

## Concept note: AfroChampions Boma “Africa’s New Deal for Sustainable Green Growth and Industrialization”

### Green or dark future, the choice is ours

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Africa sits perilously at the crossroads of the Earth’s increasingly reckless march to devastation. Its technological marginalization means that, among all continents, its room for manoeuvre is widest, but not while that marginalization manifests as incapacity, for adaptation to the current pace of global change.

Extreme-havoc events, such as Cyclone Idai, which tore through Southern Africa in March this year, shall increasingly become the ubiquitous signature of this tragic contradiction: of a continent that has benefitted the least from climate-altering industrialization, suffering twice for being too industrially feeble to deal with the effects of climate change.

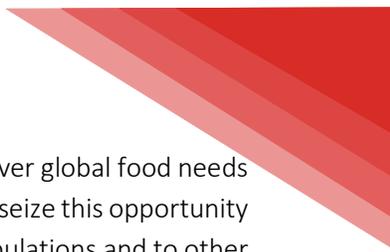
Should we decide to do what the others have done and stubbornly follow the current development model based on fossil-fuel driven industrialized activity and on erratic growth of cities on our coastlines, then we will - as stubbornly - expose ourselves to increasingly dangerous climate effects. Should we decide that time has come to think differently as we have a responsibility vis-à-vis our communities and younger generations, then we can embrace a new greener path - together with global leadership on sustainability. The choice is ours. For those who are doubtful, there is already a lot of evidence that Africa can serve as a new hub delivering solutions for full, healthy, and safe lives and set standards for the entire human family.

### Leveraging Africa’s assets to build a new development model

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#### *What we have*

- **Environmental assets:** Africa is blessed with crucial “green assets” - wonderful fertile arable land, sprawling forestry, a wide array of flora and fauna, incredible marine and wildlife. Due to unprecedented urbanization though, waste and sanitation pollution are on the rise on one hand and bad urban planning and transport management systems on the other hand.
- **Renewable energy:** Africa’s emergence must be driven by renewable energy - Africa must encourage the widespread adoption of solar, hydro and wind energy. Fossil-fuel driven sources have put us at an increased risk. It is time to consider other sources, critically. Sub-Saharan Africa has access to a wealth of primary renewable energy supplies; renewable energy deployment, and transmission at large scale is the new challenge ahead of us.
- **Agriculture:** we have plenty of quality arable land with a climate conducive to growing, and the opportunity to grow very diverse products. Yet, Africa boasts significant untapped agricultural potential. While the continent accounts for 60% of the world’s arable land, it only contributes 4%



of total output<sup>1</sup> in a context where production has to more than double to cover global food needs expected by 2050. Our challenge is to create the conditions enabling Africa to seize this opportunity to become a global food hub - providing quality processed products to its populations and to other regions, out of a non-intensive and therefore non greenhouse gas-generating agriculture model.

- **Young population:** we often talk about the demographic dividend but, in order to harness it, we first need to solve a critical equation in which the unknown factor is job creation - at large scale. It is our responsibility to leverage the opportunities offered by green industrialization models to ensure that young Africans develop skills and competences enabling them to contribute to building a sustainable future for Africa - and become themselves self-sustained and not attracted by the mirages of the Mediterranean Sea.

### *What we need*

- **Alignment:** we need to agree, as Africans, on the Africa we want and what type of future is desirable. We need to define the parameters for that green new deal for Africa. It is critical to have this conversation, ensure that those who regard western-type development models as the only way forward - and they are a number of them in Africa - are fully informed of the consequences. We need to share prospective data, value the green potential of Africa in economic and financial terms to create awareness of, excitement about and hopefully endorsement of that new green path.
- **Scaling up:** this is another critical point. We have a number of interesting projects that have been tested across the continent - thinking of mini-grid stations to revitalize rural areas, agropoles to develop sustainable agroprocessing and add value to the agricultural value chain, green mobility solutions powered with renewable energy. Yet we have not been able to scale up such projects - because we do not think enough in terms of scale and are therefore not capable to attract the right volume of investment.
- **Investment:** we need funds to accelerate the green revolution and, to that end, we need properly packaged projects as well as creativity when it comes to identifying sources of financing. Our previous boma in Nairobi has revealed the untapped potential that lies, for instance, in certain private and pensions funds in Africa whose managers are keen to generate revenues out of Africa-based activities. We need to create opportunities for African states to collaborate on cross-border projects; and we can and should further mobilize the private sector, in Africa and abroad - because it is the only way to create sound business models and transform pilot projects into game-changing ventures.
- **Supporting infrastructure,** in broad terms: the human skills, the physical infrastructures to power, process and transform the goods and products resulting from the African green industrialization shift - and above all, the digital infrastructure. Apps like i-cow or hello tractor have played a significant role to ease farmer's lives and help them address daily challenges, while offering them access to trainings and equipment. The concept of smart villages mirrors that of smart cities when

