

## 2ND AFRICAN THINK TANK SUMMIT

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# REGIONAL THINK TANK AFRICA SUMMIT

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Conference theme: **The Rise of Africa's Think Tanks** – Practical Solutions to Practical Problems

The Second African Think Tank Summit will explore the ways in which Africa's think tanks are currently making a difference in the continent's transformation, and how they can become increasingly relevant and important contributors as the vision for Africa in 2063 rolls out.

### BACKGROUND

The First African Think Tank Summit was held on 3-5 February 2014 at the Pride of Africa Irene Country Lodge in Pretoria, South Africa. It was organized in a partnership between the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the African Leadership Center, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, TTCSP, and the Institute for Security Studies as the host. Over 50 of the leading think tanks from 25 countries in Africa participated in the Summit, including the think tanks and policy institutes supported by ACBF. The Summit focused on the organizational and policy challenges facing think tanks in the region and how they might increase their sustainability, value and impact. The participants made a number of important recommendations that fall into four areas: capacity development, knowledge sharing and networking, resource mobilization and regionally based initiatives and partnerships.

Building on the success of the first Summit, the Second African Think Tank Summit will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 6 to 8 April 2015. Summit partners are ACBF, African Leadership Center, TTCSP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Think Tank Initiative (TTI) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) as the host. The Second Summit will take stock of progress towards implementing the recommendations of the first and assess how the first Summit helped African Think Tanks improve relationships with each other. It will also extend a broader overall goal of the Think Tanks and Civil Society Programme for these Summits to further strengthen the linkage between think tanks and policy makers. And it will explore the increasingly favorable environment for African think tanks to make a difference in tackling the major issues facing the transformation of the continent.

## **SUMMIT OBJECTIVES**

The rise of Africa's think tanks can be attributed to a better understanding of what is needed to bring about successful growth and development, moving away from the "one-size-fits-all" formula of the previous years to a recognition that appropriate solutions are unique for each country situation. The new environment is fruitful territory for national level think tanks that can explore in depth the customized policy options needed in their country environment. Continuing from the article, "Such organizations can play a key role by serving as catalysts for ideas and proposing practical solutions for policy problems. They can also act as bridges between governments, business and civil society. They tend to form partnerships with global think tanks and organizations, sharing in the experience of others and applying this to their own unique, locally focused research."

The Second African Think Tank Summit offers an opportunity for African think tanks to take a step back and consider the implications of this new dynamic on the nature and content of their work. To this end, the Summit will pursue the following objectives:

- a) To reflect on how Africa's think tanks can best support Africa's development priorities as reflected in Agenda 2063 and Africa's position in shaping the post-2015 agenda
- b) To examine Africa's engagement with the rest of the world, and especially how Africa can make more effective use of its interactions with the G-20 and the numerous bilateral framework cooperation agreements such as Africa and the BRICS, Africa and the European Union, Africa and the United States of America, etc.
- c) To review emerging best practices and innovative approaches for think tanks to achieve impact, influence policy, ensure financial sustainability and establish collaborative partnerships.
- d) To identify strategies for improving the capacities, quality and professionalism of Africa's Think Tanks.