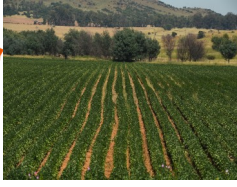


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Top stories this week



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NEPAD Agency's CEO pays a visit to the President of Niger

Niamey, August 4, 2017 - The President of the Republic of Niger, HE Mr Issoufou Mahamadou, received a visit from the CEO of the NEPAD Agency, Dr Ibrahim Hassane Mayaki (former Prime Minister of Niger) on Friday, 4 August.

Dr Mayaki told the press that he had reported to the Head of State on the activities of the NEPAD Agency in Niger. The areas of work by the NEPAD Agency in the country include the restoration of degraded lands, rural youth employment, support for the 3N initiative, Nigériens Nourrissent les Nigériens (Nigeriens Feed Nigeriens) and the human capital programme under development.

The Nigerien government is implementing an ambitious agricultural transformation plan called through 3N Initiative. The initiative addresses issues and reformations in the agricultural, environmental, industrial, and energy sectors. Under 3N, interventions range from providing farmers with technology and seeds to expanding market access and management.

With regards land restoration efforts in the country, the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) goals contribute directly to global restoration and sustainable development commitments. To date, 23 African countries have formally joined the AFR100 Initiative along with several other financial and technical partners. The end goal is to restore 100 million hectares of deforested and degraded landscapes across Africa by 2030.

The CEO of the NEPAD Agency said that he had also received further guidance from President Issoufou Mahamadou on "The prospects for work we will have to develop here in Niger."

Dr Mayaki was in Niger as part of a work mission related to the launch of the National Center for Strategic and Security Studies (CNESS).



L to R: Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, NEPAD Agency CEO and HE Mr Issoufou Mahamadou, President of Niger

Private sector investment is key in boosting Nigerian agriculture

Lagos, August 7, 2017 - More than 50 delegates, including senior government officials from the Ministries of Agriculture and Trade and Industry, representatives from agriculture and food research institutions, the private sector, farmers' organisations and civil society convened in Lagos, Nigeria to discuss how to accelerate private sector investment in the country's agricultural sector.

As part of the operationalisation of the Country Agribusiness Partnership Framework (CAP-F), the Nigeria Private Sector Stakeholder Consultative meeting was organised by Grow Africa in partnership with the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), and the Nigeria Agribusiness Group (NABG). The meeting was convened with the aim of boosting private sector investment in various agricultural value chains in Nigeria. It provided an opportunity for the national agriculture community to familiarise themselves with the Federal Government's priorities and plans for the sector. The delegates also gained knowledge on the government's national agriculture investment plan. The meeting was also designed as a tool to enhance public/private dialogue and identify common solutions to attract private sector investment into agriculture in Nigeria.

"Our objective is to capacitate NABG to undertake value chain analysis and develop business/ investment cases out of this analysis. We will then work with the private sector, both domestic and international, to match investors with those investment opportunities and help negotiate deals between government, farmers and investors which can be announced/signed publicly during the annual Grow Africa Investment Forum," stated the Executive Director of Grow Africa, Mr William Asiko.

On the margins of the meeting, Grow Africa, represented by Mr William Asiko and NABG, represented by its chairperson, Mr Sani Dangote, a memorandum of understanding was signed. The memorandum outlines areas of cooperation between the two organisations in order to stimulate investment into Nigeria's agriculture.

Both parties have identified policies reform, access to inputs, technology transfer and access to finance as zones of cooperation.

According to Mr Dangote, "There is urgent need for private sector stakeholders in agriculture to work together towards growing Nigeria's agriculture, diversifying from oil and gas dependency, encouraging agricultural industrialisation, and creating an enabling environment for agribusiness to thrive. NABG strives to engage government at all levels in setting policy direction and regulatory reforms to enable sustainable inclusive socio-economic growth by creating systematic linkages between small, medium and large agribusiness enterprises."

