

Africa's Agenda 2030: channeling the SDGs towards inclusive, resilient and accountable development



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Research report based on the regional retreat *Achieving the SDGs' vision of equity, growth and resilience in Africa through regional cooperation*, held in Liberia in September 2017.

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Preface

The 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), agreed by UN Member States in September 2015, set a new roadmap for global cooperation towards a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable world. For African nations, the new agenda suggests solutions to many longstanding development challenges, as well as opportunities to showcase progress and strengthen regional collaboration. While every country faces its own unique set of challenges, there are also similarities, which offer opportunities for cross-country learning.

The government of the Republic of Liberia and the Independent Research Forum (IRF), a grouping of ten sustainable development institutes and think tanks from around the world, held a retreat in Monrovia, Liberia on 15-17 September 2017, on the theme of “Achieving the SDGs’ vision of equity, growth and resilience in Africa through regional cooperation”. Participants included government officials and representatives of civil society organizations from eleven African countries.

The retreat provided participants with a “safe space”, outside of the formal inter-governmental processes on the SDGs, to share experiences and identify approaches to overcoming shared challenges. The discussions focused on two key aspects of the 2030 Agenda that are particularly relevant to Africa: achieving economic growth that is socially equitable and environmentally sustainable, and creating effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for transformative governance.

The retreat discussions were rich, with much sharing of experiences among participants. These discussions form the basis for this research report, which also draws on desk research and interviews with selected participants. The report aims to build on the learning from the retreat and make it available to a wider audience, particularly those who are involved in bringing the vision of the SDGs to reality in African countries.



Retreat participants. Credit: Rosebell Kagumire

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The Liberia retreat that this research report is based on was one of a series carried out under the auspices of the High Level Group of Heads of State in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which was created in 2015 at the initiative of the Prime Minister of Sweden. The initiative brings together the leaders of nine countries who share a commitment to political leadership, partnership and responsibility in order to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The retreat was co-hosted by the IRF and the government of the Republic of Liberia. IIED, the Liberia Ministry of Finance and Planning, the Liberia Office of the President's Secretariat for ECOWAS and the SDGs, and the Open Societies Initiative for West Africa contributed to retreat organization and facilitation.

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Overview: Agenda 2030 and transformative change in Africa

Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) establish a new roadmap for global cooperation on development. Grounded in a collective vision of a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable world, the SDGs move away from longstanding models based on flows of development assistance from the global North to South. Instead the SDGs offer a universal agenda that is relevant for all countries and that recognizes the intricate relationship between the economic, social, environmental and political dimensions of development. While universal in nature, Agenda 2030 is meant to be adapted to specific contexts and priorities, which vary from country to country and can change over time.

Africa in transition

The SDGs land at a time when Africa is undergoing rapid socio-economic change and increasing environmental risk, particularly from climate change. If the SDGs are to make a difference for Africa, they need to offer solutions to the persistent problems of sustaining economic and social progress, in a highly dynamic context.

Africa's economic experience over the past fifteen years illustrates the challenges. Between 2002 and 2014, most countries experienced strong GDP growth, well above the global average. But this growth was fuelled largely by commodity exports, with few benefits accruing to the local economy and little progress on reducing poverty. According to the UN's Human Development Index, every country in Africa is today less equal than it was in 2010. For the African masses, in other words, the trickle-down

benefits of economic growth have been few. The model also proved fragile; when global commodity markets crashed in 2015-16, growth trends quickly reversed and the economies of many countries have still not recovered. The negative effect on growth was exacerbated further in countries affected by the Ebola crisis around the same time.²

New economic models will also need to take account of the demographic, economic and environmental changes occurring across the continent. Africa has the fastest growing population in the world and the rate of population growth is accelerating. Most of its population is young with a median age of 19.5 years with a rapid demographic shift from rural to urban areas.

Climate change is already affecting weather patterns, with impacts on agriculture, human health and safety, water and ecosystems. In 50 years, Africa will no longer be a sparsely populated continent with a largely agrarian workforce and abundant natural resources. With visionary leadership, regional collaboration, smart planning and well-directed investment, these changes, rather than being challenges, can drive the transformation Africans seek.

The enabling environment for that transformation requires political stability, good governance, equal rights for women and minorities, and responsive institutions that are focused on achieving prosperity that is sustainable and inclusive. While Africa has made much progress in this direction, it has been uneven across the continent, and over the last ten years the rate of improvement overall has slowed (Mo Ibrahim

² World Bank (2016). 2014-2015 West Africa Ebola crisis: impact update. <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/297531463677588074/Ebola-Economic-Impact-and-Lessons-Paper-short-version.pdf>

Foundation 2017). Increasingly effectively, citizens are calling for greater transparency and accountability from their governments, political leaders and national institutions, often utilizing new technologies to do so.

What the SDGs can offer

While presenting a common global agenda, the SDGs also reflect the distinct development situations of different countries and regions. Unlike previous international development frameworks, including the largely donor-defined Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs were prepared through a participatory process involving all UN Member States over a period of 16 months. African governments and civil society were influential in these negotiations, promoting a Common African Position outlining the continent's shared priorities. Nearly all of these priorities were reflected in the final version of the 2030 Agenda.

The SDGs align closely with the African Union's [Agenda 2063](#) roadmap as well as the national development strategies of many countries. These converging agendas, from national to regional to global levels, can reinforce and enhance one another. Because of their global span, the SDGs provide a common vocabulary for discussions on sustainable development across borders and sectors of society.

Using the vocabulary of the SDGs, it is easy to describe the widely shared transformative vision of development for Africa in a few phrases:

- end poverty in all its forms everywhere;
- achieve sustained and sustainable prosperity that leaves no one behind;
- ensure the social, economic and political inclusion of all;
- make all institutions of governance effective, accountable and inclusive.

The SDGs suggest growth models that differ significantly from the ones that have prevailed in the past. The SDG models are built around principles of economic inclusion, equitable

benefits from national growth, sustainable use of natural resources, climate resilience and enhancement of ecological and cultural values. They require steering investment towards technological innovation, job-rich industries and sectors, strategies for enabling the economic participation of the poor and marginalized, and green economy pathways.

Achieving that kind of economic transformation will require innovations in governance in order to harness the ideas and contributions of all sectors of society. Participatory decision-making and transparent and accountable institutions are fundamental attributes and enablers of sustainable development. Key issues that countries need to address include supporting strong citizen engagement; transparency in investment decisions; the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the media; as well as designing and building multi-stakeholder platforms for monitoring progress on national and global commitments, including the SDGs.

The regional dimension

Regional cooperation has a long history in Africa, and has shown its value in ending conflict, building democracies, supporting economic and social development and promoting African interests in multilateral and global negotiations. While many African countries may have little political power individually, they succeeded in getting their priorities reflected in the SDGs and other international agendas by adopting a common negotiating position. Africa's regional and sub-regional institutions are now looking at how they can best support their member states on delivering the SDGs. Many of the pathways countries are pursuing require regional cooperation on issues such as trade, free movement of people, research and development, technological innovation and infrastructure. Coordination among regional institutions will be critical to avoid duplication of effort while optimizing the comparative advantages of all.

Inclusive and sustainable growth

In the past decade, Africa's economies have proven their resilience and ability to bounce back from global economic shocks like the 2008 global economic crisis and the 2015-16 commodity price shocks. Many African countries have also weathered various socio-political crises, including security threats from groups like Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, and seen improvements in agricultural production despite climate challenges. Consequently, Africa's average real GDP growth grew from 2.2% in 2016 to 3.6% in 2017 and is expected to remain on an upward trajectory well into 2019.³ However the continent continues to grapple with some challenges including infrastructure deficits in areas like energy generation and unemployment – the majority of Africans work in the subsistence agriculture sector with a few in rapidly growing and highly productive services sectors. According to the [2018 African Development Outlook](#) by the African Development Bank, 'the dual nature of most African economies...is the single most important reason for poverty to persist and inequality to remain high.' In order to promote and sustain inclusive growth, African governments need to address education, skills development and growth, without tipping the inequality scale further. To fulfil Agenda 2030 and make headway on Agenda 2063, citizens and stakeholders from across academia, the public and private sectors; civil society; and donor communities need to work together and coordinate efforts.

The increasing capacity for domestic resource mobilisation, strengthening of governance frameworks, investments in human capital, empowerment of vulnerable and largely excluded populations like the youth and women,

proliferation of new technologies in ICT as well as the prospects for a budding green economy all offer opportunities for ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth in Africa.

A. Inclusive growth strategies

Job creation and poverty reduction are integral to sustainable growth and inclusive development. Over half of Africa's labor force engages in agriculture and climate considerations are looming. It is important to develop agribusiness models and green economies that recognize and create avenues for the poor, women, and youth to have more ownership in the production process. The SDGs suggest that to achieve this, African nations need to explore avenues for not only enhancing inputs, outputs and value chain linkages in agriculture, but also for empowering citizens – particularly rural dwellers, low-income citizens, women, and youth – to be involved in the sector.

With looming challenges like climate change, issues like local content, renewable energy, carbon footprints, and technology transfer are particularly relevant for sustainable growth and development. African governments, civil society organizations (CSOs) and donors are already leveraging partnerships in support of green economy and sustainable growth initiatives. For instance, the Domboshava Community Development Association in Zimbabwe is using [biomass technology](#) to develop clean, affordable and accessible renewable energy. Climate innovation centres are taking root in Ghana, [Kenya](#), [Ethiopia](#) and [South Africa](#); bringing together both local and global stakeholders to

³ African economic outlook 2018: www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/African_Economic_Outlook_2018_-_EN.pdf

invest in innovative private sector solutions to climate change. Government-led green climate funds launched in countries like South Africa and Rwanda are also making headlines as models for consideration for addressing environmental sustainability. A series of green economy readiness assessment projects in countries like Ghana are beginning to paint a picture of the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

With the launch of Agenda 2030 and the sheer magnitude of the work ahead, one thing remains clear: inclusive growth strategies must be honed to each country's unique context. To ensure this, citizens and other relevant actors should be involved in formulating, implementing, and evaluating inclusive policies and programs as well as how to integrate national development plans with global commitments under the SDG framework. Liberia's experience in domesticating the SDGs offers some insight in this regard.

