



# NEPAD NEWS

A monthly publication of the New Partnership for Africa's Development Agency

October 2018

## Hon. Raila Odinga's optimism for Africa's infrastructure

**Johannesburg, October 29, 2018** - "As an Afro-optimist and not pessimist, my message to Africans is that Africa needs to tap into its own potential. The number one issue that we need to tackle is infrastructure," said Honourable Raila Odinga, the High Representative for Infrastructure Development in Africa.

Following his recent appointment as High Representative for Infrastructure Development in Africa by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Hon. Raila Odinga of Kenya made an official visit to the NEPAD Agency in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Hon. Odinga visited the NEPAD Agency to discuss his new continental role, particularly as champion for the upgrading and modernisation of the missing links of the Trans-African Highways Network and the Continental High-Speed Freight Railways Network (C-HSfRN) - two important Infrastructure projects of Agenda 2063 – and its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan.

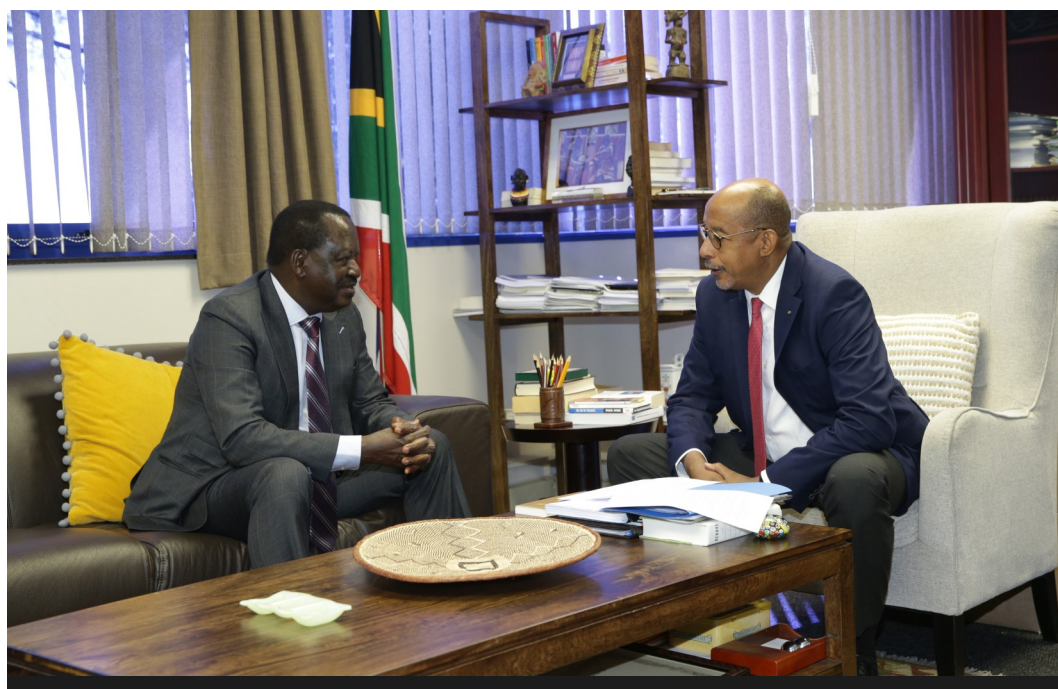
Hon. Odinga's work will be in support of strengthening infrastructure projects undertaken by the African Union Commission and the NEPAD Agency, within the framework of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).

"I am absolutely confident that the High Representative is more than capable in assisting the continent to tackle its infrastructure challenges, since he has the comparative advantage of being technically knowledgeable in this field, and he also has the requisite political backing," Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of the NEPAD Agency said in welcoming Hon. Odinga.

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**"The number one issue that we need to tackle in Africa is infrastructure,"**

**Honourable Raila Odinga, the High Representative for Infrastructure Development in Africa**



L to R: Honourable Raila Odinga, the High Representative for Infrastructure Development in Africa and Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of the NEPAD Agency

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The former Prime Minister of Kenya, Hon. Odinga also previously held the offices of Minister of Energy and Minister of Roads and Public Works. In his new continental role, he will pay particular focused to the missing links along the transnational highway corridors identified as part of the Trans-African Highways Network, with a view to facilitating their development and modernisation. Hon. Odinga has already been involved in providing input into the Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET corridor programme), which is Eastern Africa's largest and most ambitious infrastructure project.

