THIRD AFRICA THINK TANK SUMMIT

Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe)
April 8-9, 2016

Creating a Sustainable Future for African Think Tanks in Support of SDGs and Agenda 2063

CONCEPT NOTE
The proposed theme for the 2016 Africa Think Tank Summit is: **Creating a Sustainable Future for African Think Tanks in Support of SDGs and Agenda 2063 Implementation.**

September 2015 marked a milestone in the development arena – the ending of the 15-year time frame for the Millennium Development Goals and the beginning of the next 15 year time frame for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or “Agenda 2030”. For Africa, Agenda 2030’s priorities conformed to Africa’s own development blueprint, Agenda 2063, launched in 2013 and implemented through 10-year work plans. These global and regional development agendas lay out an ambitious but achievable way forward for Africa; one that will require the focused effort of all of Africa’s intellectual resources to accomplish.

The Second Africa Think Tank Summit, held in April 2015, explored the ways in which Africa’s think tanks are currently making a difference in the continent’s transformation, and how they can become increasingly relevant and important contributors as Agendas 2030 and 2063 roll out. Accordingly, the Third Summit will build on the recommendations of the second, and offer a practical roadmap for think tanks to help countries implement these Agendas.

1. BACKGROUND
The First Africa Think Tank Summit was held on 3-5 February 2014 at the Pride of Africa Irene Country Lodge in Pretoria, South Africa. It was organized in a partnership between the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the African Leadership Center, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Konrad-Andenauer-Stiftung, the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program of the University of Pennsylvania (TTCSP), and the Institute for Security Studies as the host. Over 50 of the leading think tanks from 25 countries in Africa participated in the Summit, including the think tanks and policy institutes supported by ACBF. The Summit focused on the organizational and policy challenges facing think tanks in the region and how they might increase their sustainability, value and impact. The participants made a number of important recommendations that fall into four areas: capacity development, knowledge sharing and networking, resource mobilization and regionally based initiatives and partnerships.

Building on the success of the first Summit, the Second Africa Think Tank Summit was held on April 6-8, 2015 at the UN Conference Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The 2015 Summit was organized by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the University of Pennsylvania and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The main objective was to offer an opportunity for Africa’s think tanks to take a step back and consider the implications of the new dynamism taking place in the continent on the nature and content of their work. The Second Africa Think Tanks Summit brought together a cadre of experience sharing and knowledge experts from think tanks, academia, international development partners, government officials, media and civil society organizations. The Summit brought together 131 participants from 66 leading African think tanks representing 30 countries. Non-African think tanks were also represented.
Against this background and building on the successes of the previous Summits, the Third Africa Think Tank Summit will be held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 8 to 9 April 2016. It is organized by the African Capacity Building Foundation in partnership with the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The theme of Summit is ‘Creating a Sustainable Future for African Think Tanks in Support of SDGs and Agenda 2063 Implementation’.

The choice of the theme is based on the fact that for over a decade economic growth in African countries has exceeded the global average, and remarkable progress has been made on several socioeconomic indicators despite low initial conditions. Notwithstanding the positive performance, much more remains to be done to reduce poverty and improve quality of life for the continent’s almost 1.2 billion inhabitants. The relatively high level of poverty is linked to the structure of most African economies. Presently African countries are largely dependent on commodities that are exported, creating little or no value added and
undermining opportunities for job creation. If Africa’s economy was based on commodity-based industrialization it would create decent job opportunities, substantially reduce poverty and minimize income and wealth inequalities. Transforming Africa’s economic structure from commodity-based exporting to commodity-based industrialization is therefore key to reducing Africa’s poverty.

It is against this backdrop that African member states prioritized structural transformation in Agenda 2063, the regional blueprint for development. And as a result of Africa’s unified negotiating strategy, these priorities were reflected in Agenda 2030, approved in September 2015 for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. For instance Africa’s priorities for structural transformation, technology and innovation are reflected in goals 8 and 9 of Agenda 2030. Promoting sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all are reflected in Goal 8; while building of resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation are reflected in Goal 9.

