
REGIONAL
THINK TANK AFRICA
SUMMIT

February 3rd - 5th, 2014

Think Tanks and the Transformation of Africa

THE FIRST AFRICAN CONTINENTAL THINK TANK SUMMIT

Pretoria, South Africa

Soft power is determined not only by economic strength, but also by the ability of states to produce knowledge and influence thinking. The number of Think Tanks in a country is indicative of this. –Dr. Jakkie Cilliers, Institute for Security Studies, African Futures monograph, 2008

Think tanks have played an effective role in Africa's development and will remain an integral component in the quest for poverty reduction and sustainable development for some time to come. These institutions have grown to offer the dialogue space required to tackle critical policy development challenges. They are also a dynamic place to nurture knowledge and learning and share lessons that enable growth, action and above all transformation. – Dr. Frannie A. Leautier, Former Executive Secretary, African Capacity Building Foundation, 2013

An ideal bridge between sites of knowledge production and the worlds of policy and practice, Africa's Think Tanks are potential incubators for leading ideas for Africa's transformation, thus providing invaluable space for a rare form of intellectual leadership and intergenerational exchanges. The challenge that African Think Tanks confront however is how to translate all of this into meaningful change for the continent. – Dr. Funmi Olonisakin, African Leadership Centre.

The potential of think tanks to support and sustain democratic governments and civil society is far from exhausted. Today policymakers and civil society throughout the developed and the developing world face the common problem of bringing expert knowledge to bear on government decision-making. The challenge is to harness the vast reservoir of knowledge, information and associational energy that exist in public policy research organizations in every region of the world for public good. – Dr. James G. McGann, Think Tanks and Civil Society Program, University of Pennsylvania, 2012.

Summit Program

Monday, February 3, 2014

All Day **Arrival of Participants in Pretoria, South Africa**

2.00 p.m. -5.00 p.m. **Hotel Check-in and Registration**

All day

Protea Centurion Hotel

Cnr Gordon Hood and Hendrik Verwoerd Avenues

Centurion, Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa

Tel: +27 (12) 663 8700

<http://www.proteahotels.com/hotels/Pages/protea-hotel-centurion.aspx>

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- 4:30 p.m. Transport from Potea Hotel to Summit Venue The Irene Country Lodge
- 5:00 Reception
- The Irene Country Lodge (Summit Venue)
- Nellmapius Drive,
Irene, Gauteng, South Africa
Tel: +27 12 667 6464 <http://www.irenecountrylodge.co.za>
- 5.30 p.m. Welcoming Remarks
- Jakkie Cilliers, Ph.D.* Executive Director, Institute for Security Studies, South Africa
- Emmanuel Nnadozie, Ph.D.* Executive Secretary, Africa Capacity Building Foundation, Zimbabwe
- Godwin Murunga,* Acting Director, Africa Leadership Center, Kenya
- 6:00 p.m. Summit Background and Schedule
- Paul Simon Handy,* Research Director, Institute for Security Studies, South Africa
- James McGann,* Director, Think Tanks & Civil Societies Program (TTCSP), University of Pennsylvania
- 6.:15 p.m. **Introduction of Keynote Speaker:** Anton du Plessis, Ph.D., Managing Director of the Institute for Security Studies
- Keynote Speech *Achille Mbembé*:** Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, South Africa
- “Rising Africa: Managing the Challenges, Opportunities and Threats”**
- Dr. Mbembé will provide an overview of the major economic, social and security challenges facing policymakers, think tanks and the public in Africa”**
- 7.30 p.m. Dinner
- The Irene Country Lodge (Summit Venue)

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Tuesday, February 4, 2014

8:00 a.m. Transport from Potea Hotel to Summit Venue The Irene Country Lodge

8:30 a.m. Registration

8:45 a.m. Global and Regional Challenges and Opportunities Facing Think Tanks

A Global Propective: *James G. McGann*, Director, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, International Relations Program, University of Pennsylvania, United States

