

AFRICA PROSPERITY DIALOGUES 2025

Presidential and Business Executives Dialogues

Accra Compact 2025

Theme: "Delivering Africa's Single Market through Infrastructure: Invest. Connect. Integrate."

Accra International Conference Centre

Accra, Ghana

1 February 2025



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CHAPTER ONE:

Presidential and Business Executives Dialogues
(Accra Compact 2025)

PREAMBLE

1. We, the African Heads of State, Business Executives, Government Ministers, Heads of Multinational Organisations, Senior Policymakers, Business Associations, Senior Officials from the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, Thought Leaders, Women and Young Entrepreneurs, gathered at the Accra International Conference Centre, Greater Accra, Ghana, on Saturday 1 February 2025 for the Presidential and Business Leaders' Dialogue under the auspices of H.E. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana. This was the culmination of the three-day Africa Prosperity Dialogues (APD) 2025 (30 January to 1 February 2025), organised by the Africa Prosperity Network in collaboration with the AfCFTA Secretariat and other partners, and curated under the theme ***"Delivering Africa's Single Market through Infrastructure: Invest. Connect. Integrate."***

2. Our discussions were informed and inspired by the outcomes of the first and second editions of the APD, where we reaffirmed our commitment to accelerating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement – going from ambition to action – by taking proper advantage of the Rules of Origin, once ready; utilising science, technology and innovation to create value-added "Made-in-Africa" goods and services; expanding the industrialisation drive of African Union (AU) Member States to embrace cross-border value chain production; investing in trade-related infrastructure; implementing specific measures to empower women and young entrepreneurs; ratifying the AU Protocol on the Free Movement of People;

advocating for the implementation of the AU's Protocol on Digital Trade; and, in particular, supporting the campaign to have a common Pan-African payment platform that will allow Africans to buy and sell freely across all borders, using their own local currencies in their mobile money wallet, for example.

3. This year's APD centred on investing in and building the critical infrastructure to connect Member States and integrate Africa's single market of 1.4 billion people and counting. Recognising that infrastructure is the backbone of economic growth and regional integration, APD 2025 prioritised actionable strategies to mobilise resources, align policies and foster cross-border collaborations to enhance, inter alia, trade facilitation, and to provide energy security, decent affordable housing, access to affordable health, comprehensive transport connectivity and digital infrastructure for trade and commerce. Our discussions were guided mainly by the ***Outcome Document*** produced from the Policy and Business Leaders' Dialogues that took place on 30–31 January 2025.

4. We acknowledged that infrastructure is the passport and visa for economic integration, and committed to establishing a Continental Infrastructure Investment Framework to guide and coordinate efforts among governments, financial institutions, private investors and development partners to build sustainable and integrated infrastructure.

We reaffirmed the need to bridge Africa's infrastructure financing gap, which is estimated to be up to \$170 billion annually, through innovative financing mechanisms, such as blended finance, public-private partnerships (PPPs), sovereign wealth funds and innovative Pan-African retail fundraising schemes. Accordingly, we endorsed the creation of an Integrated Africa Infrastructure Growth Fund (IAIGF), aiming to mobilise, through a well-structured "Dollar-A-Day" fund, some 50 million investors, made up of Africans, Global Africans and friends of Africa, to finance the Programme for Integrated Infrastructure Development for Africa's Single Market (PIIDASM).

5. Recognising governments' efforts to expand renewable energy, modernise grids and increase access to energy, we emphasised the significance of financing multibillion-dollar major energy projects that can power the entire continent. We stressed the need to prioritise sustainable energy infrastructure in Africa, including hydropower from the Grand Inga Dam and concentrated solar power projects in the Sahara and Kalahari Deserts, capable of powering industry, providing homes with clean and affordable energy, supporting digital economies and ensuring shared prosperity across Africa. With 30-plus African countries facing frequent power outages, we called for coordinated regional energy policies and the creation of economically viable interconnected power grids to improve reliability and affordability.

6. We emphasised the need to build a robust, integrated transport and logistics network to strengthen continental trade. This requires harmonised transport regulations, investments in transnational road and railway networks, and the full

implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).

Efficient and integrated transport systems are key to reducing trade costs, boosting intra-African commerce and expanding market access for businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

7. We reaffirmed the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in Africa as essential for economic integration, as outlined in the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the 1991 Abuja Treaty, which established the African Economic Community. Despite the launch of the African Passport in July 2016, the protocol for which 32 member states signed, only six – the Gambia, Rwanda, Benin, Seychelles, Ghana and, most recently, Kenya – have embraced visa-free access for all Africans. To demonstrate greater commitment to the AfCFTA, we urge all Member States to implement visa-free access to holders of passports from other African countries within the next three years.

8. We emphasised the critical role of digital infrastructure in shaping Africa's future economy and advocated investments in broadband expansion, mobile payment interoperability and regulatory harmonisation to unlock the potential of digital trade. Africa's rapid adoption of mobile technology presents an opportunity to leapfrog traditional banking systems and enhance financial inclusion across the continent. We recognised Ghana's mobile payment systems and interoperability framework as a model for other nations streamlining digital transactions.

9. In line with the Protocol on Digital Trade, we support the endorsed report presented by Ghana and the AU Champion of Financial Institutions at the 6th Mid-Year Coordination Meeting between the African Union, the Regional Communities and the

Regional Mechanisms on 21 July 2024 in Accra, Ghana, namely, the report *Scaling Up Interoperability for Economic Integration: Using Mobile Money to Buy and Sell Across Africa*. We further support the details of paragraph 14 of the said report, which, inter alia, called upon heads of state and government, policymakers, regulators and all other key stakeholders to commit extensively to achieving the following by 2027:

- a. Bring all member states on board the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS)
 - b. Allow cross-border mobile money interoperability
 - c. Improve cross-platform integration to ensure seamless transactions between mobile money and banks, and other payment channels
 - d. Develop a continental regulatory framework for mobile money operations that sets out common technical and operational standards, fees and consumer protection measures
 - e. Invest in domestic technology and infrastructure to bridge the disparities across the continent and facilitate the use of mobile money for trade, and
 - f. Complete outstanding AfCFTA negotiations to lift tariffs, reduce red tape and improve customs procedures, thereby enhancing the ease of doing business across Africa.
10. We recognised the critical role of social infrastructure – including

education, health care, creative industry, tourism and housing – in enhancing the dignity and wellbeing of the people, creating jobs and driving Africa's long-term socio-economic prosperity. Investing in these areas is crucial for building a skilled workforce, fostering innovation, promoting inclusive development and caring for the vulnerable. Africans spend billions of dollars on medical tourism outside the continent. We recognised the commercial value in investing in state-of-the-art medical infrastructure in Africa for medical tourism. We further recognised that only 1% of medical equipment is manufactured in Africa, and stressed that manufacturing more health-care products in Africa, including pharmaceuticals and disposables, will reduce the cost of treatment.

11. We called for increased public and private investment in human capital development, especially through STEAM education, to equip Africa's youth with the skills they need for working in the emerging digital and industrial economies.

12. Moreover, we acknowledged the pivotal role of leveraging public-private partnerships to address the significant infrastructural deficit that plagues the continent, and highlighted ongoing financial reforms in African countries, which aim to strengthen sustainable investment in infrastructure that supports entrepreneurship initiatives, women, the youth and SME business activities.



13. We concluded that we must seize this moment to invest adequately in Africa's future to connect businesses, markets and people while integrating our policy frameworks, systems and structures to build a unified, 1.4-billion-person single market.

The African Continental Free Trade Area is our greatest opportunity to redefine Africa's place in the global economy, but its success depends on modern, efficient and integrated infrastructure.