With the adoption of Agenda 2030 the task of implementing both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 has begun in earnest. However, this effort will require more analytical and scientific rigor than was the case with the earlier Millennium Development Goals. Where the MDG’s consisted of 8 goals and 18 targets, Agenda 2030 comprises 17 goals and 169 targets, and Agenda 2063 contains 20 goals and 34 priority areas including multiple targets. In addition, both Agendas are anchored by the three integrated dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social. This adds yet another layer of complexity to the policy implementation process, since policymakers must not only design programs that facilitate growth but they must ensure that such growth meets the litmus test of economic, environmental and social sustainability.

Coherent implementation of both the global Agenda 2030 and the continental Agenda 2063 will pose a challenge for policymakers in Africa. Despite over a decade-long history of development planning, many African countries continue to experience challenges in designing, implementing and monitoring their development planning frameworks. Succeeding with these Agendas will require advocacy and sensitization about the details of such frameworks, strengthened capacities to integrate such initiatives into national planning frameworks, evidence-based policymaking, and an institutional architecture and skills to monitor and follow-up on implementation outcomes. As African governments roll out of these Agendas, think tanks could therefore play a key role.

II. SUMMIT OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES
The Third Africa Think Tank Summit will take forward the work of last year’s, and produce a strategy, with actionable outputs, for think tanks to address their sustainability issues and collectively contribute to African countries’ implementation of the global Agenda 2030 for the Sustainable Development Goals and of Africa’s vision reflected in Agenda 2063.

To this end, through the various presentations, discussions and interactions, the Summit will address three objectives, as components of the strategy:

- **to determine the business case for think tanks to support agendas 2030 and 2063, and identify areas of opportunity.** Drawing on the findings and suggestions of the 2nd Summit, what features of Agendas 2030 and 2063 lend themselves to the research, analysis and advice that think tanks offer to
national policy-makers? What are the arguments for governments to engage think tanks in supporting implementation? What are the strategic entry points?

- **to identify a path to a sustainable future for African think tanks.** Gauging the progress since the 2nd Summit on the institutional challenges facing think tanks, and identifying collective solutions for financial sustainability, capacity and quality issues, attracting and retaining talent, and technological issues.
- **to develop an implementation road map.** Options and opportunities for think tank professionals and their organizations to work collaboratively through consortia, networks, and partnerships.

The Third Africa Think Tank Summit is expected to generate the following outcomes:

- Commitment to the implementation of the various recommendations of the Africa Think Tank Summits;
- Renewed, enhanced and sustained commitment of think tanks to proactively support the successful implementation of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs;
- Practical, specific areas of opportunity for think tanks to engage policy-makers and non-state actors on the major issues facing Africa currently, in the near future and in the long term;
- Fruitful exchanges of ideas, knowledge and relevant experiences and successful practices on the management of think tanks in Africa and their sustainability strategies;
- Synergies and mutual learning across African think tanks, shared best practices and effective coordination of policy research, analysis and advice; and
- Roadmap for building and sustaining national, regional and international cooperative relations and partnerships.

**III. PROPOSED DISCUSSION TOPICS**

In keeping with the overall Summit theme of “Creating a Sustainable Future for African Think Tanks in Support of SDGs and Agenda 2063 Implementation” and the abovementioned Summit objectives, the following session topics are suggested:

1. **Integrating the global, regional and national development agendas in Africa**

   **Thinks tanks can play an important role in developing methodologies to guide member states in integrating Agenda 2030 and 2063 in their national planning frameworks. Guidelines and toolkits could promote standardized methods of integration of the global and regional agendas and enhance cross country comparisons of performance. Think Tanks could also contribute to the analytical work by demonstrating the inter-linkages across the global and regional Agendas’ goals and targets and identifying their areas of convergence and divergence.** Discussions on this theme will provide concrete proposals on how think tanks could support the integration process.

2. **African perspectives on implementing Agendas 2030 and 2063**

   **Successful implementation of Agendas 2030 and 2063 must be underpinned by evidenced-based policy-making, including evaluating the interactions between economic, social and environmental policies through policy simulations, ex-ante and ex-poste impact studies, and compiling the datasets needed for further work in this area.** Discussions on this theme will present proposals to leverage think tanks as a means of supporting the implementation of both agendas.
3. Advocacy and awareness raising for development Agendas 2030 and 2063

There is little doubt that Agendas 2030 and 2063 were developed through highly consultative processes. Implementation will however require a more in-depth understanding of both Agendas and of the synergies between them. Discussions on this theme will explore proposals for strengthening the advocacy role of think tanks in the context of both Agendas.

