



9th African Union Private Sector Forum

Accelerating Africa's Industrialization through Digitization and Youth Technopreneurship

Post Event PressRelease

Africa's young technopreneurs hailed as the continent's best hope to accelerate digitization and industrialization

With the average age in sub-Saharan Africa below 19 and expected to remain within those margins over the next five decades, Africa must continue to invest in the youth through skills development initiatives as well as avail opportunities that will enable young Africans to become gainfully employed.

“As the world is transitioning from a resource based economy to a knowledge based economy, the African Union will remain committed to a digitization and the harnessing of Africa's demographic dividend through investments in youth”, said AU, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, H.E. Victor Harison speaking at the 9th African Union Private Sector Forum in Pretoria, South Africa.

The forum themed ‘Accelerating Africa's Industrialization through Digitization and Youth Techpreneurship’, was hosted by the African Union Commission with the support of the the South African Department of Science & Technology (DST) and the NEPAD Business Foundation (NBF) in collaboration with Andalem.

“Creating regional and global frameworks for building Africa's capacity in Science and technology related to information is crucial as connectivity and digitization are the foundations for the 21st century's knowledge economy, and are key enablers of sustainable innovation and new employment opportunities” said DST, Director General, Dr. Phil Mjwara during the forum.

Hosted for the first time in Southern Africa, the 9th African Union Private Sector Forum invited young technopreneurs from across the continent who presented their innovations and ideas to a delegation of pan-African business and government representatives with the intention of securing investment and funding to scale up their various projects and products.

“We agreed to partner with the AU and DST because of the strong alignment of the forum to the 2017 African Union Heads of State and Government theme of ‘Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth’. We believe that Africa is at the precipice of economic renaissance and that the youth are the linchpin to successful industrialization within the context of Digitization and Industry 4.0. I am pleased that outcomes from this forum will inform continental and regional policy as a recommendation from the African Union” , said CEO of the NEPAD Business Foundation, Lynette Chen, also speaking at the AU Forum.



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This three day forum presented the ideal platform for vibrant public-private sector discussions regarding Africa's ability and intent to harness the benefits of digital technologies and techpreneurship in order to accelerate the continent's economic transformation and sustainable development in the digital era. Main themes covered in Pretoria included Industry 4.0, Robotics and Artificial Intelligence in the African context.

"The vision of this event was to spearhead a vibrant, private sector driven and entrepreneurship-led African economy that will stay on top of technology trends as well as leveraging the region's current demographic dividend. Andalem is proud to work with institutions that promote and encourage youth entrepreneurship in Africa", said Founder and Managing Partner of Andalem, Michael Tesfaye Hiruy.

The forum is expected to develop a spin-off annual event for young tenchnopreneurs to present their solutions to Africa's challenges starting as early as next year..



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BOILERPLATE:

The African Union

The African Union (AU) is a continental union consisting of all 55 countries on the African continent. The advent of the African Union (AU) can be described as an event of great magnitude in the institutional evolution of the continent. On 9.9.1999, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity issued a Declaration (the Sirte Declaration) calling for the establishment of an African Union, with a view, inter alia, to accelerating the process of integration in the continent to enable it play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded as they are by certain negative aspects of globalization.

The South African Department of Science and Technology

The Department of Science and Technology (DST)'s vision is to increase South Africa and Africa's wellbeing and prosperity through science, technology and innovation. Its mission is to provide leadership, an enabling environment, and resources for science, technology and innovation in support of South Africa's development.

The DST is guided by corporate values which include professionalism, innovation, ethical behavior and knowledge haring.

The NEPAD Business Foundation

The NBF is a pan-African non-profit organization, which mobilizes private sector to drive economic growth aligned to the NEPAD strategic framework.

It plays the role of neutral facilitator that work with the private sector to support the development of strategic projects of sustainable development importance in order to deliver real impact across Africa.

The NBF's vision is to provide critical linkages between public and private sector with the intention of accelerating development projects, programs and initiatives from inception to implementation for the prosperity of Africa.



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Andalem

Andalem is a mission-driven Research and Advisory firm dedicated to enable the power of Technology and Data-Driven decision-making to advance Africa's economic transformation and sustainable development.

Andalem has a global vision built on the backbone of exponential technological progress, and is dedicated to build Private-Public-Social ecosystems that think globally and implement sustainable solutions in Africa. Focusing on Renewable Energy, Connectivity, Agriculture, Water, Health, Education and Financial Inclusion, we are committed to foster international collaborations that build Africa's technological capacity and accelerate its sustainable development.



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