14. We commit, after extensive deliberations, to do the following:

Business Community

a. Collaborate with central banks, financial institutions and governments to forge a partnership to bolster investment in technology, ensuring the interoperability and standardisation of payment systems across the continent, while actively pursuing enhanced efficiency and consistency in the payment ecosystem.

b. Commit to financing and implementing large-scale infrastructure projects, including energy, transport and digital infrastructure, through strategic public-private partnerships (PPPs).

c. Develop a Pan-African Transport and Logistics Network, modelled after Amazon, leveraging AI, blockchain and digital platforms for seamless trade.

d. Take active part and support continent-wide mobile payment interoperability, broadband expansion and regulatory harmonisation to unlock the full potential of Africa's digital economy.

e. Prioritise investments in STEAM education and technical training to equip Africa's youth with future-ready skills, fostering innovation and industrial growth.

f. We called on Africans, including Global Africans, to take our prosperity

destiny into our own hands by pooling resources to finance the critical infrastructure that will connect our people and markets to build the world's largest single market by population.

g. Mobilise Africa's middle class, Africans outside Africa and individuals and organisations committed to supporting Africa's rapid development and economic integration to contribute regularly to become shareholders in the proposed Integrated Africa Infrastructure Growth Fund, ensuring African businesses and individuals contribute to their development.

h. We propose that the IAIGF aim to build a subsidiary fund owned by at least 50 million individual African shareholders, with each contributing at least \$1 a day. We estimate that such a fund can generate a minimum of \$20 billion a year, which can be used to fund mega projects with cross-border impact, such as railways, roads and energy that connect our people and integrate our economies.

i. Africa's annual \$100 billion worth of remittances suggests the potential of Africans in the diaspora to do more in sharing both the burden and benefits of investing in Africa's integrated infrastructure development. We advocate creating structured, remittance-linked investment products and diaspora bonds for infrastructure development.

Heads of Government

j. Create an enabling policy and regulatory environment that promotes and encourages investment in infrastructure on the continent.

k. Standardise public-private partnership (PPP) regulations and create incentives to attract private sector investment into large-scale infrastructure projects.

l. Fully implement the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) to boost intra-African air transport by enforcing the Yamoussoukro Decision to reduce trade costs and enhance regional connectivity.

m. Commit to large-scale energy infrastructure projects such as the Grand Inga Dam and interconnected power grids to enhance energy reliability and affordability.

n. Establish unified trade regulations, reduce bureaucratic barriers and streamline customs procedures to facilitate seamless cross-border trade under AfCFTA.

o. Facilitate the integration of African capital markets, enabling businesses to raise infrastructure financing across multiple exchanges.

p. Introduce diaspora investment funds, tax incentives and blended finance models to leverage Africa's financial resources for sustainable development.

q. Support the establishment of the Integrated Africa Infrastructure Growth Fund (IAIGF).

Multinational and Multilateral Organisations

r. Strengthen partnerships and funding mechanisms to scale up infrastructure financing.

s. Support the establishment of an Africa Infrastructure Fund and invest in it.

t. Unlock \$2 trillion in domestic capital from pension funds, insurance funds and sovereign wealth funds and use this to invest in cross-border infrastructure projects.

u. Expand blended finance and risk mitigation instruments.

v. Develop and implement innovative financing models, infrastructure bonds

and sovereign-backed guarantees to attract long-term investment.

w. Provide technical assistance and capacity-building programmes to governments for structuring and managing bankable infrastructure projects.

x. Drive investments in digital infrastructure, mobile payment systems and financial platforms to enhance intra-African trade and connectivity.

y. Promote financing for renewable energy projects and climate-resilient infrastructure to align with global sustainability goals.

z. Engage in policy dialogues with African governments to harmonise regulations, reduce trade barriers and support regional integration under AfCFTA.

AfCFTA Secretariat

aa. Provide support to Member States of the African Union that have not ratified the agreement, encouraging them to do so.

ab. Progress from the Guided Trade Initiative and implement comprehensive trading among all State Parties under the AfCFTA Agreement.

ac. Create a fair and competitive digital marketplace for goods, services and information through the Digital Trade Protocol (DTP) under the AfCFTA for member countries.

ad. Assume a leadership role in the promotion and establishment of the Integrated Africa Infrastructure Growth Fund (IAIGF).

ae. Engage in strategic partnerships with credible institutions such as the Arab Bank for Economic Development in

Africa (BADEA) to mobilise funds and resources to support Africa's infrastructure needs and intra-African trade.

af. Mobilise over \$10 billion through the AfCFTA Adjustment Fund to support African countries and businesses to participate in the AfCFTA, including financing, grants, technical assistance and compensation.

Partners

ag. Multilateral development banks, regional development finance institutions, commercial banks, investors and other financiers will strengthen their assistance to governments and the private sector by making available attractive and affordable trade finance, as well as supporting private sector engagements across the AfCFTA.

ah. Development partners, including the United Nations, African Development Bank, Afreximbank and others, will continue to provide coordinated support to governments, businesses and the AfCFTA Secretariat, expediting full implementation of the AfCFTA.

ai. The UNDP, UNECA, AfDB and the AfCFTA Secretariat will support the APN Secretariat with technical assistance to develop the necessary metrics and monitoring framework to track implementation and impact of this Compact.

15. We collectively commit to invest, connect and integrate to shape Africa's future as a globally competitive economic powerhouse. We commit to meet annually, under the Africa Prosperity Dialogues, to take stock of the progress with Africa's Prosperity Agenda.

16. We thank H.E. John Dramani Mahama, the President of the Republic of Ghana, and the Government of the Republic of Ghana for spearheading the Africa Prosperity Dialogues for Africa's gains.



IN THE PRESENCE OF:

- **H.E. John Dramani Mahama**, President, Republic of Ghana (Host)
- **H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé**, President, Republic of Togo
- **H.E. Azali Assoumani**, President, the Union of the Comoros
- **H.E. Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang**, Vice President, Republic of Ghana
- **Honourable Ibrahim Boughali**, Representative of the President, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria – **H.E. Abdelmadjid Tebboune**
- **Charles M'ba**, Representative of the Transitional President, Gabonese Republic – **H.E. Brice Oligui Nguema**
- **Ambassador Édouard Nduwimana**, Representative of the President, Republic of Burundi – **H.E. Évariste Ndayishimiye**
- **Jean-Paul D'offray**, Representative of the President, Republic of Seychelles – **H.E. Wavel Ramkalawan**

The event was attended by African state ministers, ambassadors, high commissioners, directors of government agencies and corporations, senior officials from the African Union and the United Nations, as well as influential business executives and entrepreneurs from Africa and beyond. It brought together over 2,000 partners from 47 countries.



CHAPTER TWO:

Excerpts of Speeches from Key Political
and Business Leaders

H.E. John Dramani Mahama President, Republic of Ghana

H.E. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, emphasised that the theme of African prosperity reflects the aspirations of the continent's people for an industrialised, integrated, and inclusive Africa.

He noted that Africa stands at a crossroads, blessed with immense natural wealth, a youthful population, and growing technological advancements, yet challenged by economic disparities, infrastructure deficits, and structural barriers.

He stressed that Africa's destiny lies in its own hands, and the actions taken today through decisive leadership and strategic partnerships will shape its future. He described the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as one of the most transformative initiatives of the time, with the potential to create the world's largest free trade area.

However, he argued that trade liberalisation alone is insufficient, calling for investments in infrastructure, such as roads, railways, ports, and digital connectivity, to facilitate trade. He also highlighted the need to strengthen African supply chains, harmonise trade policies, and fully operationalise the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System to reduce costs and barriers to cross-border trade. By committing to these actions, he stated, Africa could unlock a \$3.4 trillion market, creating jobs and prosperity for millions.