A Regional Prospectives: *Funmi Olonisakin, Ph.D.* Founding Director, Africa Leadership Center, Kenya and *John Ahere*, Senior Program Officer. African Center for Constructive Resolution of Disputes, South Africa

09.45 a.m. **Session I (Plenary Session and Roundtable): Enhancing African think tanks' role in informing and shaping policy.**

While the number of think tanks in African has significantly grown since the 1990s, innovative, knowledge-based research oftentimes has negligible impact on actual policy formation and think tanks have few connections to policymakers. In a time of political transition in which many policies are being reviewed and reworked, it is vital that these changes be based on well-thought-out research, meaning that it is vital that think tanks have an impact on governments and public policy. What are the key reasons that think tank research is often ignored in policy formation process? Why do think tanks have such weak connections with decision-making bodies? What changes are needed in relationships between governments and think tanks in order to better utilize think tank research? Through what avenues can African think tanks best disseminate their research to effectively inform and shape policy (on the grassroots level, through the government, through academia, social media, etc)?

Chair: *Victor Murinde*, Director, African Development Institute (EADI), African Development Bank, Tunis

Kick-off remarks: *Richard Rutuku*, Executive Director, Institute of Policy Analysis and Research, Rwanda and *Pamela Kabaso*, Executive Director Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research, Zambia

Summary/Concluding Remarks: *Emmanuel Akwetey*, Executive Director Institute for Democratic Governance, Ghana

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11.15 a.m.

Coffee Break

11.30 a.m.

Session II: Impact: What is it and How Do We Measure It?

More than ever, think tanks are a vital part of African societies. Transitions are bringing opportunities for policy reform and greater participation in government. How do we assess the performance and impact of think tanks in Africa?

Therefore, it is imperative that think tanks assess their performance and strengthen themselves institutionally in order to function at a high capacity in these demanding times. Given the porous and complex nature of the policymaking process how do we measure the performance and impact of think tanks? What are reasonable metrics and measurable assessment tools?

What are some of the best practices for conducting assessments of think tanks and the environments in which they operate?

Chair: *Deryck R. Brown*, Senior Governance and Public Sector Specialist, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management, Africa Region, World Bank

Kick-off remarks: *Daniel Kabore*, Executive Director, Centre d'Analyse des Politiques Economiques et Sociales (CAPES), Burkina Faso and ***Kwabena Boakye***, Monitoring And Evaluation Officer, Africa Capacity Building Foundation, Zimbabwe

Summary/Concluding Remarks: *Sanogo Diakalia*, Senior Program Officer, IRDC Think Tank Initiative, Kenya

1.00 p.m.

Lunch

2.30 p.m.

Session III: Breakout Sessions (Three concurrent sessions):

I: Strategies for Effective Resource Mobilization for African Think Tanks

Lack of funding is among one of the most common challenges facing African think tanks. Limited funding derails insightful and vital long-term research, contributes to a compromise on think tank research focuses, limits staffing and stifles think tank operations. Government limits on funding sources exacerbate the problem. Funding from international private and public donors presents its own challenges in the form of short-term project-based funding and donor agendas. What are the specific challenges regarding funding for African think tanks? What strategies can these think tanks employ to increase effective funding? What role do international donors have to play?

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Chair: *Ingrid Charlotte Van Niekerk*, Co-Executive Director, Directors Economic Policy Research Institute, South Africa

Presentation: New Strategies and Best Practices for Mobilizing Resources for Think Tanks in Africa

Kickoff Remarks: *Gibson Chigumira*, Executive Director, Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit, Zimbabwe and *Franklin Oduro*, Deputy Director, Ghana Center for Democratic Development, Ghana

Group Discussion and Formulation of Recommendations

Rapporteur: *R. Andreas Kramer*, Ecologic Institute, Germany

II: Increasing Communication and Networking Among Think Tanks In Africa

In a 2013 TTCSP survey, respondents cited lack of communication between African think tanks as a major concern of theirs. African think tanks have a largely untapped opportunity to share resources, data, expertise and best practices with one another in order to foster and disseminate knowledge-based research. How can regional think tanks foster greater communication with one another to this end? What role can technology and greater information sharing on think tank websites play in fostering this collaboration? How can leading regional think tanks share best practices for managing think tanks, conducting policy-oriented research and for recruiting and retaining the think tank executives and scholars?