Case study: CAADP and the enduring promise of African agriculture

As a step in this direction, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) offers a pan-African framework to allow countries to review their progress towards agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security, nutrition and inclusive economic growth. A key aspect of the CAADP compact, signed by over 40 member states, is agricultural and industrial policy-making and reform, with investment as a pathway to growth. Four of Africa's eight regional economic communities have also signed the compact as of 2015,⁴ with three going ahead to develop complete

investment plans. Members who sign the CAADP compact commit to making agriculture a central pillar of development and strive to achieve recommended targets of a 6% annual growth in agricultural GDP and minimum budget allocations of 10% for the agricultural sector. In 2014, African Union leaders also signed the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the CAADP and as a recommitment to its tenets, encompassed in seven commitments.⁵ The CAADP and Malabo Declaration reinforce each other and a country scorecard has been created to track performance of 47 member countries and RECs across 23 categories, with 43 indicators and a focus on institutionalizing the CAADP.⁶ The inaugural scorecard indicates that 63% of member countries are making headway in institutionalizing the CAADP with Rwanda leading the 20 countries that are on track to achieving commitments by 2025.⁷ Beyond meeting commitments, the CAADP is helping generate economic gains. A 2018 study by the International Food Policy Research Institute suggests that CAADP compact signatories and high implementers see more growth in agriculture expenditure and output annually compared to non-CAADP countries.⁸ Additionally, a Brookings Institute report on the CAADP highlights that early signatories to the CAADP like Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia and Malawi are "increasingly prioritizing agriculture and food security as a national level driver of economic growth". According to the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, that priority translates into almost doubling agricultural

⁴ ECOWAS, COMESA, SADC, ECA: www.syngentafoundation.org/file/2481/download?token=ascRxaXD

⁵ 2017 Progress Report to the AU Assembly: www.resakss.org/sites/default/files/BR%20English%20Draft%20Print.pdf

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ IFPRI – Is CAADP having the desired impact on agricultural-led development? <https://egyptssp.ifpri.info/2018/03/11/is-caadp-having-the-desired-impact-on-agricultural-led-development/>

expenditures since the CAADP's launch.⁹ To ensure continuous learning, the CAAPD community of practice offers a framework and resources for agriculture stakeholders across Africa to share best practices and knowledge. For instance, many countries can learn from Ethiopia, which is making particular headway in agricultural extension efforts and farmer education programs. While an outlier in many respects, the island nation of Mauritius also offers insight into advancing export-led growth through investments in its manufacturing sector – a key challenge for Africa's primary-sector led economies - and diversification of its economy into financial services and ICT.

Case Study: Integrating SDGs and Agenda 2030 into Liberia's new 5-year development strategy framework

For the first time in its nation's history, Liberia experienced a democratic transition from a ruling government to opposition during the 2017 presidential elections when now former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf handed over the baton of leadership to incumbent President George Weah. With the country's national development plan, the Agenda for Transformation (AfT), 2012-2017 about to end, it was imperative that government operations continue undeterred to ensure transition to a new plan that has synergy with the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Through this transitional period, the Liberian Ministry of Finance and Development Planning was keen on ensuring policy continuity, coordination, harmonization and convergence between the country's national, regional and global obligations. To achieve this, the Department of Budget and Planning developed a blueprint on governance, a roadmap and successor plan of sorts to the AfT, that provides information, scenarios, options and lessons learned to guide the incoming government. The blueprint also

identifies pathways for development, including agriculture-driven growth and diversification with inter-sectoral linkages; human development; and green economy.

In selecting these development pathways, the Ministry undertook a multi-stakeholder engagement process. Over the course of two rounds of missions, a series of consultations and intensive awareness campaigns were undertaken in Liberia's 15 counties to inform the populace about the SDGs and Agenda 2063 and to gain insight into what elements needed to be factored into the new development plan. Working with the National Civil Society Council of Liberia, political parties, educational institutions and other stakeholders, with support from UNDP and UNECA, the government mission successfully collected insights on the needs and opportunities of average Liberian citizens on key issues like climate change.

There was also high-level buy-in for developing the new national development plan and domesticating the SDGs; key government officials like the President and Speaker of Parliament as well as senior technicians from the various budget sectors were actively involved in the technical elements. That said, there was need to strengthen and empower existing institutional frameworks for implementing the SDGs. Alongside the high level political involvement, multi-stakeholder engagement, and local ownership and awareness building at the national level, Liberia embarked on a number of budget sector consultations and baseline research on indicators to be used in tracking progress on the SDGs and Agenda 2063. All Ministries, Agencies and Commissions had started integrating the SDGs; however, much of the process was disjointed due to the poor data and information management processes. To address this information gap, Liberia looked to

⁹ CAADP – OSAA Website: www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/peace/caadp.shtml

countries with a similar context for insights and good practices; Senegal's experience with planning disaster risk initiatives was a point of learning for Liberia.

The SDG process has been an eye-opener for Liberia in many ways, particularly when it comes to domesticating the process and prioritizing goals based on national needs, resources, and vision. As the new government takes over the reins, it will be crucial to build statistical capacity and explore alternative avenues for expanding domestic resource mobilization across the various sectors. These will help ensure that Liberia not only achieves but maintains sustainable development.

B. Green economy pathways

The concept of green economy, which emerged in the early 2000s and came to prominence at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio in 2012, has no internationally accepted definition. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) describes green economy as a resilient economy where income growth, employment, economic activity and social well-being are driven through sustainable and inclusive investments aimed at reducing environmental risks and carbon emissions in order to prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems.¹⁰

Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines green growth as a “fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide resources and environmental services on which our well-being

relies.”¹¹ Hence, some of the key elements of an inclusive green economy are the creation of sustainable development pathways; the development of economic opportunity based on national and local context; targeted policy reforms and green investments for addressing challenges like poverty and climate change; as well as fiscal reform through the establishment of environmental taxes, removal of harmful subsidies and reallocation of expenditure towards green sectors.¹²

As of 2015, 14 African nations had national green economy strategies or action plans underway - Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia.¹³ While all these countries recognize the need to mainstream green strategies into their respective national development planning, countries like Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Senegal and South Africa have been identified as standouts.¹⁴ The regional interest in sustainable development and green economies is not by chance; the majority of economies in Africa remain agriculture-based and heavily reliant on their natural resources and capital. For example, Kenya, which is seen as progressive on the green development front, gains 24% and 42% of GDP annually from agriculture and natural resources respectively,¹⁵ and as such stands to benefit from targeted investments in increasing natural or ‘green’ capital. An assessment report co-authored by the Kenyan government and UNEP estimates that real per capita GDP in the East African nation could nearly double by 2030 with a focus

¹⁰ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1446>

¹¹ OECD Website: www.oecd.org/greengrowth/

¹² Switch Africa Green presentation: <http://switchafricagreen.org/Kampala/index.php/presentations-2/session-1-10yfp-sdg-2/25-operationalisation-green-economy-unep/file>

¹³ Building Inclusive Green Economies in Africa – Experiences & Lessons Learned 2010-2015: www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/Building_Inclusive_Green_Economies_In_Africa_UNEP.pdf

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Kenya Green Economy Assessment Report: www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/KenyaGEassessment_UNEP.pdf

on green economy.¹⁶ Additionally, the UN agency estimates that investments in biomass water ecosystems could create over 700,000 new jobs in South Africa, with wind and solar power investments leading to 30,000 new jobs in Senegal, all by 2030.¹⁷

On the regional level, the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Policy (EREP) seeks to help increase renewable energy supply and use in order to provide universal electricity access by 2030 and assure a more sustainable and safe provision of domestic energy services.¹⁸ The Southern African Development Community (SADC) defines its sustainable development and environmental policy goals as three-fold: protecting and improving health, environment and livelihoods of southern Africans; preserving natural heritage, biodiversity and life supporting systems; and supporting equitable regional economic development for present and future generations.¹⁹ During the 2017 African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, African Ministers stressed the importance of the environment in achieving inclusive growth and sustainable development as well as the need for synergy between national green strategies and Africa's Agenda 2063. The ministers adopted the Libreville Declaration on Investing in Innovative Environmental Solutions which aims to strengthen national and regional governance mechanisms for ocean ecosystem management in Africa; improve pollution management; enhance resilience to drought and desertification; implement a strategy to curb exploitation and illegal trade of wildlife; and upscale development and use of clean renewable energy.²⁰

The importance of context-specific national green strategies which leverage existing and potential resources alongside national priorities for development, poverty reduction and growth is clear. African countries will have to address complex questions on issues like organic agriculture and corporate interests; balancing the agenda on fossil fuels versus renewable energy; fundraising for investments in green technologies; and defining the parameters of a new green economy. Some African stakeholders see the inclusion of SDG 17 on global partnerships as an opportunity for a frank conversation on how Africa's historical "extractive" relationship with the West might affect the rules of engagement in global development and the green economy. Consequently, African governments will have to define their expectations on issues like home-grown technology development and transfer, even as they engage with global partners to address sustainable development.

Green growth strategies should take into consideration intra and inter-generational equity and how to prevent passing on costs to future generations; equity and inclusiveness; sustainable job creation, small and medium enterprise (SME) development and economic diversification; as well as environmental integrity.²¹ To achieve this, consultation with stakeholders at all levels is imperative.

Awareness and capacity needs to be built around good governance and what a green economy means in a country's context to ensure public participation at the local and national levels, while enhancing transparency and accountability. On the policy front, attention must be paid to the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Building a Profitable Green Economy in Africa: <http://africanbusinessmagazine.com/sectors/energy/building-profitable-green-economy-africa/>

¹⁸ ECREEE Website: www.ecreee.org/page/ecowas-renewable-energy-policy-erep

¹⁹ SADC Website: www.sadc.int/issues/environment-sustainable-development/

²⁰ Report of the sixteenth regular session of AMCEN: <https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33005-doc-amcen-en.pdf>

²¹ Building Inclusive Green Economies in Africa: www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/Building_Inclusive_Green_Economies_In_Africa_UNEP.pdf

revitalization and diversification of the economy in order to build strong regulatory frameworks, legislation, institutions and incentives which can help stimulate the economy and reallocate both public expenditure and private investment to green economic activities. With public-private partnerships there can be enhanced competitiveness and market access which in turn can promote local content, products and services. In Kenya for instance, both the government and private sector are coming on board to enhance and protect the country's biodiversity as part of sustainable tourism. The country's second medium-term development plan outlines tourism opportunities like a Premium Parks initiative.²² Indigenous groups like the Maasai are working with various tourism stakeholders to ensure respect for indigenous peoples, wildlife and the environment,²³ and many tourist facilities are embracing alternative energy sources like solar power and recycling of organic waste. With the recent ban of plastic bags in Kenya in 2017, tourism stakeholders are already exploring alternative packaging.

A continuous cycle of research into innovative technologies and practices, alongside integrated policymaking, multi-stakeholder engagement and monitoring and evaluation²⁴ will help ensure that African nations are not only prepared to address emerging environmental challenges but are also primed to take advantages of opportunities offered with new technologies and indigenous knowledge.²⁵ Ghana and South Africa offer insight into formulating green growth strategies at the national and local levels respectively.