4. Tracking progress and performance of development agendas

Monitoring and evaluating progress of both Agendas will be vital in ensuring that corrective actions are taken to keep implementation on the right track. While several UN bodies undertake some tracking activities, few undertake the more intensive task of evaluation. Discussions on this theme will explore how best think tanks can enrich the monitoring and evaluation of both Agendas based on their respective areas of expertise.

5. Making think-tanks fit for purpose for implementing the Agendas

Think tanks can only carry out the above tasks if they have the necessary internal capacities and resources, and are able to effectively channel their outputs to policymakers. Discussions on this theme will focus on fleshing out the key elements of an architecture to attain this. The session will take stock of the 2nd Summit follow-up actions, and will also explore how African think tanks can make more effective use of their interactions with think tanks globally.

6. Creating a sustainable future for think tanks in Africa

The Summit will feature best practices and innovative strategies, products and programs that have been developed in Africa and other regions of the world. The intent of this session is to stimulate a discussion and create a vision for the future of think tanks in Africa as they support implementation of Agendas 2030 and 2063.

IV. VENUE AND DATE, PARTICIPATION AND FORMAT

The Third Africa Think Tank Summit will be held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 8 to 9 April 2016. Participation is planned for above 100 representatives of African think tanks and think tank sponsors, selected representatives of global think tanks, and notable personalities providing the keynote addresses.

The format for the forum will follow the standard format established for these Summits globally – an opening panel of thought leaders the first day (Friday 8 April) followed by consultations in various formats – presentation panels, breakout sessions, round-tables, interactive sessions, and keynote addresses. The format is intended to maximize interaction between participants to allow for networking, exploration of issues, and sharing of knowledge and experiences.

- Panel discussions and keynote addresses. Over the 2 days of discussion, the Summit will have keynote presentations and plenary panel sessions exploring the above six topics designed to touch on various dimensions of the Summit’s objectives (see the Annex for a suggested schedule).
- Break-out and Round Table Sessions. Three break-out sessions will be used to focus in on formulating the strategies, drawing from the presentations and keynote addresses. Conclusions from the breakouts will be considered by round-table sessions at the closing of the Summit, and taken forward as the framework for a collective strategy. Each of the three break-out and round table sessions would address one of the Summit objectives and strategy components.
**Interactive Sessions.** Following the positive reception at the 2nd Summit, two interactive sessions will be repeated. These sessions are designed to maximize interactions among participants, promote knowledge-sharing, identify networking and collaboration opportunities, and strengthen familiarity and trust among the think tank professionals present.

- Lunchtime “Peer Assist”: Generation Next – The Scholars and Ideas of the Future. Ten young scholars present key ideas of research papers they are working on relating to policy issues they feel are critically important to the future of Africa, and lead a table discussion.
- Showcasing Think Tank Best Practices and Innovations. Featuring eight organizational and policy innovations from resource persons of selected think tanks, presented first from booths for participants to visit and then at round table discussions to go more in depth on how they achieved success.

The meeting will be held in English and French, with interpretation services. The Summit will be conducted in accordance with the Chatham House Rule.

V. ORGANIZATION AND SPONSORSHIP
The Summit is being organized as a partnership of ACBF, the AUC, the NEPAD Agency, and the UN ECA. The partners will agree to the areas of financial support that each can support.

VI. TARGET AUDIENCE AND PRELIMINARY LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
The Summit will provide a space for representatives of approximately 100 think tanks in Africa to offer them a space for peer-to-peer exchange of practices, positive and negative lessons learned and brainstorming on new innovative ideas and strategies for impacting public policy.

