



## Leaping Into 2025: Building an Inclusive and Resilient Africa

**Greetings to all our Stakeholders, Partners, and Supporters.**



Dear Stakeholders, Partners, and Supporters,

As we embrace 2025, we do so with renewed energy and a steadfast commitment to collaboration, innovation, and resilience. This year marks another defining chapter in our collective journey to unlock Africa's potential through strategic human and institutional development across the continent. Over the past three decades, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) has played a pivotal role in shaping Africa's development trajectory across the economic, social, and environmental pillars of sustainable growth.

Over the past three decades, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) has played a pivotal role in shaping Africa's development trajectory across the economic, social, and environmental pillars of sustainable growth. Today, I address you with deep humility and pride, acknowledging that our achievements are made possible by the unwavering trust and support of our member states, partners, and beneficiaries. Together, we are building robust institutions, empowering skilled leaders, and creating supportive frameworks that serve as the foundation for Africa's success.

**The road ahead is filled with promise and ambition.**

Our Uhora Academy, launched in 2024, is emerging as a dynamic E-learning and knowledge-sharing platform dedicated to capacity development. With the Leadership Excellence in Africa's Public Sector (LEAPS) course now live since November, a cohort of 87 senior leaders in public financial management from six countries has embarked on this transformative learning experience. Looking ahead, we will expand our offerings by introducing the Building Excellence in Taxation and Administration (BETA) courses at the International Conference on the Taxation of the Digital Economy, to be held on April 15–16 in Dakar, Senegal. During this event, we will also unveil our refreshed visual identity, boldly reflecting our mission and aspirations.

In addition, we are strengthening our agribusiness and food sovereignty pillar through new initiatives aimed at empowering women, youth, and emerging entrepreneurs. These programs will cultivate leadership, enhance business skills, and foster inclusive, sustainable agricultural value chains.

### Upcoming Highlights:

1. The 8th edition of the Africa Capacity Report, set for release later this year, will offer critical insights into economic transformation, showcasing how capacity development drives inclusive growth and the emergence of nations.
2. The second edition of the Africa Export Competitiveness Report will expand its scope to cover all African countries (up from 30 last year). This comprehensive report will feature case studies on gender inclusion, trade, and leadership, providing a detailed view of Africa's competitive landscape.

### Partner Spotlight:

This quarter, we celebrate our collaboration with the Science for Africa Foundation (SFA), whose pioneering work in drug discovery exemplifies the innovation and shared purpose driving our efforts.

Thank you for engaging with the Q1 2025 edition of the ACBF Digest. Your insights, feedback, and continued partnership are vital in shaping our shared vision of a resilient, inclusive, and prosperous Africa.

Warm regards,

**Mamadou Biteye**

**Executive Secretary, ACBF**

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



### Science for Africa Foundation: Building Africa's Scientific Future

For too long, African scientists have worked within underfunded institutions, weak research environments, and limited opportunities for collaboration. Changing that reality is the Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation) - a dynamic, African-led organization dedicated to nurturing a vibrant scientific ecosystem across the continent.

Established in 2021, the SFA Foundation's mission is bold: to empower a resilient, self-sustaining community of African scientists capable of tackling the continent's most pressing challenges - from

disease outbreaks to climate change and agricultural research. But building that kind of ecosystem takes more than just funding. It calls for strong systems, skilled teams, and long-term strategies. That's where partnership comes in.

Recognizing the need to strengthen its institutional foundation, the SFA Foundation teamed up with the ACBF, drawing on its experience in capacity building and institutional development. Together, they co-created a Capacity Improvement Plan - a tailored roadmap to strengthen SFA Foundation's internal operations, governance structures, and long-term impact.

The results speak for themselves. SFA Foundation's journey has been one of rapid growth, improved efficiency, and rising influence, all driven by visionary leadership and a commitment to excellence. Highlights of SFA Foundation's transformation journey:

- 80% of the Capacity Improvement Plan implemented, marking a major leap in operational maturity.
- Enhanced governance and financial oversight, with the rollout of key internal policies.
- A clear and robust leadership succession plan, ensuring continuity and strategic clarity.
- Targeted staff capacity-building, covering leadership development, human resources, proposal writing, and public speaking.

