

Africa Think Tank Summit Special Edition



The 11th Africa Think Tank Summit marked a defining moment in Africa's collective effort to strengthen fiscal sovereignty and bridge the gap between policy and implementation. Hosted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and held under the theme "From Taxation to Action:

Bridging Policy and Implementation in Public Financial Management (PFM) in Africa," the Summit brought together more than 500 participants online and in person from 40 countries, including policymakers, think tanks, development partners, and civil society leaders.

Over three days, we witnessed powerful exchanges, bold ideas, and practical solutions reaffirmed that Africa has the knowledge, the capacity, and the will to finance its own development. From exploring artificial intelligence in fiscal governance to launching new knowledge products and partnerships, ATTS 2025 demonstrated that innovation and collaboration remain at the heart of sustainable transformation.

I wish to thank the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, our partners at the African Union Commission, AUDA-NEPAD, AFLEX, PSI, the Africa-Europe Foundation, the World Bank, and the Hewlett Foundation for their steadfast support. My appreciation also goes to every participant who contributed to this dialogue of action.

As we turn the page from discussion to delivery, let us carry forward the spirit of accountability, innovation, and African ownership that defined this Summit. The journey from taxation to action has begun, and together, we will shape a future where Africa's growth is funded, driven, and sustained by Africans.

About the Summit



The Africa Think Tank Summit (ATTS) is the continent's premier platform for policy dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration among think tanks, governments, and development partners. Since its inception in 2014, ATTS has advanced evidence-based policymaking and strengthened the role of African institutions in driving reform.

The 11th edition, held from 8 to 10 October 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was convened by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC), AUDA-NEPAD, and the Government of Ethiopia, with funding support from the World Bank and the Hewlett Foundation, and technical partnership from the African

Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX), the Policy Studies Institute (PSI), and the Africa-Europe Foundation.

The Summit provided a dynamic space for thought leadership, collaboration, and innovation focused on strengthening fiscal sovereignty, improving domestic resource mobilization, and ensuring accountable governance across Africa.

Over three days, the Summit featured 24 sessions, including plenaries, stakeholder forums, side events, and a special training session. Key highlights included the launch of the Book on African Think Tanks titled: "Creation, Management, and Sustainability of Think Tanks in Africa," the Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2024, and the new course on "Taxing the Digital Economy" delivered through ACBF's Uhora Academy.

Connecting ideas to implementation, the Summit reaffirmed ACBF's mission to develop capable, inclusive, and sustainable institutions that drive Africa's transformation.

Summit Highlights: From Dialogue to Action: Building Fiscal Sovereignty Across Africa

The 11th Africa Think Tank Summit brought together leaders, policymakers, researchers, and development partners from across the continent to chart a path toward Africa's fiscal transformation. Each day of the Summit reflected a shared ambition to transform taxation from a policy discussion into an engine of development, accountability, and inclusion.

Day 1 Highlights: From Taxation to Action



The Summit opened on 8 October 2025 in Addis Ababa with a powerful call for Africa to finance its own future through stronger domestic resource mobilization and accountable governance.

Day one discussions took place under the theme: Bridging the Gap: Turning Visionary Policies into Real-World Impact.

Opening remarks from H.E. Aynalem Nigussie, Ethiopia's Minister of Revenue, urged closer alignment between policy and implementation, while H.E. Zadig Abreha of AFLEX called for African ownership of fiscal reform, stating that "Africa must move from being analyzed to becoming the authors of its own progress." Mr. Mamadou Biteye, ACBF Executive Secretary, supported this sentiment, emphasizing that "Africa is ready to fund its own future." Plenary sessions explored practical pathways for reform. Discussions focused on domestic resource mobilization, rebuilding public trust through transparency, and integrating youth, women, and digital tools into taxation systems. Thematic panels highlighted the role of high-quality data, debt management, and institutional capacity in sustaining fiscal transformation. Side events highlighted how inclusive, health-focused, and data-driven fiscal policies can deliver both economic and social dividends.



