an electrician working at a 200-acre condominium development, Image © Stephan Gladieu/World Bank

Ntsiki Biyela is the resident wine maker at Stellakaya with a passion for red wine, a BSc Oenology graduate from Stellenbosch University, Image © John Hogg/World Bank



an end to all harmful social practices and that all barriers to access to quality health and education for women and girls would be non-existent. In addition, the Africa of 2063 would see fully empowered women with equal access and opportunity in all spheres of life. This means that the African woman would have equal economic rights, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register and manage a business. Over 90% of rural women would have access to productive assets, including land, credit, inputs and financial services.

Agenda 2063 promotes attainment of full gender parity with women occupy 50% of elected offices at state, regional and local bodies, and 50% of managerial positions in government and private sector.

The economic and political glass ceiling hindering women's progress would finally have been broken.

Gender Equality and Agenda 2063

"As the continent moves onto achieving its goals for Agenda 2063, it will be important to monitor how targets and indicators for gender equality will evolve".

As the blueprint and master plan for the Africa we want for the future, Agenda 2063 puts gender equality at the forefront of the continent's vision. Among the 7 Aspirations outlined in the Agenda, Aspiration 6 and its related Goal 17 specifically



Professor Amivi Kafui Tete-Benissan (left) teaches cell biology & biochemistry at the University of Lomé, in the capital of Togo, Image © Stephan Gladieu/World Bank



Helinaworks for a real estate construction firm overseeing the construction of three apartment buildings, Image © Stephan Gladieu/World Bank

focus on achieving full gender equality to enable a people driven development for Africa. To this end, Agenda 2063 identifies two main priority areas: women's and girls' empowerment; and violence and discrimination against women and girls. Because of this large timeframe, mechanisms have been put in place to ensure adequate tracking and monitoring of the progress being made by the continent as a whole.

Consequently, five ten-year plans were established to ensure

The benefits of gender mainstreaming will be felt across different sectors as women's potential is unlocked and their contributions encouraged, while investments in the future of African girls are made.

accountability and transparency. First Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063, for initial 10 years (2013-2023) Goal 17: women's and girls' empowerment, this decade is focused on economic rights, and political participation and representation. On violence and discrimination against women and girls, efforts are concentrated on reducing levels of gender-based violence; reducing all harmful social norms and customary practices; and eliminating barriers to quality education, health and social services. As the continent moves onto achieving its goals for Agenda 2063, it will be important to monitor how targets and indicators for gender equality will evolve.

AU's Gender Architecture and regional commitments for gender equality and their application

In 2000, the African Union established its Women, Gender and Development Directorate

(WGDD), now Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD) with the aim of promoting and mainstreaming gender equality within and throughout the Union and its Member States. The Directorate effectively became the Union's main organ for leading, guiding, defending and coordinating the efforts on gender equality and development as well as promoting women's empowerment across the continent. By working with other departments and organs within the Union, the WGDD has designed programmes and delivered projects based on the policies and frameworks adopted by the Member States

These include the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa signed in 2004 which is a reporting framework on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and reaffirms the Member States' commitment to gender equality as enshrined in Article 4 (1) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union; and the 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) which provides a legal framework for ensuring civil and political, economic, social and cultural as well as environmental rights for all African women. These two frameworks have paved the way for other important regional commitments such as the inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment in Agenda 2063 and the development of the 2018-2028 African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment which supports the work of the Agenda as well as gender mainstreaming within the Union. The newly developed Gender Strategy is premised on

the 2009 African Union Gender Policy which provided the policy framework on GEWE

Rationale and benefits for gender mainstreaming in the African Union

Gender mainstreaming in the African Union is essential for a truly inclusive Africa where the voices and concerns of its 600 million women and girls, which represent about half of the population on the continent, are heard and welcomed at the decision-making tables. Gender equality has been and continues to be important to the AU not just because it is part of its Constitutive Act, but also because it is a fundamental human right that is integral to the economic growth and social development of the continent as a whole. As the leader and representative of a united Africa, the Union has the responsibility to add a gendered dimension to its work and activities. Indeed, increased gender equality encouraged through quality education, health care and employment amongst other things has positive ripple effects on communities from the local to the intracontinental level. When women can support and invest in themselves thanks to policies and legislations that ensure gender equality in the different spheres of life, families and economies prosper. However, the economic advantage of gender equality is not the only reason why this plea is important to the AU. In the spirit of Agenda 2063, attaining women's empowerment is a key factor in creating a prosperous and peaceful Africa.

Examples of the advantages derived from gender mainstreaming include ensuring economic security and empowerment for women

which is often translated into better financial security for families and consequently more economic stability for countries; guaranteeing equal access to services such as education and health care which are key for the social and economic development of peoples and nations. Although this is not an exhaustive list, it

Agenda 2063 would see fully empowered women with equal access and opportunity in all spheres of life. This means that the African woman would have equal economic rights, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register and manage a business.


offers an idea of the power that gender mainstreaming has to achieve gender equality and how the benefits of these do not only pertain to women and girls but have positive ripple effects on entire families and economies.

The African Women's Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion

The African Union's Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) emphasises on the need for economic empowerment of women for Africa to achieve its goals for inclusive and sustainable development as envisioned in Agenda 2063.

At the Global Gender Summit held in Kigali, Rwanda in November 2019, the idea for a dedicated period for Africa to work towards the financial inclusion and economic empowerment of women was proposed, as a means to eliminate obstacles that impede equality between men and women, through the implementation of innovative solutions to provide financial access to women. In February 2020 the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government took up the mantle and declared the years 2020 to 2030 as the Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion for African Women. In their declaration, African leaders recommitted to scale up actions for progressive gender inclusion towards sustainable development at the national, regional and continental levels. The proposal was presented by H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo- Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana and the African Union Leader on Gender and Development Issues in Africa.

In addition to access to financial products, technologies and services, achieving financial inclusion for women would require overcoming socio-cultural norms and gender barriers



The overall goal of the Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion for African Women is that every woman must be able to work, be paid and participate in the economy of her country. This involves examining the regulatory, legislative, and policy context to determine the changes needed to foster women's financial inclusion and assist financial institutions in adopting approaches tailored to women, as a separate market segment. In addition to access to financial products, technologies and services, achieving financial inclusion for women would require overcoming socio-cultural norms and gender barriers.

One of the main objectives of this new African Women Decade is the development of market access by enhancing new credit solutions for women, generating access to infrastructure in downstream processing and distribution, as well as training them in agro-industrial technology.

For these goals to be realised, African States have to put in place policies and targeted complementary measures and programs such as; entrepreneurship, business management



**Strengthening Resilience in
Nutrition & Food Security on
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Strengthening Agro-food systems,
Health and Social Protection Systems
for the Acceleration of Human, Social
and Economic Capital Development

GOOD NUTRITION IS A HUMAN RIGHT

Every child shall have
the right to enjoy the
best attainable state
of physical, mental
and spiritual
health.

The African
Charter on the
Rights and
Welfare of the
Child (Article 14)



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The African Women Trust Fund will continue to provide solutions for women to access financing for their businesses and to be economically empowered



and technology training; financial literacy, financial planning, investment and capacity building. Emphasis should be on women led Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by supporting them to overcome the constraints of accessing finance, as well as market information and networks. The AU advocates for the participation and involvement of civil societies and the women advocacy groups and organisations to drive these initiatives and ensure adoption at national levels.

Mobilising Resources to support women in accessing funding for business

The lack of access to financial services reduces women's capacity to escape poverty, and it reduces their opportunities to participate in economic activities. Providing financing for women means greater participation, opportunities, and control over resources for women. When women generate their own income, experience shows that they invest in their families and communities, thereby reducing poverty.

In January 2010 the **Fund for African Women (FAW)** was launched by the African Union. The Fund mobilised resources for programs and projects dedicated to the African Women's Decade's themes. With the African Women's Decade ended in 2020, the decision was made to convert the FAW into a Trust Fund. The African Women Trust Fund (AWTF) will continue to provide women with solutions to access financing for their businesses and become economically empowered.

The common objective of the three Funds is to provide access to financing for women which will be reinforced by the new African Women Decade on Financial and Economic inclusion.



In February 2020, the African Union in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and through the African Women Leadership Network (AWLN) platform, launched the **African Women Leadership Fund (AWLF)**. The AWLF is an impact fund aimed at strengthening women's economic empowerment through multi-layered prioritisation of women, including support for women fund managers as well as direct support for women entrepreneurs, to empower women to ascend to business and economic leadership positions.

Following a request by the former AU Commission Chairperson, H.E. Nkosazana-Dlamini Zuma, and based on a recommendation from the 25th Pre-summit of the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) meeting Pre-Summit, the African Development Bank (AfDB) established the **Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA)**, to transform the banking and financial landscape in Africa and create incentives for lending to women in business.

The common objective of the three Funds is to provide access to financing for women and will be reinforced by the new African Women Decade on Financial and Economic inclusion.

African Women's Decade (2010-2020) on Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

The 2020 Declaration follows the conclusion of the African Women's Decade (2010-2020) on "Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment", which was a critical period for advancing Gender Equality by accelerating the implementation of agreed global and regional commitments, particularly the AU Assembly Decisions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).

The African Women's Decade 2010-2020 was implemented in two phases from 2010-2015 and from 2016-2020. The AWD 2010-2020 Mid-Term Status Update Report highlighted the experiences from twenty-two (22) countries, and the progress made in establishing legislative, policy, administrative, and institutional mechanisms in the AWD implementation at the national level.

The Final Report of the African Women's Decade for the period 2010-2020 on Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, aimed to advance gender equality

through the acceleration of the implementation of global and regional decisions and commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment. The report contains experiences from the AU Member States, and it highlights, among others, actions taken, areas where further action is needed to accelerate the implementation of the gender commitments, emerging and existing challenges and recommendations to advance GEWE.

Learn More about the African Unions' strategies and guiding legal instruments that focus on the attainment of gender equality and women's empowerment in all spheres of life in Africa including developing and implementing policies and programmes that address issues related to women and girls rights, advocate for their protection and prohibit violence and harmful practices and other social norms that disempower women and girls. These include, the AU Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Q&A:

The Decade of Women's Financial & Economic Inclusion; Why Scaling up is Inevitable

The February 2020 African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, afforded African women and girls' various platforms and opportunities to rally support and advance actions towards the implementation of commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). Their efforts translated into the declaration of years 2020 to 2030 as the new Decade of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion. In this declaration, African leaders recommitted to scale up actions for the progressive gender inclusion towards sustainable development at the national, regional and continental levels.

A report on the "Status of Gender and Development in Africa" presented to the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government during the February 2020 Summit by Nana Akufo-Addo, the President of the Republic of Ghana and the African Union Leader on Gender and Development issues in Africa, shows that the continent has made considerable progress in implementing commitments towards GEWE. African Union

Member States such as Rwanda, Namibia, South Africa and Senegal, are among the top ten (10) countries in the world with the highest level of women representation in their Parliaments. Others, such as Ethiopia have, for the first time, achieved a parity government, with women fifty percent (50%) of its Cabinet and appointed its first female president. Sixteen (16) Member States have surpassed the thirty percent (30%) threshold of women's representation in national Parliaments, with significant progress made in advancing women's participation in holding elective offices and in positions of leadership. Further, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Burkina's Faso, Ethiopia, Liberia and Mali, have reduced significantly, the gender gap in terms of access and attainment of education.

However, despite these laudable achievements Ms. Victoria Maloka, Head of Division within the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate says more efforts and resources particularly for African women are needed for the continent to achieve gender





equality in all spheres of life.

What is the expectation from this new declaration of years 2020 to 2030 as the new Decade of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion?

This decade is of great importance for the African women and our young girls to build the momentum and consolidate the gains realized over the years in its efforts to close the existing gender gaps. You know that inequality and poverty are intertwined and therefore this decade, focus is on building strategies around catalyzing and breaking that cycle that has held women and girls back for many decades. In terms of economic inclusion, the declaration is particularly timely as women account for 70% of the informal cross border traders and at

a time the continent is implementing trading under the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**. Among the benefits of this common market is the reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers and implementing the simplified trade regimes, which will make it more affordable for informal traders to operate through formal channels. What this means then is that, women can also benefit from initiatives to connect female agricultural workers to export food markets. Furthermore at the regional and national levels, we expect similar momentum because the exponential potential in this continent will not be realised in a vacuum but through purposed gender sensitive economic policies, a sound business environment and political commitment. This requires that gender mainstreaming in AfCFTA

Ms. Victoria Maloka, Head of Division within the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGDD)

National Strategies should be intensified in order to draw the attention of Member States to the critical importance of gender responsive strategies in the operationalization of the AfCFTA.

Financial inclusion refers to all initiatives that make formal financial services Available, Accessible and Affordable to all segments of the population. This requires particular attention to specific portions of the population that have been historically excluded from the formal financial sector either because of their income level and volatility, gender, location, type of activity, or level of financial literacy. In so doing, there is a need to harness the untapped potential of those individuals and businesses currently excluded from the formal financial sector or underserved, and enable them to develop their capacity, strengthen their human and physical capital, engage in income-generating activities, and manage risks associated with their livelihoods.

What we mean by financial inclusion of women throughout the decade is to seek strengthened financial services and capacity building, especially for women living in rural areas, to gain access to technology and to use it to increase productivity in all industrious sectors and with tailor-made financial products for the women, have access to formal as well as reliable means to save, access and borrow money. Studies have shown that women invest 70% of their financial resources in the social welfare cost of the family, particularly education and the

health of children, while human investment ranges from 30% to 40%.

Going forward, women and girls are keen on, not only managing funds at the various public and private institutional set-ups, but also in owning the funds. There is nothing small about women and therefore we are thinking big and looking at how women can have more control over their earnings and savings as well as managing and owning large amounts of funds. We must be able to make significant progress in improving the lives and livelihoods of millions of women and young girls around the continent, and that means that we are leaving no one behind because when you empower a woman, you empower the family and the community at large. There is evidence to that trickledown effect. It is for that reason that in February 2020, African Women Leaders Network launched the African Women Leadership Fund, demonstrating their commitment to move from commitment to action. With a target of USD 100M, the launch pooled over USD 20M from the leaders present and the private sector and more commitments will see that fund grow.

According to the World Bank, more than 70% of the African Women are excluded by the financial institutions or are unable to receive financial services, such as a savings or current account, loans, credit and other institutional services, with adequate conditions to meet their needs.

The overall goal of this new African Women's Decade is that every women must be able to work, be paid and participate

in the economy of her country. This will involve examining the regulatory, legislative and policy context to determine the changes needed to foster the financial inclusion of women and to assist financial institutions in adopting approaches tailored to women, as separate market segment.

Furthermore, as declared by the AU Heads of State and Government during the 33rd AU Summit in February 2020, one of the main objectives of this new African Women Decade is the development of market access by enhancing new credit solutions for women, generating access to infrastructure in downstream processing and distribution, as well as training them in agro-industrial technology.

Finally, in addition to access to financial products, technologies and services, achieving financial inclusion for women would require overcoming socio-cultural norms and gender barriers.

What is the role of the member states and the regional economic blocs from the bottom - top approach of women equality and empowerment?

Our states and regional blocs have a key role to play in galvanizing support at the various economic and financial sectors be it the banking sector, the microfinance institutions, the telecommunication companies for the mobile money services, push for the domestication and implementation of affirmative action policies, engage in civic education and even establish relationships with innovators

and development partners who can support the tailor-made solutions needed to achieve women's financial inclusion and empowerment. Concretely, African Governments must put in place policies and targeted complementary measures that



help women to overcome the constraints of accessing finance, as well as market information and networks.

Special programmes, including targeted entrepreneurship, business management and technology training, financial literacy, financial planning, investment and capacity building, particularly for women small business owners. The African Union cannot do this on its own. We need all hands on deck. We also need the civil societies and the women bodies join this call to enable us meet the commitments on women's equality and empowerment.

The report on the "Status of Gender and Development in Africa" shows commendable progress by member states in terms of gender parity, how has that made tangible difference for the women and girls?

We are very encouraged by the progress on gender parity, equality and empowerment by the member states, which demonstrates great commitment to the policies and frameworks they have adopted at the continental level. In fact, to see our African states among the top ten globally on matters of gender equality and empowerment shows that the efforts by our women and girls over the years have borne fruit. Having said that however, there is need to scale up actions towards the universal ratification of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa popularly known as Maputo protocol, and beyond that we are saying we need to see more action in the full implementation

of the commitments we have made to advance the welfare of women and girls on the continent. To date, forty-two (42) out of fifty-five (55) Member States have ratified the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights, and our call to the remaining thirteen (13), is to ratify the Maputo Protocol as we are past the 2020 which was the year all member states agreed to have universal ratification of the protocol.

For the AU, this is not just about the numbers, these policies and frameworks have been key once integrated into the national policies because it is from there that we can have effective monitoring and evaluation of the progressive actions to benefit the women and girls of this continent. This is manifested in various ways, be it in resource allocation to gender matters, inclusion of women in top level positions, access to quality education for girls, expansion of business opportunities and favorable working environment for women and young girls and so on.

What were some of the key milestones achieved for women in the previous decade?

The African Women's Decade (AWD) 2010-2020 on Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was a very important decade for the women of this continent as it was a critical time to advance Gender Equality by accelerating the implementation of agreed global and regional commitments, particularly that of Dakar, Beijing and AU Assembly Decisions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). The AWD had 10 themes, which were implemented on an annual basis

through the financial support of the Fund for African Women (FAW).

The Fund for African Women (AU-FAW), established in 2010 and which has now been transformed into a Trust Fund for African Women, is the mobilising vehicle through which national resources are pooled at the continental level. The Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Government committed to investing 1% of Member States' annual contributions to the AU budget (based on actual received contributions) in the AU-FAW. The AU-FAW supports grassroots projects submitted by Member States and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) under AWD themes.

The AWD was implemented in two phases: 2010 to 2015 and 2016 to 2020. A Mid-Term Status Update Report was launched in 2016 contained experiences from twenty-two (22) AU Member States and highlighted progress made by Member States in establishing legislative, policy, administrative and institutional mechanisms in the implementation of the AWD at national level. However, despite these achievements some challenges were met during this period such as resistance towards the notion of gender equality, the existence of inequalities in national laws, inadequate financing of gender equality programmes, low representation of women in politics and public decision-making spaces, increase in the spread of HIV/AIDS and sexual violence.



**Strengthening Resilience in
Nutrition & Food Security on
the African continent:**

Strengthening Agro-food systems,
Health and Social Protection Systems
for the Acceleration of Human, Social
and Economic Capital Development

**A village becomes a town
when a tomato trades before it
reaches the belly.**

Mantaranjot Mangat



#YearOfNutrition

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UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL FOR AFRICAN WOMEN THROUGH THE AfCFTA



For decades, African women have been trapped in poverty cycles due to several underlying factors including unequal access to education, factors of production, and trade facilities; inequitable labour saving technologies; underpaid or unpaid labour; harmful cultural practices; and limited legal protection from gender inequality practices entrenched in society.

To break the cycle of poverty and inequalities, the African Union continues to advocate for the development and implementation of policies and legal frameworks that will create a wider array of opportunities for women, and which will lead to their economic empowerment at the national and regional levels and ensuring that the development envisaged for Africa is inclusive sustainable.

With the launch of trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in January 2021, the expectations are high as relates to the expanded business prospects for women led business which will unlock the potential for African women to grow their business from micro to macro

 **Managing Director of Dignity, Salma Salifu, Accra Ghana, Image © Dominic Chavez/World Bank**

enterprises. The Agreement establishing the AfCFTA recognises the need to build and improve the export capacity of both formal and informal service suppliers, with particular attention to micro, small and medium size enterprises in which women and youth actively participate. Furthermore, the AfCFTA Protocols on Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Investment, Intellectual Property Rights and Competition Policy provide clear guidelines to ensure emerging enterprises and infant industries are protected thus adding impetus to the Agenda 2063 goals of gender equality, women empowerment and youth development.

Through the AfCFTA, informal and micro and small enterprises will be integrated into the continental markets breaking the barriers these businesses constantly encounter as they try to penetrate more advanced regional and overseas markets.


Through the AfCFTA, Women who are estimated to account for 70 per cent of informal cross-border trade in Africa, will be well positioned to tap into regional

export destinations and use regional markets as stepping stones for expanding into overseas markets. By reducing tariffs and with simplified trading regimes for small traders, AfCFTA makes it more affordable for informal traders to operate through formal channels, which offer more protection by addressing the vulnerabilities women in cross-border trade often encounter such as harassment, violence, confiscation of goods and even imprisonment. Through deliberate efforts to integrate informal businesses into the larger continental trade structure, the challenges related to accurate data will also be addressed, to adequately capture and reflect women's trading activities in national accounting systems and regional statistical databases.