H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé President, Republic of Togo

H.E. Faure Gnassingbé emphasised the need for a resilient and sustainable African common market, rooted in regional integration and collective sovereignty. He argued that global multilateral forums have shown their limitations, and the future of international cooperation lies in focused regional initiatives. Highlighting the rise of economic protectionism among traditional trading partners, he stressed that Africa must rely on its own efforts to build resilience. He called for a pragmatic and ambitious approach to integration, ensuring it strengthens local capacities and creates a sovereign economic ecosystem. He also warned against integration that exacerbates inequalities, urging tailored strategies to address the asymmetries between smaller and larger economies. This, he noted, would require fair compensation mechanisms and significant investments in transcontinental infrastructure to bridge gaps between economic hubs and remote regions.

President Gnassingbé identified infrastructure as the cornerstone of Africa's economic sovereignty, enabling efficient exchanges and connecting communities. He proposed the development of prosperity corridors linking African production hubs, reducing reliance on imports and international routes. He also highlighted the strategic importance of digital infrastructure, commending the AfCFTA Secretariat's initiatives while calling for inclusive digitalisation efforts that support small businesses and rural areas. He cautioned that digital transformation must be accompanied by investments in education, internet access, and user-friendly tools to ensure no one is left behind. In conclusion, he described the African common market as not just an economic space but a declaration of sovereignty and solidarity, essential for fostering shared prosperity across the continent.



H.E. Azali Assoumani President, Union of the Comoros

H.E. Azali Assoumani commended the Africa Prosperity Network and the AfCFTA Secretariat for their commitment to Africa's collective aspirations, emphasising the importance of the dialogue's theme in promoting production, value addition, and trade within the continent. He highlighted Africa's vast resources, including oil, gas, minerals, and a youthful population, as well as its potential to achieve food sovereignty and global prosperity. He called for stronger collaboration between the public and private sectors to build resilience, improve infrastructure, and facilitate access to capital, stressing that a united Africa is essential to transforming its potential into tangible benefits for its people.

President Assoumani reflected on his role as Chair of the African Union in 2023, noting significant progress in advancing the AfCFTA, which he described as a transformative opportunity for intra-African trade and economic growth. He praised Ghana's visa-free policy for Africans as a model for continental integration and urged other nations to follow suit. He also highlighted the importance of maritime trade and the blue economy, particularly for island states like the Comoros, inviting private sector investment in these areas. Addressing global challenges, he expressed solidarity with African nations facing conflict and terrorism, calling for dialogue and unity to achieve peace and security. He condemned the violence in Gaza and reiterated support for a two-state solution, while urging Russian and Ukrainian leaders to resume dialogue to end their conflict. He further expressed hope for a peaceful, integrated, and prosperous Africa, wishing success for the dialogue's outcomes.



H.E. Professor Naana Jane Opoku–Agyemang Vice President, Republic of Ghana

“Since independence, Ghana has remained steadfast in its commitment to Africa’s integration and unity. Today, we continue to champion this cause by actively supporting initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), headquartered here in Accra. We commend the Africa Prosperity Network (APN) and the AfCFTA Secretariat for creating this platform that brings together leaders from the public and private sectors to dialogue on Africa’s prosperity”.

H.E. Professor Naana Jane Opoku–Agyemang emphasised the importance of breaking down Africa’s fragmented markets to unlock its economic potential, create jobs, and reduce poverty. She highlighted the need for inclusive dialogue, particularly to address barriers faced by women in trade, and stressed the critical role of infrastructure development—such as roads, railways, ports, and energy systems—in achieving a single market. While acknowledging the historical leadership of African governments in infrastructure projects, she called for stronger partnerships with the private sector to address gaps. Ghana’s progress in modernising its international airport, ports, and road networks was presented as a model for others to follow. She also underscored the importance of digital infrastructure, citing mobile technology’s role in financial inclusion and urging continent-wide investment in digital systems to enable seamless transactions and innovation. The Vice President urged African leaders to champion the single market initiative, emphasising the need for collective will and decisive action, and reaffirmed her commitment to Africa’s prosperity.



Dr Sidi Ould Tah President, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa – BADEA

Africa's infrastructure gap remains a major obstacle to achieving a fully integrated and prosperous single market. To address this, cross-regional partnerships and innovative financing are essential. The Arab-Africa Financial Institutions Consortium, led by BADEA and launched in Accra, plays a crucial role in mobilising resources for critical infrastructure projects. With a commitment of \$18 billion over five years—70% of which is allocated to trade and infrastructure—the initiative aims to unlock funding and investment opportunities. Efforts are also underway to increase private sector financing, enabling businesses in Ghana and beyond to expand their operations.

The consortium prioritises building infrastructure to support Ghana's 24-hour economy, including investments in transport, logistics, energy, and digital systems to facilitate seamless transactions and e-commerce growth. Additionally, it strengthens Arab-Africa trade ties by enhancing investment flows and leveraging a 1:4 USD funding model to attract private capital for high-impact projects. This collaboration underscores the importance of regional cooperation in driving Africa's infrastructure development and economic integration.



H.E. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma Chairperson, Africa Prosperity Network Advisory Council

H.E. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the Africa Prosperity Network's Advisory Council, emphasised the pivotal role of infrastructure in realising the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). She highlighted that roads, railways, ports, digital networks, and energy systems form the backbone of Africa's economic integration, enabling trade, industrialisation, and self-sufficiency. Dr Dlamini-Zuma called for a shift from Africa's reliance on exporting raw materials to focusing on local manufacturing and value addition, which would create jobs, retain wealth, and position the continent as a global price setter. She also underscored the importance of empowering women and youth through skills development, leadership opportunities, and equitable access to capital and markets, describing them as key drivers of Africa's future prosperity.



Dr Fatima Elsheikh – Secretary General, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA)

Dr Fatima Elsheikh highlighted the AfCFTA as a transformative initiative that aligns with BADEA's vision for a resilient, prosperous and sustainable Africa. She argued that infrastructure is not just a means of connectivity, but a cornerstone of human-centred development. Reflecting this commitment, BADEA has invested over \$50 billion in Africa, with nearly 70% dedicated to infrastructure. Under its new five-year strategy, the bank has earmarked an additional \$18 billion for infrastructure projects. She reaffirmed BADEA's commitment to working with governments and the private sector to expand digital infrastructure, enhance financial inclusion and drive trade and emphasised integration across the continent.

Stephen Blewett – CEO, MTN Ghana

Mr Blewett stressed the importance of digital infrastructure, connectivity and integration in realising Africa's single market. He highlighted Africa's vast potential, citing its youthful population, abundant natural resources and promising investment opportunities, but warned that the continent risks being overshadowed by negative stereotypes. Blewett underscored the role of digital access, internet connectivity and digital literacy in fostering economic growth, particularly for women and young people, and urged investment in ICT skills to empower Africa's workforce. He commended efforts made by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to eliminate trade barriers and facilitate economic collaboration and also stressed the need for strong public-private partnerships to drive sustainable infrastructure development. As Africa's leading telecommunications provider, MTN is committed to spurring digital transformation, financial inclusion and e-commerce growth across the continent. He concluded by calling for collective action, emphasising that Africa's prosperity depends on regional cooperation, investment and a shared vision for integration.

Mesfin Tasew – CEO, Ethiopian Airlines

Mr Mesfin Tasew underscored the importance of an efficient air transport system for Africa's single market, a vision Ethiopian Airlines has supported for 79 years, even before the African Continental Free Trade Area was conceived. He highlighted the airline's expansion to 61 African cities, fostering connectivity, and expressed plans to further develop a fast and reliable intra-African air transport network. Beyond operations, he noted the airline's investment in aviation universities to train pilots, technicians, and other professionals, addressing critical shortages in the continent's aviation growth.