"I believe that African countries should be able to trade freely among themselves through the African Continental Free Trade Area, and the skies should be open through the Single African Air Transport Market," Hon. Odinga said. He added that "For all this to happen, we need to stay focused on the priority infrastructure projects and start with the key ones already identified in PIDA, and Agenda 2063. Having an integrated approach will help us realise quick wins."

Dr Mayaki reiterated that the African Union Commission and NEPAD Agency are delighted with the appointment of Hon. Odinga as the continent's High Representative for Infrastructure, as well as the political will that has been shown. "We are fully committed and ready to support you," he informed Hon. Odinga.

Going forward, the NEPAD Agency-led Technical Working Group, comprising the AUC Department of Infrastructure, foot-print Regional Economic Communities and the Member States of the missing links corridors, will convene a technical review meeting in Sudan on the High Representative's work plan for 2019, slated for 11-13 November 2018, in Khartoum.

To enhance regional integration and trade, two important activities to be discussed by the experts, the High Representative and Regional Economic Community Executives, will be the proposed establishment of a joint corridor coordinating authority for the LAPSSET transport corridor. Deliberations will also focus on support for the upgrading of key missing links, for instance, the Kalundu Port-Uvira-Luberizi road section (along with the Central Corridor), an important 50km road stretch, linking Dar es Salaam port and the Great Lakes region, and beyond.



## **G**ene drive regulatory training for West African biosafety stakeholders

**Dakar, October 18, 2018** – It is estimated that 300 to 600 million people suffer from malaria each year. Gene Drives for malaria control and elimination in Africa will, therefore, go a long way towards eradicating the deadly parasite. Gene Drive technology is one of the emerging technologies recommended by the African Union High Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET). It was adopted at the African Union summit as one of the promising tools that would help eradicate malaria in Africa by 2030.

NEPAD Agency's African Biosafety Network of Expertise (ABNE), in partnership with the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center (DDPSC) organised a consultative and training workshop on the regulatory aspects of Gene Drive technology, from 16 – 18 October in Dakar, Senegal.

This training workshop follows a series of other meetings organised by NEPAD Agency and partners to build the capacities of African biosafety regulators and key stakeholders on Gene Drive technology regulations with a view to implementing and operationalising regional platforms for integrated vector management in Africa.

The objective of the workshop was to develop a good understanding of the basics of the Gene Drive technology and its potential applications in various sectors including health and agriculture and to establish a basis for conducting the risk assessment for decision making on the use of organisms modified with Gene Drive technology. It was also expected that interactions between the workshop participants will help build strong relationships based on trust and confidence for the establishment of functional frameworks for coordinated review of Gene Drive permit applications and collaborative policy development within countries and regionally.

During the meeting, experts from NEPAD Agency, DDPSC, and the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) shared knowledge and experiences on topics relating to the malaria vector control in Africa, the basic science of Gene Drive, the introduction to the use of malaria modelling to inform policy, risk assessment for organisms (plants, animals, insects, and microbes), risk assessment for biological control, Gene Drive regulatory and policy background in Africa. The presentations were followed by practical case studies and exercises that allowed participants to improve their understanding and skills on risk assessment and risk management for the review of the Gene Drive applications.

Participants who attended the workshop were mainly national biosafety stakeholders from Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal and experts from the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU).





The 4 per 1000 Initiative, which aims to increase the soil organic matter content and carbon sequestration by 0.4% annually, can significantly halt the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere

## **4** per 1000 Africa Symposium on Soils for Food Security and the Climate

**Johannesburg, October 26** - The Earth's soils contain about 1,500 gigatons of carbon – that is more than three times the amount of carbon in the atmosphere and four times the amount stored in all living plants and animals.

To avoid the most dangerous effects of climate change, the Paris Agreement recommends limiting global warming to less than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Currently, soils remove about 25 percent of the world's fossil fuel emissions each year.

On October 24-26, the NEPAD Agency and two of its partners the 4 per 1000 Initiative and Regeneration International hosted the first 4 per 1000 African Symposium on soils for food security and climate.