Day 2 Highlights: Reimagining Revenue for Africa's Future



The Summit opened on 8 October 2025 in Addis Ababa with a powerful call for Africa to finance its own future through stronger domestic resource mobilization and accountable governance. Day one discussions took place under the theme: Bridging the Gap: Turning Visionary Policies into Real-World Impact.

Day 2 focused on unlocking Africa’s fiscal potential through technology, data, inclusion, and reform. Under the theme “Reimagining Revenue: Strategies for Effective Domestic Resources Mobilization” participants explored how innovation and collaboration can strengthen public financial management and build self-reliant economies. The day opened with a keynote by Eddie Mandhry, Member of the ACBF Executive Board and Managing Director of the Sports AI Innovation Center, who outlined the transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI) in fiscal governance. Drawing from global and African experiences, he explained how AI can forecast fiscal outcomes, detect fraud, and guide evidence-based policy decisions. Speakers at a fireside chat emphasized that digital transformation, ethical governance, and cross-sector partnerships are central to fair, efficient, and inclusive fiscal systems. Stakeholder sessions then examined youth engagement, civil-society accountability, and the catalytic role of think tanks in driving reform.

Participants highlighted how young Africans and research institutions can help bridge the gap between fiscal policy and real-world outcomes, while civil-society organizations can reinforce transparency and citizen trust. Discussions also addressed climate- and gender-responsive budgeting, calling for equitable financing that advances both environmental resilience and social inclusion.



Day 3 Highlights: Innovation, Partnership, and Collective Action



Day 3 focused on the theme: **United for Change: Strengthening Partnerships for PFM Success.**

It concluded three days of dialogue with a strong call for collaboration, innovation, and long-term partnerships to advance fiscal reform and sustainable public financial management across Africa.

A plenary session showcased innovative practices from think tanks, fintech companies, and civil society organizations that are reshaping Africa’s fiscal landscape. The last plenary session emphasized collective action as a driver of effective domestic resource mobilization (DRM). The Official Closing Ceremony, attended by H.E. Selma Malika Haddadi, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, marked a significant milestone with the launch of two major knowledge products.: The book “Creation, Management, and

Sustainability of Think Tanks in Africa” a guide to building resilient and credible policy institutions. The new online course “Taxing the Digital Economy” delivered through ACBF’s Ubora Academy, aimed at strengthening capacity in digital taxation. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed between ACBF and the Africa-Europe Foundation, and another between ACBF and the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD).



Leading Voices: Reflections from the Summit

The 11th Africa Think Tank Summit served as both a platform for dialogue and a gathering of minds, where leaders, policymakers, and innovators exchanged compelling insights on Africa’s fiscal future.



H.E. Selma Malika Haddadi, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, described the Summit as “a movement for accountability and action.”



H.E. Aynalem Nigussie, Minister of Revenue, Ethiopia
“Policy alone cannot bring about change. It must be matched with the right implementation and cross-sector cooperation.”



H.E. Zadig Abreha, President, Africa Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX)
“Let us transform taxation from a burden into a badge of honor. Africa must move from being analyzed to becoming the authors of its own progress.”



Mr. Mamadou Biteye, Executive Secretary, African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)
“Let this Summit show that Africa is ready to fund its own future – not through dependency, but through effective, transparent, and equitable domestic resource mobilization.”



Dr. Fekadu Tsega, Director General, Policy Studies Institute (PSI)

"Building transparent fiscal systems is about renewing the social contract between citizens and the state. Proximity matters – between citizens and governance, policy and implementation, Africa and the world."



Mrs. Meseret Desta, Vice President, AFLEX

"Africa's transformation must be self-financed, data-driven, inclusive, and institutionally resilient."