The target audience and proposed preliminary list of participants from Africa are the following (no specific order):

1. NABNI (*Notre Algérie Bâtie sur de Nouvelles Idées*; Algeria)
2. Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (Benin)
3. *Projet de Renforcement des Capacités en Conception et Analyse des Projets de Développement* (Benin)
4. Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (Botswana)
5. *Centre d’études, de documentation et de recherches économique et sociale* (Burkina Faso)
6. *Programme de Troisième Cycle Inter-universitaire en Economie* (Burkina Faso)
7. *Centre d’analyse des politiques économiques et sociales* (Burkina Faso)
8. *Institut de développement économique du Burundi* (Burundi)
9. Strategic Transformation and Policy Centre (Cabo Verde)
10. Pedro Pirez Institute for Cape Verdien Studies (Cabo Verde)
11. Cameroon Policy Analysis and Research Center (Cameroon)
12. *Centre Ivoirien de Recherche Economique et Sociale* (Côte d’Ivoire)
13. *Cellule d’analyse de politiques économiques du CIRES* (Côte d’Ivoire)
14. Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (Egypt)
15. Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (Egypt)
(16) Egyptian Center for Economic Studies (Egypt)
(17) Ethiopian Development Research Institute (Ethiopia)
(18) Horn Economic and Social Policy Institute (Ethiopia)
(19) Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute (Ethiopia)
(20) Institute for Peace and Security Studies (Ethiopia)
(21) Organization for Social Sciences Research in Eastern Africa (Ethiopia)
(22) IMANI Center for Policy and Education (Ghana)
(23) Integrated Social Development Center (Ghana)
(24) Institute for Democratic Governance (Ghana)
(25) Center for Policy Analysis (Ghana)
(26) Centre for Democratic Development (Ghana)
(27) Justice and Human Rights Institute (Ghana)
(28) Institute for Economic Affairs (Ghana)
(29) Centre for Development Studies (Ghana)
(30) Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (Ghana)
(31) Benten Institute (Guinea Bissau)
(32) African Research and Resource Forum (Kenya)
(33) African Centre for Technology Studies (Kenya)
(34) African Economic Research Consortium (Kenya)
(35) Institute of Economic Affairs (Kenya)
(36) Inter-Region Economic Network (Kenya)
(37) Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (Kenya)
(38) Centre for Research and Technology Development (Kenya)
(39) African Technology Policy Studies Network (Kenya)
(40) Rift Valley Institute (Kenya)
(41) Liberia Macroeconomic Policy Analysis Capacity Building Project (Liberia)
(42) Sadeq Institute (Libya)
(43) Centre de recherche, d’études et d’appui à l’analyse économique de Madagascar (Madagascar)
(44) The Institute for Policy Interaction (Malawi)
(45) Groupe de Recherche en Economie Appliquée et Théorique (Mali)
(46) Centre d’études et de renforcement des capacités d’analyse et de plaidoyer (Mali)
(47) Centre Mauritanien d’analyse de Politiques (Mauritania)
(48) OCP Policy Center (Morocco)
(49) Centre africain de formation et de recherche administratives pour le développement (Morocco)
(50) Royal Institute for Strategic Studies (Morocco)
(51) Institute for Public Policy Research (Namibia)
(52) Laboratoire d’Etudes et de Recherche sur les Dynamiques Sociales et le Développement Local (Niger)
(53) Cellule d’analyse et de Prospective en Développement (Niger)
(54) Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (Nigeria)
(55) Centre for Population and Environmental Development (Nigeria)
(56) African Institute for Applied Economics (Nigeria)
(57) ECOWAS Economic Policy Analysis Unit (Nigeria)
(58) Development Research and Projects Centre (Nigeria)
(59) Initiative for Public Policy Analysis (Nigeria)
(60) Center for the Study of the Economies of Africa (Nigeria)
(61) Institute for Public Policy of Nigeria (Nigeria)
(62) Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (Nigeria)
(63) Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (Rwanda)
(64) Centre Autonome d’Études et de Renforcement des Capacités pour le Développement du Togo (Togo)
(65) Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (Senegal)
(66) Centre d’études de politiques pour le développement (Senegal)
(67) Consortium pour la recherche économique et sociale (Senegal)
(68) Institute for Security Studies (South Africa)
(69) African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (South Africa)
(70) Africa Institute of South Africa (South Africa)
(71) Centre for Conflict Resolution (South Africa)
(72) Center for Development and Enterprise (South Africa)
(73) Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (South Africa)
(74) Institute for Democracy in South Africa (South Africa)
(75) Development Policy Research Unit (South Africa)
(76) South African Institute of International Affairs (South Africa)
(77) South African Institute of Race Relations (South Africa)
(78) Institute for Global Dialogue (South Africa)
(79) Free Market Foundation (South Africa)
(80) Mandela Institute for Development Studies (South Africa)
(81) Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Relations (South Africa)
(82) Institute of Tomorrow (Sudan)
(83) The Sudd Institute (South Sudan)
(84) Center for Strategic Analyses and Research (South Sudan)
(85) Swaziland Economic Policy Analysis and Research Centre (Swaziland)
(86) Economic and Social Research Foundation (Tanzania)
(87) Research on Poverty Alleviation (Tanzania)
(88) UONGOZI Institute (Tanzania)
(89) African Technology Policy Studies Network (Tanzania)
(90) Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies (Tunisia)
(91) Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (Uganda)
(92) Economic Policy Research Center (Uganda)
(93) Makerere Institute of Social Research (Uganda)
(94) Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (Zambia)
(95) Macro Economic and Financial Management Institute (Zimbabwe)
(96) National Economic Consultative Forum (Zimbabwe)
(97) Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit (Zimbabwe)
The African Capacity Building Foundation
The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) was established in 1991 to build sustainable human and institutional capacity in support of Africa’s development. ACBF supports capacity development in Africa through investment in capacity building, knowledge sharing and technical assistance to countries and regional and sub-regional organizations. ACBF’s approach to capacity development focuses on addressing capacity needs and gaps as well as on stakeholder ownership of interventions, project and program sustainability and synergy of interventions with other development funding institutions.