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.allaboutfeed.net/Home/General/2019/7/Africa-Untapped-potential-for-agriculture-453504E/>

it comes to leveraging technologies and data to optimize waste, water, energy, information flows and would allow for creating 'enhanced' communities.

## A Boma on Africa's New Deal for Green Industrialisation and Growth

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### *The rationale*

Africa is therefore blessed with abundant natural resources and natural assets - fertile arable land, sprawling forestry, water and marine resources, minerals, and a young and expanding population. If harnessed properly, these resources can become instrumental in driving the Green Industrial Revolution in Africa; thus paving the way for Africa to build a unique competitive edge - as a laboratory for clean and smart technologies, as key contributor to global food security through enhanced green agroprocessing schemes or as engine for new climate resilience economic models.

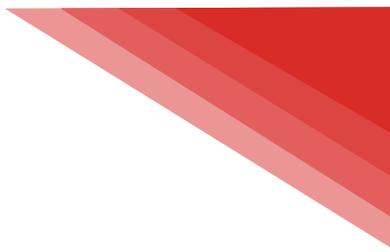
The purpose of the AfroChampions Boma on Sustainable Green Growth and Industrialization is therefore to mobilize key actors already addressing the challenge in key sectors to brainstorm on practical ways of building **smarter partnerships to accelerate and scale-up high-impact action that create value**. Food, shelter, clothing, smart infrastructure and green value chains: these are some of topics all on the agenda of this second Boma organized under the aegis of **Honourable Vincent Biruta, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Rwanda, H.E.M. Olusegun Obasanjo, Patron of the AfroChampions Initiative and Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and H.E.M. Hailemariam Desalegn, Chairperson of the board of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and Former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**.

### *The method*

As a reminder, "Boma" is the Swahili word for meeting and conclave to discuss issues of interest to the community - and we expect this gathering to be productive. The boma on Africa's green industrialisation is the second boma, following the AfroChampions boma on Infrastructure Financing and Delivery which took place in Nairobi, Kenya, in April 2019. **The bomas are part of the AfroChampions Initiative's sensitization and promotion efforts to advance Africa's economic integration through structuring projects**. This is a new concept of discussions, including brainstorming sessions to identify priority for actions and practical roadmaps, led by private sector and field experts. Such approach is resolutely action-oriented and designed to drive accountability on commitments that would be made during the meetings.

### *The objectives*

- **Create effective cross-sectoral partnerships**, identifying the roles and responsibilities of all-stakeholders in supporting the green sustainable development agenda
- **Align on parameters defining the new deal for Africa's sustainable growth and industrialisation**; define a private-sector led roadmap for submission to the African Union focussing on:

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- strategies to sustainably increase agricultural productivity
  - the development of climate-smart development and value-chains
  - the plan to leverage the Fourth Industrial Revolution for a greener Africa
  - **Bring together project promoters in the targeted areas and investors to structure projects**

### *The participants*

- African entrepreneurs and businesses active in the areas of agriculture and agroprocessing, renewable and clean energy, manufacturing, green mobility, climate resilience, green mining etc
- African Champions companies active in the green industry/managers and promoters of green infrastructure and industrial projects
- African financing institutions (public and private banks; private and sovereign wealth funds, African and global DFIs, pensions funds)
- Governments and Policymakers and leaders from regional bodies
- The Diaspora and global partners from key sectors

The brainstorm and breakout sessions are not open to the press and are under strict 'Chatham house rules' to allow for more productive discussions.