Case Study: Ghana – Policy Reform for a Green Economy

While Ghana does not yet have a national green economy strategy, its Shared Growth and Development Agenda II (GSDA II) 2014-2017 emphasizes the importance of green economy principles, sustainable development and environmental protection in national development planning. The Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation is also working with various stakeholders to integrate elements from key environmental instruments and policies like the Ghana Industrial Policy (2010), Ghana National Climate Change Policy (2012), and the National Environmental Policy (2012) into a Green Growth Action Plan for implementation.²⁶ Beyond streamlining policy and ensuring a coherent policy framework, Ghana has made some significant strides in reforming its fiscal structures through the implementation of green fiscal policy measures like targeted taxes on plastic materials, over-aged vehicles, and consumer petroleum goods. The country introduced feed-in tariffs in 2013 to promote investment in renewable energy and has also made allowance for a portion of oil revenues to go to the Ghana Stabilization and Heritage Funds so as to provide socio-environmental safety nets for future generations. As a pilot country under the EU-supported SWITCH Africa Green project, a number of Ghanaian micro, small and medium enterprises are also benefiting from capacity building and grants to scale up their environmental efforts. The World Bank financed Ghana Climate Innovation Centre (GCIC) also serves as a green business incubation hub for developing SMEs

²² Tourism for transformative and inclusive growth: http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/aldcafrica2017_en.pdf

²³ Onchwati, J, Sommerville, H and Brockway, N (2010). Sustainable Tourism Development In The Masai Mara National Reserve, Kenya, East Africa. Sustainable Tourism IV, 139, 319-330. www.witpress.com/elibrary/wit-transactions-on-ecology-and-the-environment/139/21232

²⁴ UNEP (2014) Using Indicators for Green Economy Policymaking. www.greengrowthknowledge.org/resource/guidance-manual-green-economy-indicators

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ghana: Green Industry & Trade Assessment: www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/GhanaGreenIndustryAndTradeAssessment_PAGE_0.pdf

and entrepreneurs in Ghana's green economy. Housed at the Ashesi University College which prioritizes environmental sustainability, the GCIC is supporting its first cohort of 11 clients to transform into viable businesses that are climate smart and focus on clean technologies and business models. They include Global Bamboo Products Limited, a hybrid social enterprise which promotes ecologically friendly green lifestyles through bamboo and non-timber production, and Biogas Technologies which produces waste management systems for processing organic waste into renewable biogas energy. Despite these efforts, Ghana still has more to do, for instance, with the introduction of emissions-based taxes or a "feebate" system to encourage vehicle owners to shift to higher performing vehicles that reduce CO₂ emissions and air pollution.²⁷

Case Study: South Africa – Decentralizing Green Growth

South Africa is regarded as quite progressive when it comes to green development. A concerted effort has also been made to decentralize the country's national development plan and strategy for sustainable development action. In 2011, a Green Economy Accord was signed between the government, business stakeholders and labor groups with the goal of creating 300,000 green jobs in its renewable energy sector by 2020, and to make high impact financing available through a national green fund. With the goal of catalysing South Africa's transition to a green economy, the fund offers project development and investment in green projects and programs, alongside capacity building, research and policy development. The fund offers refundable and non-refundable grants, loans, and equity to SMEs, companies and initiatives focused on

building green cities and towns, a low carbon economy and protecting biodiversity through natural resource management. There have already been some successes with standouts like the City of Cape Town's use of green public procurement for supporting the development of key sectors like sustainable agriculture, renewable energy and energy efficiency. The City of Cape Town's green procurement approach promotes the use of climate-appropriate resources, technologies and approaches by considering the life-cycle cost of goods and services in the supply chain process. A Green Procurement Action Plan for the City of Cape Town is being developed for approval in 2018 and will assess market readiness for the production of green technologies. Nevertheless, Cape Town has already registered some successes with its focus on green economy, including savings of 80,000 MWh of electricity and 79,000 tons of carbon, amounting to about US\$9 million in savings, over the past five years from its energy efficiency program. The City is also making strides towards green infrastructure and buildings by setting out performance-based specifications for water-efficient technologies in office buildings, public facilities and subsidized housing.²⁸ South Africa is also building capacity in areas like project management through a government internship program within the Ministry of Environmental Affairs. Upon completion of their internship, successful candidates apply for jobs within the department or in other relevant departments; this constitutes a step in addressing employment concerns.

C. Strategies for reaching vulnerable groups and the poorest

²⁷ Ghana Green Fiscal Policy Reforms: www.greenfiscalspolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Fiscal-Policy-Reforms_Ghana_Summary.pdf

²⁸ City of Cape Town targets green procurement: www.voteda.org/municipality-news/city-cape-town-targets-green-procurement/

Mainstream approaches to poverty reduction and development assistance generally regard poor people as passive recipients of services, neglecting the fact that they are at the very heart of communities, sectors, services. There is a notion that livelihood and development concerns are segmented by vulnerable groups; however, experiences on the ground point to the contrary. Poor and vulnerable groups see their concerns as very much connected. For instance, a rural farmer is unlikely to distinguish between corruption and drought in her community. They are linked – and sometimes reinforcing – in her experience. This fact about the indivisibility of development concerns reinforces the need to look at economic sustainability as something that cuts across social development, environment and governance – and to include citizens in the process. Holistic and inclusive development that plans for the poor, budgets for the poor and implements programs for the poor is more likely to be sustainable. Traditional social cash transfer programs like Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) might work in the short- to medium-term but could prove counterproductive in the long-term by increasing dependency. With this in mind, various African countries and stakeholders are exploring creative and innovative social welfare mechanisms to alleviate poverty, spur economic growth and help sustain livelihoods for the highly vulnerable.

One such program is the unconditional or universal basic income program – monthly cash transfers or social grants²⁹ to the extremely poor and vulnerable, no strings attached. So far, it has been piloted in Namibia and is under

consideration in South Africa. Here too, sustainability remains a core issue. Despite attempts by numerous African nations to address social security and protection issues through cash transfers, the effectiveness of such programs remains a key concern. In Uganda for instance, a vulnerable family grant created in 2011 to provide direct income support under the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment Scheme (SAGE) was phased out after the pilot ended in 2015. That part of the SAGE pilot reached over 500,000 beneficiaries in over 120,000 poor and vulnerable families that lacked labor capacity, with cash payments made through mobile money transfers.³⁰ The Senior Citizen Grant scheme which supports the elderly was less controversial and continued. It has been useful in helping reduce beneficiary dependence on others, particularly where elderly beneficiaries' health expenditure was concerned. That said, the evaluation³¹ concluded that the monthly transfers of about \$4.20 per adult beneficiary were insufficient, not only in terms of significantly expanding income levels for child nutrition or education expenditure, but also in terms of reaching more beneficiaries and guaranteeing sustainability.

Fiscal reforms are another option, particularly those targeting progressive tax schemes where wealthier individuals and companies pay higher percentages of income tax in comparison to poorer citizens. A number of fiscal policy reforms have been recommended by Oxfam and other agencies to enhance pro-poor budgeting and spending: dedicating a percentage of taxes to funding non-contributory cash transfers; reinforcing the use of gender-sensitive budgeting; combatting tax

²⁹ Ferreira, L (2017) FACTSHEET: Social grants in South Africa – separating myth from reality. Africa Check. <https://africacheck.org/factsheets/separating-myth-from-reality-a-guide-to-social-grants-in-south-africa/>

³⁰ Direct Income Support Programmes in Uganda: <http://socialprotection.go.ug/direct-income-support-programmes/>

³¹ Merttens, F, Sindou, E, Attah, R and Hearle, C (2016) Evaluation of the Uganda Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) Programme. Endline programme operations performance – final report. Oxford Policy Management. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/607525/Evaluation-of-Uganda-Social-Assistance-Grants-for-Empowerment.pdf

dodging; renegotiating unfavorable tax treaties; ending unnecessary tax breaks; and taxing extractives more effectively. The overall goal is to reduce the tax burden on the poor, as a means of providing income and pathways out of poverty. Other tax-related instruments target services like health and education. In Algeria for instance, companies receive tax incentives or income tax breaks on the wages of young employees in exchange for nurturing new talent. There has also been increased interest in public-private partnerships for addressing Africa's skills deficit and high youth unemployment. For example, South Africa's Employment Tax Incentive (ETI) encourages hiring of young and inexperienced workers by offering companies employment subsidies for their professional development.

The private sector is also getting involved in addressing the youth bulge, unemployment and skills deficit. For instance, the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Program (TEEP) which was established in 2015 has an ambitious \$100 million goal and aims to "identify and empower 10,000 African entrepreneurs, create a million jobs, and add \$10 billion in revenues to Africa's economy."³² Besides the 12-week training and networking program during which successful candidates gain key business skills and insights, the TEEP offers seed capital of \$10,000 to each entrepreneur, online mentoring, learning resources, and networking opportunities with other entrepreneurs and African businesses. Other private sector initiatives geared at supporting Africa's burgeoning start-up and entrepreneurial scene includes Kenya's technology-focused Savannah Fund which offers US \$25,000-500,000 in seed capital to early stage high technology start-ups, and Nigeria-based technology company Andela which aims to build Africa's next generation of technology leaders. A mere

three years after it was started, Andela raised a whopping \$40 million from investors in 2017, bringing it one step closer to its goal of effectively preparing 100,000 African software developers for jobs by 2024.³³ A smaller, yet equally targeted initiative is the She Leads Africa Accelerator which supports female entrepreneurs in the agribusiness, retail and e-commerce, technology, creative arts and beauty sectors by matching them with seed capital and creating opportunities to pitch to investors. The sharp growth in start-ups and entrepreneurs on the continent has also given rise to shared office and co-working spaces like Zambia's Bongo Hive, Rwanda's K-Lab, Ethiopia's IceAddis and Angola's Launchpad. These co-working spaces not only provide office and meeting spaces at affordable rates, but also become innovation hubs which offer opportunities for knowledge and technology transfer, collaboration and the creation of sustainable business eco-systems.

While private sector, donor and civil society stakeholders are increasingly coming on board to address key inclusive growth concerns like unemployment, African governments remain at the forefront of inclusive and sustainable growth, particularly at the policymaking level. Zimbabwe's Reserve Bank recently launched a social inclusion strategy to help improve women's access to financial services. The Ghanaian government's "one district, one factory" policy is geared at enhancing district level industrialization, encouraging the use of shared industry resources and creating synergies between the private sector and local government. South Africa and Tanzania are two other countries which have pro-poor policies that seek to decentralize industrialization and improve public financial management. On a national policy level, the debate about free basic education is still ongoing. Countries like Namibia

³² TEEP Website: www.tonyelumelufoundation.org/

³³ NYT, 2017: StartUp Bets on Tech Talent Pipeline from Africa: www.nytimes.com/2017/10/10/business/andela-start-up-coding-africa.html

have recorded progress in reducing inequality by focusing on skills acquisition and inclusive education. The South African government's internship program and learnerships have demonstrated some success for the acquisition of administrative and project management skills by both graduates and tertiary students. Targeted and sector-specific policy interventions like Nigeria's Youth Empowerment Scheme have also been instrumental in equipping citizens with skills and jobs and helping reduce poverty. How effective and successful are government attempts at ensuring inclusive growth? These case studies from Liberia, Nigeria and Ghana delve into some of the opportunities, nuances, and challenges.