The three-day symposium is a key part of delivering on the 4 per 1000 Initiative's overarching goal to support countries in the formulation and implementation of evidence-based interventions promoting reduced net greenhouse gas emissions through protecting and increasing soil carbon stocks.

"Sustainable food systems start by soils, healthy soils" said Eugene Rurangwa, Land and Water Officer at FAO.

Indeed, soils are very precious for our survival as human beings. 95% of our food comes from soils. A part for being our source of food, the world's soils act as the largest terrestrial carbon sink, reducing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, hence playing a vital role in climate change mitigation.

All actions toward restoring, conserving and improving healthy soils as a major carbon storage system, is critical for both sustainable agriculture productivity and mitigating climate change. This is fundamental and primordial if we need to break the continuous cycle of hunger and poverty and to attain Africa We Want.

"When it comes to fundamental indigenous knowledge and implementation, we need to be more people focussed," said Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, President of 4 per 1000 Initiative and CEO of NEPAD Agency during his open address.

"We strongly believe that the 4 per 1000 Initiative which aims to increase the soil organic matter content and carbon sequestration by 0.4% annually, can halt significantly the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is the major contributor to the greenhouse effect and the climate change, as demonstrated by many experts. And equally important, it would also contribute to sustainable agriculture productivity, through appropriate agricultural practices and methods" stated Dr Paul Luu, 4 per 1000 Executive Secretary.

The 4 Per 1000 Initiative builds on four interlinked pillars: Healthy Living Soils, Food Security, Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change in Africa and Global Climate Change Mitigation.

The initiative encourages applying agro-ecological practices that increase the quantity of organic matter in soils and meet the 4 % target per year. There are 570 million farms in the world and more than 3 billion people living in rural areas who could join the movement to implement these recommended practices. Soil degradation results in a loss of crop production and/or an increase in production costs. As a result, there is a direct link between climate change, soil degradation and food security, especially in many African and developing countries.





## **A**ligning agriculture and food processing policies to enhance healthy sustainable diets

**Rome, October 17, 2018** - For the third year in a row, there has been a rise in world hunger. The absolute number of undernourished people, i.e. those facing chronic food deprivation, has increased to nearly 821 million in 2017, from around 804 million in 2016.<sup>1</sup>

In recent decades, many low- and middle-income countries have undergone a drastic transition in diets and burden of disease. This includes a shift from consuming traditional diets often healthier and nutrient-rich, to a diet that is high in foods that have been transformed and processed in one way or the other, contributing to an increase in overweight, obesity and diet related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in all regions of the world. Food processing itself is not necessarily unhealthy; it is the nature, extent and purpose of processing that is important in terms of nutritional and health consequences.

In several countries, food processing policies and programmes are targeting trans fats, and sodium and sugar to reduce the burden of NCDs. This includes reformulating products that follow relevant nutrient facts and labelling standards, such as on salt, sugars, fats and trans fat content.

On the other hand, many low-income countries are affected by the double burden of malnutrition and still suffer from low intake of key macro- and micro- nutrient elements, such as protein, iron and Vitamin A, which is believed to be a causal factor of key nutrition issues.

The role of food processing and preservation is extremely significant for the stable availability of and access to food items rich in key nutrients both for the rural and urban population through the provision of enriched food items in a more industrialised manner. This includes the promotion of increased use of traditional foods that are often neglected, to improve people's diets.

For food processing strategies to be impactful, they need to be part of the wider agriculture and food system transformation, centered around multi sectoral alignment (agriculture, food, nutrition and health policies) and multi-stakeholder engagement.