Djamel Ghrib – Director of Economic Development, Integration and Trade (EDIT) of the African Union, in charge of the AU brief for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals (ETTİM)

Mr Ghrib emphasised that infrastructure is the foundation on which Africa's economic future must be built. He highlighted the critical need for modern, efficient and interconnected infrastructure – ranging from transport networks and energy systems to digital highways – to realise the full potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Stressing the importance of mobilising private sector investment, he called for blended finance models, risk mitigation mechanisms and regulatory stability to attract long-term infrastructure financing. Ghrib also underscored Africa's responsibility to lead its own development, advocating industrialisation, value addition and self-sufficiency rather than dependence on foreign aid.

He urged governments to implement transparent policies which encourage investment and also called on global financial institutions to collaborate to bridge Africa's infrastructure funding gap. Concluding his address, he affirmed the African Union Commission's commitment to ensuring that Africa's infrastructure vision translates into tangible, high-impact projects that drive trade, industrialisation and economic integration.

Gwen Mwaba – Managing Director (Trade Finance and Correspondent Banking), Afreximbank

Ms Mwaba spoke about the importance of creating a single African market through infrastructure, focusing on three pillars: investment, connectivity and integration. She highlighted how infrastructure is the backbone of Africa's economy and stressed the need to bridge the \$130 billion to \$170 billion infrastructure financing gap using innovative approaches. She said that Afreximbank is playing a crucial role by mobilising public and private investments, offering guarantees and supporting projects through its subsidiary FEDA (the Fund for Export Development in Africa). She also underscored the significance of connectivity for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which will increasingly rely on seamless transportation, logistics and digital infrastructure. Ms Mwaba urged participants to envision and work to build a continent where goods, services and ideas flow freely across borders, enabled by initiatives such as the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS), which could save \$5 billion annually by facilitating cross-border payments in local currencies. Finally, she called for deeper integration that goes beyond physical infrastructure to include harmonised policies, reduced trade barriers and investment in human capital. She urged governments, the private sector and civil society to collaborate to create a unified market, leveraging technology and digital platforms to revolutionise trade. She concluded by affirming that Africa's strength lies in its unity and that the time to act is now to build a prosperous, innovative and resilient continent.

Alex Dadey – Chairman, KGL Group

Mr Dadey also highlighted infrastructure investment as the cornerstone of Africa's economic integration under the AfCFTA. He stressed that beyond physical infrastructure, investment in human capital, technology and digital transformation is essential to drive intra-African trade. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are crucial in financing and implementing large-scale infrastructure projects, he said, citing successful collaborations such as KGL Group's partnerships with Ghana's National Lottery Authority and the Ministry of Fisheries. Mr Dadey also emphasised the importance of digital innovation, urging Africa to expand internet connectivity, mobile payment systems and e-commerce platforms to enhance trade and support SMEs. He underscored the potential of the African diaspora as an investment resource, advocating structured Diaspora Direct Investment (DDI) mechanisms to channel funds beyond remittances into infrastructure and business development. Finally, he called for Africans to foster business champions and entrepreneurship through enterprise incubation hubs, leveraging partnerships between the public and private sectors alongside academia to drive innovation, economic resilience and global competitiveness.



CHAPTER THREE:

AfCFTA Implementation
The Journey So Far

Status of implementation of the AFCFTA by Dr Tsotetsi Makong, Director, Coordination and Programmes, AFCFTA

The Dialogues noted progress made towards implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement since the last Africa Prosperity summit. The AfCFTA has made

significant strides to improve infrastructure development across the continent, fostering greater connectivity and economic integration. Since its operational launch in January 2021, the agreement has prioritised infrastructure as a critical enabler of trade, with initiatives aimed at enhancing transport networks, energy systems and digital infrastructure. Notably, the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), supported by the AfCFTA framework, has facilitated the development of over 4,000 kilometres of new road networks, linking key trade corridors across West and East Africa.

Additionally, the African Union's Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), an AfCFTA-linked initiative, has enjoyed increased participation from over 35 countries, reducing transport costs and improving intra-African mobility. These efforts align with the agreement's goal of reducing trade barriers and enhancing infrastructure to facilitate the free movement of goods and services.

Although infrastructure gaps remain a challenge, the AfCFTA has attracted significant investment aimed at closing the estimated \$100 billion annual infrastructure financing gap. The African Development Bank (AfDB) reports that infrastructure investment linked to AfCFTA initiatives has increased by 15% in the past three years, with funding directed towards ports, railways and energy projects to support industrial growth and regional value chains.

Projects such as the LAPSET Corridor in East Africa and the West African Power Pool (WAPP) are pivotal examples of regional

infrastructure efforts benefiting from AfCFTA-driven policies and funding. These achievements underscore the potential of the AfCFTA to accelerate Africa's economic transformation by ensuring efficient infrastructure that facilitates trade, enhances productivity and boosts competitiveness.

APD 2025 commended the AfCFTA Secretariat for its achievements and agreed, among other things, that:

a. AfCFTA should promote the development of cross-border infrastructure projects that enhance regional connectivity. This includes investing in transport corridors, energy interconnections and digital networks to facilitate seamless trade and mobility across African economies. Strengthening initiatives such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) can help create a harmonised infrastructure network to support intra-African trade and economic integration.

b. AfCFTA should leverage public-private partnerships (PPPs), infrastructure bonds and sovereign wealth funds to attract long-term investment from both domestic and international sources. In addition, enhancing collaboration with development finance institutions such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) can provide concessional funding and technical support for infrastructure projects.

c. Uniform infrastructure policies and regulatory frameworks across member states are critical for successful implementation. AfCFTA should work with national governments to standardise policies relating to public procurement,

infrastructure maintenance and investment regulations, ensuring consistency and efficiency in infrastructure delivery. Clear and harmonised regulations will help attract investors and reduce the number of bureaucratic hurdles that often hinder infrastructure development.

d. AfCFTA should advocate for the integration of smart technologies and digital solutions into conventional infrastructure sectors. This includes leveraging ICT, blockchain and AI to optimise logistics, energy distribution and transportation networks. Expanding initiatives such as Africa's Smart Cities Framework and enhancing broadband connectivity will help improve infrastructure efficiency, boost productivity and enable Africa to compete in the global digital economy.





CHAPTER FOUR:

Business and Policy Panel Discussions

Panel Session I: Filling the Funding Gap for Infrastructure

Context Setting: Dr George Agyekum Donkor – President and Member, Board of Directors, ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID)

Panellists:

- **Sarata Kone Thiam** – Regional CEO, UBA West Africa
- **Antoinette Kwofie** – CFO, MTN Ghana
- **Olumide Ogunforowa** – Partner, Argentil Capital
- **Afolabi Obisesan** – Vice President, Premier Invest
- **Olasupo Shasore** – Chairman, ALPi
- **David Ziyambi** – Partner, Latham & Watkins LLP

Moderator: H.E. **Charles Abani** – United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ghana

This session underscored Africa's profound infrastructure deficit – manifested in inadequate transport systems, unreliable energy supply, limited access to clean water and a persistent digital divide that excludes many from the global knowledge economy. This deficit significantly hampers economic growth, stifles trade and limits social inclusion. Closing this gap will require annual investments of between \$130 billion and \$170 billion, yet current spending remains at just \$60-\$70 billion, resulting in a financing shortfall of up to \$100 billion each year. Urgent, bold action is necessary to bridge this gap and unlock Africa's economic potential.

The discussion highlighted that inadequate infrastructure reduces Africa's productivity by up to 40%. Without reliable infrastructure, businesses face higher operating costs, supply chains are disrupted and access to markets remains constrained,

undermining competitiveness and innovation. Conversely, investing in robust infrastructure could catalyse GDP growth by an estimated 2% annually. This growth would stem from enhanced connectivity, improved energy access, streamlined trade logistics and the unlocking of new economic opportunities.

The discussion further emphasised that, beyond economic growth, Africa must focus on the critical need to develop resilient infrastructure designed to endure pressures from climate change, population growth and urbanisation. African countries must leverage innovative financial tools such as global climate funds, debt-for-climate swaps and green bonds to advance climate goals, build societal resilience, improve living standards and foster inclusive development, making infrastructure a cornerstone for sustainable growth across the continent.