Case Study: Liberia's Land Commission & Draft Land Rights Act - Government efforts to secure land tenure for smallholders and end land grabbing

An estimated 70% of Liberia's population ascribes to a customary land system, where rights of ownership are granted to a community or members of a community.³⁴ Typically, these communities are rural and impoverished, making land a valuable source of revenue either through its leasing, sale or economic activities like farming. Unfortunately, Liberia's legal frameworks do not currently recognize customary or communal land, thereby robbing millions of Liberians of the right to land ownership. In many instances, rural landowners are regarded as 'squatters' and the government issues contracts on the basis of those lands. In order to address land disputes and ownership issues, a Land Rights Policy was developed and endorsed by the government in 2013. Specifically, allowance was made to ensure favorable

protections for customary land, similar to private land rights: the rights to possess, use, be responsible for, identify and define boundaries of customary land.³⁵ In addition to protecting community land, and the rights of individuals and families, the policy advocated protections for women and rural communities, delineating what constitutes private, public, government and customary land.

After inputs from government agencies, ministries, CSOs and key stakeholders in 2014, the Land Rights Policy was converted into a draft Land Rights Act (LRA) for passing into law by the Liberian Parliament. CSOs, government bodies and the public had the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft LRA in 2015 at a public hearing before Parliament during which concerns on the level of consultation, bureaucracy, and concentration of power in the chair of the board of commissioners were brought up. For many Liberians, the final LRA will determine not only whether they can own land, but also how they use land. Recognising customary ownership would provide a legal mandate for rural landowners for negotiating with government on land deals, securing bank loans with land as collateral, and strengthening bargaining power with private companies. A unanimous endorsement of the draft LRA was announced in April 2016 much to the dismay of the CSO Working Group and its members which expressed fears that the delays would lead to a watering down of the customary land protections proposed.³⁶ There were also calls to ensure that widow inheritance provisions are entrenched in the final bill and that there be checks and balances to ensure that the vetting and appointment process for commissioners is based on merit.³⁷ The hope

³⁴ Land Rights Act Must Protect Rural Landowners: www.liberianobserver.com/news/land-rights-act-must-protect-rural-landowners-global-witness-2/

³⁵ Land Rights Act; <http://rightsriceliberia.com/program/governance/land-rights-act>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.



Woman cleaning and sorting tomato fruits prior to selling at Ijaye market, Oyo State, Nigeria. Credit: International Institute of Tropical Agriculture/Flickr via Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

that many have placed in the draft LRA seems unstable as pressure mounts to enact the draft bill into law, despite the fact that the final version of the LRA under consideration has not been released into the public domain or made available to key stakeholders.

Case Study: Nigeria's Tomato Sector Policy - Government support to tomato farmers for value addition

President Muhammad Buhari's administration is building on efforts at enhancing Nigeria's agricultural sector with the introduction of the Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP) 2016-2020 which replaces the Agricultural Transformation Agenda Policy 2011-2015 (ATA) initiated by President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. The smooth transition from the ATA to the APP signals strong political will and continuity in

addressing pressing agricultural and developmental issues in the West African nation. Specifically, the APP aims to tackle food security, the creation of import substitution industries and agro-allied jobs, as well as economic diversification, in order to create an "agribusiness economy capable of delivering sustained prosperity".³⁸

As part of its response, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment Development, in consultation with key stakeholders, introduced a new Tomato Sector Policy in April 2017 that positions tomatoes as a 'prioritized domestic crop' from 2016-2018.³⁹ Demand and supply of fresh tomatoes are about 2.45 million metric tonnes and 1.8 million metric tonnes per annum respectively, and an estimated \$170million goes towards importing 150,000 metric tonnes of tomato into Nigeria each year.⁴⁰ Using a mix of price, trade and investment instruments, the new policy seeks to increase domestic tomato and tomato concentrate production, while reducing post-harvest losses which currently stand at about 40% of tomatoes produced.⁴¹ Government-supported extension services will be made available to tomato farmers, while tomato processors can take advantage of import subsidies on greenhouse technologies and processing equipment. However, not all is rosy: good policy intent has been met with a number of roadblocks as seen in the case of a tomato processing factory launched by Nigerian magnate Aliko Dangote's company.

The Dangote Group's decision to set up Nigeria's biggest and most technologically advanced tomato factory reads as a plausible 4billion naira (\$12.74 million) investment, partly financed by

³⁸ The Green Alternative: <https://fmard.gov.ng/the-green-alternative/>

³⁹ Federal government approves new policy to boost local production of tomatoes: <http://blog.deloitte.com.ng/federal-government-approves-new-policy-to-boost-local-production-of-tomatoes/>

⁴⁰ Stakeholders Laud Nigeria's Tomato Policy Framework: www.invest-nigeria.com/stakeholders-laud-nigerias-tomato-policy/

⁴¹ Action-Focused Workshop Engaged Private Sector on Post-Harvest Loss & Value Chain Potential: www.igdleaders.org/action-focused-workshop-engaged-nigerias-private-sector-reducing-post-harvest-loss-unlocking-potential-nigerias-tomato-value-chain/

the World Bank. With 400,000 tons of tomato paste imported into Nigeria annually, the demand is clear. Signing on 5,000 farmers to provide tomatoes above market price creates job and revenue earning avenues. Heeding President Buhari's call to 'produce what we eat', also frees up money in the national purse. And yet, the factory has largely been non-operational since it opened in March 2016. The farmers' lack of quality seeds, agricultural inputs and machinery; limited knowledge of good production practices; poor handling and distribution due to weak road networks; unreliable power and water supply; and the non-existence of functional storage facilities highlight, yet again, the chicken-egg conundrum that plagues development efforts. Even with a well-meaning government, financing, waivers and a carefully thought out policy and implementation strategy, the road to food security and self-sufficiency is long and hard.

Beyond long-term elements like sound infrastructure and strong integrated value chains, the everyday elements of starting and operating a tomato processing factory need addressing. Tomato Jos, an agricultural production company established in 2014, seems to have already figured this out. The company raised \$55,158 online with the backing of about 630 people to pursue its mission of helping "Nigerian farmers make awesome tomato paste!".⁴² Today, Tomato Jos runs a farm in Panda, Nasarawa State, not far from Jos and is supporting smallholder tomato farmers in producing market-ready tomato paste by providing crucial elements like education, bundled inputs, logistics and supply chain support, and a food processing facility.⁴³

The Rockefeller Foundation and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition offer similar

services through their YieldWise Food Waste Initiative and Post-Harvest Alliance for Nutrition (PLAN) respectively, by providing plastic crates for transporting tomatoes in lieu of raffia baskets commonly used. The leasing of returnable plastic crates for packaging has proven successful for PLAN, which has reduced damaged or poor-quality produce in its supply chains by 17%.⁴⁴ Other innovative initiatives which could be supported and scaled up to reach vulnerable farming communities while addressing multiple SDGs include the use of seasonal tomato packing houses for longer shelf life as done by ZZ2⁴⁵ in South Africa; solar-powered cold storage rooms by Nigerian company Cold Hubs;⁴⁶ and the Zero Energy Cool Chamber,⁴⁷ used primarily in countries like Sri Lanka and India. Built with simple materials like bamboo, sand and bricks, the Zero Energy Cool Chamber is a low-cost technology used to store fruits and vegetables at cooler temperatures.

Case study: Ghana's "Planting for Food and Jobs" (PFJ) Campaign – Prospects and challenges getting sufficient extension officer support

Launched in April 2017 by Ghana's President Nana Akufo Addo, the Planting for Food and Jobs campaign is a five-year program that builds on previous policies to improve food productivity and security in Ghana, and ultimately reduce the country's food import bill. Dubbed by the government as a "clarion call on every single Ghanaian",⁴⁸ the campaign hinges on five key elements, namely: supply of improved and subsidized seeds to farmers; supply of subsidized fertilizers to farmers; provision of free, dedicated extension services to

⁴² Tomato Jos Kickstarter: www.kickstarter.com/projects/599756125/tomato-jos-making-tomato-paste-in-nigeria

⁴³ Tomato Jos: www.tomatojos.net/what-we-do/

⁴⁴ Sahel Newsletter: http://sahelcp.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Sahel-Newsletter-Volume-15_Tomato.pdf

⁴⁵ ZZ2: <http://zz2.biz/governance/natuurboerdery-nature-farming/?lang=en>

⁴⁶ Coldhubs: www.coldhubs.com/#home-section

⁴⁷ On-Farm Technology Can Save Energy and Raise Farm Income: <http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/files/datastore/234-2143.pdf>

⁴⁸ Planting for Food and Jobs overview: http://mofa.gov.gh/site/?page_id=15114

farmers; creation of marketing opportunities for post-harvest produce; and the development of an e-agriculture and monitoring platform. The long-term development goals of the policy are to support an estimated 2.5 million farmers,⁴⁹ modernize agriculture and address youth employment in Ghana. An amount of GHS 560million (approximately \$140 million) has been made available to support implementation of the first phase of the campaign, which targets improved yields of maize, rice, soybeans, sorghum and vegetables. In addition to supporting and working with an estimated 250,000 farmers, the PFJ anticipates the creation of 750,000 jobs and the generation of GHS 1.3 billion during the pilot.⁵⁰ The PFJ is being supported by international partners and donors including the Canadian government (CAD \$ 125 million over five years); the World Bank (US \$50 million for the pilot); and USAID's Feed the Future initiative.⁵¹

With only 2,600 extension officers in employment, Ghana has a deficit of about 1,400 extension officers for meaningful coverage⁵² despite the fact that an estimated 5,000 recently graduated extension officers are unemployed. In order to bridge this gap, about GHS 32 million (about \$8million) has been allocated to the recruitment, training and employment of 3,200 extension officers and assistants by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in partnership with the

Youth Employment Agency.⁵³ Each extension officer would provide services to about six farmers on average.⁵⁴ In addition to creating job opportunities and ensuring salaries for active extension service officers, the PFJ hopes to provide important agricultural support to farmers in Ghana's 216 districts. About 70% of active extension service officers are due for retirement by 2021.⁵⁵ Hence, the PFJ is considered an instrument for building agricultural knowledge and skills base for the future.