The AfCFTA is expected to enhance competitiveness, promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development, and foster sustainable socio-economic development and structural transformation. Small and medium-sized enterprises will benefit from easier means to supply inputs to larger regional companies, who then export to overseas markets. For instance, women can benefit from initiatives to connect female led agricultural businesses to export food markets. Regionally, there have been practical examples such as the preferential Southern African Customs Union trading regime where before exporting cars overseas, large automobile manufacturers in South Africa source inputs, including leather for seats from Botswana and fabrics from Lesotho, enhancing the concept of value addition and boosting local manufacturing and industrialization. Replicated at the continental

The prospective shift from micro to macro business opportunities for women will not be spontaneous and the expected benefits for women should be tempered with realism and commitment to address existing challenges women often face



 **The Windhoek Vocational Training Centre in Khomasdal is a training centre for artisans. Female students Kapolo Leena and Metha Goaseb who both hope to open their own workshops one day.**
Image © John Hogg / World Bank

level, the AfCFTA will then scale up opportunities for women to benefit from Intra-African trade. Combined with the African Union's parallel efforts to increase skills in science and technology, the blue economy, infrastructure, manufacturing and high growth, Africa is well on its way to actualise Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 which calls for "An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children." Further, Aspiration 6, underpins African women's economic empowerment, where women are fully empowered in all spheres and where women will have the rights to own and manage businesses; therefore, contributing significantly to innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives within the continent. In addition, Pillar I of the African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), underscores the need for women's economic empowerment and maximizing economic outcomes and opportunities (outcome 1.2), for women and to build "The Africa We Want" as envisioned in Agenda 2063.

Trade experts and gender equality advocates have however cautioned that the prospective shift from micro to macro business opportunities for women will not be spontaneous and the expected benefits for women should be tempered with realism and commitment to address some of the existing challenges women often face. The "Futures Report on making the AfCFTA work for women and youth", identifies these challenges to evolve around the limited

property rights for women farmers' which leads to low levels of investment and limits the full potential of export-led growth. Similarly, women and youth may be limited from gains in agriculture due to barriers in accessing finance, productive resources and other assets. This, in addition to foreign direct investment (FDI) flows towards high productivity and better established exporting operations to capture scale economies, may enlarge the gender income gap. Without complementary national policies, the gender wage gap may be used to drive competitiveness in exports and keep women in low-productive activities and sectors that may also be at risk of automation. The report therefore

recommends the critical need to promote women as 'achievers' in, rather than 'sources' of, trade competitive advantage. These issues could well be addressed and articulated in the proposed Protocol on Women in Trade to ensure African women on the continent and those in the diaspora, are at the centre stage of the AfCFTA.

As country negotiations on AfCFTA continue, it is expected that pertinent issues to ensure seamless trading will be addressed such as the e-commerce negotiations specific to operational aspects of e-commerce and utilisation of digital tools, which include: data protection, portability, security and privacy; cross-border data flows and data localisation provisions; coordinated cybercrime laws; and harmonisation of laws for the taxation of cross-border e-commerce. Whilst the AfCFTA is a continental agreement, the implementation will take place primarily at the national level. Therefore, the agreement must be translated to and contextualised in domestic realities. Those domestic realities are expected to involve the needs of women and to have women leading the negotiations, as part of the fulfilment to gender equality and inclusion.

The AfCFTA is also a catalyst for women following the Declaration of the years 2020

The AfCFTA is also a catalyst for women following the Declaration 2020 to 2030 as the new Decade of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion. African leaders recommitted to scale up actions for the progressive gender inclusion towards sustainable development.

Scan to find out more about the work of the AfCFTA Secretariat



to 2030 as the new Decade of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion. In the Declaration, African leaders recommitted to scale up actions for the progressive gender inclusion towards sustainable development at the national, regional and continental levels. The exponential potential on the continent will not be realized in a vacuum but through purposed gender sensitive economic policies, a sound business environment and political commitment focused on gender mainstreaming in AfCFTA National Strategies. The aspect of financial inclusion will ensure women, who are commonly excluded from the formal financial sector either because of their income level and volatility, location,

type of activity, or level of financial literacy, benefit from strengthened financial services and capacity building. This will be especially useful for women living in rural areas and urban-informal settlements, to gain access to technology and to use it to increase productivity in all industrious sectors and benefit from tailor-made financial products such as

the use of mobile money applications as a tool for expanding access to banking and finance that respond to the need for formal and reliable means to save, access and borrow money. Correlated, the African Union Fund for African Women (FAW) is being converted into a Trust Fund for African Women (TFAW) and it will be part of the concrete solutions that will be made available for women to realize economic justice and financial inclusion.

In doing this, the efforts will be aligned to the African Union strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) and the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa, which push for the inclusion of women in Africa's development agenda and which recognise that gender equality is a fundamental human right and an integral part of regional integration, economic growth and social development.



Scan to Download the AU Guidelines to Gender Responsive Response to Covid-19



Member States must commit to ensuring gender parity and women's empowerment and that the COVID-19 pandemic does not ultimately aggravate other areas of vulnerability for women and girls, including women's reproductive health, child marriages and domestic violence.

Implementing **GENDER RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES** to Combat **COVID-19** in Africa

The year 2020 witnessed the full effect of the Covid-19 global pandemic that met a world unprepared to deal with the disruptions it brought on; drastically changing and impacting the lives of people all over the world and generations to come. In Africa, like elsewhere, communities and nations banded together to adapt to the new Covid-19 reality with experiences gained from managing other major public health emergencies such as Ebola providing a foundation to support the rapid roll out of preventative measures.

However, as has been witnessed in the past, vulnerable groups were still left with a greater burden to bear as a result of the economic and social impact of Covid-19 lockdowns coupled with inadequate access to adequate health care facilities. Africa's women and girls constitute one of the most vulnerable groups impacted by Covid-19 and the lockdowns imposed witnessed an unprecedented rise in Gender-Based Violence (GBV) also referred to as the shadow pandemic. Loss of income not only negated the economic gains made by women in the recent past; the closure of educational institutions disrupted the educational opportunities for girls all over the continent who in turn fell victim to harmful traditional

practices.

GBV has rocked and continues to erode the socio-economic fabric of many communities in Africa. Statistically, women and girls in poorer economic conditions are more likely to experience gender-based violence. With the emergence of COVID-19 there has been an increase in reported rape cases, unplanned pregnancies (especially amongst teenage girls), early and forced marriages, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and sexual abuse. Likewise, with COVID-19 restrictions, access to healthcare facilities has become increasingly difficult due to the overwhelming number of patients compared to medical personnel and health care facilities available. In essence, the impact of the pandemic has led to crippled economies, healthcare systems and education.

African countries must understand the gravity of the situation in their respective states and work to alleviate the negative impact the pandemic has had on the lives of African women and girls. Given the presence of the shadow-pandemic and its impact on women and girls, it is paramount that African governments take a gender-responsive approach towards combating COVID-19. This approach requires Member States to commit to ensuring gender parity and women's empowerment and

that the COVID-19 pandemic does not ultimately aggravate other areas of vulnerability for women and girls, including women's reproductive health, child marriages and domestic violence¹.

In Africa, despite the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women and girls, numerous data and reports on COVID-19 further misrepresent and undermine the effect on

Empowerment (UN Women) exists as a tool to help inform interventions on a continental, regional and community levels. This project was initiated following the African Ministers in charge of Gender and Women's Affairs' meeting held on 12th May 2020.

In June 2020, the African Union Guidelines on Gender Responsive Responses to COVID-19 was developed and

instability in the economy, food & agriculture, healthcare, education, peace and security and other aspects of their respective socio-economic and political fabrics that have been heavily affected by COVID-19.

Gender mainstreaming is a priority for the African Union in its approach towards responding to the pandemic. The African Union is working on a report that will consist of necessary approaches that will aid in assessing the impact of COVID-19 responses on gender equality and women's empowerment as well as raise awareness and sensitise African citizens by demonstrating the need for gender mainstreaming in tackling the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls. The report will include consultation with civil society to ensure that the findings incorporate the voices of African citizens. The report will provide recommendations to member states on concrete interventions which can be enacted in policy and practice across sectors such as the economy, health and education, to ensure gender-responsive COVID-19 responses.

If African governments implement and adhere to the guidelines, reports and frameworks and reinforce them with legal instruments, policy makers will not only be well informed, but also equipped with the right tools in ensuring an equal future for women and girls.

The impact of COVID-19 on women is multi-dimensional and therefore, the responses have to be appropriate to meet the differential and multiple ways in which women may be affected

women and girls². As a result, gender-responsive responses to COVID-19 have not been implemented in state actions with African governments being left ill-equipped to create long-term recovery policies to alleviate the impact of the burden of the pandemic on women and girls. Given the situation "it is crucial for policy-makers to invest in gender-disaggregated data to develop responses that reflect and address the diverse ways in which women are disproportionately impacted by the ongoing pandemic³."

The African Union's COVID-19 Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Inclusion Strategy and Roadmap, a collaborative project launched by the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's

implemented. These guidelines were developed per Agenda 2063 and AU's commitment to Gender Empowerment and Women's Equality (GEWE). The core goal of the guideline is to assist Member States in addressing, managing, responding and recovering from COVID-19 with GEWE priorities guiding the said efforts. A few of the approaches highlighted for incorporating GEWE in tackling COVID-19 include: gender mainstreaming and integration, sex-disaggregated data, gender-budgeting, and enforcing existing commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. The guidelines provide Member States with a blueprint on how to regain and retain socio-economic stability for women and girls. If appropriately implemented, African member states have the opportunity to address

¹Under Siege: impact of COVID-19 on Girls in Africa (<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Under%20Siege-Impact%20of%20COVID-19%20on%20Girls%20in%20Africa.pdf>)

²African Union Guidelines on Responsive Responses to COVID-19 (https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/38617-doc-gewe_and_covid_19_eng.pdf)

³ECOSOCC COVID19 Awareness Webinar (https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/2020/07/16/civil_society_vs_covid_19-first_series_report.pdf)

⁴African Union Guidelines on Gender Responsive Responses to COVID-19 (<https://au.int/en/documents/20200603/au-guidelines-gender-responsive-responses-covid-19>)

Gender Parity:

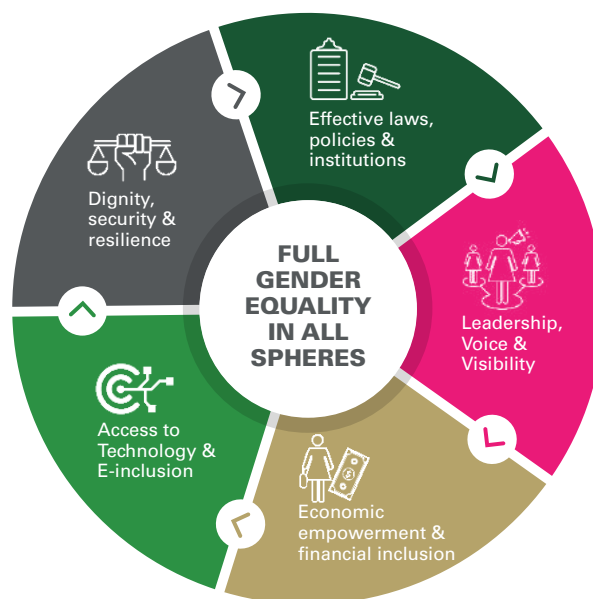
A Pre Condition for the Vision of Africa's Agenda 2063

Gender parity can be defined as the statistical measure providing a numerical value of men and women to ensure that each gender is represented equally; and that women and men have access to the same opportunities and rights, and that women and men contribute equally to every dimension of life, whether in private or public.

The African Union (AU) is dedicated to achieving Gender Parity, and it is one of the priority areas for the AU and a cornerstone for achieving inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development. Gender Parity is embedded in several key legal and policy frameworks, including the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights, Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG).

Since its adoption in 2003, The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) remains one of the most progressive legal instruments that puts forth a comprehensive set of human rights for African Women. The Maputo Protocol has contributed to shifting the trajectory on the promotion and protection of women's human rights in Africa. Article 2 of the Protocol, **"Elimination of Discrimination Against Women"** has specifically embedded the concept of gender parity, which states that states parties shall combat all forms of discrimination against women through appropriate legislative, institutional and other measures.

Moreover, to further strengthen gender parity internally within the African Union, the Women Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD) launched a campaign called the **"Fair representation, enhanced quality"**. The campaign provided



information and promoted engagement on key issues underlined in the Gender Parity Project 2025.

The **"Fair representation, enhanced quality"** campaign presented a breakdown of numerical representation of men and women in the organisation and provided updates and achievements of the Gender Parity Project and identifying the opportunities and responsibilities of leading stakeholders in achieving gender parity; as well as an evaluation of how the AU Member States are implementing the Gender Parity Project at the various levels.

This campaign strengthened awareness about Gender Parity and its relevance to achieving the

This campaign has been eye-opening as what I thought Gender Parity was aimed at kicking out all men from the AU when in fact it isn't

AU Staff

AU's development goals, as encapsulated in Agenda 2063; specifically, building a shared understanding and individual and collective ownership in implementing Gender Parity in the workplace, encouraging staff to embrace Gender Parity, seeing its value proposition and motivating women and youth within the AU to view the organisation as an employer of choice.

It is important to note that while gender gaps remain in most of the African Union Organs, at the leadership level of the AU Commission gender parity is at a 50/50 representation. The same applies to the AU Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), Furthermore, 53% of the staff population are female.


In its implementation roadmap, for Gender Parity by 2025 the AU Commission envisions the completion of the following activities:

- Fully mainstreaming of the gender parity into the AU Staff Rules and Regulations and Code of Ethics to ensure specific measures for gender parity are included. This would ensure there are gender workplace guidelines.
- Enforce administrative and punitive measures to address work place harassment
- Ensure gender supportive administrative systems are in place that allow for capacity development for women. This would also include targeted human resources processes and to develop a gender sensitive quota system for the African Union.

- Engage in targeted outreach to encourage more women to apply for the opportunities at the African Union.
- Develop a concept to operationalize a mentoring system, especially for young women
- Employing an effective resource mobilization mechanism and results-based planning.
- Ensure a functional monitoring and evaluation system that would also document reasons for departure and refusal to take AU positions.
- Establish a platform/roaster of women willing to assist new women employees settle in Addis on arrival
- Develop and make available an expatriate Guide to Ethiopia, where to go and where to find what
- Evaluate elements of the host country agreement which would limit women's ability to join the AU

While the progress made within the AU in the empowerment and equality of women in the past couple of years should be celebrated, only the successful implementation of the aforementioned activities would leapfrog the Union into achieving full gender parity by 2025.



 **Scan to
Download the AU
Strategy
on Gender
Equality and
Women's
Empowerment**



African Union Convention & Legal Frameworks aim to break the cycle of violence against women and girls

In Africa, the most prevalent forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) reported and documented, include, among others, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), which manifests in physical, sexual or psychological violence by an intimate partner; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which is a common cultural practice in some parts of Africa; Early Child and Forced Marriage where girls below 18 years are forced into marriage; as well as Sexual Violence in Conflict (SVC) which includes rape, sexual assault with violent physical assault, kidnapping, sexual slavery and forced prostitution in conflict situations.

The persistence of VAWG in Africa is mainly associated with gender power relations reflected in well and commonly ascribed and accepted social norms, entrenched in patriarchal systems characterized by male dominance, unequal distribution of resources and power combined with social institutions that sustain gender inequality. These norms in the name of culture, dictate behaviors and attitudes that perpetuate stereotypes which are the most significant barriers to eliminating and preventing VAWG. Poverty and lack of income and assets add to women's vulnerability to violence.

The rights of women to physical and psychological integrity are often compromised when women are subjected to violence and violations, which often happen in the context of violence against women, harmful traditional practices, poor health services and sexual violence including during armed conflict. The African Union (AU) views Violence Against Women and Girls as one of the critical impediments to women's realisation of their

Gender data shows exacerbated gender inequalities under COVID-19, placing women and girls at greater risk of violence

fundamental rights including the rights to life, human dignity, peace, justice, socio- economic and political development.

In 2020, Africa and the world at large experienced an unprecedented surge in Violence Against Women and Girls as a result of the lockdown and movement restrictions to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. Labelled the "shadow pandemic", it was estimated that for an average lockdown duration of three (3) months, there would be an additional 15 million cases of VAWG; 31 million for an average of six (6) months; 45 million for an average of nine (9) months; and 61 million if the average lockdown period extends up to one (1) year. Across the African continent in particular, gender data shows exacerbated gender inequalities



under COVID-19, placing women and girls at greater risk of VAWG.

The East African Community (EAC) reported a sharp increase in the number of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases. Ministries responsible for Gender across the region reported a 48% increase in the Gender-Based Violence cases reported to the Police or through the GBV Toll-Free lines. At the national level, official reports also showed that within the first week of level 5 lockdown, South African Police Services received 2,320 complaints of gender-based violence, a 37% increase from the weekly average of South African GBV cases reported for 2019. Liberia recorded a 50% increase in gender-based violence in the first half of 2020. Between January and June, there were more than 600 reported rape cases. In Algeria, several cases of femicide were committed since the beginning of 2020. The incidents increased in the context of the COVID-19 confinement, with a murder occurring every three to four days.

Similarly, in Central African Republic, a spike of injuries to women and children was reported at 69%, while rape was reported at 27%, and other assaults by 45%. In Tunisia, violence against women and girls had increased 9-fold during COVID-19. From March to June 2020, the helpline from the Ministry of Women Affairs received a number of

11,361 calls. 87% of them were reported physical violence against women and girls.

Following school closures, gender inequalities intensified especially for the poorest girls and adolescents who faced a greater risk of early and forced marriage, sexual abuse and unintended pregnancy. In Kenya, for instance, data showed that in the far northern town of Lodwar, teenage pregnancies nearly tripled to 625 in June-August 2020, compared with 226 in the same period in 2019. In Malawi, it was reported that at least 5,000 cases of teenage pregnancies in Phalombe district in the nation's south, and more than 500 girls had been married off following the pandemic. In Uganda, at least 4,300 teenage pregnancies were registered in the first four months of the COVID-19 lockdown by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. These statistics reflect the deep-seated structural inequities that feed and continue to provide a fertile ground for VAWG.

The Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD) of the African Union Commission is responsible for leading, guiding, defending and coordinating the AU's efforts on gender equality and development and promoting women and youth empowerment and is at the forefront of developing the framework for the African Union Campaign on Ending Violence against Women and Girls which is aimed at accelerating implementation of agreed obligations to prevent and end VAWG. The Campaign will be articulated around three pillars, namely: prevention; advocacy and resource mobilisation; as well as knowledge development and reporting and be anchored in Africa's Agenda 2063. It will follow a rights-based approach and the principle of "leave no one behind". The campaign will complement other existing initiatives, such as campaigns to end female genital mutilation and girls' marriage.

The WGYD also advocates for the full implementation of the the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol). The Protocol commits State Parties, amongst others, to adopt specific measures to combat violence against women, whether in public or private spaces, and to prohibit harmful practices which negatively affect the human rights of women and girls. Explicit mention of violence against women is made in Article 4, which deals with the rights to life, integrity and

» Scan African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa



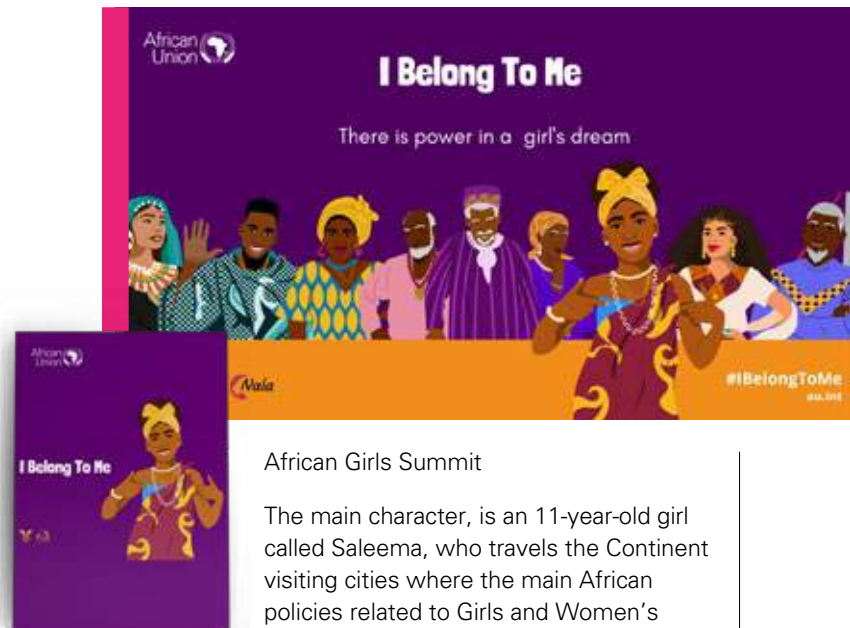
security of the person. The Maputo Protocol notes a number of violations related to the aforementioned rights including protection of women from trafficking. It stresses that women should be protected from scientific experiments without their informed consent and calls upon state parties to enact and enforce laws to prohibit all forms of violence against women. The states are also required to allocate adequate budgetary resources for the implementation and monitoring interventions geared towards eradicating violence against women.

Article 5 of the Maputo Protocol deals exclusively with women's protection from harmful practices. The section outlaws all forms of FGM, scarification and medicalization of FGM. State parties are required to eradicate elements in traditional and cultural beliefs, stereotypes, practice which exacerbate violence against women and to end all forms of harmful practices which negatively affect the human rights of women.