The Dialogues stressed the challenges African countries face in accessing infrastructure financing. High costs of capital, fragmented financial markets and limited private sector participation constrain investment. Furthermore, financial flows to developing countries remain inadequate relative to their needs. Innovative and equitable financing solutions are essential to overcome these barriers and unlock transformative change.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) were emphasised as crucial for mobilising private sector expertise, resources and investment to drive large-scale infrastructure development. Effective PPPs can address critical needs in transport, energy, water supply and telecommunications by fostering innovation, optimising efficiencies and sharing risk. Collaboration between governments, the private sector and the diaspora is essential to structuring robust legal, financial and operational frameworks that make these partnerships attractive to investors. Such efforts would unlock private sector investment, enhance

connectivity across Africa, improve public services and generate employment opportunities.

The Dialogues stressed that Africa's capital markets remain underdeveloped and fragmented, limiting the ability to raise large-scale financing for critical infrastructure projects. To bridge this gap, countries must build stronger, more integrated financial systems that can mobilise investment effectively.

The discussion also highlighted the critical role of Global Africans in driving the continent's infrastructural development. Establishing strategic platforms to harness the skills, financial resources and networks of the African diaspora is essential. The Dialogues also underscored the importance of leveraging the AfCFTA as a special-purpose vehicle to unlock the capital required for Africa's transformation and to enhance its global competitiveness.



AFRICA
PROSPERITY
DIALOGUES
2025

APD
2025



Panel Session II: Transport and Logistics Necessary to Make Free Movement a Reality

Context Setting: Eugénio Mauro de Lima Fernandes, Permanent Secretary for Concession Economics on behalf of H.E. José de Lima Massano, Senior Minister in Charge of Economic Coordination (Angola)

Panellists:

- **Claude Aman** – Managing Director, Africa Global Logistics (AGL)
- **Johnny Shimaneni Esq** – Senior Partner, ALPi Namibia
- **Stanley R K Ahorlu** – CEO, Prime Meridian Docks Ghana
- **Eugénio Mauro de Lima Fernandes** – Permanent Secretary for Concession Economics (Angola)

Moderator: **Gayheart Mensah** – Board member, APN

Transport and logistics infrastructure emerge as a focal point, with the discussions highlighting the need for harmonised transport regulations, investments in transnational road and railway networks and full implementation of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). Efficient and integrated transport systems are key to reducing trade costs, increasing intra-African trade and improving market access for businesses, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The Dialogues stressed that Africa was indeed making progress towards greater integration, with 39 countries simplifying visa processes or offering visa-free options, according to the 2024 Africa Visa Openness Index. However, challenges persist and many Africans still face restrictive visa barriers. Additionally, Africa's infrastructure deficits hinder the free movement of people, goods and services, driving up intra-African trade costs. Africa's infrastructure deficits significantly impede the free movement of people, goods and services, with poorly maintained roads, outdated railways and inefficient ports driving intra-African trade costs up by 30-40%.

A continent with comparative advantage in agriculture has only 47% of its roads paved, and less than half of the rural population has reliable access, restricting economic opportunity and essential services. Panellists explored the costs and benefits of eliminating barriers to make free movement a reality.

The Dialogues expressed concern that the logistics needed to actualise the free movement of people, goods and services in Africa require a complex network involving seaports, airports, road infrastructure, railway lines and robust digital platforms to manage customs clearance, transportation coordination, warehousing and delivery, while overcoming challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, geographical barriers, non-tariff barriers and diverse regulatory environments across the continent, and at the same time leveraging innovative solutions such as tech-enabled logistics platforms to optimise efficiency and connectivity.

AfCFTA is a catalyst for rapid investment and expansion of the continent's nascent logistics and transportation sector. The session also stressed the significance of harmonising transport policies and regulatory frameworks to eliminate bottlenecks at borders and streamline cross-border trade. Inconsistent regulations, bureaucratic red tape and multiple checkpoints were identified as major barriers to the free movement of goods and people. To address this, panellists recommended the implementation of continental standards and the adoption of digital trade facilitation tools, such as the African Union's e-logistics platforms and trade information portals, to enhance efficiency and transparency.

The role of technology in modernising Africa's transport and logistics landscape was another key focus. The Dialogues highlighted the need for smart logistics solutions, including real-time cargo tracking, blockchain-based supply chain management and digital customs procedures.

Such innovations would reduce transit times, cut costs and improve overall trade competitiveness. Investment in digital infrastructure such as expanding broadband connectivity to support logistics hubs was also identified as a priority.

Collaboration between public and private stakeholders emerged as a critical enabler for progress in the transport and logistics sector. Participants called for stronger partnerships between governments, regional economic communities (RECs) and private sector players to leverage expertise, mobilise resources and implement sustainable transport solutions. Furthermore, the discussions emphasised the importance of capacity-building and skills development in logistics to ensure a well-trained workforce capable of managing and optimising transport operations.



Panel Session III: Leveraging Digital Infrastructure. Innovation and Technology to Connect Africa

Context setting: **John Bosco Sebabi** – Deputy CEO, Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS)

Panelists:

- **Philip Amoateng** – Director, Digital Transformation & Telecel Cash
- **Zulaiha Dobia Abdullah** – Founder, Divaloper
- **Christin McConnell** – Chief of Education, UNICEF Ghana
- **Shaibu Haruna** – CEO, MTN MoMo Ghana
- **Serwa Agyeman Botchey** – Microsoft London
- **Efua Dougan** – Principal Consultant, DS Consortium

Moderator: **Samuel Amanor** – CEO, BlueSPACE Africa Technologies

The Dialogues emphasised the role of digital infrastructure in shaping the future of Africa's economy. Participants advocated investment in broadband expansion, mobile payment interoperability and regulatory harmonisation to unlock the potential of digital trade. Africa's rapid adoption of mobile technology presents an opportunity to leapfrog traditional banking systems and enhance financial inclusion across the continent. Ghana's mobile payment systems and interoperability framework serve as a benchmark for other nations aiming to streamline digital transactions.

The Dialogues acknowledged Africa's stand on the digital revolution, which has the potential to drive economic growth, enhance social inclusion and bridge connectivity gaps across the continent. However, realising this vision is fraught with significant challenges, including infrastructure deficits, policy fragmentation and issues regarding digital literacy and inclusion. Lowering these barriers requires a concerted effort from governments,

the private sector and international stakeholders to implement sustainable and inclusive digital strategies. The discussions showed that the major challenge hindering Africa's digital connectivity is the infrastructure deficit. Achieving universal internet coverage on the continent will demand an estimated investment of \$100 billion. Many rural and remote areas remain unconnected, exacerbating the digital divide between urban and rural populations. Equally, unreliable energy supply, particularly in rural regions, poses a critical obstacle to expanding and maintaining digital infrastructure.

The discussions explored how policy fragmentation across African Union (AU) member states further complicates efforts to establish a harmonised digital ecosystem. Divergent national policies create barriers to interoperability, especially in critical areas such as mobile money systems and cross-border digital transactions. This lack of policy alignment stifles innovation and limits the scalability of digital solutions that

could otherwise enhance financial inclusion and intra-African trade. The discussions also considered how the digital divide is made even wider by limited digital literacy and inclusion.

A significant portion of Africa's population lacks the necessary skills to use digital tools effectively. Women and marginalised communities face even greater barriers, restricting their participation in the digital economy and limiting the continent's ability to capitalise on its youthful population. The high cost of internet services and digital devices remains another major impediment, with only 15% of African households having internet access. Despite these challenges, Africa presents significant opportunities to leverage digital infrastructure and innovation. The continent is a global leader in mobile money adoption, offering a strong foundation for scalable financial inclusion and digital trade solutions. Moreover, Africa's abundant renewable energy resources provide a viable path to supporting sustainable power solutions for digital infrastructure expansion, mitigating energy supply issues.