Barely a year since its launch, the PFJ's key proponents are heralding its milestones. Think tank IMANI lauds the campaign's focus on extension services delivery and the desire to create a local fertilizer industry. During the national budget report, the Finance Minister stated that over 2500 agricultural extension personnel have been recruited to register and provide extension services across Ghana,⁵⁶ including 822 under the Youth Employment Agency.⁵⁷ The Ministry of Agriculture also estimates that about 745,000 jobs have been created in total, including 'unofficial jobs' in the informal sector, alongside the electronic registration of over 34,000 farmers of the 200,000 registered under the campaign.⁵⁸ Farmers registered under the campaign apparently generated GHS1.2 billion through their crop yields.⁵⁹ While the level of impact reported by government sounds encouraging, many

⁴⁹ Farmers to Benefit from first phase of PFJ: www.myjoyonline.com/news/2017/April-14th/250000-farmers-to-benefit-from-first-phase-of-planting-for-food-and-jobs.php

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ghana's Agric Policy since 1960: www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/media-center/features/3802-ghana-s-agric-policy-since-1960-planting-for-food-and-jobs-the-new-baby

⁵² Recruitment of extension officers for PFJ: www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/news/201702/307280.php

⁵³ IMANI report: www.imaniafrica.org/2017/07/09/imani-report-highs-lows-governments-planting-food-jobs-campaign-recommendations/#_ftn15

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Recruitment of extension officers for PFJ: www.peacefmonline.com/pages/local/news/201702/307280.php

⁵⁶ 745,000 unofficial jobs created under PFJ: <http://citifmonline.com/2018/02/02/745000-unofficial-jobs-created-under-planting-for-food-minister>

⁵⁷ 2018 Budget – 2700 employed under PFJ: www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/2018-Budget-2-700-employed-under-Planting-for-Food-and-Jobs-600819

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Farmers Made GHS 1.2 billion in PFJ: www.myjoyonline.com/news/2018/february-2nd/farmers-made-12bn-in-planting-for-food-and-jobs-program.php

remain sceptical, with some accusing the government of inflating numbers. Other reported milestones include the distribution of seeds; identification of dams for the One-Village-One-Dam irrigation initiative; the establishment of a task force for assessing warehouse and storage facilities rehabilitation needs; and the creation of market opportunities and institutional linkages for farmers.⁶⁰

Milestones notwithstanding, the PFJ campaign has come under heavy criticism from key stakeholders including academia, agricultural experts, policy specialists, CSOs and farmers. Key criticisms put forth by IMANI are the lack of an implementation strategy to guide the rollout of the campaign; little mention of financing support to farmers; and the absence of technology-oriented solutions.⁶¹ In their assessment report, IMANI also questions the effectiveness of targeting farmers who are already active in the sector and challenges the government to extend crucial farmer support services to the entire country. Elements like the five-acre requirement for joining the campaign were also highlighted and appear to have been addressed. Overall, IMANI seems sceptical about the feasibility of achieving the PFJ's objectives and long-term goals with mechanizing agriculture, particularly since the framework for implementation, monitoring and innovation seems absent.

Beyond its strategic deficiencies, there have been reports of logistical challenges, primarily delays, in the payment of arrears for the supply

of seeds⁶² as well as the non-payment of allowances of extension service personnel.⁶³ The Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG) has also approached government with complaints about delays and quality of inputs distributed⁶⁴ as well as questions about the effectiveness of the PFJ's extension service framework which focuses on training new officers in lieu of addressing the lack of logistics for existing extension officers.⁶⁵ There have also been calls for more public education on the PFJ so as to ensure that citizens play an active role in its attempt to revolutionize agriculture in Ghana. With all these issues, many are already challenging the milestones and numbers presented by the government regarding the PFJ campaign's success thus far.

While there has been a considerable amount of critique and doubt cast on the PFJ campaign, there has been an equal measure of suggestions and recommendations on how to improve the policy for maximum impact in Ghana's agricultural sector. For instance, the lack of awareness or interest in the campaign by the general Ghanaian population calls for more concerted efforts at explaining the concept, outlining the processes for implementation, and highlighting the role of key stakeholders.⁶⁶ In this respect, strategic and continuous consultation with stakeholders like the PFAG could potentially help in fine-tuning elements of the campaign and policy and avoid major project setbacks. As emphasized by

⁶⁰ 2018 Budget – 2700 employed under PFJ: www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/2018-Budget-2-700-employed-under-Planting-for-Food-and-Jobs-600819

⁶¹ IMANI Report: www.imaniafrica.org/2017/07/09/imani-report-highs-lows-governments-planting-food-jobs-campaign-recommendations/

⁶² Govt to pay seed suppliers under PFJ: <https://citifmonline.com/2018/02/04/govt-to-pay-seed-suppliers-under-planting-for-food-and-jobs/>

⁶³ YEA agricultural extension officers demand unpaid allowances: <http://citifmonline.com/2017/11/21/yea-agric-extension-officers-demand-unpaid-allowances/>

⁶⁴ Address loopholes in PFJ: www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/business/Address-loopholes-in-Planting-for-Food-and-Jobs-Peasant-Farmers-to-government-622878

⁶⁵ Over 2000 personnel employed for PFJ: <http://citifmonline.com/2017/07/08/nss-over-2000-personnel-deployed-for-planting-for-food-and-jobs-policy/>

⁶⁶ Agric Economist calls for education on Planting for Food and Jobs: www.ghananewsagency.org/science/agric-economist-calls-for-education-on-planting-for-food-and-jobs-127630



Phone charging, Ghana. Credit: Carsten ten Brink/Flickr via Creative Commons (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

IMANI, there is ample opportunity to incorporate technology into the agricultural sector and encourage innovation, either through hackathons – day-long events aimed at creative problem solving using technology – or the provision of simple technologies like internet kiosks or mobile information services by start-ups like [Farmerline](#). These will enable farmers to benefit from e-extension services for increased productivity.⁶⁷ These will not only make farmers more productive with their yields, but also help increase their revenues and reduce poverty and vulnerability.

D. Technological Innovation

An estimated 76% of Africans had access to telephone services in 2016, with the majority being mobile connections.⁶⁸ Technology and innovation serve as catalysts for human progress, and in recent times, the proliferation of new technologies in areas like ICT, health care, and the environment have succeeded in not only improving livelihoods, but in some cases, have

caused nations to leapfrog over decades of trial and error. Nowhere is this more evident than with Africa's adoption and adaptation of mobile technologies and other indigenous technological innovations which are helping overcome barriers to SDG-related progress.

WinSenga (Uganda): Students at Makerere University Uganda developed an app that matches smartphone technology with the pinard horn, which has been in use for over 100 years to monitor the heart rate of unborn babies. [WinSenga](#) is an alternative diagnosis tool that is accurate and affordable for use in often hard to reach regions of the country. Monitoring pregnancy and labor is key in Uganda where about 13 women die daily from pregnancy related complications. This app makes monitoring pregnancies and childbirth/labor easier and faster for health workers. Innovations like WinSenga are key for African countries to overcome challenges of delivering healthcare to underserved communities.

MPesa (Kenya): M-PESA was launched in 2007 and the mobile money technology has become the payment method of choice across Kenya and many African countries. This has had an impact especially due to financial exclusion by formal bank systems. There's evidence that the use of mobile money increases the use of formal savings accounts and allows for more effective risk sharing. Mobile money services are now available to 1.9 billion people globally. At the end of 2015, 2.5 billion people across the developing world were accessing the internet through mobile devices; this trend is set to increase by more than 1.3 billion by 2020. According to a May 2017 [UN press release](#), "Electronic identification and payment systems can support the rolling out of social protection floors, fight corruption, and enhance synergies with other means of eradicating poverty."

⁶⁷ IMANI Report: www.imaniafrica.org/2017/07/09/imani-report-highs-lows-governments-planting-food-jobs-campaign-recommendations/

⁶⁸ African Development Effectiveness Report 2016: www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Development_Effectiveness_Review_2016/ADER_2016_-_01_Executive_summary__En_.pdf

MPedigree (Ghana): MPedigree uses mobile phones to secure pharmaceutical products against counterfeiting. They have also expanded into the textile and cosmetics industries in Nigeria and Ghana. Founded in 2007 by Ghanaian entrepreneur Bright Simons, mPedigree has now expanded operations to 12 countries. MPedigree sells software that manufacturers use to label individual packs of medication with a random 12-digit code hidden under a scratch-off rectangle on the packaging thus identifying counterfeit drugs. A report by the World Health Organization shows that 700,000 people are killed globally every year following consumption of counterfeit medicines, with Africa contributing 100,000 of these fatalities. An estimated 1 in 10 medical products in low- and middle-income countries is substandard or falsified. Technologies like mobile money and mPedigree also have a commercial value as they contribute to African government cost cutting. In the case of mPedigree it has helped countries reduce loss of funds to counterfeit drugs and goods.

E. Steering Investment Towards Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Foreign direct investment to Africa has declined since 2014, however at an estimated \$59billion, it is still an important sourcing of financing for most countries.⁶⁹ This is especially true for Angola, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana and Ethiopia which together account for 57% of the total FDI inflows the continent received in 2016. While donor agencies and development partners play a crucial role in bridging Africa's resource gap, questions remain on their priorities and interest in Africa. However, it is important to note that the majority of foreign investors in Africa are

multinational companies. The necessity of global accountability frameworks as captured by SDG 16 cannot be underestimated. A rethink of who catalyzes growth will be useful in not only determining where investments go, but how they are used. The ideal objective would be to transform Africa's relationship with its investors and partners into a "win-win" while emphasizing transparency and accountability.

The SDGs present an opportunity to re-examine the role of investment partners in emerging sectors: renewable energy, intellectual property, local content targets in trade, and extractives. As it stands, it is not always clear who is financing what or what the rules of engagement are when there is a mix of private and public funds. Donors and investors should strive to understand what the needs are on the ground and align their investments, programs and financing accordingly to maximize opportunities for inclusive growth. It is also important that African governments hold companies accountable to national laws.