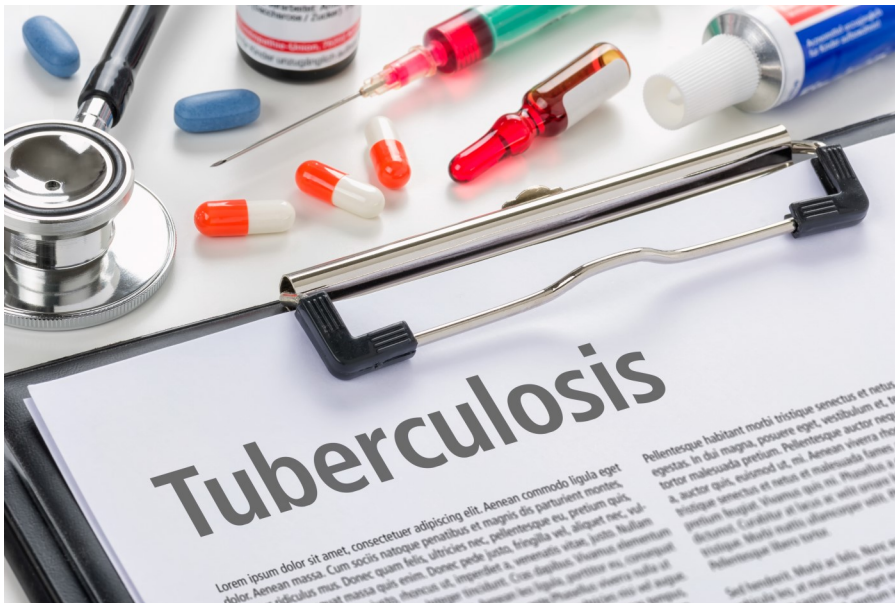
At one of the world's biggest event on food and nutrition security - the Committee on World Food Security, the Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa (IFNA), together with WHO and FAO hosted a side event on "Aligning agriculture and food processing related policies to enhance healthy sustainable diets."

H.E Ambassador Mario Arvelo Caamaño, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the UN Rome-based Agencies gave the opening speech at the event, followed by presentations by Mr Kostas Stamoulis, Assistant Director General, FAO, as well as Mr Hideya Yamada, Vice President for Food, Agriculture and Nutrition, JICA.

Ms Bibi Giyose, Senior Officer-Nutrition and Food Systems at at NEPAD Agency and Ms Mary Mwale, IFNA Focal person from Government of Kenya presented the regional perspective from Africa. The event will presented valuable country experience in the area of agriculture, food processing and transformation policies and programmes, addressing the different forms of malnutrition including undernutrition and overweight and obesity for increased nutrition outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition/en/>





To end TB completely, Africa will need new and sustained financial commitments from the public and private sectors. And, finally, disease-control strategies must be designed to support the economic and health-care priorities of the Regional Economic Communities.

## Winning the war on TB

by Dr Ibrahim Mayaki

The world is finally waking up to the threat posed by one of the most overlooked diseases of our time. Last month, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) hosted the first-ever high-level meeting on tuberculosis (TB) to explore options for international eradication efforts. But, as welcome as this new global focus is, the fact remains that the road to beating TB begins in Africa.

Simply put, TB remains one of the deadliest epidemics in Africa today, and one-quarter of all TB deaths worldwide occur there. In 2016, some 417,000 people on the continent succumbed to the disease. Recent outbreaks of multidrug-resistant TB and extensively drug-resistant TB in South Africa, Mozambique, and Ghana could push the annual death toll even higher. These pockets of the bacterium, now completely immune to antimicrobial treatment, mean that the challenge of global eradication has become even more daunting.

Part of the reason for TB's persistence is the vulnerability of the populations it infects. For starters, TB is among the leading killers of HIV-positive people, claiming some 40% of those who die from HIV. This poses dangers for non-HIV patients as well, especially those with suppressed immune systems, young children, and infants. Eradication is also difficult because TB is a highly contagious airborne bacterium; people living and working in close quarters – such as miners, prisoners, migrants, and refugees – suffer the highest rates of infection. Finally, because TB prevalence is closely linked to poverty and social marginalisation, reaching those most at risk is not always easy.

Infectious diseases have no borders, and as African countries deepen their trade ties and intra-Africa migration grows, the threat of regional pandemics will only increase. This makes it all the more critical that Africa begin developing a multi-sector, integrated approach to containing, controlling, and eventually eradicating public-health challenges like TB.

To this end, one approach that African governments could emulate is the TB management strategy in place for the continent's mining sector, an inter-agency plan devised in 2014 by the Southern African Development Community. Although this so-called "harmonised" approach applies to a commercial industry, its focus on coordinating with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) – African Union states grouped for economic integration – could serve as a model for more effective collective action on TB containment.

