



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION | FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE



Republic of Zimbabwe



3rd Pan-African Capacity Development Forum

“Developing Capacity for Africa’s Economic and Social Transformation”

Welcome remarks by

Prof Emmanuel Nnadozie

Executive Secretary,

The African Capacity Building Foundation

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Right Honourable Phelekezela Mphoko, Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe;
Honorable Ministers here present;
Dr. Shehu Misau, Representative of the Chair of ACBF Executive Board;
Distinguished Members of the ACBF Board of Governors & Executive Board;
Former Executive Secretaries present: Mr. Leshele Abel Thoahlane, Dr Edwin Forlemu, and Dr. Soumana Sako;
Top Government officials from Zimbabwe;
Top Government officials from other countries;
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Representatives of development partners;
Distinguished panelists and experts;
Distinguished participants;
Members of the media;
Dear friends;
Ladies and gentlemen:

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the 25th anniversary celebration of the African Capacity Building Foundation. I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to Honorable Mphoko, Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, for taking the time off his busy schedule to celebrate with us today.

This Forum is organized by ACBF in partnership with the Government of Zimbabwe. We are grateful to the government, not only for being so generous and supportive of this event, but for hosting ACBF in Harare since inception in 1991. Zimbabwe's political and financial support has remained unwavering and we are truly grateful.

My sincere thanks also go to all of you who are here to join us in making this day possible. ACBF being a family comprising African and non-African countries, development partners, think tanks,

supported projects and programs, our story began with the sowing of a seed a quarter of a century ago. Thanks to the commitment and vision of all, the seed took root and has blossomed into a success story told by everyone in your respective sectors, regions, and countries.

Your Excellency Mr. Vice President, Hon. ACBF Governors, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The birth of ACBF on February 9, 1991 was the culmination of intense efforts and groundbreaking commitment to capacity building in Africa. Allow me, at this juncture, name among those pioneers Mr. Paati Ofofu-Amaah, who drafted the ACBF Constitution, who passed two weeks ago. May his soul rest in peace!

We are also gathered here to celebrate all the women and men who served the Foundation over the past 25 years, especially former chairpersons and members of the Board of Governors, former chairpersons and members of the Executive Board and for Executive Secretaries. Allow me at this stage to recognize three of my predecessors here present, namely **Mr. Leshele Abel Thoahlane, Dr. Soumana Sako and Dr Edwin Forlemu**. We also celebrate all our partners:

- Non-African countries : Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, India, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of Africa ;
- Multilateral Development Institutions: World Bank, African Development Bank, and United Nations Development Programme. Allow in this regard to publicly recognize the World Bank for its leadership role in the financing of ACBF over the past 25 years and express the hope that this partnership will continue in the future;

- Foundations : Rockefeller Foundation a few years ago and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation today
- Implementing Partners and Experts (too many to be listed one by one) who are tirelessly implementing the Foundation's operations.
- Our 39 member countries, for their continued political and financial support. Allow me to list them individually : Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Chad, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republi of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mauritania, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Your Excellency Honorable Vice-President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

From the capacity assessment studies done by ACBF around Agenda 2063, there are huge capacity gaps that need to be addressed if we are to achieve its objectives and targets. The study "Identification and Projection of Critical Technical and Sector Specific Skills for the First Ten Years Implementation of Agenda 2063" provides an illustration of the special skills that are critical for its implementation (and consequently the SDGs). The report shows that skills shortages in terms of numbers and quality in the region have reached an alarming point, posing a major concern. The following shows the scale of the challenge to surmount if the continent is to deliver on Agenda 2063:

- The continent's current share of global engineers stands at 35 engineers per million people compared to 168 for Brazil, 2,457 for the European Union, and 4,103 for the United States.

- Just in 2011, over 10,000 medical graduates born or trained in Africa migrated and were registered to practice in the United States alone.
- The continent has only 2% of global doctors though it bears around 24% of the global burden of diseases.
- Furthermore, in the fields of science and technology, it is estimated that only 28% of students are enrolled in these programs with the majority studying the social sciences.
- The continent accounts for less than 1.5% of international scientific journals publications, a percentage that has been declining steeply in recent decades. This is a source of concern for sharing knowledge on what works or doesn't, so as to shape the formulation of policy and development programs.