African governments are exploring possibilities for sustainable investment and innovative green funding mechanisms like green bonds and carbon credits which would not only interest investors, but also ensure that national sustainable development priorities remain intact. South Africa's green fund is a promising venture in this regard. As part of its formulation, the South African government is undertaking a series of studies to analyse green economy trade, the market potential of various green technologies and which partnerships will be most strategic for achieving its goals. Rwanda's Green Fund FONERWA is already claiming progress in its push for green growth since its creation in 2012. Some notable achievements include the creation of an estimated 136,000 green jobs, offering opportunities for women;⁷⁰ technical training for over 700 stakeholders;

⁶⁹ UNCTAD (2017) Foreign Direct Investment To Africa Fell By A Moderate Three Per Cent In 2016, Says UN Report. Press release. <http://unctad.org/en/pages/PressRelease.aspx?OriginalVersionID=408>

⁷⁰ FONERWA (2017) Green Rwanda Media Review - 9 December 2017. www.fonerwa.org/blog/%E2%80%8Bgreen-rwanda-media-review-9-december-2017

and the restoration of lands and over 19,000 hectares of watersheds and water bodies. Besides global partnerships, public-private partnerships can play an integral role in advancing and financing sustainable development efforts. A youth employment program spearheaded by the South African government, labor and private sector stakeholders seeks to provide 1 million internships over the course of three years. Ethiopia is working towards middle-income status by investing in ICT development in education; the Ministry of Education recently entered a \$20 million partnership with a company to set up 300 secondary schools and 10 universities.

There are also public-private partnerships between donors, academia, foundations, companies and investors to build local capacity and help accelerate high impact business, social and environmental sustainability solutions. One such initiative is the Climate Business Innovation network spearheaded by the World Bank and partners to “support developing countries in their transition to clean energy and other climate-smart paths”.⁷¹ The network offers access to global sources of technology, finance and expertise, and features over 30 partners in 12 countries, 8 of which are African - Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, and South Africa. In Kenya, the Kenya Climate Innovation Centre helps secure financing of between \$100,000 to \$1million for green SMEs working in areas like sustainable farming, water management and green technology. With its partners in Malawi, the network has helped support SME development and inclusive business projects focused on innovations like commercialising micro-hydro power and mango fruit farm development and value addition. A by-product of such

partnerships is shared knowledge on best practices for scaling and replication. The Green Climate Fund, a global fund initiated in 2010 by the 194 countries under the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change, has secured over US \$10 billion since 2014. Should member countries and partners keep their promises by way of investment and disbursement, it could become a key source of grants, loans, equity and investment to new markets interested in exploring and developing green economies.

Beyond working in communities, CSOs serve as a link between the public and private sectors and contribute to holding both accountable. Many NGOs and CSOs focus on issues pertaining to the demand for services, yet there is also a need to buttress mechanisms for holding governments accountable, especially when it comes to investment and delivering services. Organizations like the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) work closely with civil society and marginalized groups on issues like economic governance and local health and education service delivery. On the investment front, CSOs have also been integral in raising the alarm on less than transparent business, projects or investment. A recent example involves the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), an Africa-led initiative conceived during the COP21 climate summit in Paris in 2015. With a focus on transforming energy systems and improving coordination of financial flows, AREI aims to help accelerate the provision of access to renewable energy across Africa while reducing greenhouse gases. Specifically, the multi-donor finance initiative hopes to double Africa's existing power generation capacity to 300 GW by 2030.⁷² The need for a project like AREI is clear, however concerns over the lack of transparency in selecting beneficiary projects, conflict of

⁷¹ World Bank Group Launches Climate Business Innovation Network: www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/11/16/world-bank-group-launches-climate-business-innovation-network

⁷² The long road to implementing AREI: www.germanclimatefinance.de/2017/11/07/long-road-implementing-africa-renewable-energy-initiative-arei/

Use of technology to improve government accountability

Citizens are using new platforms to make their voices heard and demand inclusion in the governance of resources as well as development processes. Some innovations are enabling governments to track their spending, others make it easier for citizens to follow government promises and budgets in order to better hold their authorities to account. Here are a few:

TRAC FM - This SMS-based polling platform facilitates citizen engagement with interactive radio programs in Uganda and Somaliland through data collection and a radio broadcast of the mapped poll results. It shows how media innovation can bridge the gap between the leaders and the governed to enhance accountability. Listeners respond to the radio polls by sending an SMS message to a toll-free short code. The TRAC FM system responds with a reply and a subscription request. The software automatically collates the responses, creates near real-time bar-chart data visualizations and plots the respondents' locations on an online map. The radio presenter can then share the results with listeners and use the data to formulate questions for guests including experts and politicians or the relevant authorities. The system also keeps a log of all the users and their responses and locations, which is used by TRAC FM in their demographic research and creation of user profiles.

BudgIT Nigeria uses information technology to release budget information at the federal, state and local levels on a quarterly basis. It fills a crucial gap in ensuring inclusive governance by employing technological innovation to break down complex data for easy consumption by citizens. The organization has helped localize global standards in over 15 public institutions, including the National Assembly's Budget and Research Office.

Ghanaian non-profit **Odekro** helps make governance more transparent and accountable by harnessing technology to create a national platform for accessing parliamentary and legislative tools. By publishing profiles of members of parliament and monitoring their engagement in the law-making process, Odekro also helps demystify the notion that citizens are not part of the governance process.

A number of national initiatives have sprung up for tracking the promises of leaders in the form of **"Presidential meters"**, including the Mackymetre (Senegal), Buharimetre (Nigeria), Presimetre (Burkina Faso) and Lahidi (Guinea).

interest from donor involvement in operations, as well as the weakening of African sovereignty and ownership stalled the initiative. CSOs not only succeeded in gaining observer access to AREI meetings, but also shed light on the need for clear organizational structures, processes, and leadership to ensure that the billions already pledged are used effectively and with Africa's interests in mind.⁷³ Through the work of civil society actors like the Green Economy Coalition which works with partners in countries

like Gambia, Senegal and Ivory Coast, attention has been called to the fact that initiatives like the UN's Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) program could actually promote non-green practices. Already, there have been reports of land, or green, grabbing and citizen displacement in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. The exploitation of vulnerable groups like rural farmers, and apparent "multi-generational

⁷³ Ibid.

carbon slavery” of families in Mozambique under the program has also been highlighted thanks to CSOs and the media. CSOs also draw on research from initiatives like the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) to hold their governments accountable and address issues like corporate social responsibility in a

collaborative manner. As African governments and stakeholders figure out what investment options will lead to significant gains, it is important to ensure that participatory natural resource management and development are kept a priority.

Accountability and transparency for transformative governance

Accountability and transparency are considered integral parts of democracy -- of governance which keeps citizens at the centre. While the majority of African nations proclaim democracy as their system of governance, a lot remains to be done in empowering citizens to play their role in ensuring that African leaders act as stewards of their countries and its resources. This requires making information accessible to citizens, demonstrating how country resources are being allocated and used for development, creating platforms for tracking country commitments on regional and global engagements like the SDGs and Agenda 2063, and providing the right administrative, legal and judicial structures and instruments for ensuring compliance and accountability.

A. Making Information Available to Citizens

Assuring access to information depends on having effective legal structures and information access laws and instruments in place. In this respect, African countries can be loosely grouped into three: i/ governments that have passed comprehensive information access laws, ii/ governments that have developed laws but are yet to put them into effect and iii/ governments that have not yet developed any comprehensive laws on enhancing transparency and accountability.

The process of passing information access laws can be an arduous one, especially if political will is lacking. Even when government, parliament, and other political actors are involved, issues like technical capacity and citizen education can prove to be hurdles during implementation. For instance, Sierra Leone which enacted its Right to

Access Information act in 2013, faces challenges in implementation. In Sierra Leone's case, a commission with weak capacity makes for poorly engaged citizens. By building capacity, relevant stakeholders are empowered with the mandate, skills, knowledge and tools needed to actually implement policies, laws and projects. It is important to bear in mind that legal processes take time. A good practice to adopt in countries with no formal legal structures is to leverage alternative avenues, like village or town meetings, through which transparency and accountability can be assured. It may also be that legal avenues already exist and can be exploited. A useful example is Article 21(1)(f) of the Ghanaian Constitution which guarantees citizens' right to information. In the absence of an approved Right to Information bill, it has become the basis on which journalists, CSOs and other stakeholders can request information.

The importance of consistent and timely dialogue between government and its citizens should not be underestimated. Non-formal structures like forums, traditional and digital media can prove useful in bridging divides, especially in rural areas where illiteracy can be a barrier to accessing information. It is essential that information is not only accessible but understood by the average citizen; hence the right medium (language) would have to be considered per the context of a country or community.

Although there are policies to guide freedom of expression and information in Africa, a mixed picture is presented when one takes a closer look at progress so far in legalizing and implementing freedom of information (FOI). Between 2004 and 2014, a total of 7 African countries passed FOI laws; bringing the total number of countries

which made it legal for citizens to exercise their right to know to 11.⁷⁴ However, the majority of African governments are yet to draft or pass laws ensuring transparency and accountability where government affairs are concerned. While Liberia was the first West African country to pass its FOI law in 2010, civil unrest and weak legal institutions have stalled implementation of the law. Liberia's neighbor Ghana is often heralded for its free media and strong democracy, yet the Right to Information (RTI) Bill which was presented to Parliament in 2011 is yet to be passed. Indeed, many of the countries with FOI laws face significant challenges with implementation, including lack of technical capacity and legal expertise, poor monitoring and oversight structures, lack of political will and fears of insecurity and mass-casualty terrorism with the availability of public information.⁷⁵

Challenges notwithstanding, some strides have been made. An innovative judicial studies program with a pan-African faculty was launched in Nigeria in 2014 to build capacity for resolving disputes on disclosure and exemptions, alongside a [FOI Act website for regular reports](#). The Southern African Development Community is working on mainstreaming FOI into the economic community's protocols, while the African Union has provided a FOI template for adaptation by countries. Ghana is yet to pass its RTI bill, but citizen and pressure group Occupy Ghana successfully used the constitution to petition the Supreme Court on the Auditor-General's reluctance to issue disallowance and surcharges of state monies spent illegally; a [suit found in their favor](#).

Access to information is at the heart of development. There is a correlation between poverty, access to information and opportunities, and lack of government data makes it difficult for citizens to hold states accountable on their

development processes and duties. Open data can help achieve the SDGs by providing critical information on natural resources, government operations, public services, and population demographics. It is key to improving efficiency and effectiveness of public services as well as increasing transparency, accountability and citizen participation. Open data contributes to improved governance by exposing and preventing mismanagement and corruption.⁷⁶

A number of organizations, such as the Open Society Initiatives for Southern, West, East and North Africa, work at creating environments where governments are required to provide information to the public, whether demanded or otherwise. This, in turn makes the work of organizations like data visualization and civic technology firm [OroData](#) and open contracting advocates [Budeshi](#) more effective. As technological access improves across Africa, the opportunities for e-governance initiatives with multi-stakeholder support will grow. Liberia has already taken steps in this regard with its Open Budget Initiative.