But before a specific framework can be agreed upon, three issues require urgent attention. First, African health-care planners and disease specialists must set country, regional, and local containment targets. For example, setting goals for reductions in new TB infections would enable health officials to measure more accurately the impact of their strategies.

Moreover, to end TB completely, Africa will need new and sustained financial commitments from the public and private sectors. And, finally, disease-control strategies must be designed to support the economic and health-care priorities of the RECs. At the moment, most state and regional health-care systems lack funding and human resources. African policymakers must, therefore, develop systems for prevention, diagnosis, and care that help governments share the disease burden and ensure that treatment protocols are consistent across regions.

To be sure, there are some positive trends in the fight against TB. Global infection rates are falling by about 2% annually, and even African countries hit by TB still managed a 4% decline in infections from 2013 to 2017. And, with organisations like the World Health Organization and the African Union beginning to produce roadmaps for TB eradication, it is clear that momentum is steadily building. Still, sustaining this progress in Africa will require significant regional coordination, not to mention a lot more money. Most vaccines and medications are currently too expensive for the majority of Africans. But even those lucky enough to obtain treatment – usually a six-to-an eight-month course of powerful antibiotics – still face a 20% chance of relapse.

The goal of eradicating TB is within reach; the recent gathering at the UNGA marked a critical turning point in the world's war on the disease. But even as commitments are made and declarations signed, we must remember that in Africa, the battle is far from over.



# NEPAD Agency in pictures



NEPAD Agency staff with Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga, High Representative for Infrastructure Development in Africa



Dr Ibrahim Mayaki with Former President of Nigeria at the 18th International Economic Forum on Africa "Shifting Boundaries"



Dr Ibrahim Mayaki at the 18th International Economic Forum on Africa, "Optimal solutions for national challenges are found at a regional level"



Millicent Kgeledi, winner of "Best TV Interviewee" at the African Union communication training in Johannesburg, South Africa



Bibi Giyose (far right) at the Committee on World Food Security in Rome, Italy

## Upcoming Events

- 5 - 8 Nov 2018:** *Contract Negotiation & Fiscal Policies in the Extractive Industries: Regional Dialogue and National Training. Nairobi, Kenya.*
- 19 - 21 Nov 2018:** *1st AU-NEPAD Africa Pharma Conference 2018. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.*
- 26 - 28 Nov 2018:** *2018 PIDA Infrastructure Week. Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.*

For more events visit: [www.nepad.org/events](http://www.nepad.org/events)

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## Announcement



The image shows a screenshot of the NEPAD website homepage. The header includes the NEPAD logo and navigation links: AGENDA 2063, WHO WE ARE, OUR FOCUS, WHERE WE WORK, and WORK WITH US. The main headline reads "NEPAD is transforming into the African Union Development Agency". Below this, a sub-headline states: "During the recent African Union Summit in Nouakchott, Mauritania, African Heads of State and Government approved the establishment of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA). A decision was..." and a "LEARN MORE" button is visible. A large white starburst graphic on the right side of the page contains the text: "It's here! We're pleased to announce the NEW NEPAD Knowledge Portal is now online!".

## It's here! The NEW NEPAD Knowledge Portal is now live!

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new knowledge portal at [www.nepad.org](http://www.nepad.org).

The objective of the portal is to better communicate with our stakeholders and to strengthen knowledge exchange and learning. The site has a fresh new look with clear navigation and a responsive layout for all platforms. We have simplified the content by focussing on our results and achievements in order to increase visibility of our work.

### What's new?

In addition to the changed design and layout, new functions and platforms have been created. These include:

- **Agenda 2063 knowledge portal:** a continental platform for AU Member States to share progress, good practices and success stories in the pursuit of the continent's development agenda
- **Webinars and communities of practice:** to allow countries to engage and co-create knowledge online
- **Scorecards:** to monitor and review progress in the delivery of Agenda 2063

The portal features a variety of knowledge products such as publications, good practices, success stories and policy briefs.

We invite you to explore the new portal and most importantly, we look forward to your contribution.

Your feedback is very important to us as we strive to develop a portal that is valuable to you.

Write to: [Info@nepad.org](mailto:Info@nepad.org)

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