Mr. Eddie Mandhry, Member of ACBF Executive Board and Managing Director, Sports AI Innovation Center

"AI is no longer experimental. It can help us finance Africa's future and empower our public institutions to serve citizens better, with ethics and collaboration at the core."

Voices of the Summit and #ThinkTank60

The Summit brought together a diversity of voices united by one purpose to turn ideas into action for Africa's fiscal transformation. From policymakers and think tank leaders to innovators and youth representatives, participants shared insights that captured the spirit of collaboration, accountability and ambition shaping Africa's development agenda. Watch the videos below for more insights.





Knowledge and Innovation

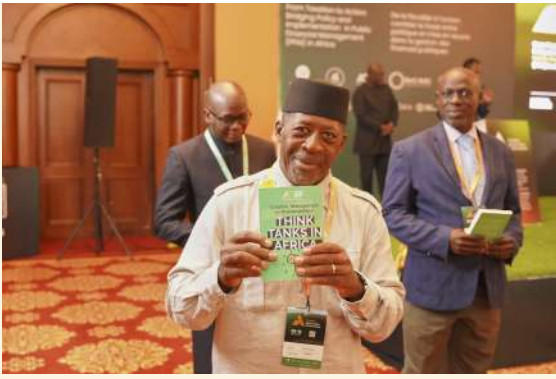
At the heart of the 11th Africa Think Tank Summit was a commitment to turn ideas into impact. From thought-provoking discussions to the unveiling of new knowledge tools, ATTS 2025 positioned innovation as the foundation for Africa's fiscal transformation and institutional resilience.

New Knowledge Products Launched

Two major resources were unveiled to strengthen the continent's capacity for reform and leadership:

Book Launch – "Creation, Management, and Sustainability of Think Tanks in Africa"

This landmark publication captures over three decades of lessons and best practices in establishing and sustaining African think tanks. It offers a roadmap for building credible, financially resilient, and policy-influential institutions capable of shaping development outcomes across the continent.



New Course – “Taxing the Digital Economy”

Developed through **ACBF's Ubora Academy**, this course provides policymakers, tax administrators, and researchers with practical tools to address the fiscal challenges and opportunities of Africa's growing digital landscape. The program empowers participants to design fair and efficient taxation frameworks suited for the digital age.

To watch the video, click on the [link](#)



Partnership in Action: Strategic MoUs Signed

The 11th Africa Think Tank Summit demonstrated that sustainable reform in public financial management requires collaboration across institutions, sectors, and regions. From multilateral organizations to local think tanks, partners came together in Addis Ababa to translate shared goals into joint action.

Two key Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed during the Summit, signaling a new era of collaboration:



ACBF and the Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF) formalized a strategic partnership to advance innovation, policy dialogue, and leadership development across Africa and Europe. The agreement lays the groundwork for joint research, capacity-building programs, and cross-continental learning platforms.

ACBF and the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) entered into partnership to strengthen cooperation between African think tanks and civil-society organizations, ensuring that fiscal reforms are both evidence-based and inclusive.

As the Summit Communiqué emphasized, collective action remains the cornerstone of Africa's fiscal sovereignty and sustainable transformation.

Summit Communiqué



Read by Meseret Desta, Vice President, AFLEX, the Summit Communiqué reinforced the key priorities emerging from three days of dialogue.

Key Recommendations from the Summit Communiqué

Technology-Oriented Tax Systems: Governments were urged to strengthen domestic resource mobilization through fair, efficient, and technology-enabled tax systems while reducing reliance on official development assistance and debt.

Evidence-Based PFM Systems: Participants called for institutionalizing evidence-based and transparent PFM systems, including citizen budgets, joint audit follow-up mechanisms, and effective oversight by parliaments and civil society.

AI-Powered Revenue Management: Delegates emphasized leveraging AI and digital innovation for predictive revenue analysis, expenditure tracking, and improved compliance across sectors.

Enhancing Policy Influence of Think Tanks: Sustainable funding and structured collaboration frameworks were recommended to empower think tanks as catalysts for translating policy into tangible action.