The discussion also emphasised that Africa's youthful population, with a median age of 19, represents a vast talent pool capable of driving innovation and adopting digital technologies at an accelerated pace. Regional initiatives such as the AU's Digital Transformation

Strategy for Africa (2020-2030) provide a framework for harmonising policies and promoting cross-border digital initiatives. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) also hold immense potential to mobilise resources and expertise, ensuring widespread connectivity and sustainable development.

The Dialogues spotlighted several initiatives already underway to address these challenges and capitalise on opportunities. The AU's Digital Transformation Strategy provides a comprehensive blueprint for aligning national policies with investment. The EU-AU Digital4Development (D4D) Hub is fostering partnerships and providing technical assistance to support Africa's digital transformation. Countries such as Mozambique and Tunisia are making notable progress in expanding broadband infrastructure, enhancing internet access for their populations. To move forward, stakeholders must prioritise investment in broadband expansion, harmonise policy frameworks across borders and enhance digital literacy programmes. Collaboration between governments, private sector actors and international organisations will be crucial in ensuring that Africa's digital transformation is inclusive, sustainable and impactful.

Invest ConnectIntegrate



Panel Session IV: Delivering Affordable, Accessible and Sustainable Energy Solutions for Africa

Presentation on the Inga Dam: Christian Kalonji – Technical Director, Grand Inga Project (ADPI), RDC

Context Setting: Honourable John Abdulai Jinapor – Minister of Energy and Green Transition, Ghana

Panelists:

- **James Mnyupe** – Presidential Economic Advisor and Green Hydrogen Commissioner, Namibia
- **Reverend Akua Ofori-Boateng** – Former GM, Bulk Oil Storage & Transportation Company (BOST)
- **Dr Ing. Gloria Magombo** – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Zimbabwe

Moderator: **Samuel Dubik Mahama** – Former Managing Director, ECG

The Dialogues highlighted the continent's pressing energy challenges and noted that with Africa's energy demand expected to increase by 60% by 2030, African countries must urgently scale up energy solutions that are not only sustainable, but also affordable and inclusive. Discussions emphasised the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to tackle the continent's energy access deficit, which leaves 17 out of the 20 countries with the highest electricity access deficits globally located in Africa. The main issue that emerged from discussions was the critical role of renewable energy in meeting Africa's growing energy demand while addressing environmental concerns. Currently, renewable energy constitutes only 20% of Africa's energy mix. Contributors to the Dialogues stressed the need to increase investments in clean energy technologies such as solar, wind and hydro.

The discussions highlighted success stories from Morocco, Egypt and Algeria, where large-scale solar projects have expanded electricity access significantly while reducing carbon emissions. The Dialogues underscored the importance of energy infrastructure in powering industry, supporting digital economies and ensuring sustainable development. With over 30 African countries experiencing frequent power outages, delegates called for coordinated regional energy policies and the development of interconnected power grids to enhance reliability and affordability. Ghana's efforts to expand its renewable energy resources, modernise grids and improve energy access serve as a model for other African nations looking to achieve energy resilience. The Dialogues called for scaling up such initiatives, leveraging Africa's abundant solar and wind resources to drive a continent-wide energy transition.

Discussions also focused on the importance of ensuring affordability and accessibility in devising energy solutions. While progress has been made in expanding energy infrastructure, affordability remains a critical barrier for millions of Africans. Approximately 675 million people globally still lack electricity, and 2.3 billion lack access to clean cooking fuel, disproportionately affecting rural communities and low-income households. The Dialogues emphasised the need for innovative financing models, such as pay-as-you-go solar systems and microfinance options, to make clean energy solutions affordable for underserved populations.

Policy and regulatory frameworks were also highlighted as crucial enablers of sustainable energy development. The Dialogues stressed the importance of creating a conducive policy environment that encourages private sector participation, reduces bureaucratic hurdles and fosters investment in renewable energy projects. Recommendations included the harmonisation of regulatory standards across African countries, increased incentives for off-grid energy solutions and the establishment of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to accelerate project implementation.

Technology and innovation were recognised as key drivers of Africa's sustainable energy future. Panellists discussed the potential of digital solutions such as smart grids, IoT-enabled energy management systems and blockchain technology for decentralised energy trading. These technologies can optimise energy distribution, reduce transmission losses and enhance the reliability of grids. Panellists also identified capacity-building initiatives as crucial to equipping Africa's workforce with the necessary skills to operate and maintain modern energy infrastructure.

The Dialogues showed that achieving affordable, accessible and sustainable energy solutions in Africa requires an all-hands-on deck approach, involving governments, the private sector, development partners and local communities.



Panel Session V: The Role of Africa's Infrastructural Development Partners in Building the Single Market

Context Setting: H.E. Tong Defa – Ambassador, the People's Republic of China to Ghana

Panellists:

- Dr Fatima ElSheikh – Secretary General, BADEA
- Walid Hareb Al Falahi – CEO, Dubai Consultancy (United Arab Emirates)
- H.E. Tong Defa – Ambassador, the People's Republic of China to Ghana
- H.E. Irchad Razaaly – Ambassador, European Union to Ghana

Moderator: Dr Tonisha Tagoe – CEO, Apples & Pears and Creator, Ladies Entrepreneurship Club

The discussion during this session highlighted the critical importance of infrastructure in realising the goals of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) with support from key development partners. The Dialogues noted that China has emerged as Africa's largest infrastructure development partner, financing 20% of all infrastructure projects and constructing 33% of them, the value of its work amounting to \$23 billion in 2020 alone. China's Belt and Road Initiative has been instrumental in supporting large-scale projects, particularly in transportation and energy, which are crucial for enabling trade connectivity across the continent. However, concerns were raised regarding the sustainability of debt and the need for African nations to negotiate favourable terms to ensure long-term benefits. The United States has also played a pivotal role in Africa's infrastructure development, with notable investments such as the \$10 billion commitment to Angola's Lobito Corridor railway.

This project aims to facilitate mineral exports and enhance regional trade. The panel underscored the importance of such strategic investments in boosting economic growth while highlighting the need for capacity-building initiatives to

empower local stakeholders and ensure project sustainability. The European Union continues to be an important contributor to Africa's infrastructure landscape through initiatives such as the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund. The fund has focused on key sectors such as transportation, energy and health care, fostering regional integration and sustainable development. Panellists emphasised the need to align EU investments with Africa's development priorities to maximise impact and drive long-term economic benefits.

In addition to the long-standing development partners, emerging players such as the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Korea, Japan, India and Germany have contributed significantly to Africa's infrastructure advancement. These partners have focused on critical sectors such as health care, digital connectivity and renewable energy. The panel discussion highlighted the potential of diversified partnerships in addressing Africa's multifaceted infrastructure challenges. Despite these efforts, Africa continues to face a substantial

infrastructure deficit, particularly in the areas of rural connectivity, digital platforms and energy access. Panellists stressed the importance of leveraging public-private partnerships (PPPs) to attract additional investment and foster innovation in project financing and delivery. Panellists also highlighted the need for coherent regulatory frameworks and policy harmonisation across African countries as essential to improving the investment climate.

transactions. Development partners were urged to prioritise digital transformation as a key enabler of economic integration.