*"The ACBF engagement was transformational. Through this partnership, we have strengthened our internal structures, refined our strategic direction, and enhanced our ability to deliver on our mission. Today, we operate with greater efficiency, resilience, and confidence, ready to scale our impact. This journey has not just been about improving systems—it is about positioning the SFA Foundation as a driving force in African science, equipped to champion homegrown solutions and secure the resources needed to sustain and grow Africa's scientific ecosystem."* **Raynold Zondo, Chief Operating Officer, SFA Foundation.**

By the end of 2024, the impact was already clear. SFA Foundation was managing a larger project portfolio with greater agility and consistency. At the same time, a new resource mobilization strategy and cost recovery framework laid the groundwork for financial sustainability - a crucial step toward independence and long-term resilience.

Looking ahead, the Foundation is focused on scaling successful programs, building stronger links with industry, and amplifying African research on the global stage through science communication. With strategic support and a growing internal capacity, SFA isn't just contributing to Africa's scientific future - it's helping to lead the way.

This partnership with ACBF highlights what is possible when targeted capacity-building meets visionary leadership. But the spotlight remains where it belongs: on SFA Foundation's commitment and resolve to build Africa's scientific future.

## ACBF IN ACTION

### **Voices of Transformation: How the LEAPS Program is Empowering Public Sector Leaders Across Africa**

The Leadership Excellence in Africa's Public Sector (LEAPS) promotes transformative leadership across Africa. This feature spotlights six remarkable individuals from the program's inaugural PFM cohort representing Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Sénégal and Zimbabwe. Their stories illustrate how leadership excellence, innovation, and resilience are critical drivers of positive change on the continent.



**Dr. Birago Antwi-Agyei**

Assistant  
Commissioner,  
Ghana Revenue  
Authority



**Pamela Osei  
Agyekum**

Director, Human  
Resources  
Management and  
Administration, Internal  
Audit Agency, Ghana



**Jacob Muimi**

ICT Specialist at the  
Public Financial  
Management Reforms  
Secretariat (PFMRS)  
Kenya



**Michael Kahiti**

Director of Planning  
and Head of Africa  
Division, National  
Treasury, Kenya



**Angela Nyangani**

Deputy Director of  
Audit at Office of  
Auditor General (OAG)  
Zimbabwe



**Lloyd Karonga**

Head of Financial  
Accounting, Zimbabwe  
Revenue Authority  
(ZIMRA)



**Cheikh Ndiaye**

Treasury Inspector and  
Coordinator at the  
Directorate-General of  
Public Accounting and  
Treasury, Senegal



**Sokhna Mal Diop**

Principal Treasury Inspector  
of Exceptional Grade, and  
Director-General of  
Administration and  
Personnel at the Public

## **The Leadership Excellence in Africa's Public Sector (LEAPS) Technical Seminars**

As part of the LEAPS Program under the Enhancing Leadership and Governance in Public Financial Management (ELG-PFM) Program, ACBF trained 79 senior PFM officials from Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Senegal, Zimbabwe, and The Gambia. The 6-month program includes leadership skills to integrate climate considerations into financial governance.

On 10 March 2025, ACBF conducted the second technical seminar on Green PFM, led by Srinivas Gurazada of the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) secretariat and Dr. Linda Etale (ACBF). The seminar addressed climate change challenges, macro-fiscal impacts, and strategies for integrating climate considerations into PFM systems. Officials explored global best practices and country experiences in Green PFM, with guidance on PEFA's climate framework for climate-responsive fiscal planning.

The first seminar, held on 5 February 2025, focused on PFM and Artificial Intelligence, featuring experts from Aga Khan University, IDInsight, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The seminar covered AI applications in budgeting, auditing, financial reporting, and public service delivery. Participants explored strategic AI integration, policy implications, and challenges such as data privacy, bias, and regulatory gaps. Officials gained insights into AI-driven PFM improvements, developed strategies for ethical AI implementation, and strengthened collaborative networks for knowledge sharing.

### **Key 2024 Achievements**

- Launch of ELG-PFM Program at the African Development Bank Meeting in May 2024.
- Country needs assessments in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, and Ivory Coast to identify leadership gaps.
- Development and rollout of the LEAPS leadership training program, including five leadership modules, coaching, and mentorship.
- Engagement of a Strategic Advisory Panel (SAP), consisting of former finance ministers and experts, to guide the program.
- Implementation of group and individual coaching sessions for PFM officials.
- Hosting of PFM technical seminars, including discussions on AI, Green PFM, crisis management, and international negotiations.