Case Study: Liberia's Open Budget Initiative

Liberia is working to make budget information more accessible to its citizens with the Open Budget Initiative. Information on budget lines, projections, disbursements to counties and contributions to national income can be found on a billboard in front of the Ministry of National Planning and Development in the nation's capital. Working with CSOs and the media, the government is also raising citizen awareness on the budget and other development concerns outside the capital through a citizen guide to the national budget. The document, distributed with t-shirts and other promotional items, includes details of the national development plan;

⁷⁴ Making Progress on Freedom of Information in Africa: www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/making-progress-freedom-information-africa

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ World Bank IC4D Blog, 2015: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/ic4d/sustainable-development-goals-and-open-data>

highlights on the SDGs and Agenda 2063; 11 sector budgets; fiscal year priorities and the country development fund in simple, everyday English. An online SMS portal was also set up to allow citizens to request information via mobile phone but it has since gone offline due to technical difficulties. Organizations like the Centre for Accountability and Transparency in Liberia are taking things “one step beyond open budget” by providing additional information on expenditures and processes leading to spending. With a score of 36, Liberia is classified by the Open Budget Index as providing only “minimal budget information”. Key recommendations for improving transparency, oversight and public participation include publishing in- and mid-year reports online; ensuring the supreme audit institution is well-funded; and organizing legislative hearings on the audit report for the public and CSOs to testify.⁷⁷

B. Transparency and Accountability in Investment

Citizen participation, openness, and responsiveness are key tenets of democratic governance. In recent times, there has been a trend towards African citizens requesting for more accountability from their governments, particularly where inclusive growth and service delivery are concerned. Citizens also come to the table and create impact as development partners through the establishment of CSOs. Initiatives like the Mo Ibrahim Index of Governance and the Afrobarometer are integral to collecting data and measuring public sentiment on issues like public finance, corruption and the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the decision-making process. In Liberia, Accountability Lab's Accountapreneurs (accountability entrepreneurs)

take things a step further by inviting public officials into communities for direct engagement with citizens through creative arts like film festivals, comic books and street theatre. That said, the push for more accountable and democratic governance across Africa is uneven at best. A key determinant is willingness of citizens not only to establish organizations, but also to demand change and action by asking the right questions.

When it comes to investments in natural resources and extractives however, all hands need to be on deck to ensure that both government and international and local partners utilize resources to the benefit of the majority. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is a global framework committed to promoting transparency, government regulation and accountability in the extractive industry through a multi-stakeholder approach. Over 20 African countries have committed to publishing periodic information on extractive sector governance. In Madagascar for instance, the EITI process has resulted in in-depth studies on artisanal and small-scale mining and local transfers for communities – information which could create considerable change for vulnerable populations living in communities where extractive activities take place. Nigeria and Cameroon⁷⁸ are also making headway on improving commodity trade transparency through public information and capacity building.⁷⁹ We take a closer look at the EITI in Liberia and Ghana.

Case Study: Liberia's EITI

In 2009, Liberia became the first African country and the second globally to be part of EITI.⁸⁰ Liberia's extractives industry is composed of the

⁷⁷ Open Budget Index: www.internationalbudget.org/budget-work-by-country/findgroup/group-data/?country=lr

⁷⁸ Eads, C and Kråkenes, A (eds) (2010) Impact of EITI in Africa. Stories from the ground. EITI. <https://eiti.org/sites/default/files/documents/EITI%20Impact%20in%20Africa.pdf>

⁷⁹ Africa using the EITI to its potential: <https://eiti.org/blog/africa-using-eiti-to-its-potential>

⁸⁰ 7th and 8th LEITI Report: www.leiti.org.lr/uploads/2/1/5/6/21569928/leiti_report_7th___8th_summary_final_for_printing.pdf

mining, oil and gas, agriculture and forestry sectors, with the mining sector contributing over half of extractives revenues through iron ore, gold and diamonds, and almost 6% of GDP.⁸¹ By enacting the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) Act and endorsing the creation of an autonomous multi-stakeholder agency, the Liberian government indicated its commitment to transparency and accountability in the mining sector and extractives industry as a whole. Consequently, extractives companies and relevant agencies are required to disclose information on payments and revenues annually. This not only helps reconcile revenue circulation in the industry, but also provides information for due diligence on concession agreements as well as stakeholder advocacy.

Using LEITI data and drawing on Liberia's freedom of information law, the Centre for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia analysed industry trends and produced a report on contract inefficiencies which could potentially impact revenue generation and development at the local and national level. The organization also initiated a series of post-process audits that can be replicated in other African countries as a tool for addressing corruption, resource mismanagement, impunity and demanding corporate social responsibility. That said, there is room for improvement. Currently, the LEITI doesn't examine how revenues from the extractive industry are actually spent since those funds go into the larger development pool. There is also need to enhance legal systems to ensure prosecution where non-compliance with legal requirements is detected, as well as improve timeliness of data reporting. In this regard, Liberia draws on lessons from other EITI member countries.

Case Study: Ghana's EITI

The Ghana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (GHEITI) is currently under suspension due to lack of timely data; however the initiative has had considerable impact since its inception in 2010 in the aftermath of Ghana's oil discovery. Like Liberia, a multi-stakeholder approach was adopted with an 11-member committee representing government agencies, companies, local government and traditional authorities. In addition to providing public insight into revenues from the sector through its reports and an open data dashboard, GHEITI engages in public consultation and debate on spending of extractive sector revenues.⁸² Such engagements have resulted in recommendations for government consideration and some policy reforms, including the introduction of a capital gains tax, higher ground rent for mining and a fixed royalty rate.⁸³ The GHEITI is currently undergoing its second validation process and hopes to continue work on issues like the beneficial ownership disclosure, a safeguard to prevent tax evasion by uncovering shell and paper companies set up by Ghanaian citizens on behalf of multinational companies.⁸⁴

C. Accountability in Tracking SDG Progress

Governance is an integral aspect of sustainable development. It not only puts forth frameworks for policy and decision-making, but also provides mechanisms for accountability and transparency to citizens and other stakeholders. Some measures to ensure strong citizen engagement in tracking SDG progress include advocacy on national SDG priorities, independent monitoring, and collective CSO support for national policy

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² GHEITI 2015 Annual Activity Report: https://eiti.org/sites/default/files/documents/2015_annual_activity_report_-_final_1_0.pdf

⁸³ GHEITI Innovations: <https://eiti.org/ghana#innovations->

⁸⁴ Ghana takes giant stride to beneficial ownership disclosure: <https://eiti.org/blog/ghana-takes-giant-stride-towards-beneficial-ownership-disclosure>

frameworks and regional agendas like Agenda 2063. As an example, CSOs in Sierra Leone are working collectively on a national parliamentary committee on the SDGs which they had advocated for. The civil society in Zimbabwe has also mirrored a set of SDG cluster committees set up by the Zimbabwean government and is working with them to ensure transparency and accountability. Grassroots communities, stakeholder groups and issue-based CSOs also have a role to play. In connection with this, district level capacity building and engagement is important for enhancing awareness of a country's laws. On the regional level, instruments like the African Peer Review Mechanism help challenge African parliaments and legislative actors to monitor progress in democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development.

The legislature, African parliaments, and assemblies have a unique opportunity to help advance the SDGs in their respective countries, particularly when it comes to oversight. It is essential that they not only become conversant with the SDGs, but also gain insight into their linkages with national development instruments. To this end, the Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust (SAPST) trains and assists parliamentary committees in determining how best parliaments can fulfil their oversight role vis-à-vis the SDGs. In Zimbabwe for example, SAPST has advocated for the SDG committee to include all chairpersons of the portfolio committees and ensure that SDGs are mainstreamed across parliamentary committees. Additionally, there are partnerships between relevant committees and CSOs to track critical policy pronouncements and projects.

Case Study: The Pan-African Parliament holds governments accountable on the SDGs

African parliaments have a critical role to play in not only domesticating the SDG framework in their respective countries, but also ensuring that the SDGs' aim of promoting inclusive and accountable, citizen-centred sustainable development is attained. The Pan African Parliament (PAP) and its members have spearheaded and participated in a series of conversations regarding the specific roles and mandates of African parliaments during the SDG process. One recommendation is to ensure harmonization with the African Union's Agenda 2063 to ensure a "thorough integration" with the SDG indicators.⁸⁵ In playing their representative, oversight and legislative roles vis-à-vis the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, African parliamentarians would need to understand and raise awareness on the SDG framework among constituents; assess readiness and ensure political neutrality in domesticating the SDG process; and provide oversight to enhance people's participation.⁸⁶ They also have an important role to play in facilitating domestic resource mobilization; outlining and monitoring budgetary allocations for implementing and reaching targets; scrutinizing national plans to ensure harmonization and domestication of the SDGs, and making and reviewing laws to facilitate implementation at the local, national, regional and continental levels.⁸⁷

A parliamentary framework has been established for monitoring the SDGs and critical issues like environmental sustainability in the context of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, regional and global frameworks that African nations are

⁸⁵ Integrate Agenda 2063 with SDGs: www.panafricanparliament.org/news/268-integrate-agenda-2063-with-sustainable-development-goals-mps-say

⁸⁶ The role of parliamentarians in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: www.together2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/FINAL-Closed-Captioning-May-17-Webinar-Role-of-Parliamentarians.pdf

⁸⁷ Ibid.

signatories to.⁸⁸ Additionally, the PAP will serve as a platform for sharing best practices, lessons and challenges in parliamentary engagement on the SDGs. These include developing common strategies for effective parliamentary engagement, as well as promoting partnerships and collaboration between parliamentarians and key development stakeholders.⁸⁹ To achieve this, the respective committees within the PAP would be expected to monitor progress on the SDGs assigned to them based on their relevant mandate.⁹⁰ As a first step, parliamentarians are undertaking self-assessments⁹¹ in order to gauge the work ahead in ensuring the domestication of the SDGs in their respective countries is people-centred, inclusive and accountable. African parliamentarians and parliamentary committees in Southern Africa benefit from the Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust's training and capacity building in preparation for their oversight role on the SDGs. The Open Society Initiatives also work to ensure district level capacity building and engagement, while the African Peer Review Mechanism provides a complementary framework for challenging and monitoring African parliaments and legislative actors. Domesticating the SDGs and working towards sustainable development is an effort that requires galvanization of all stakeholders at the local, national, regional and global levels.

D. The Role of The Media

Education and access to information are a necessity for monitoring, evaluation, transparency and accountability. Government institutions should be able to deliver information to citizens regardless of whether it is requested or not. The media, often called the

fourth arm of governance, has an essential contribution to make in advancing sustainable growth and accountable governance. In the context of the SDGs, both journalists and the media are integral to raising awareness and sensitizing people about the Goals, their relevance and efforts at the national and local levels. Ultimately, the media and its actors serve as a communication, transparency and accountability bridge for all stakeholders. For this reason, it is imperative that the media be engaged in key processes pertaining to policymaking, social and economic governance. This could be done by training them on reporting about specific elements of the SDGs or equipping them with the tools, mandate and protection to pursue the truth in a manner that is best suited to the environment they find themselves in. For instance, radio is a much more effective than the mobile phone in many African countries when disseminating key information between governments and citizens.