Learn More about the African Unions' strategies and guiding legal instruments that focus on the attainment of gender equality and women's empowerment in all spheres of life in Africa including developing and implementing policies and programmes that address issues related to women and girls rights, advocate for their protection and prohibit violence and harmful practices and other social norms that disempower women and girls. These include, the AU Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

I Belong To Me

"I Belong To Me" is a book that celebrates the African History and Heritage on Girls' and Women's Human Rights and the path towards the elimination of Harmful Practices, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage. The book was presented during the 3rd



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book



African Girls Summit

The main character, is an 11-year-old girl called Saleema, who travels the Continent visiting cities where the main African policies related to Girls and Women's rights were adopted in order to discover that there is legitimacy and power in her voice and in her dreams.

The book explains, in a simple and straightforward manner, concepts such as Girls and Women's Rights, Bodily Integrity and Bodily Autonomy. "I Belong To Me" explores the power of Pan-African intergenerational dialogue and the crucial role played by communication and collaboration at family and community level in order to achieve the Aspirations of Africa's Agenda 2063

The book was written, illustrated, and proofread by a team composed exclusively of African Women, coming from different regions and backgrounds, in order to ensure cultural authenticity. The story is anchored in African Culture and social structures and the book is seen as a conversation starter and an interactive tool at grassroots level.



POSITIVE MASCULINITY: PROMOTING ZERO-TOLERANCE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

In Africa, the most prevalent forms of documented Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) include, among others intimate partner violence (IPV), which manifests as physical, sexual psychological or economic violence by an intimate partner; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which is a common cultural practice in some parts of Africa; Early Child and Forced Marriage where girls below 18 years are forced into marriage; Sexual Violence in Conflict (SVC) and Humanitarian settings which includes rape, sexual assault with violent physical assault, kidnapping, sexual slavery and forced prostitution in conflict situations. Women and girls also face sexual harassment and violence in the work place, in schools and in other public spaces.

The persistence of Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa (VAWG) is mainly associated with gender power relations reflected in well and commonly ascribed and accepted social norms, entrenched in patriarchal systems characterised by

unequal distribution of resources and power between men and women, combined with social institutions that sustain gender inequality. These norms in the name of culture, dictate behaviours and attitudes that perpetuate stereotypes which are the most significant barriers to eliminating and preventing VAWG and have an inter-generational impact.

Despite the progress and concerted programmes undertaken at different levels, VAWG remains a devastating pandemic that threatens women and girls' lives and national developments. This demands accelerated action to galvanise all sectors of society to actively participate in efforts towards

eradicating the scourge. Men in leadership therefore have a key role to play in influencing other men to prevent and eliminate violence. Similarly, they can play a key role in being role models for boys and young men, and in engaging other men in leadership, to agree on creative and sustainable strategies to prevent and end VAWG in Africa.

Recognizing the disproportionate level of male responsibility in perpetuating Violence Against Women and Girls, the African Union initiated a campaign on

"Positive Masculinity" where male leaders on the continent mobilise to lead in supporting and driving efforts towards the eradication of VAWG on the continent. The overall focus of the Positive Masculinity call-to-action is to mobilise the commitment, and galvanise action by men in leadership to

Men in leadership have a key role to play in influencing other men to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls as well as being role models for boys and young men



« From right to left, front row: H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo; H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé Eyadéma; H.E. Denis Sassou Nguesso; H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; H.E. Félix Antoine Tshisekedi; H.E. Paul Kagame; H.E. Macky Sall. Back row: Mr. Ronald Lamola; Madam Bineta Diop.

accelerate the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls in Africa at all spheres and at all levels. In this regard, a historic Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity was convened in November 2021, by the African Union and the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), to mobilise and rally African men and boys to support and drive efforts towards the eradication of Violence Against Women and Girls on the continent.

Held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Men's Conference secured the commitment of Heads of State and Government; the Private Sector; Religious and Traditional leaders; Academia; civil societies; women and youth, to accelerate the zero-tolerance policy, prevention and elimination of violence against African women and girls, including violence during conflict and post-conflict situations. African Heads of State and Government adopted the "Kinshasa Declaration" expressing their concern on the persistence of violence against women and girls in Africa, despite the commitment of States to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women and girls. Led by Heads of State

Scan to Watch
the statements
of the leaders in
English



or French



and Government from the Congo Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Togo, the leaders committed to ensuring that the necessary policies and measures are put in place by Member States to address any form of impunity.

In February 2022, H.E. Felix Tshikese, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo and 2021 Chairperson of the African Union was appointed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government as the African Union Champion on the Positive Masculinity initiative. The Assembly underscored his demonstrated dedication and diligence in accompanying and supporting efforts to promote gender equality and to relentlessly combat sexual gender-based violence. The Circle of Champions will also be established to advance the participatory and intergenerational approach that engages all stakeholders, including youth, religious and traditional leaders, civil society, and African women leaders and the private sector, to amplify the call to action to end the harmful and discriminatory practices in the societies.

As a guide to actions that support zero-tolerance on all forms of violence against women and girls in Africa, the leaders committed to adopt and implement an African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls that will serve as a legal framework to end violence against women and girls in Africa. This proclamation is in favour of the AU Commission to kick-start the process of negotiating an African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls. The

Participants at the Men's Conference, flagged by H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; Madam Bineta Diop and Michelle Ndiaye



Convention will complement existing binding and non-binding legal instruments on VAWG such as the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA).

Equally important in the fight against VAWG is financing. The continued insufficient funding for services to end VAWG such as telephone advisory lines or free helplines, shelters or homes for survivors, legal assistance, medical care services and psychological support hamper efforts to address this scourge. Member States are encouraged to rapidly scale-up spending on projects to prevent VAWG if Africa is to meet its goals under Agenda 2063. Therefore, it might be prudent to mount a continental multi-sectorial funding initiative to coordinate national responses to VAWG and to support women survivors in crises and conflict settings. This calls for the alignment of all existing efforts to leapfrog what works and close existing financing gaps.

In calling on men to be role models for boys as a foundation for fundamental values that define the positive expressions of masculinity on the continent, the leaders committed to provide the necessary resources to address violence against women and girls and called on the private sector to develop and implement policies and programmes that equally support the inclusion, economic and financial empowerment of all African women and girls, in line with the goals of the new African Women's Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion for African Women 2020-2030. Further, the leaders committed to support the implementation of the newly developed Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index as a tool to accelerate the realisation of the rights of



Scan to learn more about the Men's Conference on Positive Masculinity and actions that advance the call to prevent and end violence against women and girls

women and girls. The leaders committed to follow-up annually, the implementation of the Kinshasa Declaration and Call for action, at the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence.

In recent years, several efforts have demonstrated the commitment by leaders to address the scourge of violence against women and girls. For instance, Member States in the Eastern Africa region, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda have in April 2019 adopted a Regional Declaration on Ending Cross-Border Female Genital Mutilation and a Costed Regional Action Plan to End Cross-Border Female Genital Mutilation (2019 – 2024).

**Food production
should lead to
food security
as well as
better
nutrition**

**THE YEAR OF
NUTRITION**



**Strengthening Resilience in
Nutrition & Food Security on
the African continent:**

Strengthening Agro-food systems,
Health and Social Protection Systems
for the Acceleration of Human, Social
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1 MILLION BY 2021 INITIATIVE TRANSFORMS THE LIVES OF OVER 8 MILLION YOUTH IN AFRICA



Africa's youth population is estimated to reach 1.6 billion by 2030; this number is expected to grow to 2.4 billion in 2063. This exponential growth is an opportunity to harness the demographic dividend through making investments in youth. The pace, depth and scope of Africa's development depends on how well its youth are nurtured, deployed and utilized. In 2019, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, launched the 1 Million by 2021 Initiative to inspire investments in African youth across 'the 4 Es: Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Engagement.

Since its launch the 1 Million by 2021 Initiative has surpassed its targets with the AUC provided opportunities for 8,774,852 young people through the initiative.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- **The AU Youth Development and Empowerment toolbox** developed providing modules for orienting and activating young people to solve Africa's challenges.

- **Promoting resilient education systems through** advocacy efforts aimed transforming education in Africa. This led the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Education, Science and Technology (EST) to adopt the DOTSS framework as the minimum package for transforming education systems.

The DOTSS framework call for action in five domains:

- Digital and electricity connectivity of all schools
- Online learning to complete classroom learning
- Teacher development focusing on teachers and caregivers as facilitators and motivators of learning
- Safe to learn online and offline in classrooms and communities
- Skills focused learning that embraces 360 degrees holistic approach to skills development drawing on modular components including foundational skills.



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1 Million by
2021 Report

- **Implementing education sector response to COVID-19 including launching** in partnership with HP Life, an online learning platform for young people. The program provides free online learning tools for educators and students and support to schools and universities to adopt virtual learning solutions.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

- **The African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU YVC) Programme.** Between 2019 and 2020, 480 young people

from the AU Member States trained through the AUYVC programme.

- **Africa Young Women Leaders Fellowship (AYWLF).** In November 2019, the AU in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), launched the African Young Women Leaders Fellowship. Under this initiative, 20 young African Women from 20 countries were selected for one year fellowship with the UN in 15 locations around the world. Plans are underway to recruit 20 new fellows for the second cohort of the African Young Women Leaders Fellowship.
- **AUC/GIZ Tech Fellowship Programme** The AUC/GIZ Tech fellowship was launched in September 2021 to deploy highly competent technology innovators to the AU as resident fellows. The fellows are expected to co-create and build innovative tailor-made products and processes that improve the delivery of the AU mandate in the context of good governance and citizens engagement.

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- **Africa Inclusive Innovation Summit:** In September 2019, the AU hosted the first African Inclusive Innovation Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to explore emerging job opportunities in a technological age and the role of technologies in creating economic opportunities for low- and middle-income earners.
- **Be A Changemaker Africa (BCMA) Competition**

launched in 2020 by the AU in partnership with HP Life and Word Skills Initiative (WSI). The competition reached over 500 young innovators and entrepreneurs in Africa, and provided three-month mentorship and coaching sessions, and financial support to accelerate implementation of ideas and innovations.

- **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Innovation Challenge.** In November 2020, the AU launched the AfCFTA innovation challenge in collaboration with UNDP. The Challenge selected 10 finalists from a pool of over 400 applications based on gender, nationality, education level and work experience. The initiative provided the 10 young African entrepreneurs with training and skills to enhance their capacities to enable their successful participation in the AfCFTA.
- **100,000 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Initiative** launched by AU Commission in partnership with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD).
- **Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) launched** by the AUC and AUDA-NEPAD. The project aims to empower young female agripreneurs with skills in agriculture processing along the value chain and business development.
- **The Goodwill Initiative** In 2020, the AU partnered with UNICEF, GenU and Goodwill to launch the 'Better Together', and 'Better Together Africa' campaign,

an initiative to provide an alternative opportunity for 'learning to earning' during the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative which was led by the Youth Division of the AUC focused on providing learning opportunities, skills development, professional experience to African Youth, through a mix of weekly challenges and accreditation for learning achievements.



Ms. Chido Mpemba
African Union Youth Envoy

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

African Union Youth Envoy

The AU Youth Envoy serves as a representative of African youth and advocates for their interests at a continental level within the framework of the AU including the implementation of the African Youth Charter, the Demographic Dividend Roadmap and Africa's Agenda 2063. In 2019 Ms. Aya Chebbi from Tunisia was appointed by the Chairperson of the AUC. In November 2021 Ms. Chido Mpemba from Zimbabwe was appointed as the Youth Envoy

Youth led Conversations

have been initiated to promote

engagement with African youth by given them platforms to engage with policy makers and their peers to lend their voices to addressing Africa's development agenda and the role of youth in achieving Agenda 2063. The AUC Youth Corner was established to create spaces for young people to have conversations with leaders and duty bearers. The Youth Corner Series included webinars, podcasts and intergenerational dialogues through digital / social media platforms. **The Young African Professional Online Series (YAPOS Talks)** was implemented by AU to promote and empower youth through participation and training to support the goals of Africa's human capital development. YAPOS Talks allows young people to participate in content that will benefit and enrich them professionally.

The 1 Million by 2021 Initiative was conceived, designed, and implemented as a public-private-youth partnership initiative. The success of the various programmes under the initiative from AU Member States and RECS has enabled its implementation at regional and national levels. In addition, various AU partners have provided technical, human and financial support to ensure the success of the initiative including GIZ, UN Agencies (UNICEF, UNDP) Generation Unlimited (GenU), Open Society Foundations, HP Life amongst others.



« Scan to learn more about 1 Million by 2021 Initiative

AFRICA NO FILTER: Challenging Stereotypes and Reframing the Narratives about Africa



Narratives are often described as a collection or system of related stories that are articulated and refined over time to represent a central idea or belief. These narratives overtime define the general perception and attitudes; negative or positive, especially towards a person or a group of people that stereotype them.

For Africa the prevailing narratives have largely been of a broken continent, a “dark continent” only now slowly emerging from a long slumber, still struggling to transform itself. These narratives have informed and continue to define how the world responds to Africa and Africans; including people of African descent in the diaspora.

Africa No Filter (ANF) is one of the organisations on the continent that has taken up the mantle of challenging the prevailing narratives

and charting a new course for how Africa sees itself. The organisation brings together various parties into a partnership and donor collaborative working to shift stereotypical and harmful narratives within and about Africa. This is done through Research, Grantmaking, Community-building and Advocacy with the overarching goal to build a robust and active coalition of African narrative change makers by supporting storytellers, investing in delivery platforms and driving disruptive campaigns. By investing money, time, and voice into the community of African storytellers and content creators, ANF believes that over time we will see an increase in narratives and stories that reflect a more diverse, dynamic, and evolving continent as opposed to the current menu of stories that dwell and thrive on stories that depict poverty, poor leadership, corruption, conflict and disease. In its work to change the narratives about

Investing in Research

ANF believes that changing narratives requires that stories are data driven and evidence based. The organisation works with academic research fellows from across the continent who are interrogating African narratives across a number of platforms and themes including the restitution of African art to representation in media coverage on



Moky Makura
Executive Director, Africa No Filter



Scan to learn more about the work of Africa No Filter & download their reports

global issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Data is also collected through literature reviews, social media and search engine analytical reports to gauge what Africans are thinking. Notable outcomes are the ground breaking report on How African Media Covers Africa shining a spotlight on the role African media has to play in defining the narratives about the continent and its people; the One Africa Report which was a study undertaken in nine African countries to gauge youth sentiment about Pan-Africanism and continental integration and which will be used as a benchmark to launch a wider study on youth narratives about Africa; The Business in Africa Narrative Report aims to capture how Africa is seen as a business and investment destination.

Investing in African Storytellers

ANF established various project and operational support grants including the Kekere Storytellers Fund to provide funding for creative and innovative storytellers in the media and the arts. One of these is Bird, Africa's first digital story agency which is taking on traditional media and disrupting the way African newsrooms portray the continent.

Building Community

ANF recognises that storytellers need more than just funds. They need access to markets and networks. ANF works to create the linkages that will connect storytellers to a wider information and commercial ecosystem that creates opportunities, amplifies partnerships and showcases narrative progress. The ANF Academy provides practical training sessions that build sustainability such as Grant Writing for Creatives or Budgeting and Financial Management.

Advocating for narrative change

ANF has positioned itself as the narrative "watchdog;" tracking and sharing learnings and data around examples of harmful narratives on the continent and implementing measures to disrupt it. The ANF handbook How to write about Africa is one of the tools that has been availed in this endeavour as well as actively contributing editorial content for publication or broadcast in regional and international media.

ANF Partners

Africa ANF collaborates with various international organisations including the African Union (Directorate of Information and Communication and the AU Development Agency /AUDA-Nepad), Ford Foundation, Bloomberg, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Luminate, Open Society Foundations, Comic Relief, the Hilton Foundation, the British Council and Hewlett Foundation.

Agenda 2063 Photo Journalism Awards

Pictures have the power to reflect everyday life experiences and are a valuable tool for storytelling. They capture a moment in time in history and also have the power to transport one to faraway places.

The Directorate of Information and Communication of the African Union and GlZ joined forces to launch the Agenda 2063 Africa Photojournalism Project for African Female Journalists. The Project is in line with Africa's development strategy Agenda 2063 which provides the framework for Africa's socio-economic growth agenda through the implementation of key projects that will transform the continent into a global powerhouse. Key to this transformation is changing the narratives and stereotypes about Africa and Africans and inculcating the spirit of Pan Africanism as envisioned in Aspiration 5 of Agenda 2063. The Agenda 2063 Africa Photojournalism Project was launched in 2021 in line with the AU Theme for the year 2021

"Art's Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We

Work to tap into the artistic and creative aspects of journalism to portray Africa's diversity, rich heritage and cultural diversity and the economic development and social transformation of the continent led by Africans.

The Agenda 2063 Africa Photojournalism aims to inspire female photo journalists from across the continent to share powerful images telling Africa's

story from an African perspective. The Project also aimed to capacitate journalists by providing them with training that would enhance their craft and storytelling ability through the use of imagery. The 2021 photojournalism training was provided by the African Women in Media with whom the AU partners to host the annual African Women in Media Conference

The Agenda 2063 Africa Photojournalism 2021 awarded to six winners in 6 categories




"I believe everyone has the right to information to get in touch with the world through any means possible."

Vanessa Chebet

Winner: Regional Economic Integration, Transport & Information Structure

#TheAfricaWeWant



"In the society we live in, people with disabilities are often marginalized, the goal is to promote the positive image of people living with disabilities, share their resilience side & finally break the stereotype & prejudice against them."

Arlette Bashizi

Winner, Good Governance: Human Rights, Justice & Rule of Law

#TheAfricaWeWant



"My picture represents Agriculture & Rural Environment & it shows how Agricultural we are as Africans & how the rural environment looks like."

Safiyya Daba

Winner: Agriculture, Environment, Land Rights & Skills Development

#TheAfricaWeWant




"The day i took this image, I was really excited to showcase the resourcefulness of Ugandans. Even with scenarios with limited resources, many make it work. I also wanted to capture the innocence of childhood."

Shirah Paul Mukama

Winner, Democracy & Digitalization category

#TheAfricaWeWant



"My voice and our voice collectively is powerful in changing the African narrative."

Fardosa Hussein

Winner: Youth & Women, Africa's research excellence innovative solution building

#TheAfricaWeWant



"War in Africa extends beyond physical damage to silent emotional & mental health battles, economic challenges, medical crises, social & cultural breakdown. We need to amplify these stories at global level."

Miriam Watsemba

Winner, Silencing the Guns in Africa: Conflict Prevention & Transformation, mediation

#TheAfricaWeWant



**Strengthening Resilience in
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**Farmers are the
First & Largest
Scientists &
Entrepreneurs
Community of the
World.**

Venkat Gandhi

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AFRICAN WOMEN IN MEDIA CONFERENCE 2021 HELD UNDER THE THEME “Building Resilience”

In 2019, the Information and Communication Directorate of the African Union partnered with African Women in the Media, to increase engagement with media as specifically women in media to promote Agenda 2063. The partnership has resulted in an annual conference which brings together over 500 media practitioners to discuss the opportunities for improving development journalism, giving a voice to women working in Africa’s media and recognising the work being undertaken by the media to promoting Africa’s Agenda 2063.

The AWIM annual conference aims to create linkages for knowledge exchange between academia, policy makers, CSOs and media industry; promote the economic empowerment of women, and provide a platform to promote visibility for women in the media

The AU-AWIM partnership is underpinned by the need to:

- Create awareness about the AU Strategy for Gender Equality & Women’s Empowerment (GEWE 2018-2028), The African Women’s Decade of Women’s Financial Inclusion and other key activities undertaken by the AU as relates to gender issues.
- Create awareness of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa
- Inform and engage media by :Recognising the contributions of journalists towards the achievement of Agenda 2063 (outcome from STC on Communications & ICT 2017) and Engaging media in the advocacy initiatives for ratification, domestication and implementation of regional and international instruments related to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in the media

Frameworks like the African Union's GEWE Strategy have highlighted the need and importance of working with and supporting practitioners in the media, cultural and creative industries, towards the development and implementation of policies and laws that advance "women's equal & fair representation and as a reflection of this need and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2021 AWIM Conference was held under the Theme Building Resilience and aimed to address the existing gendered experiences of women media practitioners and the impact this has on the adequate representation of women and women's issues in media content. The conference aimed to address questions such as:

What did the pandemic reveal about the true status of women's rights and gender equality in Africa and the media, and how might we better support women in media going forward?

How have and might women rights defenders, advocates, and organisations participate and work with media to address governance and security challenges facing the continent?

What is the current state of the allocation of resources and funding for women and media development, and how might this and the wider financial inclusion of women be reimaged?

What was the impact of the pandemic on Africa's media,

creative and cultural industries, and what opportunities emerged as we build back better?