### **2025 Priorities**

- Completion of first cohorts training, including technical seminars and coaching sessions.
- Recruitment and training of a second cohort of senior PFM officials.

- Launch of Public Sector Collaboration Hub in October 2025 to facilitate peer learning across African countries.
- Research on PFM oversight and accountability challenges with local think tanks.
- Training of Members of Parliament on PFM governance to improve financial oversight.



**Mr. Adil Ababou, Senior Program Officer at the Gates Foundation**, a strong supporter of the LEAPS program, emphasizes that successful public finance reforms require not only technical assistance but robust change management to foster collaboration and sustained commitment. LEAPS sets a new standard for leadership in Africa’s public sector, creating a solid foundation for stronger governance and a sustainable future



**Spotlight on Taxation Capacity in Africa: Watch the AFP-TCA Feature Video!**

We are thrilled to present the feature video for the [African Finnish Partnerships on Taxation Capacity in Africa \(AFP-TCA\) project](#). This collaboration between ACBF and HAUS Finnish Institute of Public Management tackles critical taxation challenges, such as taxing the fast-growing digital economy and Africa’s informal sector, to advance good governance and transparency. Stay tuned for upcoming training on these critical topics, exclusively at the Ubor Academy. Watch the video [here](#).

## Thought Leadership and Collaboration

**Africa Philanthropy Day Second Edition**  
10 December 2024 | OECD Conference Centre | 2 Rue André Pascal, 75016 Paris, France

How can we strengthen philanthropic support for education in Africa?

**Panel II | Bridging education and employment: tackling the skills mismatch**

Barassou Diawara  
Senior Knowledge Management Expert  
The African Capacity Building Foundation

Frédéric Bardeau  
President  
Senegal

Mosun Layode  
Executive Director  
Africa Philanthropy Forum

Elisa Desbordes  
CEO  
EcoBank Foundation

Mel Oluoch  
Strategic Partnership Director  
Southern Africa Association

More information:  
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**SPEAKER #AWIEF2024**

**MAMADOU BITEYE**

Executive Secretary  
The African Capacity Building Foundation

Zimbabwe

## **Africa Philanthropy Day, Second Edition: Strengthening the Future of Education in Africa**

On 10 December 2024, global leaders and experts in philanthropy convened at the [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) Conference Centre in Paris, France for the Second Edition of Africa Philanthropy Day. This pivotal event, hosted by the OECD Development Centre and [Network of Foundations Working for Development \(netFWD\)](#), focused on strategies to strengthen philanthropic support for education across Africa, addressing pressing challenges and opportunities. Mr. Barassou Diawara, Senior Knowledge Management Expert at ACBF, participated in Panel II: Bridging Education and Employment. During this session, participants explored how philanthropy could close the gap between educational outcomes and workforce demands. ACBF spotlighted its role in addressing Africa's skills mismatch, showcasing its expertise in capacity building and knowledge management. Panelists discussed innovative approaches to equipping African youth with market-relevant skills, emphasizing sustainable employment and economic growth. For further inquiries, the event organizers encourage contact via [DEV.netFWD@oecd.org](mailto:DEV.netFWD@oecd.org).

## **A Decade of Empowerment and Innovation: Celebrating the 10th AWIEF**

The 10th [Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum \(AWIEF\)](#), held on 28 - 29 November 2024 in Cape Town, South Africa, was a landmark event under the theme: "Future for All: Collaborate for Growth, Solve Inequity, Act on Climate." AWIEF2024 brought together over 1,300 stakeholders from 65 countries, including leaders, innovators, policymakers, and entrepreneurs, to champion sustainable development, innovation, and women's empowerment across Africa. The forum featured insightful dialogues on entrepreneurship, innovation, and climate action, offering actionable strategies to tackle inequities and foster growth. Distinguished speakers include H.E. Mr. Austin Gormley, Ambassador of Ireland in South Africa, and Dr. Hanan Morsy, Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). To mark a decade of transformative work, a special video, [10 Years of Impact](#), was unveiled to celebrate AWIEF's journey in empowering African women and entrepreneurs. Explore the photo gallery for a snapshot of the action: [AWIEF2024 Conference and Awards Photos](#). AWIEF continues to be Africa's foremost platform for advancing women's empowerment, innovation, and entrepreneurship. It drives systemic change and connects a global audience committed to sustainable development.

