



Economic Commission for Africa

Harnessing Technologies for Sustainable Development

ECA Policy Research Report



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New and emerging technologies can yield a high payoff in catalyzing Africa's transition to sustainable development. Where effective, the new technologies can lower the incidence of disease, reduce food insecurity, and reduce vulnerability to environmental damage by allowing more flexible crop management systems.

These are some of the conclusions in *Harnessing Technologies for Sustainable Development*. The report also tracks the progress of African countries towards sustainable development. The indicators reveal sobering challenges—while some countries have made good progress, many have slipped down the rankings.

The Report identifies medical and agricultural biotechnologies as key missing ingredients often overlooked as a basis for sustainable development. These exciting new technologies range from genetically engineered mosquitoes that have the potential to eradicate malaria, to vitamin A enriched rice that can reduce blindness in children. And many more are on the horizon.

But the new technologies are no panacea or silver bullet. Producing them and spreading their benefits will not happen automatically. That will require critical analysis and planning—by regional and international organizations and governments, private sectors, and civil societies—to take full advantage of the technological revolution. It will also require coordinated actions and strategic partnerships in fostering first-rate intellectual public goods, including scientific research and public policy analysis, national and regionally.