During the conference the African Union provided grants to support the development of the expertise of content creators determined to change the narrative about Africa and showcase initiatives being undertaken to reach the goals of Africa's Agenda 2063. The 2021 grants were awarded to 5 winners:



Improving Africa's Public Health Sector – Lessons from the Covid-19 Pandemic (*Cindy Sipula, Zambia News and Information Services*)



Science and technology - Space science activities and facilities in Africa (*Sarah Mawerere, Uganda Broadcasting Corporation*)



Women in trade Financial inclusion as tool to boost intra-African trade (*Sheila Ponnio, City Review*)



Status of Africa's creative economy - 2021 AU Theme of the Year (*Nitasha Ramparsad, JD Legacy Projects*)



Africa digital transformation strategy. How digital economy can help accelerating the achievement of the Africa we want (*Elizabeth Angira, The Sun Weekly*)



**Strengthening Resilience in
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and Economic Capital Development

**A farmer is a magician who
produces money from the mud.**

Amit Kalantri

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE THEME OF THE YEAR 2021, ARTS CULTURE & HERITAGE:

Levers for Building the Africa We Want

The implementation of the 2021 theme of the year was undertaken under 5 key focal areas. A summary of the activities are presented below. The full progress report is available on www.au.int



Arts, Culture and Heritage Continental Policy Instruments

- Entry into force of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance. The Charter is the main treaty that will guide the development of the Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa; however only 17 AU Member States have ratified it: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa. For Africa's creative economy to grow and develop and become a major

**Only 17 African
Countries have
ratified the Charter for
African Cultural
Re-nnaissance**

contributor all African States need to ratify and implement the Charter

- Endorsement of the draft African Union Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage by the Specialised Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs (STC-JLA) held 22 – 24 September 2021
- Validation by member states experts of the draft Statute of the AU's Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition (CELHTO);
- African Common Position on Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage drafted during the Continental Experts' Workshop on the Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage held in Dakar, Senegal in collaboration with the Government of Senegal and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)

Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) on the Continent



- Popularisation of the Revised African Union Plan of Action on Cultural and Creative Industries which aims to: Stimulate economic growth of the CCIs;
- The 27th Edition of the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 16-23 October 2021; The Africa Fashion Reception and Africa Celebrates, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 16-21 October 2021; Creative Africa Summit (CANEX), Durban, South Africa from 19-20 November 2021; the 7th Edition of the All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA), Lagos, Nigeria, 21 November 2021;
- Statute of the African Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission (AACC) promoted during 74th Edition of the Cannes Film Festival and FESPACO

The Great Museum of Africa (GMA), Protection of Heritage and Combatting Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property



- Project document and the draft Statute developed for the Agenda 2063 Flagship Project of the Great Museum of Africa;
- Promotion of the AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage and the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance during 50th Anniversary celebration of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property

1% of National Budgets.... what AU Member States have committed to allocate to the arts, culture and heritage sector by 2030 if the Creative Economy is expected to become a major economic sector

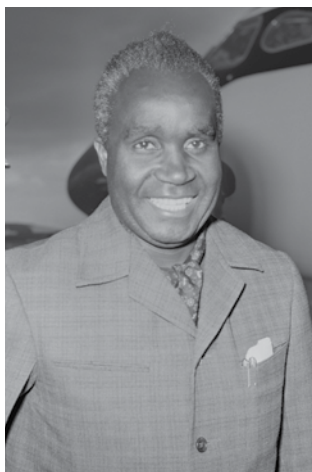
African Languages and Oral Traditions

- The AU's African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) launched the African Languages Week in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from 27-30 July 2021 in collaboration with the Government of Burkina Faso
- CELHTO carried out a study on the endogenous mechanisms of conflict prevention, management and resolution in Central Africa; as well as organised a competition on the collection of tales and legends on African cultural values

Building Partnerships and

Cooperation

- Recognition of the **H.E.**



Kenneth David Kaunda, *former President of Zambia* for his contribution to African cultural renaissance and the spirit of Pan-Africanism

- 35 young people trained in entrepreneurship and heritage sustainability by the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF);
- 30 heritage experts trained in heritage management in collaboration with the UNECA and the Heritage Management Institution;
- Popularization of the African World Heritage Day celebrated on the 05th May each year in order to contribute to the increase of African Sites in the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage List and removal of African Sites from the World Heritage List in Danger;
- 6 children awarded for dictation and promotion of African Languages;

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic several activities which were not undertaken in 2021 have been earmarked for implementation in

2022 including:

- Launch of the Temporary Site of the Great Museum of Africa, a Flagship Project of the AU Agenda 2063 to be hosted by the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.
- Launch of the Temporary Secretariat of the African Audio-Visual and Cinema Commission (AACC) to be headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya and advocacy for the ratification of the Statutes of the AACC
- The finalisation of the Draft African Common Position Paper on Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage
- Promoting AU Model Law on the Protection of Cultural Property and Heritage
- The Organization of the 6th Pan-African Cultural Congress (PACC6)
- The Organization of the 2nd Pan-African Conference of Writers (PACW2)
- The Organisation of the 2nd Creative Africa Summit (CANEX)
- Development of the Draft Continental Arts Education Policy
- Organisation of the Virtual Forum for Traditional Leaders
- Study on the Endogenous Mechanisms of Conflict Prevention, Management and resolution in Central and East Africa
- Finalisation of the Assessment on the Decent Work in the Arts, Culture and Heritage sector.



**Strengthening Resilience in
Nutrition & Food Security on
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Strengthening Agro-food systems,
Health and Social Protection Systems
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and Economic Capital Development

**If having access to enough
food is necessary for a
person's survival, then getting
an adequate combination of
safe & nutritious foods is
fundamental to his or
her future, and to
the well being,
health &
development of
entire communities
and economies.**

**His Majesty King Letsie III,
Kingdom of Lesotho &
AU Nutrition Champion**

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PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING PLAN FOR AFRICA (PMPA)

The African Union's Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa (PMPA) was established to develop the African pharmaceutical industry a sector with considerable potential for reducing the burden of disease in Africa. With a projected value of over US\$40 billion by the next decade, the sector will also contribute significantly to economic growth. A business plan for implementing the plan was developed and considerable progress has been recorded including the establishment of initiatives to harmonise medicine regulation on the continent, addressing human capacity and skills shortages, and promoting cooperation and advocacy in the industry.

The PMPA is premised on the inalienable principle that access to quality healthcare, including access to all essential medicines that are affordable, safe, efficacious, and of good quality, is a fundamental human right. The PMPA proposes that the promotion of industrial development and the safeguarding and protection of public health are not mutually exclusive priorities and that the production of quality medicines and the development of an international compliant industry in Africa are possible, desirable and eminently doable. The Plan is based on the belief that industrial development and the development of the pharmaceutical sector is not in conflict with public health imperatives and that the industry should in fact be developed with the long term aim of promoting access to quality essential medicines.

The PMPA has a vision to develop a competitive and enduring integrated pharmaceutical manufacturing industry in Africa able to respond to the continent's need for a secure and reliable supply of quality,

affordable, accessible, safe and efficacious medicines. This is a plan that foresees the entry of Africa into new drug discovery and the development and commercialisation of African developed and researched blockbuster drugs. It also recognizes the critical need for governments to play a catalytic role in order to kick-start the growth of the industry and to put a brake on overreliance on imports.

Factors identified as key to achieving the vision of the PMPA are:

- Strong independent and predictable regulatory systems
- Availability of the requisite human skills and access to know-how in the short term
- Increased competition leading to continuous product improvements, increased production
- and distribution efficiencies, enhanced sales and marketing efforts and service
- and business model innovation
- Reduced demand uncertainty and accurate forecasting
- Enhanced regulatory oversight
- Investment and access to affordable finance
- Provision of time-limited, easily understood, and accessible incentives



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Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for
Africa**

The African Medicines Agency

Substandard and falsified medical products and medicines inflict economic burdens on individual patients and their families. On the other hand, legitimate pharmaceutical companies also face huge revenue losses due to competition for the market with substandard and falsified medicines and medical products. Governments make additional losses through the loss of revenue from unpaid taxes and spending money in fighting the falsified medicines and medical products menace. Poor-quality medicines result in increased cost, such as resources wasted on ineffective therapies and treating additional complications.

Insufficient access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable medical products in Africa has posed a significant challenge to public health for decades. In part, this is attributed to weak or absent policies and regulatory systems, a lack of appropriately trained personnel in National Medicines Regulatory Authorities (NMRAs) and ineffective regional collaborations among NMRAs. In response to national regulatory challenges in Africa, a number of regional harmonisation efforts were introduced through the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonisation (AMRH) initiative to, among others, expedite market authorisation of medical products and to facilitate the alignment of national legislative frameworks with the AU Model Law on Medical Products Regulation.

The African Heads of State and Government at their 32nd Ordinary Session in February 2019 adopted the Treaty for the establishment of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) placing an emphasis on investment in regulatory capacity strengthening and responding to the enormous health challenges including lack of access to affordable, quality essential medicines.

AMA will enhance the capacity of states parties and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to regulate medical products in order to improve access to quality, safe and efficacious medical products on the continent. AMA will also promote the adoption and harmonisation of medical products regulatory policies and standards, as well as provide scientific guidelines and coordinate existing regulatory harmonization efforts in the African Union recognised RECs and Regional Health Organizations (RHOs).

AMA is the second continental health agency to be launched by the AU following the launch of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) in 2017.

The Treaty for the Establishment of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) entered into force as of 5th November 2021, thirty (30) days after the deposit of the 15th instrument of ratification, on the 5th of October 2021, by the Republic of Cameroon at the African Union Commission (Article 38, AMA Treaty).


THE AFRICA REGIONAL NUTRITION STRATEGY

2015-2025

Objectives for the ARNS

1. 40% reduction of the number of African children under 5 years who are stunted by 2025;
2. 50% reduction of anaemia in women of child-bearing age in Africa by 2025;
3. 30% reduction of low birth weight in Africa by 2025;
4. No increase of overweight in African children under 5 years of age by 2025;
5. Increase exclusive breast-feeding rates during the first six months to at least 50% by 2025;
6. Reduce and maintain childhood wasting in Africa to less than 5% by 2025.



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THE COST OF HUNGER IN AFRICA CONTINENTAL REPORT

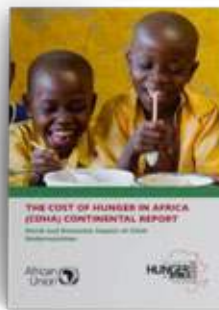
The Cost of Hunger in Africa Continental Report presents findings on the significant negative effects of undernourished children on health, school performance and labour productivity; and estimates the social and economic impacts of child undernutrition in a given year. The report provides key recommendations to be used by AU Member States to implement policy and other nutrition sensitive strategy interventions so as to reduce and eliminate under nutrition on the continent.

When a child is under nourished, the negative consequences follow that child for his/her entire life. These negative consequences also have grave effects on the economies where s/he lives, learns and works

The COHA study model is used to estimate the additional cases of morbidity, mortality, school repetitions and dropouts and reduced physical capacity associated with a person's undernutrition status before the

age of five. In order to estimate these social impacts for a single year, the model focuses on the current population, identifies the percentage of that population who were undernourished before the age of five, and then estimates the associated negative impacts experienced by the population in the current year and the associated economic losses incurred by the economy in health, education and potential productivity in a single year.

The COHA 2021 study was conducted in 21 AU Member States (*Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe*).



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0 - 5 Years

Undernourished children are at higher risk of anaemia, diarrhoea and respiratory infections. These additional cases of illness are costly to the health system and families

6 - 18 Years

Stunted children are at higher risk of repeating grades in school and dropping out of school. Additional repetitions impacts are costly to the education system and families.

15 - 64 Years

Children who dropped out of school early and then working in non-manual activities, may be less productive. If they are subsequently employed in manual activities, their physical capacity will be reduced and they may be less productive. People who are absent from the labour force because of infant mortality associated with undernutrition represent a loss of economic productivity

THE AFRICAN LEADERS FOR NUTRITION

The African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) is an initiative of the African Development Bank (ADB) that brings together African leaders at the highest political level as well as other eminent Africans to champions for better nutrition (including agricultural practices) and to advocate for and promote action across multiple sectors to improve the health and wellbeing of Africans with a focus on children and their early developmental phases so as to build the foundation for a productive human capital in Africa. The initiative was conceived of during a high level conference convened in Dakar, Senegal, in October 2015 by H.E. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and Chair of the African Union 2022 under the theme, Feeding Africa, An Action Plan for African Agricultural Transformation and during the 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union held on 31 January 2018 in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, the ALN was endorsed by African leaders, signalling commitment to supporting the initiative as one of the programmes necessary for implementation if to achieve the goals of Aspiration 1 of Africa's Agenda 2063

The ALN is one of the flagship programs launched under the ADB's High 5 priorities, specifically "Feed Africa". It is led by a group of ALN Champions who advocate for multisectoral approaches to invest in and sustain commitment aimed at ending malnutrition in Africa.

The ALN prioritises its activities against 3 key areas

1. Accountability

Tracking and measuring state of implementation, progress and impact through the Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard

2. Investments

Assessing the economic impact of malnutrition and proposing financial strategies to address the gaps in order to achieve the nutrition targets

3. Leadership

Enlisting African leaders to drive commitments towards nutrition at the highest levels of decision making on the continent



Scan to Learn more about the The African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) and the work of the African Development Bank

AU THEME OF THE YEAR 2022

Interview with

H.E. MINATA

SAMATE

CESSOUMA,

Commissioner
for Health,
Humanitarian
Affairs
and Social
Development



The African Union Theme for 2022 is Year of Nutrition, “Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent: Strengthening Agro-Food Systems, Health and Social Protection Systems for the Acceleration of Human, Social and Economic Capital Development”.

On deciding on the theme, the African Heads of State and Government were mindful of the fact that food security without improved nutrition will not deliver the desired inclusive socio-economic outcomes envisaged in Africa’s Agenda 2063 as the number of those affected by hunger and malnutrition has not decreased over the past few years.

In relation to the Theme of the Year 2022, what does strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security mean; and how does it impact human, social and economic capital development?

Nutrition is a foundation for development. Investments in nutrition are now considered as a long- term investment in social, economic and human

capital development. This has been clearly demonstrated by the findings of the African Union led Cost of Hunger in Africa Study, popularly known as COHA, which shows that when the population is well nourished, there are social, human and economic gains. A well-nourished population is made up of healthier, well-educated citizens, which in turn leads to a productive society. The study further shows that child undernutrition is costing our continent a loss of approximately 1.9 – 16.5 percent of Gross Domestic Products (GDP) annually.

Nutrition is also an input and output of resilience in that well-nourished individuals are healthy and can work harder and in turn, households which are food secure are able to endure and recover more from external shocks and vice versa, and this has clearly been demonstrated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has left many households in dire need. Hence the need to build more resilience.

The Theme of the Year is timely as it comes at the time when the world is undergoing and recovering from the global health crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has created major global health and economic shocks affecting people’s health, nutrition and livelihoods through job losses, higher food prices, loss of remittances, reduced purchasing power, rationing of food and other basic goods, inadequate safety nets and disruptions to health care services and education. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, some parts of the continent are still experiencing humanitarian challenges associated with conflict, extreme weather events / climate variability and economic slowdown, all of which are affecting food security and nutrition.

Strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security is key if the African Union is to achieve the Agenda 2063 goals and targets, and more specifically the Malabo targets of reducing stunting to 10% and underweight to 5% by 2025. Nutrition is both an input to and an outcome of strengthened resilience.

The theme further recognizes the key role of agriculture in addressing nutrition-specific interventions and nutrition-sensitive interventions, and in improving people’s diets by increasing the availability, affordability, and consumption of diverse, safe, and nutritious foods and diets.

What are the goals of the AU in relation to strengthening health and social protection systems? What is the link with human, social and economic capital development? Please highlight the major successes and challenges to date

The AU has prioritised nutrition in its policies, strategies and decisions throughout its history.

- **Aspiration 1 of Africa’s development framework**, Agenda 2063, underlines the importance of nutrition to build “The Africa We Want” with Goal 1 of the Aspiration being “a high standard of living, quality of life, sound health and well- being” of African people, and Goal 3 on citizens being “healthy and well-nourished

and enjoying a life expectancy of above 75 years.”

- **Article 14 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** also calls for adequate nutrition and care to combat malnutrition and improve knowledge of nutrition, including breastfeeding and human capital development.
- **The African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS)** continues to guide member states on nutrition policies and programs in order to achieve nutrition targets; and the ARNS 2015-2025 calls on all AU Member States to put together multi-sectoral nutrition action plans, budgets and expenditure tracking systems for effective implementation and monitoring of nutrition interventions. This is also complemented by the AUDA-NEPAD Nutrition and Food Systems Implementation Plan 2019-2025 which is aligned to the ARNS.
- **The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)** one of the continental programmes initiatives under Agenda 2063 serves as the framework for action on agricultural transformation across Africa. CAADP supports member states in increasing investment and productivity in the agricultural sector and has in place regional and national programmes aimed at improving food systems, food security and nutrition.
- **The 2014 Malabo Declaration** commits countries to ending hunger and reducing child stunting to 10 % and the underweight to 5% by 2025.

- As part of advocacy for nutrition, the AU endorsed the **Cost of Hunger (COHA) in Africa Study** in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD and the World Food Programme (WFP). It has further endorsed the AU Nutrition Champion and African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) Initiative in an effort to rally high-level political engagement to advance nutrition in Africa.
- To advance multi sectoral approaches in addressing hunger and malnutrition, the **Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025)** recognises the multiple benefits of Home-Grown School Feeding Programme and is implementing a Continental Home Grown School Feeding programme. In addition, AUDA-NEPAD launched the guidelines to design and reinforce the implementation of **Home Grown School Feeding programme**.
- The African Union has also published the first African Union **Continental Nutrition Report** as an accountability tool, to measure the progress of implementing key continental policies and strategies.

What is the current status in terms of food security and nutrition in Africa, and where does Africa stand within the timeframes set by Agenda 2063?

Even if great progress can be noted over the years, food and nutrition insecurity remains one of the long-standing challenges in Africa that hinders sustainable development. Africa has some of the highest cases of the triple burden of malnutrition globally, accounting for more than nine out of ten of all children with stunting, more than nine out of ten children with wasting, and more than seven out of ten children who are overweight worldwide. Recent data highlights that 282 million people

Africa has some of the highest cases of the triple burden of malnutrition globally, accounting for more than nine out of ten of all children with stunting, more than nine out of ten children with wasting, and more than seven out of ten children who are overweight worldwide.

are undernourished in Africa, an increase of 49 million from 2019 . The Sub Saharan Africa region is mostly affected, with 24.1% of the population being undernourished, while the North African sub-Region has 7.1% undernourishment.

Are we on course to meet the aspirations of the Heads of State and Government to end hunger by 2025? If not, when do you think Africa will achieve food security for all?

According to the 3rd CAADP Biennial Review Report (March 2022), member states are not on track in attaining the Malabo targets of

ending hunger and bringing down stunting to 10% and underweight to 10% by 2025. According to the report, out of the 22 member states that reported, only 13 countries are on track of bringing down undernourishment to 5% and below while out of 23 that reported, only 4 are on track of attaining the stunting targets.

How is the designation of 2022 as the year of nutrition going to assist in strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the continent?

The theme of the year for 2022 is an opportunity to recognize and preserve past nutrition gains while also safeguarding future nutrition efforts towards attaining the Malabo Declaration targets by 2025. It is also an opportunity to come together to address the interconnected challenges of nutrition and to enhance the resilience of communities to adapt and cope with existing nutrition and food security challenges. The African Union recognises the multisectoral nature of addressing nutrition and calls for a multi sectoral approach. As such in 2022, the AU will work closely with various stakeholders, to raise awareness to all policymakers working on resilience-building on the social, economic and human costs of under-and malnutrition and ensure inclusion on nutrition objectives in all sectors of development.

The theme of the year for 2022 is an opportunity to recognize and preserve past nutrition gains while also safeguarding future nutrition efforts towards attaining the Malabo Declaration targets by 2025.

The AU Commission has developed the concept note and a comprehensive roadmap, including key strategic partners on the theme of the year in line with the identified objectives aimed at strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security guided by the following priorities:

- Data management and information systems, knowledge generation and dissemination, to inform decision making
- Advocacy for increased commitment and investment on nutrition
- Partnerships and mutual accountability platforms for coherent and harmonized action and transparency
- Institutional capacity enhancement and enabling environment for intensified action and delivery of results and impact

The African Union Commission's departments of Health and Humanitarian Affairs: Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) and Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (DESTI), are working closely with the AU Nutrition Champion, His Majesty King Letsie III of Lesotho; the African Union Development Agency (AUDA/NEPAD,) and the Government of Cote d'Ivoire to implement the action plan.

The Commission has further called in key stakeholders and partners at continental, regional and national levels to support the implementation of the action plan on the AU theme of the year on nutrition throughout 2022.

AU THEME OF THE YEAR 2022

Interview with
H.E. AMB. JOSEFA
LEONEL CORREIRA
SACKO

Commissioner for
Agriculture, Rural
Development, Blue
Economy and Sustainable
Environment

Amid growing hunger due to COVID-19, conflict and climate change, the 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union Heads of State and Government in February 2022 declared 2022 to be “the Year of Nutrition and Food Security” with the stated goals of “strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent and strengthening agro-food systems, health and social protection systems for the acceleration of human, social and economic capital development.” As stated during the launch by the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission, “it is a unique opportunity to strengthen political commitment to end malnutrition in all its forms and to further improve food and nutrition security through the implementation of Malabo commitments, and the goals and objectives of the Africa regional nutrition strategy for the years 2016 to 2025”.