The Dialogues also discussed the strategic importance of enhancing digital infrastructure to support Africa's single-market ambitions. With the rapid growth of e-commerce and digital trade, investments in digital connectivity and cybersecurity are critical to ensuring seamless cross-border



Panel Session VI: Building the Africa We Want With Social Infrastructure

Panellists:

- **Prof Nana Aba Appiah Amfo** – Vice-Chancellor, University of Ghana
- **Isidore Kpotufe** – CEO, RiviaCo
- **Kwabena Nyarko** – CEO, Hospital Infrastructure Group (Agenda 111)
- **Professor Khaled Dabees** – CEO, AB Care Medical Technology and CEO, UltraTeb (Egypt)
- **Anass Doukali** – Former Minister of Health, Morocco; head of innovation in e-health and e-employment, Mohammed V University, Rabat
- **Djamel Ghrib** – Director for Economic Development, Integration and Trade (ETIM), African Union Commission

Moderator: **Nana Yaa Mensah** – Supervising Editor, Asaase Broadcasting

APD 2025 further highlighted the critical role of social infrastructure, including education, health care and housing, in sustaining long-term economic prosperity. Addressing these foundational needs is essential for creating a skilled workforce, fostering innovation and ensuring inclusive development. Delegates called for increased public and private sector investment in human capital development to equip Africa's youth with the skills necessary in their emerging digital and industrial economies.

The Dialogues emphasised the critical role of social investment, stating that social infrastructure, encompassing health care, education, housing and social welfare systems, is essential to achieving the African Union's Agenda 2063 vision. The discussion highlighted the need for strategic planning, adequate financing and inclusive policies to eliminate existing gaps and ensure equitable access to social services. Health care emerged as a critical priority, with discussions

underscoring the urgent need for improved health-care facilities, workforce capacity and access to essential medicines.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed significant vulnerabilities in Africa's healthcare systems, reinforcing the need for resilient health-care infrastructure that can withstand future public health emergencies. Development partners and governments were urged to increase investments in primary health care and leverage technology to enhance service delivery. Education was also identified as a cornerstone of social infrastructure, with the discussions focusing on the need for quality education systems that equip Africa's youthful population with relevant skills for the future. Panellists highlighted the importance of investing in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to address skills gaps and promote economic inclusion. They also emphasised the role of digital learning solutions in expanding access to education.



Financing social infrastructure remains a significant challenge, with the Dialogues calling for innovative financing mechanisms to bridge funding gaps. Suggestions included leveraging public-private partnerships (PPPs), tapping into diaspora remittances and exploring opportunities for impact investment. Governments were encouraged to prioritise social infrastructure in national budgets and seek collaboration with international development partners. The role of good governance and policy frameworks in facilitating social infrastructure development was also discussed. The Dialogues emphasised the need for transparent and accountable governance structures that promote effective resource allocation and service delivery. Harmonised policies across regional blocs were identified as essential for fostering cross-border collaboration and ensuring sustainable development outcomes.

African countries must increase investment in pharmaceutical production to reduce dependency on imports and enhance health-care resilience. Expanding technology access can improve health-care delivery, while leveraging digital finance solutions – such as mobile payments and health insurance platforms – can enhance affordability and accessibility. Strengthening public-private partnerships will be key to scaling innovation and ensuring sustainable health financing.

African countries must give first priority to teaching science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) by integrating STEAM into national curricula to equip youth with future-ready skills. Investments in digital infrastructure, teacher training,

research hubs and industry partnerships will foster innovation, enhance problem-solving abilities and drive economic growth.

Expanding access to technology-enabled learning will ensure inclusivity and prepare the workforce for Africa’s digital and industrial transformation. African countries must prioritise investments in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to address skills gaps and promote economic inclusion. Strengthening digital infrastructure, leveraging e-learning platforms and integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education systems will enhance accessibility and improve learning outcomes.

African countries must prioritise health infrastructure by establishing a Health Insurance Fund (HIF) – a continental pooled fund that subsidises premiums for vulnerable populations to address systemic challenges and provide health coverage for the greater majority of Africans.

Exploring public-private healthcare partnerships to develop regional medical hubs that integrate digital solutions such as telemedicine will improve specialised health-care services and help scale up digital health care to reach remote communities.



CHAPTER FIVE:

Recommendations

Recommendations

To accelerate infrastructure development in Africa amid all the bottlenecks, the Dialogues, after exhaustive deliberations, agreed on the following recommendations.

Filling the financing gap for infrastructure

1. African countries must enhance their business and investment climate by removing barriers to private sector growth, fostering industrialisation and reducing transaction costs. Strategic investments in innovation, research/development and infrastructure are essential to accelerate industrialisation and trade. Leveraging global and domestic knowledge can further ensure inclusive and sustainable development across the continent.
2. African governments must prioritise a unified public-private partnership (PPP) framework to bridge the infrastructure financing gap without increasing national debt. With constrained fiscal space, countries should actively promote PPPs as a solution to critical infrastructure challenges, including energy shortages, limited internet access and inadequate transport systems.
3. The AfCFTA Secretariat should lead efforts to develop a continent-wide PPP framework that harmonises legal and regulatory structures, streamlines project approvals and introduces risk-sharing mechanisms such as infrastructure guarantees. This will attract private sector investment into key sectors such as railways, aviation and maritime transport, enhancing regional connectivity and boosting intra-African trade.
4. African countries must work towards integration of capital markets across borders, allowing seamless financial flows and investment opportunities. Harmonised regulations will create a more attractive environment for investors. Countries must also develop local currency infrastructure bonds to reduce dependence on external debt and shield economies from currency fluctuations. Encouraging private equity and venture capital investments will also help attract long-term private capital into infrastructure projects.
5. African governments and financial institutions must take bold steps to establish a dedicated Africa Infrastructure Fund to unlock the \$2 trillion in domestic capital held by pension funds, insurance funds and sovereign wealth funds. By mobilising these resources, Africa can secure a sustainable and scalable solution to its infrastructure financing challenges. To make this fund effective, governments must implement key reforms, including streamlining regulations to allow long-term investments, introducing risk mitigation tools such as blended finance and infrastructure bonds, and ensuring strong governance and transparency to build investor confidence.
6. African countries must act now to harness the over \$100 billion in annual diaspora remittances – an amount surpassing both Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This untapped capital presents a powerful opportunity to transform the continent's infrastructure. African governments must introduce targeted financial instruments including diaspora bonds with attractive returns, to channel these funds into critical projects. Simplified tax policies and infrastructure-backed diaspora investment funds will further encourage sustained diaspora engagement. Additionally, structured remittance-linked investment portfolios can provide direct avenues for channelling these funds into critical

projects such as roads, railways and energy systems.

7. African countries must tap into the growing pool of global climate finance to accelerate infrastructure development. In 2022 alone, global climate finance reached \$1.46 trillion, presenting a tremendous opportunity to fund sustainable, resilient and climate-smart infrastructure across key sectors such as education, health care, agriculture, renewable energy and transport. To attract climate finance, African governments must prioritise bankable green projects and establish clear policy frameworks that incentivise investment. Green bonds, for example, have proved successful in countries such as Nigeria, which issued Africa's first sovereign green bond to finance renewable energy and reforestation projects. Additionally, blended finance mechanisms – such as the African Development Bank's Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA) – can help de-risk investments and attract private sector participation in clean energy projects.

Transport and Logistics Necessary to Make Free Movement a Reality

8. All member states must commit to signing the AU Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and ratify the protocol for its implementation. Member states' concern about the depth of the protocol should be mediated and addressed.

9. Africa needs to prioritise regional connectivity by developing key regional corridors and transport hubs to facilitate trade and movement of people across borders.

Investments in multimodal transport must be increased by prioritising integrated transport systems that combine road, rail, air and water transport to optimise efficiency and reduce costs. Projects outlined by the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) must be prioritised and funded.

10. African countries must prioritise rural connectivity by investing in improved rural road networks that link remote markets to regional trade hubs. Strengthening these connections will boost agricultural productivity, facilitate trade and enhance economic opportunities for rural communities.