Below are pictures from the meeting and MOU signing event:



About Grow Africa

Grow Africa works to increase private sector investment in agriculture, and accelerate the execution and impact of investment commitments. The aim is to enable countries to realise the potential of the agriculture sector for economic growth and job creation, particularly among farmers, women and youth. Grow Africa brokers collaboration between governments, international and domestic agriculture companies, and smallholder farmers in order to lower the risk and cost of investing in agriculture, and improve the speed of return to all stakeholders.

About the Nigeria Agri-business Group

NABG is an organized private sector platform working together to grow Nigeria's agricultural economy, creating jobs and lifting millions out of poverty. NABG investment cuts across the value chain from input to output markets, export markets and consumer food manufacturing.

About the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH)

IDH works to convene companies, civil society organizations, governments in public-private sector partnerships to drive sustainability from niche to norm in mainstream markets of which in the case of partnership with Grow Africa focuses on the commodities in the agriculture value chain. These initiatives are geared towards delivering impact on sustainable development goals.

Investing strategically in higher education

Dr Ibrahim Mayaki

The demographic development of Africa poses major infrastructure and equipment problems for our countries. This is particularly true for the education sector. Since nature loathes the void, where states do not or can not accept hundreds of thousands, even millions of students, non-state institutions are set up to fill the gap.

This is true of the growing number of Christian universities or Koranic schools that are more concerned with primary education. For our countries, education of the youth must of course be a priority, but the means, despite a generally strong economic growth, are often lacking. Yet, education is one of the primary human rights. The UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to ensure "access to quality education for all, equality of access, and promoting opportunities for lifelong learning." The increase in enrollment is an undeniable success, especially for girls who are often excluded from school. But this also poses a problem for higher education, which is struggling to welcome those who wish to go further in studying, yet African national universities can not meet the demand. Hence the gap we were talking about earlier.

In the 1950s there were only 41 higher education institutions in Africa with 16,500 students. In 2010, 5.2 million students are enrolled in 668 universities in sub-Saharan Africa, more than double since 2000. Faced with this tidal wave, it is understandable that countries are struggling to cope with demand.

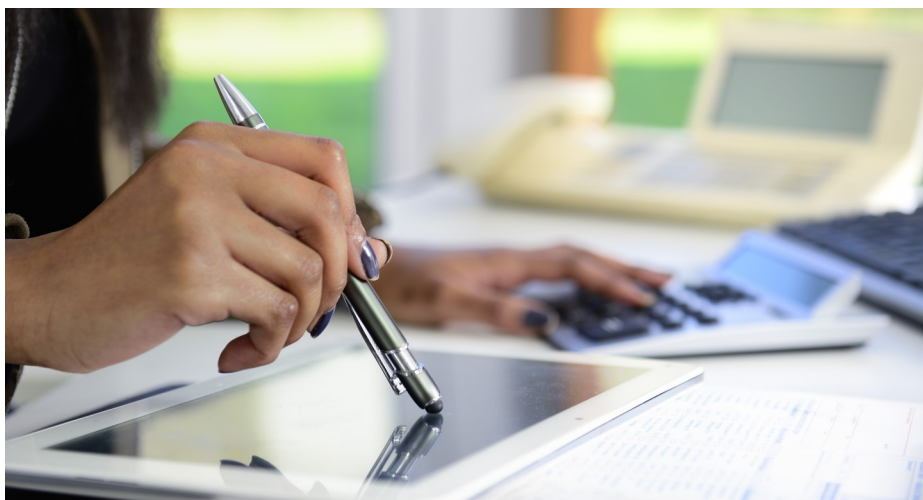
West Africa today, for example, lacks skilled labour for the mining industry or mining engineers, while the region is experiencing an unprecedented mining boom. International mining companies are therefore obliged to call on expatriates for a number of fields of competence, and sometimes at best, they train their West African colleagues to replace them. But the ideal would be to have training institutes, mining schools, for example at the regional level in ECOWAS, which would train young people in those trades which are seeing an increase in jobs opportunities.