This theme could not have come at a better time as food and nutrition security in Africa is off track three years to the endpoint of the Malabo declaration by 2025. The 3rd CAADP Biennial Review report unveiled during the AU Summit in February 2022 and officially launched on 10th March 2022 indicates that even though one third of the 51 member states are progressing well, only one country - Rwanda- is on track to achieve the goals of the seven Malabo Declaration commitments by 2025.

Continentially, traction has been gained in reducing hunger and malnutrition since 2003 as enshrined in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the 2014 Malabo declaration on accelerated agricultural transformation for shared prosperity and livelihoods, but lost between 2014-2019 period as a result of conflict and climate change which is stalling progress by interacting with multiple other stressors and shocks. In the last five years, the continent has been buffeted by at least five shocks:

- i) The fall armyworm (2017-2018);
- ii) The desert locusts in the Horn of Africa (2019-2020);
- iii) COVID-19 (2020 to date);
- iv) Russia’s war on Ukraine (2022 and on-going); and
- v) Climate Change (droughts, floods, cyclones).

Africa’s food systems while changing as a result of population growth, rapid urbanization and a young population remain critically constrained in almost all their key components. Food production

and productivity, for instance, remains uncompetitive and grossly below potential in providing decent incomes for farmers, herders and fishers as well as associated frontline entrepreneurs, despite agriculture being the main economic and livelihood activity for more than 60% of the continent's population contributing about 16 per cent of the GDP. The continent continues to be a net food importer expending about \$43 billion annually and this could reach \$110 billion in 2025 if unchecked despite having about 60 per cent of the world's uncultivated arable land.

The most recent estimates show that about 346 million people in Africa, a quarter of the population, are undernourished and facing severe food insecurity, up from 286 million in 2021. Two years of conflict in northern Ethiopia's Tigray region has left millions facing hunger and starvation. Insurgencies in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria have also deepened food insecurity in the Sahel, which now faces its worst food crisis in recent years. Many of countries dealing with conflict are also among the most severely affected by climate change, including South Sudan and Somalia. The number of people pushed into hunger because of drought in the Horn of Africa could rise from the current 14 million to 20 million by the end of the year. South Africa is also grappling with one of the biggest natural disasters in the country's history with the floods in KwaZulu-Natal Province in April 2022 that have killed more than 400 people and destroyed thousands of homes.

The 2021 Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition report indicates that nearly three-quarters of Africans cannot afford a healthy diet. The report indicates that 281.6 million people on the continent, over one-fifth of the population, were undernourished, an increase of 89.1 million since 2014, which is 46.3 million more than in 2019.

There is significant variation in the levels and trends of hunger across the regions. About 44.4 percent of undernourished people on the continent live in Eastern Africa, 26.7 percent in Western Africa, 20.3 percent in Central Africa, 6.2 percent for Northern Africa, and 2.4 percent for Southern Africa. In addition to the 346.4 million Africans suffering from severe food insecurity, 452 million



H.E. Amb. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment

suffer from moderate food insecurity

In addition to hunger, millions of Africans suffer from widespread micronutrient deficiencies, while overweight and obesity are already significant public health concerns in many countries. According to the Sun Movement, malnutrition rates across Africa remain unacceptably high with 13.7% of infants having a low birth weight and 30.7% of children aged 0 to 5 years suffering from stunting. Women are particularly at risk across Africa, with more than 40% of women of reproductive age suffering from anemia.

The AU Theme for 2022 will be led by the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS), in close collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), the Department of Education,

Science, Technology (ESTI) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). Implementing the theme of the year will leverage on several ongoing flagship projects and activities of the African Union such the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, the African Continental Free Trade Area, the Free Movement of Persons, education and innovation, among others.

The Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) is planning to deliver concretely on this theme to face the growing threats of COVID-19, conflict, climate change and rising food prices and to build a strong and resilient food systems that can withstand future shocks for Africa.

The plans to implement the theme of the year are succinctly presented below:

1. In order to reduce the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Africa's food systems, the AUC and FAO convened a meeting of Ministers for Agriculture of AU Member States on 16 April 2020 to share experiences and identify actions to be undertaken. A Task Force composing all major players in African Agriculture (AUC FAO, European Union, AfDB, World Bank, IFAD, WFP and AUDA-NEPAD) was put in place to oversee the implementation of the actions identified by the Ministers in the Declaration and reporting back to them. The Task force has been working together ever since to provide a coordinated response and their work is set to intensify with the adoption of Nutrition and Food Security as the African Union Theme for 2022. I have initiated talks with the Chairperson of the 4th STC to renew the mandate of the Task Force so that they can continue to render the much needed support to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and the Russian-Ukraine crisis on food and nutrition security.
2. As part of the UN Food Systems Summit convened by the UN Secretary-General on 23 September 2021 in a bid to accelerate the implementation of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, ARBE department, AUDA-NEPAD and UNECA coordinated by the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC-ARDWE) with input from various Africa-based technical institutions drawing largely from

the 49 or so national consultations that took place in Africa formulated the African Common Position, in which Africa collectively agreed on 43 game changing solutions to strengthen the resilience of its food systems towards meeting the Agenda 2063 and SDGs goals. We are working with AUDA-NEPAD to assist our member states to implement these game-changing solutions.

3. The UNFSS was also held mid-way to the Malabo targets in 2025 and the progress towards attaining these targets are not encouraging. The various BR cycles have made recommendations to fast track the implementation of CAADP Malabo commitments. Some of these recommendations are also mentioned as game changing solutions in the African Common position to the UNFSS. Through our partnership, we need to support the implementation of CAADP Malabo and the UNFSS pathways that are in our common position. This can only be done in a more effective way if we support our member states to develop and implement agriculture policies strategies and investment plans that are compliant to both CAADP and the ACP to the UNFSS. By doing so, we will contribute significantly to the implementation of the AU 2022 theme of the year
4. The Department is already collaborating with several development partners to take forward including the U.S. Government the AU 2022 theme. As a first step, after the AUC/US high level dialogues on 11 March 2022, the Wilson Center, the U.S. Department of State and the African Union will co-host a dialogue (or High Level Event) on "Africa's Policy Priorities for Food Security and Nutrition: Advancing the CAADP Agenda in a Climate-Impacted World" on 11 May, 2022. The goal of this dialogue is to engage policy makers and experts from Africa and the United States in a discussion that will shape U.S.-AU cooperation on food security and nutrition going forward, convening senior AU officials from the African Union Commission's Departments of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (H.E. Amb. Josefa Sacko) and of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (H.E. Amb. Cessouma Minata Samate) with key U.S. stakeholders from Congress, the Executive Branch and the private sector.

5. In an effort to ensure that Africa builds back better and greener from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department in collaboration with the UK Government and other partners developed the AU Green Recovery Action Plan (AU GRAP) and launched it virtually on 15 July 2021. The GRAP has five complementary pillars:

- a) Climate finance, including increasing flows, efficiency, and impact of funding.
- b) Supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency and national Just Transition programs.
- c) Nature-based solutions and focus on biodiversity through work on sustainable land management, forestry, oceans and ecotourism.
- d) Resilient agriculture, by focusing on inclusive economic development and green jobs; and;
- e) Green and resilient cities, including a focus on water (flooding and water resources).

Efforts are ongoing to assist member states and regional economic communities to implement the plan including the pillar on resilient agriculture as well as the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy to upscale climate smart agriculture in Africa.

The department of ARBE will continue to be proactive, responsive and provide the required support and technical back stopping to assist member states to strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security in line with the AU 2020 Theme of the Year.

THE CONTINENTAL NUTRITION SCORECARD

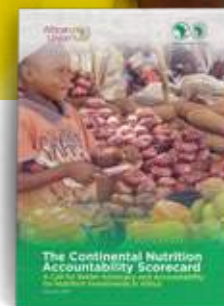
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hereas significant progress has been made to address malnutrition in Africa, there remain significant challenges that need to be addressed.

The continental nutrition scorecard provides a snapshot of progress made and areas that require attention including stunting, anaemia, childhood wasting, obesity and exclusive breast feeding for infants.

Some findings in the scorecard include:

- Half of African countries have high to very high (>30%) prevalence of childhood stunting
- Only 15 African countries have managed to contain the prevalence of childhood wasting within the recommended ranges of reduction from 7.9% to less than 5% with the bulk of countries ranging from 5% to 23%
- Some African countries have high prevalence of overweight of up to 22% (against a global target of less than 6%)
- Africa continues to have a high prevalence of anaemia amongst Women of Reproductive Age (WRA) with a prevalence of 47% and ranging from 22% to 59% against a global target of reduction to 15%
- Whereas Africa has improved rates of exclusive breastfeeding (EBF), with 18 countries surpassing the 50% target and ten countries ranging between 37% to 48%, 20 countries have low rates with some as low as 5%



Scan to Download the detailed Continental Nutrition Scorecard

Interview with **H.E. PROF MOHAMMED BELHOCINE**

Commissioner for Education,
Science, Technology and
Innovation

In relation to the theme of the year 2022, what role does Education, Science, Technology and Innovation play in supporting Agro-Food systems that will lead to greater resilience in nutrition and food security?

Education, Science, Technology and Innovation play a critical role in agro-food systems and creating greater resilience in nutrition and food security in the continent. There are a number of higher education and research institutions that provide teaching, research and extension in agriculture. They build enormous human resources with qualifications for driving the agricultural sector in various fields such as plant genetics and breeding, horticulture, agronomy, animal husbandry, soil science, agricultural economics and agribusiness and innovation, and agriculture engineering and extension. At the same time these institutions carry out agricultural research and development contributing to knowledge generation, technology development, and innovations that are important for agro-food systems, food and nutrition security, environmental sustainability, resilience and agricultural growth.

What major contributions have activities under your department made to strengthening Agro-Food systems?

The Department directly contributes to strengthening agro-food systems in the continent through implementation of its mandate. We have developed and adopted strategic policy frameworks namely

- a) The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25),
- b) The Continental TVET strategy which fosters transformative and responsive education systems



- c) The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024) to facilitate the deployment of science, technology and innovation, and
- d) The African Space Policy and Strategy for harnessing space sciences and technologies in the continent.

A number of programmes have been launched, and strategic institutions operationalized namely the Pan African University, African Scientific, The Scientific, Technical and Research commission (STRC), Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC), African Observatory in Science Technology and Innovation (AOSTI), International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (CIEFFA) and Pan-African Institute of Education for Development (IPED), which are contributing immensely on the theme of the year through their mandates.

Some of our activities that are strengthening agro-food systems in the continent are:

- Since its establishment, The Pan African University between the years 2012-2021 has awarded scholarships to 2582 (830 females and 1752 males) students from 51 African Union Member States to study at the MSc/MA and PhD levels. The PAU further carries out research and promotes Innovation and entrepreneurship and promotes agriculture in Africa.
- Home-Grown School Feeding Initiatives: The Heads of State and Government adopted Assembly/AU/Dec.589 (XXVI)/ decision in 2016 that outlines the development of guidelines and frameworks to increase the scale and quality of Home-Grown School Feeding programmes in Africa, and this has brought together various stakeholders and partners to supporting Member States in their national efforts to develop and implement sustainable policies and programmes for zero hunger and combat malnutrition
- In 2022, the continent celebrated the Africa Day of School Feeding on 1st March, under the theme: “Nutrition and human capital development in Africa through increased investment in Home-grown School Feeding”, directly linking with and raising the importance of the theme of the year.
- Technical and vocational education and training: The Department of Education Science Technology and Innovation (ESTI) promotes policies and programmes that foster youth employment and skills development, innovation and entrepreneurship. The goal is to build a paradigm shift and prepare young people to become job creators rather than job seekers, through modernised national TVET systems, that take into account agro-entrepreneurship. Currently, the Department in collaboration with African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) is implementing the Skills Initiative for Africa through cooperation with Germany (BMZ) and the EU and AU member states. It also emphasizes a focus on girls and young women entrepreneurs, led by the International Centre for Girls and Women’s Education in Africa (CIEFFA).
- ESTI promotes intra-Africa and international research and innovation through the implementation of the STISA-2024. From 2011, the department has implemented competitive research grants focused on: Post-harvest & Agriculture; Energy, Renewable & Sustainable Energy and Water & Sanitation, with the inclusion of climate change and fisheries; and on Food Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture. More than 40 lead institutions in partnership with over 200 other institutions from across Africa received grants ranging from USD 500,000 to USD 1Million to support research in Africa, and post graduate students attached to the research projects.
- Harnessing space science, technology and innovation for food security and sustainable agriculture in Africa: Space systems and applications are formidable tools for Food and Nutrition Security, because they systematically monitor simultaneously large areas and fine resolution as well as provide accurate and timely information on agricultural planning and production prospects. For example, in cooperation with the EU, the Department is implementing the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) & Africa programme in collaboration with the regional and national institutions in the five regions of Africa. The services developed under the GMES & Africa programme contributes to food security and nutrition in all Africa. Indeed, the programme is producing monthly agriculture and rangeland seasonal monitoring and assessment bulletins providing seasonal crop conditions with monthly updates, multi-hazard early warning systems and grain trade and markets information for Eastern Africa. In North Africa, the programme is providing information on the status of arable land through land degradation assessment and



**Strengthening Resilience in
Nutrition & Food Security on
the African continent:**

Strengthening Agro-food systems,
Health and Social Protection Systems
for the Acceleration of Human, Social
and Economic Capital Development

**Over 65 million children
receive school meals
across Africa in a year**

Learn more about The
Home-Grown School
Feeding Programme an
initiative of the African
Union's Continental
Education Strategy for
Africa (CESA)

#YearOfNutrition

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water availability as well as developing scenarios for harvest prediction. In western Africa, the programme has developed an integrated service providing data and information on wetland types and superfices. In Central Africa, the focus of the programme is the tropical forest monitoring and assessment and Congo Basin water navigability to allow the transportation of the agricultural production among others. In West, North, East and South Africa regions, the programme provided information the identification and protection of potential fishing zones.

What have been the challenges?

Funding for education and science, technology and innovation is a key challenge faced by the department in the implementation of its projects. Investment in ESTI still remains low, far below the 1% GDP agreed to be allocated to R&D. Furthermore, Intra-African cooperation is low with African institutions working in silos resulting in loss of time and knowledge. Africa remains weak in terms of infrastructure for data acquisition, archiving and processing which are necessary for developing strong excellent centers of research.

What is the envisaged way forward?

African institutions have to encourage the cross-fertilisation of ideas which aims at sharing data, knowledge and best practices among institutions and people. The agri-food systems are about using big and mega data. Therefore, High Performance Computing and Cloud Computing are currently the solutions and options to adopt. But this will require high level connectivity in terms of internet for better and real time data and information access and sharing. This how we can improve the competitiveness of Africa agricultural economics. This one of the reasons why Africa should invest in space science and technology. The AU is currently undertaking actions to operationalize the African Space Agency (located in Cairo, Egypy) for space activities coordination and regulatory framework at the continental level. This institution will hugely contribute to the agricultural innovation in Africa. There is a need to strengthen agricultural networks, boost funding and intra-Africa cooperation among others.



AU Sustainable Schoolfeeding Programme

School feeding can be broadly defined as the availability and the provision of adequate food – in terms of quantity, quality, safety, as wells as socio-cultural acceptability – for schoolchildren. Commonly, school feeding refers to meals served on school premises; nevertheless, complementary modalities of feeding, such as take-home rations (THR), exist where food is provided to the children's families, usually conditional upon their children attending school. In various countries, in-school meals are combined with THR for particularly vulnerable students, particularly girls, to generate greater impacts on school enrolment and retention rates and reduce gender or social gaps.

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The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA)

identifies school feeding as one of the key initiatives necessary for achieving CESA's strategic objective to "build, rehabilitate, preserve education infrastructure and develop policies that ensure a permanent, healthy and conducive learning environment in all sub-sectors and for all, so as to expand access to quality education." The importance of school feeding and the need to strengthen school feeding programmes was reinforced at the highest level when the Heads of State and Government made the landmark decision during the 2016 AU Assembly to establish the 1st of March as the African School Feeding Day. This decision recognised school feeding as an important instrument for ensuring inclusive development, health, rural development, gender equality, and inclusion in education, especially for poor, socially marginalised and economically constrained communities.

Given the inter-related nature of prolonged malnutrition, lower school attendance and completion rates, and their effects on the positive development of future human capital, school feeding programmes are emerging as an ever-expanding policy option to address these issues on the African continent. Home-grown school feeding (HGSF) programmes, in particular, are gaining traction, as they aim to promote local economic development and agricultural transformation through establishing linkages between

the school feeding programme's demand for food and the supply of locally grown food.

School feeding programmes therefore have multidimensional sectoral outcomes and impacts across education and learning, health and nutrition, and agriculture and local economic development and when combined with extensive national capacity development, these programmes can act as an enabler for African human capital development

Education & Learning

The strongest sectoral outcomes measured from school feeding programmes are associated with education and learning and they include:

- Increased school enrolment
- Increased school attendance
- Reduced repetition and dropout rates
- Improved learning and concentration abilities
- improved retention, cognitive performance (higher test scores)
- Decreased gender-gap in education

Health & Nutrition

Within the health and nutrition sector, evaluations on school feeding programmes have shown positive outcomes on schoolchildren's anthropometric measurements, such as height, weight, and body mass index; micronutrient status; reported short-term hunger; and incidence of illness. School feeding not only promotes the nutrition and health of direct beneficiaries, schoolchildren, through school meals, but can also influence households' level of food security, health and

nutrition through Take-Home-Rations (THR) which have a spill-over effects on households as THR works akin to an income transfer to households, in that it increases the food and financial resources in the home, mainly through the sharing of THR amongst family members. Sharing THR with children in their first 1,000 days of life can have particularly impactful results through improving their nutritional status during this most critical window of cognitive development.

Agricultural & Local economic Development

Structured demand programmes linked to school feeding connect large, predictable sources of demand for agricultural products (i.e., markets) to small farmers, which, in theory, reduces risk and encourages improved quality, leading to improved food systems, increased income, reduced poverty and, in the long-term, increased food security. School feeding programmes can serve as an example of a structured demand programme, with school feeding constituting a market to which smallholder farmers can be linked. Structured demand programmes, particularly when implemented in rural areas, can stabilise commodity prices and markets through public procurement; lead to more productive and expanded smallholder cooperative societies, as demonstrated through increased yields, and greater feelings of community empowerment

Recommendations for School Feeding Programmes

To ensure sustained School feeding programmes it is

necessary to:

1. Link school feeding programmes to international, continental and national development agendas
2. Design and implement school feeding programmes to achieve cross-sectoral policy objectives
3. Invest in and empower multi-sectoral response and coordination mechanisms.
4. Commit to developmental procurement strategies that exert a strong focus on increasing local production capacities.
5. Innovate financial arrangements by diversifying sources of financing for school feeding programmes and/or putting into place co-financing mechanisms.
6. Devote resources to stronger M&E system and automate feedback processes to improve policy outcomes.
7. Deepen and learn from South-South and pan-African cooperation to optimise policy impacts.



« Scan to Learn more about School Feeding Programmes on the continent and recommended

policy interventions by downloading the report on Sustainable School Feeding across the African Union

A Human Rights Based Nutrition Approach Focusing on the African Woman and Child

By **Dr. Ibrahim Banaru**, Senior Registrar in Family Medicine at Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Zaria, Nigeria. Alumnus of the MSc Reproductive Health Pan African University

Nutrition is imperative to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). UHC is rooted in the belief that realising the highest attainable standard of health is an inalienable right. Adequate nutrition is a key factor in being able to live a healthy life. Despite its implications for health and human capital development, nutrition is still a neglected area. However, there is some growing commitment to furthering nutrition on the African continent with stronger political will, as indicated by the AU's declaration of 2022 as the Year of Nutrition. This article engages with nutrition as a determinant of health, focusing on women and children while framing a human rights approach to ending malnutrition.

Nutrition as a determinant of children's and women's health

Malnutrition is defined as not having enough energy and nutrients needed to fuel a physically active life for optimal healthy living. Malnutrition comprises under-nutrition and over-nutrition, both of which come with devastating health consequences. Malnutrition in all its forms increases the risk of diseases and death, with more than half of deaths in children under the age of 5 years and one in five deaths in adults all attributable to dietary risk factors.

Malnutrition disproportionately affects children and women of reproductive age. The prevalence of malnutrition among African children remains a dire concern with long-term micronutrient deficiency leading to stunting, as well as impaired cognitive and physical development.

Malnutrition in children is the highest contributor to under-5 mortality, due to the heightened susceptibility of malnourished children to infectious diseases. Scientific evidence has it that beyond the third year of life, the effects of long-term malnutrition are irreversible.

Children deprived of adequate nutrition do not attain their optimum height for their age and are left with long-term devastating consequences. They do not reach optimum size in adulthood and are therefore more likely to be less physically active. Malnourished children also have poor educational outcomes, as there is a direct relationship between the degree of stunting and cognitive impairment.

Maternal malnutrition increases the risk of poor pregnancy outcomes in women of reproductive age, including anaemia, premature labour,

obstructed labour, and having babies with low birth weight. Anaemia in pregnancy heightens the risk of maternal death. Maternal malnutrition leads to a vicious cycle.