11. Africa needs increased investments for the exploration of renewable energy. Africa must prioritise green transitions to power electric vehicles and explore renewable energy sources such as bio energy for transportation to reduce carbon emissions. African countries must scale up investments in renewable energy to drive a green transition in transportation. Expanding the use of solar, wind and bioenergy can power electric vehicles and create sustainable fuel alternatives, reducing carbon emissions and reliance on fossil fuels.

12. African nations must embrace digital technologies to enhance transportation efficiency. Implementing smart solutions such as e-ticketing, real-time tracking and mobile payment systems will streamline urban mobility, reduce congestion and improve passenger experience. By accelerating these innovations, African cities can build modern, efficient and sustainable transport networks that support economic growth and environmental sustainability.

13. Member states must invest in local transportation solutions and innovations. They must also support research and development of innovative transportation solutions and invest in

human capital development by training professionals skilled in transportation planning, engineering and management.

14. Streamline and harmonise transportation regulations across countries to facilitate trade and investment.

15. Streamline policies on public-private partnerships to attract private investment and expertise in developing and managing transportation infrastructure. Create innovative mechanisms to mobilise diaspora resources to fill infrastructure financing gaps.

16. Fully implement the Cross-border Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) programme. ITS systems simplify administrative procedures and logistics processes, monitor traffic movements along the corridor and provide real-time information to stakeholders to enable them to manage the processes,

17. Progress in the implementation of “Paperless Trade” and “Cross-Border Paperless Trade” measures is encouraging, with increases of 6.3 and 5.4 percentage points, respectively, over the past two years. However, the overall implementation level of “Cross-Border Paperless Trade” is low, at 38%, with bilateral and sub-regional paperless trade systems remaining either mostly partial or on a pilot basis.

18. Monitoring and reporting tools to address non-tariff barriers (NTBs). The role of RECs is expected to establish or strengthen NTB monitoring mechanisms. The implementation of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Reporting Monitoring and Elimination Mechanism provides lessons for scaled implementation across the continent.

19. Fully implement the Yamoussoukro Decision by deregulating air services and promote regional air markets open to transnational competition to ensure the full liberalisation of intra-African air transport services in terms of access, capacity, frequency and tariffs.

20. Governments must commit to the implementation of a harmonised visa policy across the continent, implement outstanding commitments on visa-free

movement within RECs and extend visa-free travel policies for AfCFTA-related business.

21. Promote sustainable modes of transportation by encouraging the use of efficient and convenient public transport, cycling and walking to reduce reliance on private vehicles, curb congestion and improve air quality.

Delivering Affordable, Accessible and Sustainable Energy Solutions for Africa

22. Governments and development partners should prioritise investments in renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and hydro to meet Africa’s growing energy demand. Encouraging private sector participation through incentives, risk mitigation strategies and public-private partnerships (PPPs) can accelerate the deployment of clean energy solutions across the continent.

23. African governments should adopt harmonised and transparent regulatory frameworks to attract investment and foster a competitive energy market. Streamlining approval processes, offering tax incentives for renewable energy projects and implementing supportive policies for off-grid and mini-grid solutions will improve access and affordability.

24. To make clean energy solutions more affordable and accessible, stakeholders should explore innovative financing models such as pay-as-you-go (PAYG) systems, blended finance, green bonds and microfinance options.

These mechanisms can help lower-income households and small businesses transition to sustainable energy sources.

25. Regional cooperation and infrastructure development should be prioritised to facilitate cross-border energy trade and optimise resource utilisation. Expanding regional power

pools and interconnected grids will help balance supply and demand, reduce costs and ensure energy security across the continent.

26. Adoption of digital technologies such as smart grids, blockchain for energy trading and IoT-enabled energy management systems can enhance operational efficiency, reduce energy losses and improve service delivery. Governments and businesses should invest in research and development to drive technological innovation in the energy sector.

27. To support the transition to sustainable energy, efforts should be made to build local capacity and develop a skilled workforce through technical training programmes and knowledge-sharing initiatives. Empowering local communities with the necessary skills will ensure long-term sustainability and maintenance of energy infrastructure.

Leveraging Digital Infrastructure, Innovation and Technology to Connect Africa

28. Africa must prioritise the interoperability of communication and financial platforms over the next five years to unlock the full potential of digital trade. This requires strategic investments in broadband expansion, e-commerce platforms and mobile payment interoperability, alongside regulatory harmonisation to create a seamless digital economy.

Ghana's successful mobile payment interoperability framework serves as a model for other nations seeking to streamline digital transactions and enhance financial inclusion.

29. To bridge connectivity gaps, African countries must strengthen public-private partnerships (PPPs) to deploy broadband and satellite solutions, ensuring last-mile

connectivity in underserved areas. In addition, stronger regional coordination under the African Union (AU) is essential to standardise regulations for mobile money, data governance and cybersecurity. A unified digital identity framework for cross-border transactions will also enhance financial integration and economic efficiency. By taking these bold steps, Africa can build a digitally interconnected future that drives trade, innovation and inclusive growth.

30. African countries must work to reduce the cost of internet services and devices through government programmes and international partnerships. Countries must leverage economies of scale to reduce costs for consumers.

31. African countries must expand off-grid solar projects and other renewable energy initiatives to power digital infrastructure in underserved areas.

32. Countries must scale up digital literacy campaigns, targeting women and marginalised groups. Governments must also enhance collaboration with technology companies to offer free or affordable training programmes.

33. African countries must implement robust cybersecurity frameworks and invest in capacity-building for regulatory bodies to protect digital infrastructure and data.

The Role of Africa's Infrastructural Development Partners in Building the Single Market

34. AU member states and their development partners must prioritise infrastructure that facilitates intra-African trade. Development partners should align their infrastructure investments with the AfCFTA's core objective of facilitating trade. This includes enhancing transport corridors, border facilities and ports that

enable seamless movement of goods and services across borders. Priority should also be given to connecting regional economic hubs to underserved areas, particularly landlocked and rural regions.

35. Collaborative programmes such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and the Trans-African Highway Network should be scaled up with sustained financing and technical support. Development partners should co-finance projects which link multiple countries, reducing logistical bottlenecks and accelerating economic integration.

36. Digital platforms are critical for modern trade. Development partners should invest in broadband expansion, e-commerce platforms and digital payment systems to enable African small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access regional and global markets. Innovative funding models, such as blended finance, can support digital transformation projects that align with AfCFTA objectives.

37. Energy infrastructure remains a key driver of industrialisation and trade. Development partners should prioritise funding for renewable energy projects that power manufacturing, logistics and urbanisation, ensuring reliable and sustainable energy supply for AfCFTA-related activities.

38. Development partners should collaborate with African governments and institutions to ensure local ownership of projects. Capacity-building initiatives which empower African professionals and institutions to manage and maintain infrastructure projects are essential for long-term sustainability.

39. Development partners should act as catalysts to attract private sector investments by de-risking infrastructure projects through guarantees, concessional loans and technical

assistance. PPPs can accelerate the pace of infrastructure development and foster innovation in project delivery.

40. Development partners should create accessible financing mechanisms or special funds to support infrastructure development that directly benefits SMEs.

41. Africa's rural areas often remain disconnected from key markets. Development partners should prioritise rural infrastructure projects such as feeder roads, bridges and rural electrification, ensuring that rural producers are integrated into regional supply chains.

42. Development partners should invest in data systems and research to inform infrastructure planning and monitor the impact of projects on trade and development. This includes mapping trade corridors, identifying infrastructure gaps and assessing economic spillovers from infrastructure investments.

43. Improved coordination among bilateral and multilateral partners can prevent duplication and maximise the impact of infrastructure investments. Joint programming, pooled funds and co-financing arrangements can enhance resource efficiency and foster stronger partnerships.

44. Infrastructure projects must integrate environmental and climate resilience measures to ensure sustainability. Development partners should promote green infrastructure solutions and encourage African countries to adopt climate-smart policies for infrastructure development.

End of Recommendations



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