The reality nowadays is that private institutions, often linked to religious orders, respond in the place of governments to the needs of higher education. On the other side of the spectrum, this situation of academic indigence also pushes some of the best brains to go abroad, often in the West but also and more and more in some Arab countries and Asia, to further their studies. This adds to the brain drain and skills deficit problem. The example of doctors is probably the most illustrative. This is also true of university professors, who are often discouraged by the lack of resources, recognition, public investment and adequate infrastructure to accommodate ever more students.

African governments have therefore allowed the development of private universities, which are predominantly Christian. In Ghana, for example, there were only two private universities in 1999, and now there are 28. Nigeria has since authorised 61 private institutions since 1999, of which 31 are Christian. This situation raises, of course, the question of State control over higher education both in terms of the content of teaching and the integration of education into a traditional republican culture independent of religious denominations.

With regard to education, the African Union, Agenda 2063 provides that at least 70% of all African high school students have access to higher education, which represents an eight-fold increase in the current rate registration.

To achieve these objectives, our countries will therefore have to invest more in education, in partnership with the private sector. This should go hand in hand with an increase in standardisation of programmes and monitoring of private institutions to define clear training strategies in line with developmental needs.



Enabling a knowledge-based economy led by innovations in Seychelles

Beau Vallon, August 10, 2017 - The National Institute for Science, Technology and Innovation (NISTI) in the Republic of Seychelles, in partnership with key national stakeholders, the Ministry of Education, the National Bureau of Statistics, the University of Seychelles (Guy Morel Institute) and the NEPAD Agency are currently running a training workshop on strategies of creating an enabling environment for a knowledge-based economy led by innovation in Beau Vallon, Seychelles.

During the official opening session, Dr Tichaona Mangwende, Head of Research and Statistics Cluster, NEPAD Agency, reminded participants that Seychelles wants to move from an efficiency driven economy to a knowledge-based economy driven by innovation.

“The training workshop aims to share insights on how much we know about Seychellois’s Innovation System,” Mangwende said. “During the workshop, we needed to ask ourselves if the STI indicators we are busy with are relevant to what matters for Seychelles Socio-economic one development,” Dr Mangwende added.

Mr Hambani Mashilani, Senior Policy Officer at the African Union Commission said during his opening remarks that, “The presence of HE Excellency, the Vice-president among us, is not only very encouraging, but underscores the much-needed high political leadership and championship to push and facilitate the implementation of Africa’s Science, Technology and Innovation Agenda.”

“In 2015,” Mashilani further stressed, referring to the vice president in attendance, “You the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, adopted Agenda 2063, the long-term strategic framework that commits the African continent to deliver on the rising aspirations of its citizens, and to respond to global expectations, especially the SDGs. Action is required from many domains to realize the aspirations of the *Africa We Want!*”

The African continent has 55 countries that are at different development levels, with differentiated capacities - financial, human capital, scientific or technological. Most of the challenges they are facing are complex, interlinked and transcend national boundaries; some cannot be addressed by governments single handedly. Therefore, Science, Technology and Innovation are among the enablers and critical tools needed to collectively address some of these challenges.

““This event takes us to a new phase of a long journey of collaboration between NISTI, NEPAD, ASTII and SANBio Network. This collaboration aims at the development of STI on our continent and more so in our Southern African region,” said The CEO of NISTI, Mr Xavier Estico. He also emphasised that, despite the challenges associated with the R&D and Innovation Survey, NISTI took the initiative to conduct the survey against all odds.

The training workshop was officially opened by Dr Conrad Shamlaye, Chairman of NISTI, and the National Institute for Science Technology and Innovation in Seychelles. On behalf of the National Institute for Science Technology and Innovation, Dr Conrad Shamlaye, welcomed H E the Vice President of Republic of Seychelles, Honourable Vincent Meriton . In his opening remarks, Dr Shamlaye mentioned that NISTI is a very young organisation. “I, therefore, feel humbled and privileged to see so many important people gathered here today, and to stand as a partner with NEPAD and SANBio in organising this meeting and the training workshop to address key elements of science, technology and innovation. And in particular to explore what it takes to promote an enabling environment for a knowledge-based economy and how to translate from policy to innovation and application in support of industry.”



