



## 2<sup>nd</sup> RUFORUM TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

### CONCEPT NOTE

## SYMPOSIUM IV: ECONOMIC TRENDS, BEST PRACTICES, POLICY-PRACTICE AND FUTURES

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024 (12:00-13:30 CAT)

**Venue:** Mercure Hotel, Grand Ballroom, Windhoek, Namibia

**Registration Link:** <https://bit.ly/3wITNlp>

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### BACKGROUND

African countries are extremely diverse in income status and present an uneven growth rates varying between 4 to 6%<sup>1</sup>. Despite these positive signs, Africa accounts for only 2% of world trade and receiving only 3% of foreign direct investment<sup>2</sup>. The continent's renaissance in the 1990s, which saw the establishment of the Africa Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as well as innovative continental efforts such as CAADP, doubled economic growth and created prospects. Endemic challenges such as climate change and several depressants of productivity as well as externalities continue to affect growth. Remarkably [Africa has made big strides after the COVID 19 pandemic](#). Whereas there are improvements in fiscal deficits, at 4.9% in 2023, significantly less than 6.9% in 2020 according to the [AfDB](#), an increase in debt distress across many countries in sub-Saharan Africa creates challenges, undermines investments and growth according to the International Monetary Fund<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, 11 African countries are projected to experience strong economic performance in 2024 according to AfDB and include: Niger (11.2%), Senegal (8.2%), Libya (7.9%), Rwanda (7.2%), Cote d'Ivoire (6.8%), Ethiopia (6.7%), Benin (6.4%), Djibouti (6.2%), Tanzania (6.1%), Togo (6%), and Uganda at 6%. In the growing economies, diversification of production and trade have unlocked business opportunities

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview>

<sup>2</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, Reimagining Economic growth in Africa, 2023

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2023/09/26/cf-how-to-avoid-a-debt-crisis-in-sub-saharan-africa>



including agro-based industry<sup>4</sup>. This can translate into wealth and improved livelihoods for Africa's citizens if the market forces balance.

Africa's Continental Free Trade Area offers opportunities for easing access to regional markets and strengthening production chains, and helping domestic industries become more prepared for global trade<sup>5</sup>. Unfortunately, Africa still faces supply chain hurdles such as poor logistics, low levels of technology, fragmented markets, limited capital sources, and weak institutions and regulations<sup>6</sup>. Given the variations in economic growth trajectories as influenced by policy, investments, externalities and other factors, Africa can learn from the successful and lagging economic stories to inform the required corrective measures both now and in the future.

To better inform the continent's growth investments, RUFORUM has organised a symposium to discuss Africa's economic trends, best practices, policy-practice interface, and futures for the continent's economic growth. This symposium takes place as part of RUFORUM's Second Triennial Conference and will generate new knowledge on models, pathways, and drivers for accelerating Africa's economic growth. Successes and lessons for scaling these across the continent will be identified and widely disseminated. Knowledge will be shared, and discussions held in two sub-themes outlined below:

***Sub theme 4(a): Innovations for growing Africa's agriculture and related sectors!***

- i. Improving Africa's low agricultural total factor productivity: The status, trends, and opportunities. Within this sub-theme, issues such as accessing improved technologies with lesson learnt from programmes such as the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) programme will be discussed.
- ii. Technological Leapfrogging: Digitization, renewables, and manufacturing transition.
- iii. Production at scale for a growing population and markets: Can smallholder agriculture grow and feed Africa: Evidence, roles and opportunity?

***Sub theme 4(b): Foresight and trend studies***

- i. Reaping Africa's demographic dividend: Implications for education planning and investments. This will include discussions on how to skill the next generation, Policy frameworks, trends and implications.
- ii. Making agriculture work for African economies: lessons learnt from CAADP and other frameworks.

<sup>4</sup> IMF *Regional Economic Outlook Africa*, April 2023, [www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/SSA/Issues/2023/04/14/regional-economic-outlook-for-sub-saharan-africa-april-2023](http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/SSA/Issues/2023/04/14/regional-economic-outlook-for-sub-saharan-africa-april-2023).