The legal framework within the African human rights system is relevant to protecting the right to adequate nutrition.

The right to nutrition can be codified alongside other rights such as the right to life and the right to health. Within the African human rights system, for instance, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has interpreted the right to food as being implicitly protected under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights through such rights as the right to life, the right to health, and the right to economic, social, and cultural development. There is a judicial precedent which further strengthens the notion of nutrition and access to food as human rights when, in the year 2001, the African Commission on Human and People's rights concluded that Nigeria had failed to uphold its obligation to respect and protect the right to food of Ogoni people by not preventing contamination of food sources by oil companies.

We can also deduct the right to nutrition for children from the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, recognising the right of children to nutrition in Article 14 (2), c, d, and h in the context of the right to health. For African women, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa recognises the right of women to nutrition in Articles 14 and 15.

A multispectral approach to ending malnutrition

Nutrition-sensitive policies, including responsive budgeting and domestication of the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy

Evidence suggests interventions against malnutrition are cost-effective, but it requires political will backed by coherent and sustainable policies to materialise.

Legal mechanisms thus include policies that uphold the right to nutrition, particularly in the context of women and children, who bear the brunt. The law ensures access to food that is safe, adequate, and nutritious and access to a continuum of nutritional health services. There should also be a coherent and explicit implementation framework for the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS). States should also avail themselves of regional peer reviews in the spirit of the regional framework to serve voluntary monitoring, accountability, and learning.

Infrastructure and improved funding sources for home-grown food

One of the banes of agricultural transformation in Africa, is poor infrastructure for mechanised agriculture and a lack of credit facilities. There should be a deliberate effort to provide a technologically appropriate infrastructure to sustain agriculture beyond subsistence, ideally to a commercially competitive one of sufficient quality to meet growing demand. It is also imperative in the spirit of Agenda 2063, where Africa promises to finance its development by allowing states to improve funding sources for agriculture and nutritional

services and improve fiscal policies for transparency, to ward off corruption and ensure that investments in nutritional services are adequately utilised, and that agricultural subsidies result in improved yields.

Gender mainstreaming, poverty reduction, and social protection

There is a growing link between poverty, gender inequality, and malnutrition. An African woman lacking access to credit and support facilities for furthering agriculture and food production, leads to a vicious cycle of poverty, lack of access to adequate food, and malnutrition. Therefore, there is need to mainstream a gender affirmative social protection policy by countries to ensure social security that guarantees food security and nutrition.

Integrating population health and environmental best practices

Internal displacement and migration exacerbate malnutrition as a result of climate change, environmental degradation, and insecurity.

States have a duty to integrate global imperatives to mitigate climate change to reduce the harmful impacts on the environment and population health. There should also be a multi-pronged peace-building effort in crisis-prone areas to reduce the devastation on access to food and nutrition occasioned by civil disturbances.

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THE YEAR OF NUTRITION
Strengthening Resilience in
Nutrition & Food Security
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DEVELOPING AFRICA'S HUMAN, SOCIAL & ECONOMIC CAPITAL BY INCREASING RESILIENCE OF AFRICAN GIRLS THROUGH QUALITY NUTRITION AND EDUCATION

By **Dr. Rita Bissoonauth**, Head of Mission at the African Union/International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) & **Ms. Maria Mdachi**, Consultant AU/CIEFFA)

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a double health and social-economic impact on the 1.354 billion African population. Emerging evidence indicates that African girls and women have been disproportionately affected by this situation. In regards to education, the fear is that there is a "risk" of not achieving the minimum learning standards and an accrued context of "learning poverty" for all learners, more so for girls.

The pandemic's health effects and restrictions have spurred a downturn on human development and economic growth, hitting both households and national governments. COVID-19 has left families with loss of purchasing power whilst robbing them of human capital to trigger growth and prosperity. The tension between demand and supply for services and purchasing power have led to crises in children's development and well-being, education inclusive. The reverse is also true; when there is a growth in the economies, households and governments are able to spend, with relative progress on the well-being of children.

At the pandemic's peak in 2020, at least 130 million girls were affected by continental-wide COVID-19 related school closures putting 10 million girls at risk of never returning to schools.

Further evidence shows that an estimated 13 million more girls could be forced into child marriages and early pregnancies.

Essential services offered in African schools include provision of meals, water and sanitation, physical education and creativity (sports and arts) as well as psycho-social support, just to name a few. Within the context of fragility, conflict and violence situations, humanitarian and emerging pandemics as well, these services are often neglected, giving way to weak human development foundations. If Africa wants to keep its course towards stable, equitable and inclusive, prosperous and peaceful societies, all learners, especially girls need to remain in schools, irrespective of their contexts.

The cost of not educating our girls and young women is high, and spans generations through childhood, youth and adulthood in terms of illness, morbidity and underperformance in the workplace. School feeding programs provide one of the answers to the alarming statistics of low enrolment and completion rates, high drop-out rates, especially for girls, chronic malnutrition which has been exacerbated by the COVID 19 pandemic, unacceptable



levels of physical stunting and cognitive impairment.

Following an assessment carried out by the World Food Program (WFP), it has been proven that the value of school meal programs far exceeds the nutrition of learners and has a positive and significant impact on school enrolment, particularly for girls and internally displaced populations, as well as on improving school completion and on reducing dropout rates. It is therefore crucial that the African continent invests in human capital through quality nutrition to enable it to generate growth and drive Africa's development.

The African Union in collaboration with the World Food Program (WFP), has initiated «Home Grown School Feeding», an initiative serving the continent, using pre-existing food solutions in African societies. This program supports learning by improving the health and nutrition of school-age girls and boys and has demonstrated the strong correlation between education and nutrition. This positive impact extends to families and communities where the food bowl and take-home ration alleviate hunger, sometimes generating income by stimulating local markets and agriculture. This kind of food program enables families to ensure the education of girls by keeping them in the system and making them successful in their lives.

Furthermore, knowledge-building at school is one of the main ways to improve health. The school, through its culture, organisation, management, physical and social environment, teaching and learning strategies, including assessments, has an impact on the self-esteem, academic success, well-being and the health of girls and boys. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought an end to this decade of global

Where there are school health and nutrition programs, girls stay in school longer, their nutrition improves, child marriage rates go down, and teen pregnancies fall

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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growth in school feeding programs and has sharpened global resolve to restore access to these vital safety nets as a priority.

Joint action by countries and development partners is needed to support and strengthen both learning (expanding digital access, teacher support, catch-up strategies for vulnerable children) and the learner (nutrition, health, psychosocial support, social safety net). This is especially true for girls: where there are school health and nutrition programs, girls stay in school longer, their nutrition improves, child marriage rates go down, and teen pregnancies fall. We need to ensure that building back better includes support for the well-being of vulnerable children to achieve their individual potential and contribute to the creation of national human capital.

As a specialised institution of the African Union mandated for the promotion and advocacy of gender equality in Africa's education, the African Union/International Centre for Girls and women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) has been working tirelessly in this endeavor, from early learning foundations to higher education in Africa. Based on the strategic directions drawn from the Continental Education Strategy in Africa (CESA 16-25), to its corresponding Gender Equality Strategy (GES4CESA), AU/CIEFFA has recognised health and nutrition as one of the key strategies for retaining girls in schools within safe school provisions including in emergencies and fragile, conflict and violent contexts.

In line with the AU 2022 Theme, AU/CIEFFA intends to undertake interventions with senior policy makers and other key stakeholders aimed at gaining support and commitment towards prioritising engendered health and nutrition for the empowerment of African girls and women.

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**Strengthening Resilience in
Nutrition & Food Security on
the African continent:**

Strengthening Agro-food systems,
Health and Social Protection Systems
for the Acceleration of Human, Social
and Economic Capital Development

**To make agriculture
sustainable, the grower
has got to be able to
make a profit.**

Sam Farr



Continental Dashboard providing Information about Africa's Seed Systems Launched



A new, interactive digital tool that will support the measurement, tracking and comparison of competitive seed systems, The African Seed Access Index (TASAI) Dashboard was launched during the 22nd African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) Congress held in Djerba, Tunisia (28 February – 3 March 2022)

The dashboard is a gamechanger as it is seen as one of the tools that can be used to provide key information to policy makers and other sectoral decision-makers with information on where and how seed quality and availability are lagging and support implementation of evidence-based actions. The newly launched dashboard incorporates data from 17 Member States and provides information across 22 key indicators that are essential to seed sector development at national level including research and development, industry competitiveness, seed policy and regulations, institutional support and service to smallholder farmers.

The African Union is working with the TASAI Inc to facilitate the expansion of the dashboard to cover all the 55 Member States as

the dashboard will complement actions identified in the 3rd Biennial Review Report of the Agenda 2063 continental programme the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP). The 3rd Biennial Report provides a status of implementation of the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme; a strategic framework for the development of the seed sector in Africa. The dashboard is also viewed as timely coming a time when the continent is focusing its

The Dashboard can be accessed at dashboard.tasai.org



Scan to learn more about the work of African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA)

efforts to enhance food and nutrition security in line with the AU 2022 annual theme,

YEAR OF NUTRITION:
Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African continent: Strengthening Agro-food systems, Health and Social Protection Systems for the Acceleration of Human, Social and Economic Capital Development.

Coordinated and developed by TASAI Inc, the African Seed Access Index (TASAI) Dashboard has been realised through the joint partnerships of the African Union Commission, BMGF, USAID, AGRA, AfDB, AATF, DG, Kenya Markets Trust, UKAid, Adam Smith International, Cornell University, and EIAN RDC.



African Union's Food Geopolitics:

A Geostrategic Instrument to Protect Africa Against Vulnerability & Manipulation by Great Powers

By **Dr. Jean Amia**, Protocol Assistant; Cabinet of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.
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Identities, be they European, American, Latin American, Asian, Arab or African, are expressed in a unitary drive unveiled under the term globalization which, itself, is a planetary revolution leading to a global economic system backed by democratization and multi-polarization of powers. The world is now a global village with common issues and all sorts of power rivalries. Africa is not left out of this power rivalry. Aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063 (*A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development*) mentions the eradication of poverty in Africa within a generation, through shared prosperity. Its aim is to ensure a high standard of living, well-being for all on the continent with well-educated and sufficiently qualified citizens, underpinned by science, technology and innovation. It is about producing healthy, well-nourished citizens and transforming economies by creating jobs through modern agriculture for increased proactivity and production.

According to United Nations estimates, Africa is a driving force for global demography, with 1,338,880,525 inhabitants as at 15 June 2020, i.e. 16.72% of the world's population, which is expected to double by 2050 and account for a quarter of the inhabitants of the planet.¹ UNICEF projects that in 2050, 40% of children under five in the world will live on the African continent.² Africa is also a primary source of raw and strategic materials. It has 60% of the world's unused arable land,³ an enormous and varied energy potential: 8% of world oil reserves, 7% of gas reserves, 4% of coal reserves, 10%

of hydroelectric potential, 17% of uranium, 15% of geothermal energy, 38% of wind energy, 300 days of sunshine per year on average (according to figures quoted at the Energy Trilemma Summit meeting in Addis Ababa in 2015,⁴ which today are higher, given the new discoveries here and there). This means that Africa has the necessary resources to ensure its empowerment and to assert itself through agriculture and its mineral-rich subsoil, and put an end to its high dependence on others, on the dictates of donors and on what they pretend to be giving.

Analysis of malnutrition in Africa and in the world

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), the number of hungry people started to gradually increase again since 2015 after several decades of continuous decline. Current estimates show that nearly 690 million people suffer from hunger, i.e. 8.9% of the world's population.⁵ According to 2019 estimates, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an additional 135 million people are believed to be suffering from acute food insecurity worldwide since 2020,⁶ thus compromising immune systems, making bodies vulnerable to infection, reducing the effectiveness of vaccines and impeding recovery.⁷

Food security in Africa has deteriorated since 2019. The number of undernourished people in Africa stands at 250.3 million. The food system and food consumption patterns in low- and middle-income African countries do not provide food at a cost that makes diets healthy and affordable for a majority of the population.⁸ If nothing is done to significantly

¹ <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/africa-population/>

² L'Afrique : le continent de demain? Published on 2 March 2016, available at <https://www.planete-energies.com/fr/medias/decryptages/l-afrique-le-continent-de-demain> consulted on 15 June 2020.

³ Thierry BARBAUT - Numérique, économie, Afrique et développement, published on 19 September 2013 in Info Afrique, Economie et Numérique, available at <https://www.info-afrique.com/grenier-afrique-monde/> consulted on 15 June 2020.

⁴ L'Afrique : le continent de demain? Published on 2 March 2016 and consulted on 23 June 2020, at: <https://www.planete-energies.com/fr/medias/decryptages/l-afrique-le-continent-de-demain>

⁵ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

⁶ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/fr/hunger/>

⁷ African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) Initiative: Embedding nutrition within the Covid-19 Response and Recovery. Covid-19 Position paper, p.1.





solve the problem of nutrition, the achievement of zero hunger by 2030 unlikely and the number of people affected by hunger globally could exceed 840 million by 2030.

Need for restructuring strategic thinking and the African intelligence function

Yves Lacoste considers geopolitics as: *"the study of power rivalries on a territory"*. In this world of multi-polarisation of powers, everything is "geopolitical"; from atlases to travel guides, including the "geopolitics" of football, cuisine, culture or cinema. Global economic inequality fuels geopolitical tensions. African Union's food geopolitics must adopt a much more Pan-Africanist approach, capable of bringing in added impulse to protect African peoples and states against vulnerability and manipulation vis-à-vis great powers. America, Europe and Asia have succeeded in asserting themselves in this global context of power differences and rivalries and have imposed themselves as powers on the international scene. Africa can, and must do it. To this effect, the late Jerry Rawlings, former President of Ghana, had said: *"Food is a political weapon...*

Africa's foremost defence is self-sufficiency in food. Until we attain a substantial measure of freedom from food dependency, we are vulnerable to manipulation by the wealthier nations."⁸

During the 8th Annual High-Level Retreat of the African Union on the theme "The Emerging Global Order, Multilateralism and Africa" in October 2017, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, stated the role of the African Union as follows: *In carrying out our*

Food is a political weapon...Africa's foremost defence is self-sufficiency in food. Until we attain a substantial measure of freedom from food dependency, we are vulnerable to manipulation by the wealthier nations.

Jerry Rawlings
Former President of Ghana

⁸ Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2020: Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets. Consulted on 31 December 2021 at <https://repository.uneca.org/handle/10855/44790?show=full>

⁹Quote from former Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings, consulted on 25 June 2020 at: <https://yen.com.gh/58293-powerful-quotes-jerry-rawlings.html>

action at the African Union, namely to help the continent build a bright future in a world dominated by uncertainty and complexity, we urgently need to escape the trap of routine and the short term, as well as the ease of off-the-shelf solutions. We must follow the path of reflection and innovation, that of elevating thinking and rehabilitating the intelligence function". He concluded that one of the fundamentals of the African Union philosophy is that *"African problems should seek African solutions"*.¹⁰

These words by the late Jerry Rawlings and the current AU Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, are not only a call to Africa but also an opportunity to resolutely join in the emergence, through innovative dynamics capable of helping Africa out of food dependence. The fact that African Heads of State and Government are taking into account Africa's potential to ensure its food security justifies their relevant and dynamic decisions on agriculture and food and nutritional security. At the 2010 Summit in Kampala, and on the recommendation of the Republic of Malawi, the AU Assembly adopted 30 October of each year as the **African Day for Food and Nutrition Security**. Through this decision, the AU clearly expressed its determination to provide Africa with the capacity to ensure its food security.¹¹ In 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the same African leaders distinguished themselves in a Declaration on Nutrition Security for Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainable Development, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063 Vision adopted in 2015. The African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) Initiative, a platform for high-level political engagement to advance nutrition in Africa, developed by the African Union and the African Development Bank, endorsed in 2018 by the Assembly of the AU, is made up of Heads of State and former Heads of State, Ministers of Finance and other eminent African leaders and dignitaries. The Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard, a major advocacy mechanism to support the ALN initiative with the aim of highlighting the progress made in the field of nutrition by each country and the entire African continent in relation to agreed overall and continental goals, has recorded some satisfactory results.¹² The Heads of State

and Government of the AU have understood this well and it is the reason why the theme chosen for 2022 is: *"Building Resilience on Nutrition on the African Continent: Accelerate the Human Capital, Social and Economic Development"*. The food geopolitics driven by African leaders stands out as an interest, a strategic challenge, a compass for the future, an engine of development, the key to Africa's destiny in the midst of power rivalries in the international arena. Member States must take ownership of the African Union's food geopolitics to develop and achieve food self-sufficiency, and be able to influence international balances. The African Union is a real opportunity for Africa to gain power through its Agenda 2063 because the destiny of a people, its prosperity and its security are increasingly determined at the regional level.¹³ The common vision and political will of African leaders disclosed in the declarations, resolutions and decisions taken within the AU on food security in Africa are instruments of food geopolitics, sustainable solutions intended to transform food systems and ensure food security for African populations. Their implementation requires effective inter-sector collaboration with the private sector to agree on political and economic choices in terms of nutrition. The progress made in the various sectors as well as the innovative initiatives undertaken at institutional, national and continental levels to promote nutrition can only be assessed in relation to political statements, agricultural development programmes, reports and other legal instruments without a real positive impact on African populations. This is why beyond the inventory that can be made of the instruments and the various mechanisms devoted to the issue of nutrition in Africa, there is still the problem of malnutrition in Africa and the search for remedial solutions. Beyond the instruments, what solutions can guarantee the eradication of malnutrition on the continent?

Imperative need for fresh impetus to shake up or completely destroy established orders

As the rest of the world increasingly identifies Africa as the most promising place to produce the extra food needed to feed the world's growing population, African children are bearing the brunt of hunger and malnutrition. This is a challenge and calls for a strengthening of the ongoing development

¹⁰ Excerpt from the speech of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, 8th Annual Retreat of the African Union 2017, consulted on 25 June 2020 at: <https://tchadinfos.com/afrique/ua-trouver-des-solutions-africain-es-aux-problemes-africains/>

¹¹ Decision on the celebration of the Africa day for food and nutrition security, Doc. Assembly/AU/17(XV) Add.8, adopted by the Fifteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Kampala (Uganda), on 27 July 2010.

¹² The Continental Nutrition Accountability Scorecard: <https://en.readkong.com/page/continental-dashboard-for-accountability-en-4083312>

¹³ Stratégie africaine : quelles voies ? By Jean-Jacques KONADJE, available at <https://www.diploweb.com/Strategie-africaine-quelles-voies.html>

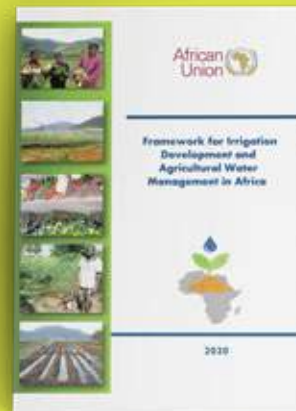
processes in order to preserve the future of Africa. A “multi-sectoral approach” with “multi-stakeholder platforms” must be included into nutrition policies and strategies across Africa.¹⁴ With more than a quarter of the Member States of the United Nations, Africa has a say on the international scene. But first, it must stop being hungry. Food is a basic human right. Every human being is born free and equal in dignity and rights. Food is not a privilege, nor charity. It is a right that is not subject to the capacities, abilities, opinions or values of the individual. The right to food implies the possibility for individuals to feed themselves in a dignified way, and to be able to feed their families, and not “to be fed”. “Being fed” by “others” is testimony of the state of vulnerability



Food is not a privilege, nor charity. It is a right that is not subject to the capacities, abilities, opinions or values of the individual. The right to food implies the possibility for individuals to feed themselves in a dignified way, and to be able to feed their families, and not “to be fed”

vis-à-vis “them”. Begging or scavenging for food is certainly undignified. Food is a strategic weapon of war. This is why, the common desire of African States in the African Union to eradicate hunger in Africa must be in line with their individual desires to eradicate hunger within their respective states in a universal environment where malnutrition is a source of vulnerability and manipulation of poor countries by rich countries. Our leaders must ensure the implementation of the AU food geopolitics in their respective countries. Inaction or demobilisation have no place in the current context where the strongest call the shots. Their efforts must be combined to produce the additional determination and commitment necessary to instil fresh impetus that can completely destroy established orders. Agenda 2063 requires it; the African people demand it. The Chairperson of the AU Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat speaks for the voiceless by echoing out the voices of the African peoples as follows: *“the ardent wish of the peoples of Africa, particularly youth, is that leadership and governance invest greater efforts to ensure that Africa gives and avails itself of the best”*.¹⁵

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[!\[\]\(e474458956c9a37fbf9586ddb60a7fa1_img.jpg\) Scan to Download the Framework for Irrigation Development and Agricultural Water Management in Africa](#)

¹⁴ Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy 2015-2025, p.1,2.

¹⁵ Excerpt from the speech of AUC Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, 25 May 2020, Addis Ababa.