Inclusive Fiscal Governance: The communiqué called for mainstreaming gender and youth engagement, simplifying compliance for SMEs, and supporting women-led enterprises to foster equitable outcomes.

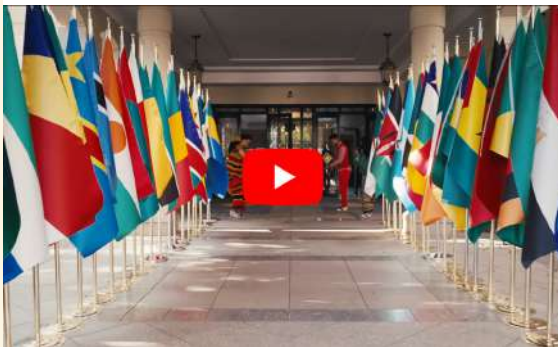
Strengthening PFM Capacity Building: ACBF and partners were encouraged to scale up capacity-building programs, leadership development, and the creation of a continental public financial management competency framework.

Innovative Financing in PFM: Countries were urged to explore innovative financing mechanisms such as health and environmental taxes, public-private partnerships, diaspora bonds, and digital economy taxation.

Photo & Video Highlights

The 11th Africa Think Tank Summit came alive through powerful visuals capturing three days of dialogue, partnership, and inspiration in Addis Ababa. From the Opening Ceremony to the final plenary, the energy of collaboration was evident, Ministers, policymakers, and thought leaders shared ideas that will shape Africa's fiscal transformation.

Opening Ceremony Video



Voices of the Summit Series



View the Photo Gallery:

Experience the moments that defined the Summit, from the signing of strategic MoUs and keynote addresses to panel discussions, side events, and the closing ceremony.

Visit: [Link](#)

Media Coverage



AllAfrica: [Africa Think Tank Summit Opens in Addis Ababa](#) – Highlighting the Summit's role in advancing Africa's fiscal sovereignty through evidence-based policy and stronger public financial management systems.



Xinhua News Agency: [African Think Tank Summit Calls for Fiscal Reforms to Drive Self-Reliance](#) – Emphasizing the Summit's call for self-financed development and innovative taxation systems.



Pulse of Africa: [Africa Think Tank Summit Charts a New Path for Fiscal Transformation](#) – Spotlighting the Summit’s call for inclusive reform and sustainable domestic resource mobilization.



Bantu Gazette: [Think Tanks Positioned as Catalysts in Africa's Fiscal Transformation](#) – Showcasing the pivotal role of African think tanks in translating fiscal research into actionable reforms.



African Angle: [Africa Think Tank Summit Opens in Ethiopia](#) – Covering the launch of key initiatives, including the African Think Tank Platform Project and the Book on African Think Tanks.



Capital Newspaper
[Addis Ababa Summit Urges Africa to Act on Debt Crisis | Capital Newspaper](#)

Acknowledgements

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) extends its sincere appreciation to all institutions, partners, participants and all individuals whose contributions made the 11th Africa Think Tank Summit a success.

Special thanks to the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, through its Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Revenue, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for their warm hospitality and strong leadership in co-hosting the event.

We also acknowledge the invaluable partnership of the African Union Commission (AUC), AUDA-NEPAD, the Policy Studies Institute (PSI), the African Leadership Excellence Academy (AFLEX), and the Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF).

ACBF further appreciates the generous financial support of the Hewlett Foundation and the World Bank Group, as well as the participation of all think tanks, researchers, civil society representatives, and private sector leaders who made this Summit a milestone in Africa’s journey toward fiscal sovereignty.

Together, we reaffirm our commitment to building effective, accountable, and self-financed public financial management systems for a stronger and more resilient Africa.

As the Summit Communiqué emphasized, collective action remains the cornerstone of Africa’s fiscal sovereignty and sustainable transformation.

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