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Now that we know the continent's capacity challenges, ACBF is moving to respond decisively and immediately. In the ACBF Strategic Plan for 2017 to 2021, focus will be on four key reinforcing pillars through a widely consultative process with stakeholders on the continent:

- Enabling effective delivery of continental development priorities
- Supporting countries to achieve tangible development results
- Enhancing private sector and civil society contribution to sustainable development
- Leveraging learning and knowledge to attain greater development effectiveness

Building on our 25 years' experience, we plan to develop programs addressing each of these elements. Specifically, we propose to do 5 things to address the critical skills conundrum:

- Support high-level tripartite education dialogue among the private sector, training institutions and African governments on

how to develop capacity for implementing Agenda 2063 and the SDGs and in particular the critical technical skills for implementing the flagship projects under the first 10 years of the plan of Agenda 2063;

- Devise strategies for capacity retention, harmonization and utilization on the continent;
- Invest massively in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and vocational skills. As part of our commitment to this, the Africa Capacity Report, our flagship publication for 2016, is on understanding the capacity imperatives on science technology and innovation.
- Mobilize Diaspora capacity to support the continent's development agenda
- Develop Africa-focused professionals – for example, producing regional integration experts, domestic resource mobilization experts, etc.

We propose in our five-year strategic plan to pay attention to building the critical skills, strengthening the institutions required to deliver on the continental, regional and country development agendas and building soft capacities. The question of soft capacities deserves special attention in order to promote mind-set and ownership transformation. This will require promoting leadership that is transformative and accountable, responsive institutions and ownership of the African narrative and brand. We will also focus on promoting mind-set change, change and transformation readiness, spirit of self-confidence, African values, pan-African perspectives and African solidarity, Africa's ownership of its development, evaluation and performance culture and Africa's ownership and management of Africa's resources and agendas.

The aim is to ensure that the common person is eventually emancipated socially and economically. But how are we going to deliver on these propositions? We have five modalities for this:

1. Grant Making and Fund Management: This cluster of service consists of retailing grants to finance capacity development programs and projects.
2. Knowledge Services: Emphasis is put on “fit-for-purpose” knowledge products and more on connecting experiences and lessons on capacity development.
3. Capacity Development Advisory Services: Support for robust analysis of capacity challenges and developing and implementing strategies and programs to address them.
4. Resource Mobilization for Capacity Development: Supporting partners and stakeholders to mobilize resources for the implementation of the required capacity development programs.
5. Capacity Development Innovations: Using innovations in capacity development that ensure creation, retention, and utilization of existing capacities, for example, facility for financing innovative capacity building interventions (FICAD) - for which three awards are being made this afternoon.

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ACBF believes that it is in special position to accomplish the objectives of this ambitious 5-year strategy because of its uniqueness and value proposition.

Created by and for African countries and their partners, ACBF has much to offer. It has been recognized by continental bodies as an African knowledge and capacity building service provider of choice for almost 25 years. It is also seen as having unique knowledge of Africa’s capacity building landscape, thanks to accumulating in-depth understanding of the capacity needs of African countries and playing a lead role in assessing capacity with national partners.

This recognition and respect is at the heart of ACBF's value proposition. In a quarter century, ACBF has developed a strong network of think tanks and collaborated with universities, governments, and civil society. That gives it a unique position: strong coordination capabilities, a potentially wide delivery network, and the influence to leverage support.

Besides the strong value for money it provides, ACBF's unique profile and strengths also highlight its value proposition:

- Twenty-five years of experience in supporting and coordinating capacity development in Africa.
- An Africa-wide mandate and unique understanding of the African context.
- Expertise in investment and program management.
- A strong track record in managing financial facilities and complex donor relationships.
- An exceptional skills mix of the core staff.
- Enhanced governance architecture and highly reliable operating systems and processes.
- Strong strategic partnerships and networks.

For ACBF to accomplish these transformative objectives, however, countries need to pay attention to capacity development and allocate resources accordingly. Secondly, ACBF needs to be fully supported politically and financially by African governments. Thirdly, partners especially the non-traditional ones, need to recognize that the continental capacity needs are enormous and re-inventing the wheel will be retrogressive. We need to move forward fast. Hence to efficiently and effectively tackle the capacity challenges, there is need to provide political and financial support to institutions that already have experience in capacity development as well as solid understanding of the continent's development architecture (which includes understanding the key players). This is to effectively coordinate capacity development efforts for Africa's sustainable and

inclusive development. ACBF brings that unequivocal value to the table – building on its 25 years of work on the continent.

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The task of strengthening institutional and human capacities still remains even more relevant, especially as we witness new challenges with the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As discussed at length yesterday, Africa still faces some challenges of building required capacity in key sectors that are fundamental to the continent's economic and social transformation. Capacity development – human, institutional and soft – is needed to enable them perform optimally in achieving the desired results. Emphasis must henceforth be placed on building critical skills and institutions required to bring about development.

Let me conclude by thanking you again all for your support to ACBF in the last 25 years. Your continued support will be critical as we strive to bring capacity development to the continent, and more importantly, enable the Foundation to accomplish its mandate and its vision of an *Africa capable of achieving its own development*.

Thank you very much for your attention. Merci infiniment de votre attention.