Programmes” the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy 2015-2025 of the African Union, recommendation number 7 indicates “Facilitate production diversification, and increase production of nutrient-dense crops and small-scale livestock.” This is very crucial for the much needed

balanced diets. As such even the AU accepts that livestock is a big part of overcoming the malnutrition burden.

Apart from the potential contribution to human nutrition, livestock are an important asset in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), and have been shown to contribute significantly to rural development through the provision of food, cash, manure and general

With most livestock species in Africa, there is a large gap between potential yield and actual yield. This yield gap has persisted for a long time, making Africa a net importer of livestock products.

livelihoods in the rural and peri-urban households. Africa has the largest population of livestock in the world. There are even countries in Africa that have a lot

Building resilience in human nutrition through human capital development in animal breeding on the African continent

By **Professor Mizeck Chagunda**, Chair, Animal Breeding and Husbandry in the Tropics and Subtropics and Managing Director, Institute of Agricultural Sciences in the Tropics (Hans-Ruthenberg-Institute), University of Hohenheim, GarbenStr. 17, 70593 Stuttgart, Germany, mizeck.chagunda@uni-hohenheim.de

Livestock play an enormous role in human nutrition. This role is even more pronounced given the fact that some of the micro nutrients and vitamins that are very essential for functions such as human cognitive development, nervous system development, and robust immunity and haematopoiesis are predominantly available from animal-based food. Examples of such nutrients are Riboflavin, Vitamin B12, Calcium, Zinc, Iron, and Vitamin A. Deficiencies of these nutrients in the human body have several severe consequences. According to the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) 2015-2025, “The continued high level of malnutrition in Africa is a matter of serious concern that goes far beyond the already well recognized public health impact”. Citing the FAO’s “Key Recommendations for Improving Nutrition through Agriculture

more livestock per capita than is found anywhere in the world. However, different scientific studies have demonstrated that with most livestock species in Africa, there is a large gap between potential yield and actual yield. This yield gap has persisted for a long time, making Africa a net importer of livestock products. This situation has led to farmers not extracting optimal profits from their endeavours, and society not obtaining the required nutrition from the available livestock.

Despite these shortfalls, livestock development in Africa remains one of the key drivers for socio-economic transformation and resilience in farming communities. Further, livestock development is important for the continent to meet sustainable development goals, and to address other global challenges of our time. Apart from the low productivity, it is well documented that suboptimal efficiency in agriculture production has resulted in biodiversity loss, water pollution and environmental impact. Part of this negative impact can be directly attributed to inefficiencies in the value chain for livestock production. Just like most developing regions, SSA is faced with the challenge to rapidly increase agricultural productivity to help feed its growing human population without depleting the natural resource base. Efficient production systems have a vital role to play in enhancing livestock's contribution to sustainable livelihoods in an optimal manner.

In most livestock producing regions of the world, animal breeding for increased productivity has been demonstrated to improve growth rate, milk yield and egg production and hence providing quality food for humans. Most of this success has taken place in the past 50 and 60 years. Despite having a large population of livestock, most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have not registered such success. Genetic improvement of livestock through animal breeding depends on access to genetic variation and effective methods for exploiting this variation. Lack of critical mass of human capital has been one of the most impeding factors which has led to lack of exploiting the said variation. As such we so have very little well-defined animal genetic improvement in Africa. Systematic breeding programmes, clearly designed development mating systems, consistent animal recording initiatives, robust genetic evaluation and animal selection enterprises, professional development and advocacy interventions are conspicuously lacking. Recent studies in dairy cattle have also shown that there would be more genetic

gains with a Pan-African genetic improvement programme than with individual country efforts. More would be achieved with multi-faceted approaches while focusing on a common goal. This is where sound human capacity in animal breeding is not only required but is also a prerequisite for building resilience in human nutrition through animal production on the African continent.

The African Animal Breeding Network (AABNet) is a pan-African initiative that was established in the year 2020 to create an opportunity to work closely together in driving the "Innovations to support productive, efficient and resilient livestock systems in Africa". With the vision to drive the development and dissemination of improved livestock genetics and broader genetic improvement solutions in Africa, AABNet is set to create a suitable interface for strong and long-term engagement between academia, industry, farmer-organisations, public sector and other development agents. AABNet will focus on capacity development and knowledge transfer for animal breeding, and creating innovations to support livestock genetic improvement in Africa. The delivery of the AABNet's strategic objectives is anticipated to be achieved through:

1. Multi-country genetic evaluation to support decisions and inform genetic merits of livestock germplasms
2. Professional development linked to talent and technology incubation
3. Advocacy and awareness, business development linked to livestock genetic improvement
4. Innovative partnerships to support equitable collaborations between academia, public sector and governments, private sector and livestock farmers' organisations.

Operationally, the AABNet will create sustainable interfaces for strong and long-term engagement between academic, industry, farmer-organisations (including breed associations), public sector, and philanthropic and development agencies to drive the development and dissemination of livestock improved genetics and broader genetic improvement solutions in Africa. AABNet is registered with the Registrar of Societies in Kenya under section 11(2) of the Societies Act and has a full constitution. Currently, AABNet is housed and hosted by Egerton University in Kenya under a hosting agreement.

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Building Resilience in Nutrition on the African Continent Through Value Addition

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A key goal of the United Nations sustainable development goals, SDGs, is to achieve zero hunger by the year 2030, but according to the World Health Organization, 45% of deaths among children under 5 years of age is linked to malnutrition, and food insecurity is a major cause of malnutrition in low income countries, most of which are found in Africa. Food insecurity can be caused by drought, conflicts and food loss through the entire agricultural value chain.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO, more than 30%, representing approximately 1.3 billion tonnes of all food produced annually for human consumption, is lost. Food loss is a major issue in both developing countries and developed countries. Perishable nutritious foods are the most lost or wasted.

High level of food loss could be as a result of:

- poor management and handling of food
- lack of infrastructure
- inappropriate pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest practices
- lack of adequate cooling and

storage facilities

- lack of food processing technologies
- poor packaging materials
- limited access to market

Reducing food loss can significantly improve resilience, food security and nutrition which is more achievable than increasing production.

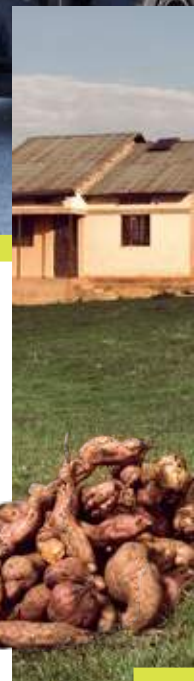
Areas in North Eastern Kenya experience food insecurity, which is evident through recurrent cases of malnutrition; thus household level food processing and preservation to ensure food availability through all seasons leading to food security is called for. There's been intensive training on value addition of different foods for instance orange fleshed sweet potatoes in Turkana and Samburu counties, which experience high rates of malnutrition. This calls for value addition as a major approach to ensuring food security and avoidance of malnutrition.

Value addition refers to activities and processes aimed at maintaining or improving the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of an agricultural produce, and can happen at all stages of an agricultural value chain, from production to harvesting, processing and marketing.



The importance of value addition are as follows

- It enables one to get higher yields from farm produce
- It improves consumers' acceptance of a product
- It improves products' shelf life and reduces post harvest losses
- It improves the nutritional value of a product



- It reduces bulk for easy handling and transportation
- It can create employment if done commercially

The orange fleshed sweet potatoes is one of the most perishable products being advocated for to ensure food security through value addition. It is drought resistant, with short maturity periods and high yielding capacity without necessarily using artificial fertilizer; and instead using farm yard manure. Most importantly, the potato has high nutrition value. With value addition through proper processing, storage and development of new products, it can be used not only to counter malnutrition but also to ensure food security. Sweet potatoes can be used in the development of different new products, which in turn increases consumer acceptance and reduces post-harvest losses. The new products can be sold to generate income, which can in turn, ensure acceleration of human capital and social and economic development.

Orange fleshed sweet potatoes can be used in different forms from eating it raw to boiled. In addition, excess boiled sweet potatoes can be mashed and mixed with wheat flour to produce very soft and nutritious mandazis and chapatis. Sweet potatoes can also be skinned and crated into smaller pieces later dried for two to three days depending on weather, stored in hermetic bag to last as long as one year milling any amount as per the demand. It can also be sold to generate income in both raw or in flour state. Different factories have created employment through value addition of Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes through production of bakery products for example orange fleshed sweet potatoes breads and scones from Migori and Bomet Counties in Kenya. They also sell Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes flour.

Another form of value added product is nixtamalization of maize to reduce the presence of mycotoxins such as aflatoxin by 60-70% which in turn reduces food losses. Aflatoxins are toxic and hepatocarcinogenic compounds produced by most strains of *Aspergillus parasiticus* and *Aspergillus flavus*. AFB1 is the most potent naturally occurring liver carcinogen. Nixtamalization is a process by which dried kernel are cooked and steeped in an

alkaline solution usually water and food grade lime to remove the pericarp which houses the *Aspergillus Flavus* which produces aflatoxin. Aflatoxin is a carcinogenic and poisonous substance which can kill if taken in large quantities.

Nixtamalization as one form of value addition is important in that it extends the shelf life of maize. According to Dr. Stephen Mugo, the regional representative of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre Africa, 90% of Kenyan households grow maize, and nixtamalization will be crucial in reduction of post-harvest losses, reduction of mycotoxins and aflatoxins, and increase incomes and the nutrition value of the products made from nixtamalized maize.

Value addition is among the best approaches of ensuring food security and treatment of malnutrition, which in turn ensures nutrition resilience, and economic and social development.

Value addition can be done to other produce like beans, sorghum, soya beans and many other grains, vegetables and fruits to reduce food losses and ensure food security at both household and community levels. Therefore, African countries should invest more in value addition.

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Call to Action for Nutrient Justice in Africa

By **Joyce Fortuna Touoyem Ngoughehu**, 2nd Pan-African Prize of the Young African Writing Contest 2021, on the theme *My Africa My Future*, organised by ECOSOCC.Organization, fortunatouoyem@gmail.com

Chronic food insecurity is a challenge still faced in parts of Africa. As suggested by the epigraph borrowed from Aimé Césaire, “building resilience on nutrition on the African continent” has become “... the greatest project of African thought and experience in modernity, likewise its ultimate achievement”. However, we must take action for continental nutritional justice.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), around 50% of global pathological mortality is linked to foodborne diseases. How can we get out of this globalising situation? Which development model suits Africa? In the food sector, towards which nutritional resilience model should we move for culturally sustainable development?

To contribute to such social transformation, this article aims to encourage stakeholders and key decision-makers on the continent to urgently initiate an adequate inter-African pooling of traditional African resources and practices and to build on updated cultural unity and comprehensive emergence plans, in order to lay the foundations for food resilience for a just and inclusive society.

Advocacy for industrialisation based on traditions

To achieve the developmental objectives

of industrialisation based on traditional practices, citizen and stakeholders advocacy is required, as is African state implementation by signing an African development pact for emergence based on traditions.

The endeavours would be underpinned by four pillars:

- intergenerational preservation of the environment (environmental sustainability);
- economic efficiency (inclusive economic development);
- social equity (inclusive social development);
- governance (peace and security).

In the immediate future, this



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involves initiating inventories and launching incentive policies and experimental practices in the various traditional key sectors and branches with immediate profitability. Concretely, these include the agro-food, agro-phyto-pharmaceutical, agro-phyto-cosmetic, and many others traditions.

Building sustainable nutrition resilience

To achieve this, it would be wise to first set up pilot programmes to identify practitioners and experiment on the parameters of industrialisation of consumer products, particularly food, or even nutraceuticals and drugs: the composition, preservation, toxicity, dosage, packaging, expiry date, etc.

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The outcomes would be the protocols and prototypes to be standardised for mass production and distribution at continental level, including for export. In this way, a lasting resilience would be built for the segment most vulnerable to exogenous shocks and by so doing, lay down the foundation that would allow Africa to win the competition of becoming a major global manufacturing centre in the 21st century.

Towards a “Year of Nutrition” in Africa: the challenge of resilient farming communities

Knowledge and mastery of food heritage can make it possible to “build nutrition resilience on the African continent” by “accelerating human capital” and through “social and economic development”. It is therefore with good reason that the African Union initiated a set of reforms aimed at promoting not only health but also and above all sufficient and nutritious food for the populations. That is why African Heads of State and Government named the year 2022 as the “year of nutrition”.

To achieve this objective, Cameroon and many other African countries have implemented a series of reforms marking their attachment to this African Union’s innovative programme. Thanks to the various partnerships between the state and international institutions such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and many others, the state has strengthened its range of actions in the field of nutrition.

Cameroon and the sustainable safety nets strategy

The following new reforms were noted in Cameroon:

- Provision of sufficient and nutritious food for crisis- and disaster-affected regions (particularly in the Far North, North, Adamaoua and East regions of Cameroon);
- Increasing the income of smallholder farmers present in priority districts

of some regions in order to improve their self-sufficiency and livelihoods;

- Development of national agricultural policies and programmes inspired by the “Vision 2035” paper aimed at reducing underemployment, rolling back poverty and, above all, doubling agricultural production;
- Adoption of a multisectoral approach (2015-2035) to coordinate the prevention of malnutrition. It provides for the establishment of complementary strategies aimed at reducing non-communicable diseases, increasing the production and consumption of safe and nutritious foods and mainstreaming food and nutrition objectives into agricultural programmes with support from the 2016-2027 health sector strategy for the prevention of malnutrition and the provision of nutritional education;
- Establishment of school feeding based on an inter-sectoral commercial approach that creates links between schools and producers under the guidance of the Ministry of Basic Education, which itself enjoys support from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health;
- Establishment of a national agricultural investment plan aimed at creating an enabling environment for increased agriculture export production and meeting national needs. This should be achieved through increased access to markets to improve the standard of living of rural producers and promote increased investments in land and water resources;
- Strengthening resilience in times of crisis by providing resources to meet the needs of women, men, girls and boys thanks to WFP support;
- Establishment of a school voucher system that facilitates the inclusion of smallholders into value chains in order to create resilient farming communities where natural resources are managed in a sustainable and equitable manner, thereby increasing productivity;
- Institutional capacity building for the establishment of sustainable safety nets to guarantee food and nutrition security.

Despite its abundant natural resource wealth, its ecological and food diversity as well as all the efforts made so far to promote nutrition, parts of Africa still suffer from very serious food insecurity. Much is at stake. At a time when taste is trivialised, it is necessary to prevent the disappearance of products from our lands, which are vestiges of the past. A reasoned and exhaustive inventory of local products should preserve the memory of each region of Africa and save Africa from nutritional peril. Such is currently the biggest challenge, which is, above all, food for thought.

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COULD NUTRITION BE THE CATALYST AFRICA NEEDS TO OPTIMISE TRADE FOCUSED ON ‘MADE IN AFRICA’ IN THE ERA OF THE AFCFTA?

By **Yavi Madura**, Executive Director – PABWA,
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It has long been established that Africa’s solutions for Africa’s challenges can also solve the world’s biggest problems.

Hunger and food scarcity is worst in Africa compared to anywhere else in the world because of multiple factors including land and crop degradation, periodic droughts and weather-related shocks, poverty, limited access to basic food staples and essential services, and population growth. This is in addition to the wars and conflicts that ravage parts of the continent, which also impact the famine crises.

This, in short, gives a perspective of the intensity and complexity of the challenges that Africa faces. But it also gives a perspective on the solutions that could potentially solve the world’s problems of hunger, famine and food safety and scarcity in other regions. It could also potentially go one step further, in optimising trade in this era of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Solutions for hunger and famine will have to examine nutrition and how our natural resources on the continent can close the





gaps by delivering on the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy, 2015–2025. In this research, the value of nutrition, and specifically African-sourced raw materials that make up that nutrition, could truly be the game changer for the continent in terms of trade optimisation. The AfCFTA's trade liberalisation agenda opens up possibilities and potential for not only global markets, but also increasing intra-Africa trade, which is the essence of the AfCFTA.

The AfCFTA could present the opportunity for Africa to use the challenges we face, as a turning point, to not only resolve our challenge of hunger and famine, but to look for disruptive solutions that lend themselves to this era of the AfCFTA.

The AfCFTA is an entry point for investment in Africa, to optimise manufacturing and especially full value chains. Technology infrastructure investment in the AfCFTA agenda means nutrition could be at the forefront of solutions from that investment. Actually, the research tells us that it could be a key investment attractor – who would not want to invest in technology that could potentially change the way human beings think about their nutrition across the world, and not only in poverty-stricken countries. With the rich array of raw materials and natural resources in Africa, adding investment from a trade optimisation perspective could be what Africa didn't know we were waiting for, to change the game of the economic and trade agenda of Africa.

Goal 2 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals is “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, with Target 2.2 being to “end all forms of malnutrition.” With Africa being at the forefront of this global problem, we have the opportunity within the AfCFTA, to attract investment to not only resolve African problems by Africans, but also to create products and services that could potentially change the way the world thinks about nutrition, boosting immunity, and how we buy and eat food for disease prevention, especially in a post Covid-19 world.

We know that Africa has enough land to feed the

world, but in focussing on nutrition as a catalyst for innovation, we don't have to just feed the world, but use African medicinal and traditional methods to lead the world on nutrition and disease prevention. It may be time to not be afraid to recognise the value of African medicine and traditional methods in dealing with illness and disease.

A simple example of this is African moringa. Moringa is known to be indigenous to South Asia but endemic to parts of Africa. The moringa tree has “been described as the most nutritious tree yet discovered.” Secondary and tertiary research around the world is trying to establish if moringa “contains higher amounts of nutrients than most conventional sources — e.g., 10 times the vitamin A of carrots, 12 times the vitamin C of oranges, 17 times more calcium than milk, 15 times more potassium than bananas, 25 times more iron than spinach, and 9 times more protein than yogurt.”

Moringa has been known to be included in dietary supplements to assist in nutrition. Having the land available to feed the world, means that the African continent has the potential to create a nutritive need for moringa to be included in both food and medicine in fighting immune-deficient diseases and even for optimising a healthy lifestyle, in disease prevention. The full value chain manufacturing of pills, shakes, powders, gels, creams, lotions, and liquid supplements could be possible through investment in trade and manufacturing infrastructure – African Moringa could rival the global ‘obsession’ with collagen, glutathione, and other nutritive and healthy lifestyle products that are part of \$billion industries.

African moringa is but one of many examples there are in using nutrition as a catalyst for trade optimisation. Nutrition could be a brand positioning identifier in the same way the world has come to think about quality and excellence in ‘German cars’, ‘Italian shoes and pasta’, or ‘French champagne’, etc. The ‘Made in Africa Trade Protocol’ in the AfCFTA creates a platform for optimising what is proudly African-made.

Africa has many opportunities to utilise what we have on the continent to create “The Africa We Want” and in terms of turning problems into profit - nutrition could be our game changer, our disruptor, in this era of the AfCFTA.

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**Strengthening Resilience in
Nutrition & Food Security on
the African continent:**

Strengthening Agro-food systems,
Health and Social Protection Systems
for the Acceleration of Human, Social
and Economic Capital Development

Life cannot be without
food; when we destroy
the lands that give food,
we destroy the foods
that give life

Ernest Agyemang
Yeboah



The Need for Gender Based Approaches to Achieving the African Regional Nutrition Strategy 2015-2025

The Case for the Democratic Republic of Congo

By **Joseph Mimbale Molanga**, University of Kinshasa, DRC, <https://tinyurl.com/2p8pyav3> and **Asmaa Darag**, Cairo University, Egypt, asmaamazab@outlook.com

This paper aims to explain why, on the basis of the 2015-2025 impact objectives of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS), and the structural changes brought about by Covid-19, it is necessary to work towards a paradigm change and a reversal of perspectives with a view to nutritional resilience in the DRC. It begins by setting out the theoretical framework of the research. It then uses the “population-resource” binomial as a framework for analysing food insecurity in the DRC, while noting the limitations of its analytical framework. From these limitations, it proposes the gender approach as an anchor point for a paradigmatic renewal in the fight against food insecurity in the DRC. Finally, this paper considers the food insecurity exacerbated by Covid-19-induced structural changes as a problem faced by several African countries, most notably the DRC, and truly requires a reformulation of the paradigm for addressing it - with a clear focus on empowerment, capacity building and support for women in agriculture and agribusiness - in order to achieve the ARNS 2015-2025 impact objectives.

The ultimate goal of SDG 2 is that by 2030, humanity will be able to eliminate hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. These goals are also among the regional priorities of the African Union’s Agenda 2063. This can be seen in various AU decisions, resolutions and policy documents, including: The Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa (African Union, 2003), decision on the Revised African Regional Nutrition Strategy (RARNS) 2005 – 2015 (African Union, 2006), decision on the commemoration of the African Food and Nutrition Security Day (African Union, 2010), declaration on nutrition security for inclusive economic growth and sustainable development in Africa (African Union, 2014), 2015-2025 African Regional Nutrition Strategy (African Union, 2015), decision on the African Leaders Nutrition Initiative (ALN) (African Union, 2018), etc. Similarly, Aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063 envisages ‘a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable

development'. To achieve this ambition, one of the AU's key objectives is to ensure that its citizens are healthy and well nourished.