L-R: Mr Hambani Mashilani, AUC; Dr Gideon Nimako, NEPAD Agency; Dr Ereck Chakauya, SANBio; Dr Tichaona Mangwende, NEPAD Agency; Mr Xavier Estico, NISTI; The Honourable Vice President Mr Vincent Meriton; Dr Conrad Shamlaye, NISTI board; Mr Lukovi Seke, NEPAD Agency

“We will pursue the belief that science, technology and innovation serve to address the needs of communities and the challenges that communities face: Be they economic development, industrialisation, climate change, food security, epidemics of communicable or non-communicable diseases, preservation of biodiversity or cultural heritage,” Dr Shamlaye added.

NISTI will continue to work with schools to support the young persons who are embarking on this journey.

Women's Day, South Africa



Johannesburg, August 9, 2017 - 9 August is Woman's Day. This day could be ridden with emotions, but let us remember that the day serves to remind South Africa and the whole of Africa, the importance of its Women.

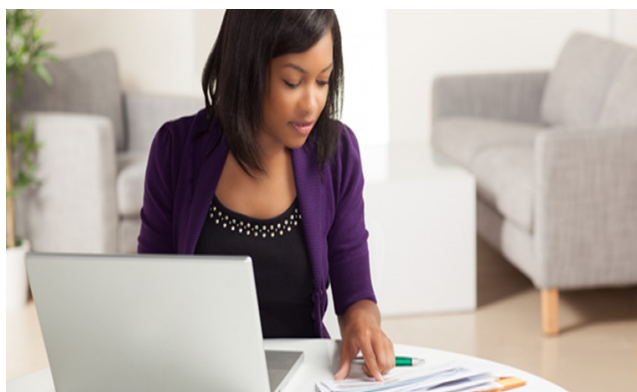
South Africa celebrates and honors more than 20 000 heroic women of all races and age who on this day in 1956, marched against the discriminatory 'pass laws' which restricted the movement of black people in the country. Since then, great strides have been taken to institutionalise gender equality, women's human rights and women empowerment. However, much more needs to be done for the attainment of an inclusive, peaceful, democratic, and prosperous African society.

To this end, the NEPAD Agency would like to join South Africa in celebrating its resounding successes, and above all, the role played by women in protecting and promoting democracy and equality - and most importantly the daily contributions they make in their families and communities.

This year the NEPAD Agency commemorates Women's month and Women's Day by extolling the courage, tenacity and resilience of the women of 1956. These inspirational women call upon us to do the right thing and leave no room for human and women's rights violation. As we talk more and more about the second liberation of Africa and economic liberation, we cannot avoid thinking also of the Africans who represent more than half of the continent's population: Women.

Happy Women's Day to all!

Announcements and upcoming events



The Call to participate in the 4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit is now open!

The Africa-Europe Youth Summit will bring together more than 120 youth leaders from both continents, including African Diaspora, on 9-11 October in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Click on the link below to apply and get more information
<http://www.youthforum.org/latest-news/call-open-4th-africa-europe-youth-summit/>
DEADLINE: 6th August



2017 PIDA WEEK
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Early **Registration** and information on **submitting Abstract** visit:
<http://csa2017.nepad.org/en/>
 or write to
4thGlobalScienceConference2017@nepad.org

KEY DATES

Close for Submission of Abstracts:
20 September 2017

Deadline for early bird registration:
30 September 2017

- > Highlight Emerging Science and Innovations
- > Showcase Experiences and Lessons
- > Interrogate and Share Circumstance-specific Conditions
- > Networking and Opening or Consolidation Opportunities
- > Stimulate and Facilitate Discussions and Dialogue

Johannesburg, South Africa



To see more, follow the link: <http://www.nepad.org/events>

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