ACBF is the outcome of collaboration between African governments and the international donor community. Its mission is to secure Africa’s future by building sustainable human and institutional capacity for sustainable growth and good governance.

The creation of ACBF was in response to the severity of Africa’s capacity needs, and the challenge of investing in indigenous human capital and institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. ACBF was also designed to serve as a coordinating mechanism for donor support to capacity building on the continent, through the pooling of resources and common governance and reporting system.

ACBF has spearheaded/played a lead role in the establishment of 41 policy institutes/think tanks which have become the first point of call for policy research products and technical/advisory services by the key stakeholders—public, private, NGOs, media and development partners. Besides the financial and technical support to national, regional and continental bodies, ACBF is also a knowledge hub in the area of capacity building. The Foundation has developed and disseminated the Africa Capacity Report, a strategic and tailor-made capacity building knowledge product. The inaugural version of the ACR was launched in 2011, with the theme *Capacity Development in Fragile States*. This was followed in 2012 with the second edition of the Report on the theme *Capacity Development for Agricultural Transformation and Food Security*. In 2013, the Foundation produced the third edition of the Report with the topic *Capacity Development for Natural Resources Management*. The fourth edition of the Africa Capacity Report in 2014 dealt with the topic *Capacity Imperatives for Regional Integration in Africa* while the 2015 edition is on *Capacity Imperatives for Domestic Resource Mobilization in Africa*.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
Established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN) in 1958 as one of the UN’s five regional commissions, ECA’s mandate is to promote the economic and social development of its member States, foster intra-regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa’s development. Made up of 54 member States, and playing a dual role as a regional arm of the UN and as a key component of the African institutional landscape, ECA is well positioned to make unique contributions to address the Continent’s development challenges.
African Union Commission
The Commission is the key organ playing a central role in the day-to-day management of the African Union. Among others, it represents the Union and defends its interests; elaborates draft common positions of the Union; prepares strategic plans and studies for the consideration of the Executive Council; elaborates, promotes, coordinates and harmonizes the programs and policies of the Union with those of the regional economic communities; ensures the mainstreaming of gender in all programs and activities of the Union. The mission of the Commission is become “An efficient and value-adding institution driving the African integration and development process in close collaboration with African Union Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and African citizens”.

The NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an African Union strategic framework for pan-African socio-economic development, is both a vision and a policy framework for Africa in the twenty-first century. NEPAD is a radically new intervention, spearheaded by African leaders, to address critical challenges facing the continent: poverty, development and Africa's marginalization internationally. NEPAD provides unique opportunities for African countries to take full control of their development agenda, to work more closely together, and to cooperate more effectively with international partners.