Citizen journalism is another avenue through which important information can be shared with citizens and communities that may not be connected to traditional media. With relatively better access to the internet and free online technologies, many initiatives have sprung up across the continent to monitor and measure the performance of government. For example, Parliament Watch in Uganda offers live minute-by-minute social media updates to foster better understanding on the business of Parliament. Initiatives like Integrity Idol, a reality TV show, take a creative approach to engaging the media in highlighting values that promote transparency and accountable governance in the public service.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ 2016 African Parliamentary Conference on the SDGs: [HTTPS://SDGACTIONCAMPAIGN.ORG/2016/03/15/AFRICAN-PARLIAMENTARY-CONFERENCE-ON-THE-SDGS/](https://sdgactioncampaign.org/2016/03/15/AFRICAN-PARLIAMENTARY-CONFERENCE-ON-THE-SDGS/)

⁹⁰ Report of the Pan-African Parliament Fourth Session (May 2017): www.panafricanparliament.org/hansard/2017-may-session/day03/227-hansard-10-may-2017/file

⁹¹ Parliaments and the SDGs: A self-assessment toolkit: www.ipu.org/resources/publications/handbooks/2017-01/parliaments-and-sustainable-development-goals-self-assessment-toolkit

By investing in and strengthening the capacity of journalists, media and civil society stakeholders to investigate, report, and communicate, more pathways towards greater social inclusion are developed. Access to information and education should however go hand-in-hand, especially since language and income can be barriers to accessing relevant information.

Case Study: Media Foundation for West Africa raising awareness on the SDGs among journalists

Recognizing the role of media in enhancing awareness and implementation of the SDGs, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) has taken various approaches to working with journalists in supporting citizen engagement and government accountability in Ghana. As a member of the national technical SDG steering committee, the MFWA played a significant role in helping Ghana define its priorities for the SDGs. In order to demystify the notion that the SDGs are solely a high-level conversation, the organization has also committed to making people aware, not just of the goals, but also their role as citizens in holding government accountable to their deliverables. In 2016, the MFWA organized a training for about 50 Ghanaian journalists on the SDG framework, targets and methodology, in collaboration with UNDP, UNESCO and the UN Communications Group. The workshop also outlined the journalists' role in informing people about the SDGs and understanding how to report on

development issues. Emphasis was placed on Goal 16, which addresses peace and security, rule of law and good governance as areas on which the media could hold government to account, alongside Goal 10 on inequality. The workshop participants also received micro grants to investigate and report on development issues. As a result, 22 reports were produced on topics related to the SDGs and three journalists awarded. With the success of the first micro grant scheme, a larger SDG reporting call was launched in 2017 leading to the production and broadcast of over 40 relevant stories and five outstanding journalists were recognized. The MFWA's work seems to be paying off – there is already a positive trend in the number of development reports in the Ghanaian media on issues like sanitation and maternal health. Furthermore, more journalists are referencing and providing information on the SDGs in their reports. Nonetheless, a lot remains to be done in raising awareness beyond development stakeholders. For its part, the MFWA is working to help develop SDGsinfo.org, a platform for aggregating and disseminating information on the SDGs. An NGO SDG platform is also being developed by civil society to help improve the availability of development-related information. With the right financial and capacity-building investments, the media will be strengthened to not only provide event coverage, but ground-breaking reporting that holds government accountable and improves lives.

Regional dimensions

As Africa and the rest of the world look ahead to achieving the SDGs by 2030, the importance of truly owning the sustainable development agenda as a pan-African effort cannot be over-emphasized. The legacy of early post-colonial visions for pan-Africanism, like the 1959 Sanniqueli Conference of Heads of States from Liberia, Guinea and Ghana, served as the foundation for the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975. While its goals of economic integration and development have yet to be fully realized, ECOWAS has played a key role in helping Africa clarify its priorities and ambitions, most recently encapsulated in Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 deliberately echoes the SDGs but reflects a distinctively African vision of sustainable development. Like the SDGs did at the global level, Agenda 2063 expands the continent's development priorities from a narrow focus on poverty reduction and economic growth to include all the dimensions of sustainable development. Each of these efforts has been an ardent and necessary call, building on one another for action on poverty eradication, inclusive and sustainable prosperity, pan-African integration, good governance, peace and security, people-centred development and geopolitical advancement. Consequently, the SDGs need to be seen not as the overarching framework for development in Africa but one of several overlapping agendas, from national to regional to international. Countries need to understand where these agendas align and where they may point in slightly different directions or emphasize different issues. Each has value both in terms of reinforcing and supplementing one another.

In order for the linked visions of Pan-Africanism and sustainable development to be realized,

there is an essential need for collaboration. The limited, and ever dwindling, resources also buttress the importance of innovative and cost-effective solutions which are holistic yet nuanced. Regional economic blocs could play a crucial role in helping their respective sub-regions clarify their priorities, supporting and facilitating cross-country experience sharing. For instance, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is already making strides in identifying and aligning the objectives of its member states with the global framework, alongside determining financing mechanisms for implementation⁹² by its development finance institutions. The participation of regional institutions will also be beneficial for national monitoring, especially on the governance and accountability dimensions of the Agenda. At the continental level, the Africa Union and UNECA are working on a joint 10-year implementation framework for the SDGs and Agenda 2063; this will include a regional monitoring framework covering both Agendas. UNECA is also working on building national data management and monitoring capacity for the SDGs. Bearing in mind that sustainable development is people-led, many of these efforts have embedded civil society in their activities. In instances where no seats at the table have been made available, CSOs have galvanized at the grassroots, national and regional levels to demand representation. Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement, especially when it comes to regional partnerships and action on sustainable development.

A key area where a regional approach is essential is in addressing the continent's science, technology and innovation (STI) deficits. On average, African countries invest only 0.4% of

⁹² Banda, L (2017) SADC Development Finance Resource Centre. Report on the Strategy for Implementing SDGs by SADC DFIs. Draft Report. The SADC DFI Network Secretariat. www.adfiap.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/02-20170406-Report-on-the-Strategy-for-Implementing-SDGs-by-SADC-DFRC-CEO-Forum-201701.pdf

GDP in STI, compared to a global average of 2.4%. Limited capacity to invest in STI in many countries has left Africa overly dependent on imported technology, but regional approaches to STI that pool expertise and resources could overcome national constraints. The question of financing is another which is critical not only to Africa's future, but also to untangling African nations from what some consider to be shackles from colonial times. As it stands, donor aid has yet to galvanize Africa's economic transformation on a sustainable level, and some African governments are already surpassing ODA receipts with revenue generated internally. Bright spots aside, the flow of illicit finance and reluctance of international companies to pay taxes remain challenges, particularly in countries where government transparency is more a promise than a reality. Until economic growth strategies are successful, foreign corporations' largely extractive relationship with Africa will continue, robbing local people of their due. Parliamentarians can push governments to act on their SDG commitments and monitor how they do, but they will need tools for doing that effectively. The Pan-African Parliament is working with Parliamentarians to build awareness of their role in accountability on the SDGs. It has designed a set of questions for Parliamentarians to use to find out how much their Ministers know about the SDGs.

Intra-continental trade lies at the heart of Africa's regional integration and economic development. Until 2013, Africa traded mainly with the West. In the last few years however, most of the continent's trading has been with other emerging and developing economies.⁹³ This is reflective, not only of the increased engagement with countries like India and China, but also of the fact that Africans are beginning to look to one another for different products. That said, the

diversification of Africa's exports has been rather slow, due in no small part to industrial challenges in jumpstarting and sustaining manufacturing across the continent. Food for instance, remains a big budget item on Africa's import bill and is expected to reach almost US\$ 110 billion by 2025.⁹⁴ With initiatives like the CAAPD and other projects prioritising investments in agricultural production, agro-processing and agribusiness, Africa does have the opportunity to not only feed itself, but also trade its food products. In order for this to happen however, trade structures, infrastructure and policies need to be enhanced. The continent's annual infrastructure deficit of about US\$ 90 billion must be addressed in order to provide the road networks, ports, airports, and railways that will transport African goods, merchandise and people from one end of the continent to the other. As it stands, only a third of rural Africans have access to a two kilometre stretch of all-season road, compared to two-thirds of their counterparts in other developing regions.⁹⁵ Africa also has the lowest electricity access rate in the world; over 60% of the population have no electricity. Programs like the African Development Bank's 'New Deal on Energy for Africa' will not only power homes, but also businesses, factories, storage facilities and transport hubs that are vital for regional trade. Africa's recently announced US \$3 trillion continental free-trade zone as well as the African passport, hold promise and, at the very least, encapsulate the dreams of pan-Africanism. Practical issues of free movement of persons have yet to be resolved, however with the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, the financial backing and investment necessary, forward-looking policies and the unflinching dedication to ensuring that development is both sustainable and inclusive, Africa stands the chance of unlocking its greatest asset: itself.

⁹³ 2017 African Economic Outlook: www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/outlook/trade-policies-and-regional-integration-in-africa

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Addressing Africa's infrastructure deficit: www.ey.com/gl/en/industries/government---public-sector/dynamics---collaborating-for-growth_addressing-africas-infrastructure-deficit

African countries are grappling with how to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into their national plans and strategies at a time when Africa is undergoing rapid socio-economic change and increasing environmental risk, particularly from climate change. If the SDGs are to make a difference for Africa, they need to offer solutions to the persistent problems of sustaining economic and social progress, in a highly dynamic context. In September 2017, a group of development leaders from around the continent met in Liberia to explore what the SDGs could mean for Africa's future. The discussions focused on progress and challenges in the areas of sustainable and inclusive economic growth and accountable and transparent governance. Participants shared many rich stories and examples, which provide the basis for this research report.

The report offers case studies and examples from throughout Africa on inclusive growth strategies, green economy pathways, reaching the poorest and most vulnerable, citizen engagement, the role of the media and tracking progress on the SDGs. It also looks at how technology, investment and regional cooperation are contributing and can further contribute to achieving the aims of the SDGs in Africa.

The Independent Research Forum (IRF) is a partnership of leading sustainable development research institutes and think tanks, united by a common commitment to sustainable development for improved human wellbeing. IRF's purpose is to offer an independent source of critical thinking, integrated analysis and awareness-raising on issues central to achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The IRF embodies the 2030 Agenda's principle of universality by bringing together expertise and experience from diverse regions and cultural and socio-economic contexts.

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