In the same vein, the 2015-2025 African Regional Nutrition Strategy sets targets to reduce stunting in children under 5 by 40%; reduce anaemia in women of childbearing age by 50%; reduce low birth weight by 30%; no increase in overweight in children under 5; increase exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life by 50%; and reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%. However, the African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN, 2019) assessment reveals that of the 150.8 million stunted children under 5 years of age worldwide, 58.7 million are in Africa and only seven states across the continent have stunting rates below 19% – fifteen have a prevalence of child wasting below 5%, Thirty-eight have female anaemia prevalence rates of over 30%, eighteen have at least 50% exclusively breastfed infants, twenty have vitamin A supplementation prevalence rates of over 70%. These alarming facts hold true for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In April 2021, the FAO and WFP issued a warning to the DRC government about the worrying level of food insecurity in the country – 27.3 million people are reportedly chronically food insecure, or one in three people (Nations Unies, 2021; We-CSC, 2021) making the DRC, in spite of its immense natural resources a country in dire need for assistance. This situation exposes the complexity of the food supply system in the country – a supply system that would also be the source of risk of negative impact on food production and livelihoods especially for rural populations, particularly under the stress of climate extremes.

The theoretical framework of this paper starts from the thesis of an imbalance in the “population-resource” binomial that can explain the problem of food insecurity and malnutrition on the African continent. This is indeed a thesis developed by Thomas Robert Malthus (1852) on population growth by predicting that population would increase in a geometric sequence while natural resources would increase in an arithmetic sequence. The result is a growing gap between population and resources – and from this population pressure on resources, famines, wars, misery, and eventually, unparalleled mortality would follow. The situation in Africa in general and the DRC could suggest a resurgence of Malthusian thinking in the face of

dramatic population growth and all this – in a context of uncertainty marked by climate change and the Covid-19 crisis.

As a counterpoint to the Malthusian thesis, the research considers numerous items in the literature that highlight two strategies for nutritional resilience in the Covid-19 era, namely: mitigation and adaptation (see Emaziye and Ovharhe, 2021; Erinle, 2021; Omer and Hassen, 2020; Shahzad et al., 2021; Venning, 2021). In the same vein, she conceptualises the importance of ‘gender’ in ‘climate-smart agriculture’ (Babugura, 2021; Mehar, 2020), which is based on capacity development at all levels to minimise the risk of negative impacts of crises. The aim is to encourage the simultaneous achievement of several of the ARNS 2015-2025 impact objectives – including the revision of rigid market requirements and the re-evaluation of the opportunity costs of marketing and transport infrastructure – which will allow for the adoption of practices that increase the productivity of available land, build resilience, limit risk and reduce the negative effects of Covid-19 and greenhouse gas emissions.

Population-resource” and food insecurity in DRC

DRC's population is estimated at 84 million (UNICEF, 2019), the third largest in sub-Saharan Africa and the tenth largest in the world in terms of population growth (WFP, 2020). The population is expected to more than double in the next 30 years (see Figure 1).

However, beyond the figures, the most decisive question is that of the link between this population growth and food insecurity in the DRC. In fact, according to neo-Malthusian logic, uncontrolled

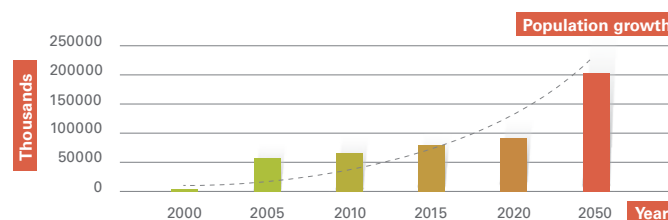


Figure 1: DRC population growth

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population growth necessarily leads to an increase in needs, which in turn increases the pressure on available resources, leading in the long term to the depletion of resources (see figure 2).

The Malthusian thesis suggests, in the case of the DRC, that population growth will have to be controlled in order to act effectively against food insecurity and malnutrition. It also raises the question of the impact of this population growth on economic activity. But in any case, in view of the

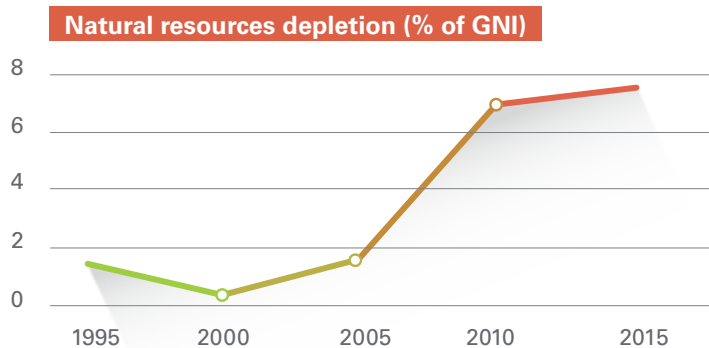


Figure 2: Pressure on Natural Resource - DRC
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particular situation of the country, it is possible to oppose three fundamental arguments to the thesis of the imbalance of the “population-resource” binomial. First of all, resources are not a strictly limited stock and their availability depends on exploitation techniques that can always improve the yield that can be obtained from the material. Second, population growth in the DRC is not necessarily the cause of food insecurity due to resource depletion. Finally, population growth is also an opportunity (demographic dividend) – a younger, more dynamic population... undoubtedly constitutes a strengthening of the active population in relation to the dependent population such as the elderly and children. Hence the interest in putting things into perspective and adapting to the complexity of social reality, in particular through a gendered approach to building food resilience.

Gender approach and food resilience

Many agricultural activities are managed by small-scale farming systems in the DRC – with women being employed in 70% of the agricultural activity (The World Bank, 2021b). The agricultural sector contributes 20% of the DRC’s GDP. However, analyses show that the country’s agricultural production is insufficient to cover most of the population’s food needs. The main reasons are a

weak food supply system and ineffective agricultural policies (see Mavinga, 2021) and low investment in the agricultural sector [see figure 3 – This figure clearly shows the progressive decline in the contribution of the agricultural sector to GDP formation].

Figure 3 suggests that in the DRC it is men who manage the money from agriculture, while women farmers, through their work, are more active and contribute to the transformation of the country than

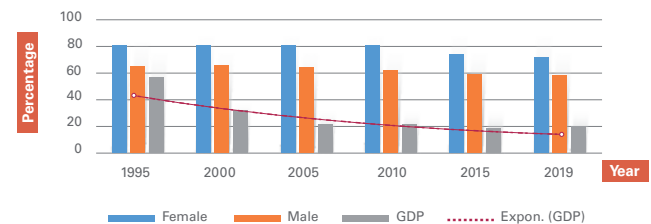


Figure 3: Gender employability in agriculture and impact on DRC's GDP
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men. This is why it is important to advocate for a paradigm change and a reversal of perspectives with a gender approach in order to achieve a climate-smart agriculture that can effectively contribute to the achievement of the ARNS 2015-2025 impact objectives.

At the policy level, consider the example of the results of the harmonisation of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (The World Bank, 2016), which suggest that increased investment spending with better targeting of women agro-processors, complemented by additional policies such as access to micro-finance, public infrastructure development and skills development programmes are essential to building food resilience among rural people. Furthermore, in terms of access to strategic resources, what stands out is the implementation of four risk management strategies:

- Women’s capacity building and adoption of green technologies in food production and processing;
- The application of microcredit (planned risk-taking to link factors of production);
- Consolidation and diversification of small and medium-sized rural enterprises
- Expanding partnerships with farmers’ associations and women’s advocacy groups to strengthen access to critical market factors, such



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If we want
food to feed
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the farmer

Lailah Gifty Akita

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as productive resources and production components.

It is noted from the above that the need for a paradigm change, the need for efficiency and the prospect of scaling up constitute a set of capacities that can enable women to fulfil basic functions in the sector and contribute significantly not only to the fight against food insecurity in the DRC, but also to assist the country in its pursuit of the ARNS 2015-2025 impact objectives.

Given that food insecurity, Covid-19-induced structural changes, resource constraints and structural deficiencies are problems faced by most African countries, particularly the DRC, reformulating the paradigm for addressing food insecurity and malnutrition. Above all, it provides a clear focus on empowerment, capacity building and support for women in agriculture and agribusiness – an important step towards nutritional resilience and the achievement of the ARNS 2015-2025 impact objectives.



Rejuvenating the agricultural system to boost food security and face the sustainable development challenge in Africa

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A young and soaring population, coupled with rampant urbanisation are major trends shaping the destiny of African agriculture and from which profound changes are required in order to improve Africa's food and nutritional profile (Sakho-Jimbira, 2019). The agricultural sector, which is the main lever of food security in Africa, is a top priority of the African Union (AU, 2010, 2014). Despite the many efforts made by Heads of State and Government, Africa is struggling to find a successful outcome to its economic and social development, in particular the eradication of hunger and poverty faced by millions of Africans, notably those living in rural areas and who are highly dependent on natural resources (FAO, 2018). This situation continues to hamper its socio-economic emancipation as well as its prominence in the international supply chain.

Accordingly, there is need for profound brainstorming to finally lay down new bases of development where young people who account for 75% of the African working population could play a leading role in moving the continent towards a better and more sustainable future. They are henceforth expected to take charge of the continent's destiny towards its ambitious development projects such as those linked to the eradication of hunger, poverty and illegal immigration, as well as the instauration of peace in Africa, a guarantee for sustainable development.

The African Union is resolutely committed to food and nutrition security in Africa, as evidenced by the 2015-2015 Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (AU, 2015). This strategic commitment to meet nutritional challenges on the African continent is a noteworthy progress, but it cannot succeed without effective integration and operationalisation of the youth who, today, abound in talents to foster the socio-economic development of Africa. This implies that young people must take centre stage in building the African continent

and also serve as instruments to shape its destiny. However, in Africa, young people are traditionally marginalised and excluded from key development sectors and decision-making processes, especially those relating to the major challenges facing most African countries. Agriculture, which is a key sector and source of life for a large majority of the African people, is an example where few young people are involved, and which is often seen as an activity for illiterates, of last resort and with few job opportunities to be grabbed compared with other sectors such as mining, finance or health, to name a few. This requires that agriculture be made attractive in the eyes of young people, especially those qualified to boost it towards food self-sufficiency and resilience.

Youth, shortfall for sustainable and self-sufficient agriculture on African soil?



Africa has a young population which, unfortunately, is rather under-utilised or committed to face its major development challenges. Approximately 70% of the African population is under the age of 30 (i.e. 226 million Africans are aged 15 to 24) which explains why Africa is considered the continent with the youngest population in the world, in a context of a glaring lack of access to employment (Sakho-Jimbira & Hathie, 2020). The explosion of African youth with poor access to jobs and decision-making is very disturbing and at the same time an

obstacle to African progress. The AU has obviously made many efforts toward the fulfilment of young people as a pillar for human capital development but also for the social and economic transformation of Africa. Unfortunately, the voice and action of the youth are absent stimuli in many African society projects and markedly in the agricultural sector. The African Union encourages incentives to mobilise technical and financial resources for the execution of national nutritional emergency plans, but such incentives cannot solve African nutritional ills without a change of traditions in the African agricultural production system that is largely incompatible with its ambitious nutritional goals and with a continuous demographic explosion. Furthermore, the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods in Africa takes into account the involvement of all categories, including women, youth and other disadvantaged social strata, in growth and transformation opportunities. However, the inappropriateness of instruments or the discrepancy between theories and practices by Member States is an inhibiting factor for a good number of development initiatives on African soil. Consequently, the African Union must adopt binding decisions and control tools on the operationalisation of key development sectors in Africa. It is obvious that young people, aware of the current challenges could, in the near future, play this role, provided they are in command or are actors of African progress in key sectors of African development.

Nowadays, valorising and harnessing the enormous potential of African youth is an unconditional sustainable development priority. In Africa, young people constitute the majority of the unemployed and in the digital age, job creation in the agricultural sector requires the integration of young people who have what it takes to embrace new information and communication technologies. Africa's agricultural potential is huge, and gives the continent the possibility of feeding the rest of the world. As such, the move towards new approaches to agricultural production should not side-line young people with digital skills who, today, should occupy a key position in the agri-food chain. Accordingly, harnessing the potential of Africa's youth is the only hope for African agriculture to thrive if Africa is to catch up in terms of agricultural productivity. Also, the youth cannot fully play this role without substantial investment in them by African decision-makers in the field of education, technical education and vocational training in agriculture.

It is obvious that transition from the traditional agricultural system to smart agriculture with the ambition of increasing productivity and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including adaptation to climate change, is more to the credit of the modern youth than that of the older generation with no mastery of new technologies. Young people have many talents, ideas and energy. The dynamism and innovative capacities of young people are likely to shape Africa's agricultural system to be able to feed a growing and highly urbanized population. Consequently, their integration into the agricultural sector will stimulate the continent's economic growth by curbing unemployment, poverty and hunger which will in turn contribute to maintaining social peace and political stability.

Conditions for attracting the youth to the agricultural sector in Africa

Agricultural inputs, from fertilizers to technology through herbicides, are of paramount importance in the agricultural chain. However, a lack of qualified human resources adapted to the proper use of these assets seems to be a significant setback in the progress of Africa's agricultural sector. Millions of African farmers practise subsistence agriculture, with poor access to agricultural extension workers, who, in turn, lack financial and material resources to facilitate their field activities. Similarly, the training in agricultural techniques provided to staff who can provide farmers with advice and training courses seems to be insufficient. This situation, in a context of climate change, is leading and will continue to lead to agricultural yield losses and food insecurity, and contribute to the migration of young people to urban centres on the continent or economic migrants outside the continent.

Institutions should offer young people the advantage of using and mastering modern technologies in line with the needs of the contemporary agricultural system capable of attracting and retaining them in the world of agricultural production

Training and mobilising human capital in agricultural development practices must be part of a new vision of African societies, particularly their respective youths. This calls for innovation in the education sector to make this a strategic goal far from the theoretical discourse with political connotations. Laying the foundations for an innovative agricultural system that guarantees food security and resilience of the agricultural sector requires the creation of attractive opportunities in the agricultural sector as

a golden opening to young Africans. This should begin with the opening of institutions offering training in the agricultural system, and massive guidance of young Africans to such institutions for specialised training. The institutions should offer young people the advantage of using and mastering modern technologies in line with the needs of the contemporary agricultural system capable of attracting and retaining them in the world of agricultural production. Adopting technology with substantial investments including the granting of better working conditions will make the agricultural sector attractive in the eyes of young people. Therefore, unemployment, illegal immigration and political manipulation mostly of young men and women will be stopped or limited. In the agricultural system, young people will have to seize climate change as an opportunity to assert themselves, make their voices heard by significantly improving agricultural productivity and food security. In addition, they will serve as a benchmark for agricultural development thanks to the progress they will make. Climate change and variability require climate-smart agriculture with the adoption of new technologies and new practices that are the prerogative of the youth who will serve as a driving force for older generations in the agricultural production chain.

Africa's Agenda 2063 vision for "a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development" is no doubt a huge ambition for multidimensional socio-economic progress everywhere in Africa, but involvement of the youth would be a key determining factor in a changing world requiring more quality and dynamism. This entails binding investments in young people through education, technical and vocational training in agricultural systems. In this way, they could be the guarantors of Africa's development when they are educated, qualified and involved in decision-making.

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**Your food is
supposed to be
your medicine and
your medicine is
supposed to be
your food.**

African Proverb

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**Under the Comprehensive African
Agricultural Development Programme
(CAADP) African governments agreed to
allocate at least 10% of national budgets
to agriculture & rural development, and
to achieve agricultural growth rates of
at least 6% per annum**



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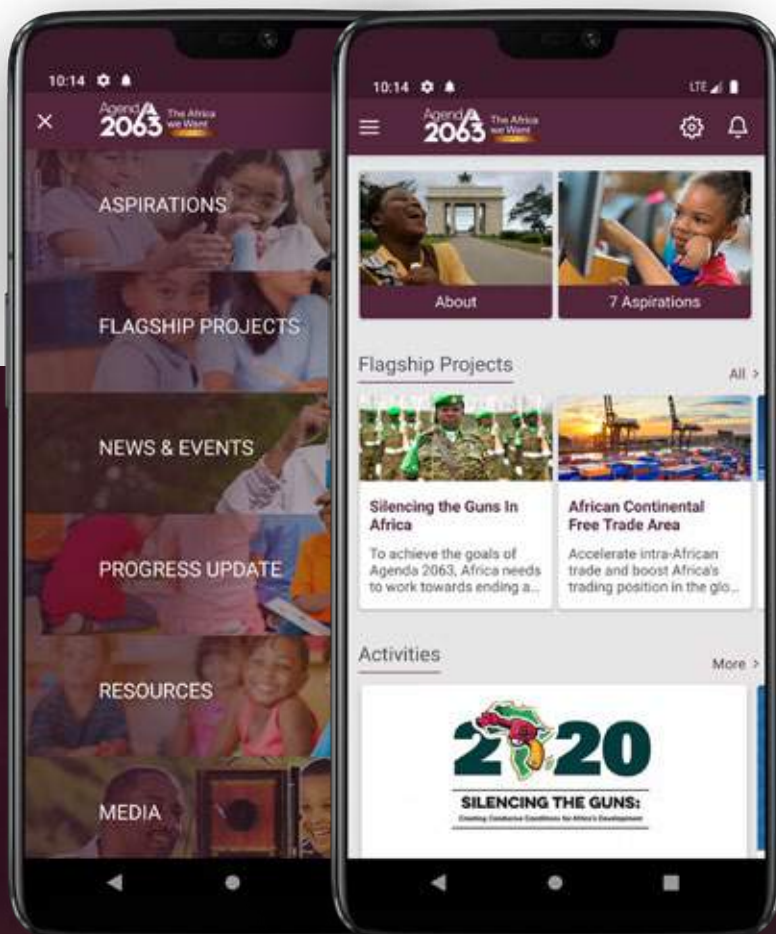
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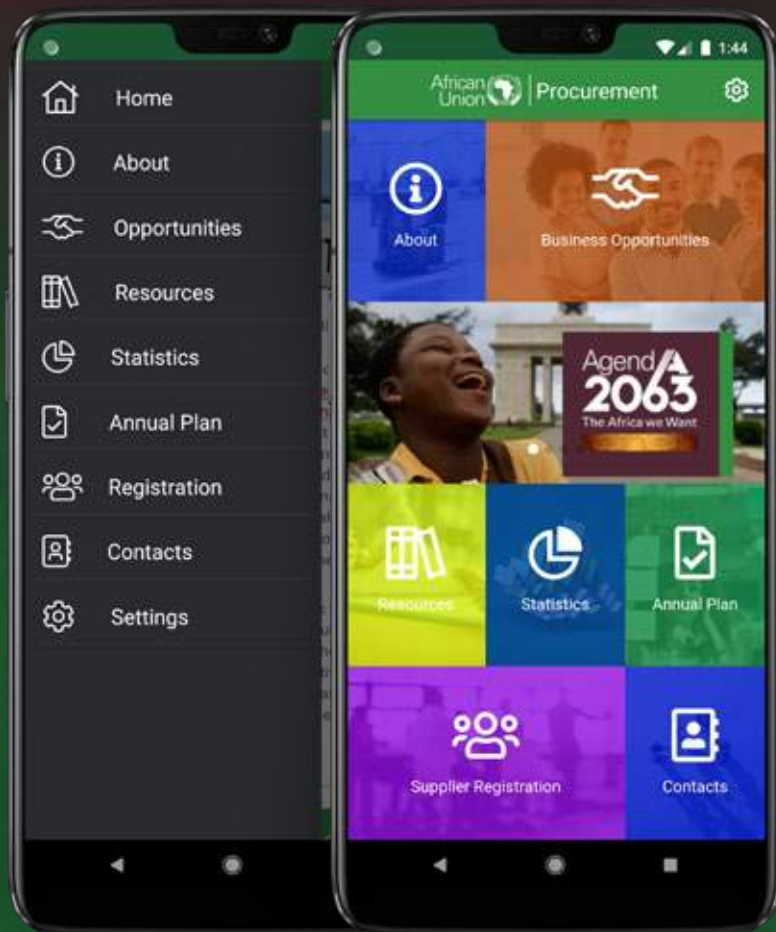
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**1st March is
the Africa Day
for School
Feeding**

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“
**Malnutrition can be as common in poverty as in
wealth, one for the lack of food, the other for the lack
of knowledge of food**

T.K. Naliaka



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“
Unless Africa uses modern
technologies, our farmers’
output will remain low and
we will remain dependent
on others to feed us

Dr. Akinwumi Adesina

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and Economic Capital Development

**Trade in Agricultural
products within the
AfCFTA will open up
markets, increase
incomes, reduces
post-harvest losses,
ensure food safety and
increase variety and
availability of nutrient
rich foods.**

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30th October is Africa Food Security and Nutrition Day

THE YEAR OF
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2022



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**AFRICA HAS 60% OF THE
WORLD'S ARABLE LAND**

yet.....

**Africa spends more than
US\$40 billion annually on
food imports creating
more jobs and business
outside than inside the
continent**

**We must invest in Agriculture
in Africa to achieve economic
growth for Africans**

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**An integrated, prosperous and
peaceful Africa, driven by its own
citizens and representing a dynamic
force in the global arena.**



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