## **Picks of the Quarter**

### **Must-Read Insights from Our Top Publications**



## **Survey of the Capacity Needs of Africa's Regional Economic Communities and Strategies for Addressing Them**

Africa has experienced rapid economic growth in the 21st century, but its limited regional integration remains a major obstacle to sustaining this progress. Greater connectivity among African countries is essential to boosting trade, participating in global value chains, and harnessing the potential of its youthful population. Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which are critical to achieving the African Union's Agenda 2063, face persistent challenges, including weak institutional frameworks, insufficient human resources, and inadequate financial capacity. The ACBF's capacity assessments in 2006 and 2014 reaffirmed the need to strengthen RECs to meet Africa's evolving development priorities. Addressing these challenges is critical for deepening regional integration, unlocking Africa's economic potential, and ensuring continued growth and competitiveness in the global economy.



## **The challenge of African Youth Unemployment**

Youth unemployment remains a pressing challenge in Africa, with most of the continent's unemployed population under the age of 25. ACBF's 2017 Occasional Paper highlights the persistent barriers to effective youth employment programs, including inadequate funding, poor coordination, and the lack of systematic evaluation. These challenges undermine the scalability and impact of existing initiatives. This paper advocates for a multisectoral, collaborative approach combining short-term job creation and long-term structural reforms. It emphasizes leveraging Africa's abundant natural resources, skilled workforce, and technological potential. Recognizing that youth unemployment transcends national borders, the paper calls for regional cooperation and collective action among governments, the private sector, and international partners. With the African Union's Agenda 2063 goals still unmet, the need for sustainable, strategic solutions to youth unemployment is more urgent than ever.



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THE AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION

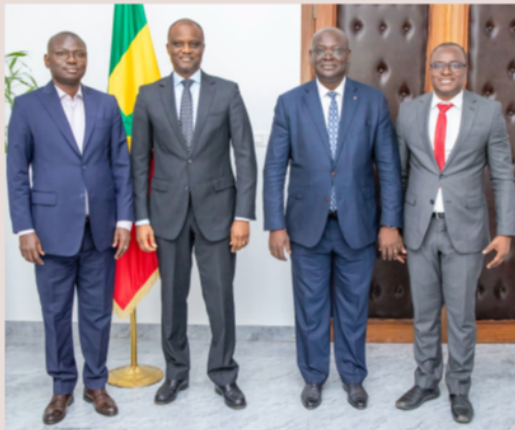


## **Factoring as a Catalyst for Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Intra-African Trade**

As Africa grapples with the economic challenges of the post-COVID-19 era and the Russia-Ukraine war, the AfCFTA offers a transformative opportunity to boost intra-African trade, currently only 17% of the continent's total trade. This publication underscores the critical role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in driving Africa's economic recovery and highlights factoring as a key financial tool to empower SMEs. Factoring provides immediate working capital by underwriting receivables rather than relying on traditional collateral, enabling SMEs to improve cash flow and access financing. This is especially beneficial in Africa's challenging business environments, where using personal assets as collateral often carries significant risks. Drawing on case studies and data, the report illustrates how factoring can enhance trade, support SME growth, and drive regional integration under AfCFTA. By leveraging factoring, SMEs can become engines of economic development, fostering resilience and expansion in Africa's evolving trade landscape.