<sup>5</sup> <https://unctad.org/publication/economic-development-africa-report-2023>

<sup>6</sup> Balma, Lacina et al. (2022) : Long-run impacts of the conflict in Ukraine on food security in Africa, Kiel Policy Brief, No. Ukraine Special 1, Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW Kiel), Kiel



- iii. Policy and economic implications of climate risks and natural disasters covering topics such as the race to net zero economies: which way for Africa, are we preparing? Natural disasters and economic growth in Africa, and Economic development imperatives for sustainable development

**Sub theme 4c: Policies, planning and its implementation (underpinnings for the second decade of Africa’s agenda 2063- (2024-2034)**

- i. People centred development covering topics such as gender, diversity, and economic inclusion: The cost of exclusion to Africa and the policy imperatives for empowering of women.
- ii. Leveraging potentials of the youth for inclusive and green development in Africa.
- iii. Harnessing the power of the private sector, including unleashing innovation and improving agrifood system functionality.
- iv. Trade opportunities: Our progress so far: opportunities and challenges for the full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
- v. Environmental economics and mitigating the adverse outcomes of frontier technologies.

**OBJECTIVES**

The main aim of this scientific session is to exchange new knowledge on Africa’s economic growth trends, best practices, policy-practice interface, and futures for the continent’s economic growth. Specifically, this session will:

- a) Facilitate exchange of knowledge on innovations for growing Africa’s agriculture and related sectors.
- b) Facilitate exchange of insights emerging from foresight and trend studies on drivers of Africa’s economic growth.
- c) Generate policy implications on policies, planning and its implementation of emerging best practices that should underpin the second decade of Africa’s agenda 2063 (2024-2034).
- d) Foster partnerships and networks among researchers and industry professionals for innovations scaling models for growing Africa’s economy.

**APPROACH**

This symposium will be kick-started by a keynote address on the topic **“Africa’s 21st Century development perspectives; trends, Best -Practices, Policy-Practice and Futures**. Three discussants will present a response to the issues raised in the keynote address to initiate discussion among participants. This symposium will set the tone for the different sessions which will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- a) Knowledge on innovations for growing Africa’s agriculture and related sectors including success stories, challenges, and opportunities.
- b) Most feasible economic growth pathways for achieving accelerated economic growth as derived from trend and foresight studies including success stories, challenges, and opportunities.





- c) Policy implications for planning and implementation of best practices that should underpin the second decade of Africa’s agenda 2063 (2024-2034).
- d) Partnerships and networking among researchers and industry professionals for innovations scaling models for growing Africa’s economy.

## PARTICIPANTS

Participants will include researchers, scientists, academics, development partners, policy makers and Government Officials, industry representatives, Non-Profit Organizations, professionals, and graduate students.

## ORGANIZERS

The event is organized by RUFORUM, with support from the Government of Namibia and RUFORUM member universities in Namibia.

## PROGRAMME

TUESDAY 13 <sup>th</sup> August, 2024	
PLENARY SESSION IV	
<b>Venue:</b> Mercure Hotel, Grand Ballroom	
<b>Registration Link:</b> <a href="https://bit.ly/3wITNlp">https://bit.ly/3wITNlp</a>	
<b>Chair:</b> Prof. Festus Annor-Frempong, University of Cape Coast	
<b>Rapporteurs:</b> Dr. Shihaleni Ndjaba and Dr. Amuri Nyambilila	
Time	
12.00-12:05	<b>Welcome Remarks from the Chair</b>
12:05-12:30	<b>Key Note Address</b> <b>Title: <i>Africa’s Agriculture Trends, Best-Practices, Futures and Policy Agenda</i></b> Prof Ernest Molua, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Cooperation & Relations with the Business World, University of Bamenda
	<b>Discussants</b>
12:30-12:40	Prof. Johnny Mugisha, Makerere University
12:40-12:50	Dr. Babatunde Olumide Omilola, African Development Bank
12:50-13:00	Dr. Paul Falakeza FATCH, Board Chair, AFAAS
13:00-13:20	<b>Discussions</b>
13.20-13:30	<b>Closing remarks</b>
13:30-15:00	<b>Lunch</b>

Co-organisers:

