



Side Event

Africa Youth SDGs Innovation

Venue: AGO8, Mulungushi International Conference Centre

Kenneth Kaunda Wing

Lusaka, Zambia

Hybrid

Thursday August 17, 2023

Concept Note and Programme of Work

I. Background

1. Africa has a fast-growing population. In 2022, Sub-Saharan Africa had a population growth rate of 2.5 per cent, compared to 1.5 per cent in the Middle East and Northern Africa. In Europe and Central Asia, population contracted by 0.3 per cent while in Northern America and East Asia and the Pacific it grew by only 0.5 and 0.2 per cent respectively. In South Asia population grew in 2022 by 0.9 per cent, in Latin America and the Caribbean by 0.7 per cent, and world-wide, population growth rate averaged only 0.8 per cent.
2. A rapidly growing population in Africa will exacerbate pressures on the continent to create decent jobs and generate the finance necessary to expand infrastructures to improve the quality of lives, while on the other hand it will generate a larger market for goods and services and create opportunities for increased sustainable production and consumption on the continent. However, for the continent to reap its demographic dividend, it will be imperative for significant progress to be made on the achievement of SDG 9 in relation to “*Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*”. The promotion of inclusive industrialization and the acceleration of sustainable structural transformation will be critical development objectives for Africa to achieve in order to reap its demographic dividend and avoid the pitfalls of deepened poverty amidst rising unemployment and advancing climate change. At the heart of this sustainable structural transformation agenda lies the necessity to build productive and entrepreneurial capacities in Africa, driven by technology and innovation to stay competitive.
3. Africa has not only a growing population but a population which tends to be very young. The United Nations notes that Africa has the world’s youngest population, with 70 per cent of Sub-Sahara’s population below the age of 30. The inclusion of the young in the sustainable industrialization and sustainable structural transformation processes of the continent will therefore be critical to ensure that the continent builds the productive, green and innovative capacities it needs to compete regionally and globally on industrial markets and take advantage of the regional and global trade agreements that it is a party to while being cognizant of its commitments to combat climate change.
4. By nurturing youth-led entrepreneurship and enhancing the capacities of the young to harness Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to embrace new and emerging opportunities afforded by a growing global digital and green economy, the continent can make notable dents into its sustainable development challenges. African youth have to be empowered as agents of sustainable structural transformation and as drivers of sustainable development and this implies recognizing and rewarding their efforts at making a difference to their societies and at improving the quality of life of citizens in their economies. Youth-based start-ups that have a potential for high-impact growth should be supported as part of the continent’s drive towards sustainable industrialization and trade development (including harnessing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)) and in its quest to achieve the United

Nations Sustainable (UN) Development Goals (SDGs). Their innovation journeys could also be highlighted and shared in order to promote best practices and learning in the young African community and inspire the young generation to lead the continents' entrepreneurial efforts.

5. Furthermore, in the face of significant financing deficits to achieve the SDGs and address the impacts of the triple crises posed by Covid-19, the Ukraine war and climate change, innovative approaches pioneered by the young in Africa, intended to devise local solutions to local problems and based on use of local inputs, can contribute to alleviate the sustainable development challenges faced by their communities, countries and regions and provide an impetus to the achievement of the SDGs and to national and regional development goals on the continent.
6. Against this context, the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), through its Subregional office for Southern Africa (SRO-SA), has partnered with the African Youth SDGs Summit and AfriLabs to organize an Africa Youth SDGs Innovation Award in order to showcase the innovation potential of young African entrepreneurs. The award aims to recognize and reward outstanding young entrepreneurial efforts, that have successfully developed an innovation to resolve a specific development problem for firms, governments, households and communities and with an impact on the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The contest ran from April to June 2023 and was based on specific eligibility criteria that are detailed in the Annex. The top 6 winners of the Africa Youth SDGs Innovation Award will be announced at a side event, organized by the African Youth SDGs Summit, ECA SRO-SA, and AfriLabs at the Summit that will take place from 14 to 17 August, 2023 in Zambia.

II. Objectives of the Side Event

7. The objective of the side event is to present the 6 winners of the Africa Youth SDGs Innovation Award to a target audience of public and private stakeholders with an aim to share their experiences and innovation journeys with other young Africans and inspire African youth to embrace innovative and high-growth entrepreneurship that can impact on African societies and the achievement of the SDGs. The innovation contest is a planned deliverable of the UNDA13th tranche project "*Innovative approaches for MSME competitiveness to promote trade and inclusive industrialization in Southern Africa in the Post-Covid context*". The objectives of the project are to strengthen capacities of Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) in selected Southern African member states to design and apply innovative approaches to enhance their competitiveness so that they can be effective private sector enablers of trade and inclusive industrialization and build resilience to unexpected shocks such as Covid-19. Supporting start-ups to grow into full blown MSMEs is an important plank of industrial and trade development on the continent.

III. Format

8. The side event will be held in a hybrid format at the margins of the Africa Youth SDGs Summit. It will be mainly in-person but equipped with teleconferencing facilities to allow speakers and other participants who are not able to travel to join virtually. The side event will take place within a 3-hour time slot in the morning on Thursday August 17th, in Lusaka, Zambia. The provisional programme of work provides details of the sessions.

IV. Expected Outcomes

9. The side event is expected to lead to the following outcomes:
 - a) Awareness among stakeholders especially the young of the potential of technology and innovation and entrepreneurship as catalysts for sustainable structural transformation, inclusive industrialisation and sustainable development in Africa.
 - b) Sensitization on the need to empower the young to drive innovation and transformational change on the continent to ensure that Africa reaps its demographic dividend;
 - c) Awareness on the necessity for public and private actors to develop youth development initiatives and support youth-based entrepreneurship in Africa as part of harnessing the potential of the AfCFTA and other global trade agreements;

V. Expected Outputs

- a) A report summarizing the outcomes of the side event;
- b) Press release;
- c) Interviews of the winners with the media to publicize their innovations and attract investors' interest;
- d) Media articles on the innovations of the winners, their innovation journeys and its scalability potential.

VI. Participants

10. Attendees at the Africa Youth SDGs Summit including representatives of the African Youth community, senior representatives of Governments, private sector, impact investors and the UN family based in Zambia.

VII. Date and Venue

11. The side event will be held on Thursday 17th August, 2023 from 10:00 to 13:00 at the Mulungushi International Conference Center, Room AGO8.

VIII. Language

12. The meeting will be conducted in English.

IX. Contacts

13. Further information on the meeting and any other related matters should be addressed to:

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Provisional Programme

09:30-10:00	<p>Registration of Participants.</p> <p>Mistress of ceremony: Ms Kasapo Manda, <i>Co-Chair, Africa Youth SDGs Summit.</i></p>
10:00-10:30	<p>Opening Session:</p> <p>Welcoming Remarks by Ms. Isatou Gaye on behalf of the <i>Director, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Subregional Office for Southern Africa (ECA-SRO-SA).</i></p> <p>Statement by Ms. Nanko Madu <i>Director of Programmes, AfriLabs.</i></p> <p>Keynote Statement by Hon. Mr. Elvis Chishala Nkandu <i>Minister of Youth, Sports and Arts, Republic of Zambia</i></p>
10:30-12:00	<p>Session 1: Introducing the winners of the Africa Youth SDGs Summit</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Wilma Sokeng, <i>Senior Programmes Officer, Afrilabs.</i></p> <p>1. Overview of the Africa Youth SDGs Innovation Award, <i>Ms. Bineswaree Bolaky, Economic Affairs officer, UNECA Subregional office for Southern Africa.</i></p> <p>2. Presentations by the 6 winners (10 mins each).</p> <p>Q&A (20 mins).</p>
12:00-12:15	Session 2: Presentation of Trophies to the 6 winners, Photo
12:15-12:30	<i>Press Conference/Interviews with media</i>
12:30- 13:30	<i>Lunch Break and Networking.</i>

Annex



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



AfriLabs

Call for Applications:

Africa Youth SDG Innovation Award

Are you a young African entrepreneur who has developed an innovative solution with a demonstrated positive impact on the achievement of the SDGs on the continent? If yes, this call for applications is for YOU.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), through its Subregional office for Southern Africa (SRO-SA), is partnering with the African Youth SDG Summit and AfriLabs to organize a Youth SDG Innovation Award in order to showcase the innovation potential of young African entrepreneurs. The award aims to recognize and reward outstanding young entrepreneurial efforts, that have successfully developed an innovation to resolve a specific development problem for firms, governments, households and communities and with an impact on the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Who can apply?