## **STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS**

The Executive Secretary of ACBF recently participated in a series of high-level meetings, with engagement and collaboration on critical capacity development initiatives for Africa:



**Meeting with Mr Abdourahmane Sarr**  
 Minister of Economy, Planning and Cooperation



**Meeting with Amb. Maricruz Evuna**  
 Secretary of State

ACF Governor  
Senegal



**Meeting with Dr. Natu El-Maamry Mwamba**

Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Finance and Planning  
Tanzania

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Equatorial Guinea



**Meeting with Hon. Matia Kasaija**

Minister of Finance,  
Planning and Economic Development  
Uganda



**Meeting with Hon. Phenyio Butale**

Minister of International Relations  
Botswana



**Meeting with Hon. Lejone Mpotjoane**

Minister of Foreign Affairs and  
International Relations  
Lesotho



**Meeting with Mrs. Botho Keba Bayendi**

Director of Strategic Planning and Delivery  
African Union Commission

## UPCOMING

### Join Us: International Conference on Taxation of the Digital Economy



Save the date! From 15 – 16 April 2025, the Ministry of Finance and Budget in Dakar, Senegal, will host the International Conference on Taxation of the Digital Economy, a hybrid event aimed at empowering African countries to effectively tax the fast-growing digital economy. Organized by ACBF and HAUS Finnish Institute of Public Management in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC) - Department for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry, and Minerals (ETTİM), and the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF), the conference will bring together policymakers, tax administrators, global experts, and stakeholders to tackle challenges in digital taxation, share best practices, and strengthen Africa's capacity for domestic resource mobilization.

3 reasons why you should attend

- ✓ **Explore solutions for taxing Africa's US\$180 billion digital economy.**
- ✓ **Learn from global leaders and African innovators.**
- ✓ **Discuss harmonized policies and capacity-building for sustainable development.**

What to expect: Key Conference Themes

#### **1. Best Practices for Digital Economy Taxation**

Explore how African governments can design fair and effective tax systems to strengthen domestic resource mobilization, address gaps in infrastructure and regulation, and integrate citizen participation. Learn from international best practices to enhance national tax policies.

#### **2. Global and Alternative Tax Policy Frameworks**

Discuss solutions for taxing cross-border digital activities and ensuring Africa's voice in global tax reform debates. Examine harmonized approaches to digital services taxes and advocate for equitable, democratic

global tax frameworks.

Don't Miss Out on 15 – 16 April 2025 in Dakar, Senegal.

**Register here:** <https://whova.com/portal/registration/q3vNgyW9vO114nlxjbgW/>

The International Conference on Taxation of the Digital Economy is supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland through the African-Finnish Partnerships on Taxation Capacity in Africa (AFP-TCA) program.

## IN THE NEWS

Here's a summary of media coverage and content on the LEAPS Program launch:



### Ghana News Online

[LEAPS Program Launched in Ghana to Strengthen Public Sector Leadership](#) This article highlights LEAP's role in equipping senior officials with the leadership skills needed to address Ghana's public finance challenges.



### Bantu Gazette

[ACBF Launches Leadership Program to Strengthen Public Financial Management in Senegal](#) The Senegal launch LEAPS launch is covered here, underscoring the importance of leadership and change management in ensuring sustainable PFM.



### Agence de Presse Sénégalaise (APS)

[Finances publiques : le ministère de l'Économie lance un programme de renforcement des compétences du personnel](#) This French article details the launch of LEAPS by Senegal's Ministry of Economy to enhance the PFM skills of senior public officials and support national development.



### GhanaWeb

[AfCFTA is the driving force of Africa's economic development](#) - Wamkele-Mene Wamkele. Mene emphasizes the AfCFTA's role in unlocking Africa's economic potential, strengthening regional trade ties, creating jobs, and fostering sustainable development.

## CADAST Paves the Way for Africa's Economic Revolution

By Editorial November 26, 2024



### My Daily News Online

#### AfCFTA: The Catalyst for Africa's Economic Progress

This article discusses how AfCFTA catalyzes regional economic growth, highlighting its potential to reduce trade barriers and accelerate industrialization in Africa.

## Landmark Conference in Ghana Tackles Trade Integration Under AfCFTA

Editorial Staff 2 Months Ago 0 8 Mins



### Capital News Online

#### AfCFTA: Africa's Pathway to Economic Prosperity

This story highlights AfCFTA as critical for Africa's economic development, focusing on its ability to promote trade, foster economic independence, and unify the continent's economies.

**Procurement Announcements:** Visit our website for the latest procurement opportunities.

**Job Announcements:** Explore exciting career opportunities at the ACBF.

We would love to hear about the work you are heading, your accomplishments, and impact-driven results.

Are you an **ACBF partner**? Please email us at [Comms@acbf-pact.org](mailto:Comms@acbf-pact.org).

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