The Africa Youth SDG innovation Award is open to:

- any individual of African nationality who was between the age of 18 to 35 as at 31st December 2022
- who has designed an innovative product or designed an innovative process to resolve a specific development problem for society, and with a demonstrated impact on the achievement of the SDGs. The innovation may have been commercialized or is about to be commercialized.
- The innovative product or innovative process must be original and must have been developed no earlier than 31st December 2016.

How will winning applicants be assessed?

In a first round, applicants will be assessed by a jury composed of public and private sector stakeholders and the top 20 applicants will be invited for a short interview. In a second round the jury will select 6 winners. Due consideration will be given to gender balance and geographical diversity when selecting the winners.

What do you win? Several prizes!

The 6 winners will be invited to present their innovation at the African Youth SDG Summit that will be held in Lusaka, Zambia in August 2023. Further information on the African Youth SDG Summit are available at: <https://youthsdgssummit.org/>. All costs in relation to the travel will be borne by UNECA.

The winners will also be invited to participate in person in one training on innovation that ECA SROSA will organize for small and medium-sized enterprises during 2023-2024. Costs of in-person participation will be borne by UNECA.

ECA SRO-SA will also sponsor the costs of their travel and participation to the **Africa Tech Festival** in Cape Town, South Africa, November 14-16, 2023.

How to submit your application?

Applicants should submit a pitch deck of up to 15 slides in PPT, and an accompanying narrative in Word of no more than 1500 words outlining their innovative solution, by **June 11, 2023** at the following website: <https://youthsdgssummit.org/youth-sdg-innovation-awards/>. Submissions can be in either English or French.

The pitch deck and the narrative should cover the same scope, and include the following information:

- A brief overview of the development problem the innovation addresses
- A clear description of the innovative solution
- An explanation as to why the solution is innovative
- A discussion on how the innovative solution impacts positively on society and on the achievement of the SDGs. The relevant SDGs should be highlighted.
- An explanation on how the innovation was conceived, designed, applied and if applicable, commercialized (your innovation journey) and who were involved (describe your team members)
- Challenges encountered in developing and commercializing the innovation and how challenges were overcome
- A summary of the business model that can be used to commercialize the innovation and potential for scalability

- The stage of the development of the business (idea / Minimum Viable Product MVP/ established business/gaining traction / etc) including relevant figures wherever feasible (Monthly Active Users, Monthly Recurring Revenues, and others as relevant)
- How do you see the market for your innovation evolving and what are your future plans.
- Other information you deem pertinent to include (e.g. challenges for getting innovation patented etc)

Information to include when submitting your application

When submitting your application, please fill in the google form that contains your full name, your country of birth, your country of citizenship, your date of birth, physical address of your company, link for the website of your company (if available), your email address, your cell phone number, and the registration/licence number of your company if applicable. Please upload a copy of your passport, and proof of your business licence (if applicable) as requested on the Google form.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to showcase your innovative solution and make a difference in Africa! Submit your application today and stand a chance to win the **Africa Youth SDG Innovation Award**.

For any inquiries, please go to Contact Us and phrase your question.

Additional information

Media purposes: By submitting an application, applicants agree to allow the organizers of the **Africa Youth SDG Innovation Award** to use their names, images, and information about their innovation for media purposes.

Disqualification: The organizers reserve the right to disqualify any applicant who fails to comply with the above-cited rules and/or who submits falsified information including counterfeited innovation ideas.

The decision of the jury is final and without appeal.