Chair: *Barassou Diawara*, Knowledge Management Officer, Africa Capacity Building Foundation

Best Practices for Networking, Collaboration and Capacity Building for Think Tanks in Africa

Kickoff Remarks: *Lufingo Mwamakamba*, Director, Food Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network and *Jonathan Stead*, Director of Marketing and Communication, South African Institute for International Affairs

Group Discussion and Formulation of Recommendations:

Rapporteur: *Sy Amadou*, Brookings Institution, United States

III: Effective Strategies for Engaging Policymakers, Media and the Public

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Although government decision-makers have proven hard to engage at times, think tanks may find productive partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs), media outlets and other policy actors that might enhance their impact on public policy. What are the challenges and opportunities with these partnerships? How might such partnerships benefit both the journalist, bloggers, CSOs and Think Tanks? How might such collaboration foster greater policy impact? What are the best practices for engaging policymakers, Media and the Public.

Chair: *Kawme Owino*, Executive Director, Institute for Economic Affairs, Kenya

Presentation: Best Practices for Engaging Policymakers, Media and the Public

Kickoff Remarks: *Paul Simon Handy*, Research Director, Institute for Security Studies, South Africa and *Ifediora Amobi*, Director, African Heritage Institution, Nigeria

Group Discussion and Formulation of Recommendations

Rapporteur: Roger Mark De Souza, Woodrow Wilson Center, United States

4.00 p.m.

Coffee break

4.30 p.m.

Session IV: Roundtable: What changes in the strategy, structure and staff patterns of think tanks are required to enable them to better serve the governments and civil societies in Africa?

Think Tanks around the world are faced with both challenges and opportunities that require fundamental changes in how they operate. This session will examine how changes in funding, technology and research will fundamentally alter how think tanks operate. Key areas for discussion include impact of technology, changes in funding patterns, complex relationships with both domestic and international funders, difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff who can respond to these new threats and opportunities and changes in how policymakers access and use information for policymaking.

Chair: *Ambassador Hussein El-Kamel*, Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs

Kick-off remarks: *Phindile Lukhele-Olorunju*, Interim Chief Executive Officer, African Institute of South Africa, South Africa, *Sarah Ssewanyana*, Executive Director, Economic Policy Research Centre, Uganda

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6.00 p.m. **End of Day**

7.00 p.m. **Dinner and Networking** The Irene Country Lodge

Wednesday, February 5, 2014

8:30 a.m. **Keynote Address: *Frannie Léautier PhD: Think Tanks in Africa Catalysts for Ideas and Action***

Dr Léautier will examine the important role think tanks play in shaping public policy and strengthening civil society in Africa.

Dr Léautier is the former Executive Secretary of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). She is currently a Partner Mkoba Private Equity in Paris. Dr. Léautier has a rich a career in the private sector and in international development. She served as Vice President of the World Bank and Head of the World Bank Institute from December 2001 to March 2007. She also served as Chief of Staff to the former President of the World Bank from 2000-2001. From 2007 – 2009, she founded and took over as Managing Partner at The Fezemba Group, a company focused on risk management and leadership development.

9:30 a.m. **Wrap Up and Breakout Session Reports**

This session will feature a wrap-up of the discussions from Sessions 1-3 by three or four participants (from selected countries and think tanks)(about 10 minutes each) that will cover points on which participants' views converged or differed. Participants are encouraged to discuss matters to be incorporated into a set of recommendations for donors, policymakers and the think tank community in the Africa region and beyond.

10.30 a.m. **Concluding Session: Recommendations and Next Steps**

The objective of this roundtable session is to develop a concrete set of recommendations and a plan of action flowing from the Summit. Specifically, participants will be asked to develop a set of recommendations that will strengthen the capacity of think tanks to provide actionable, knowledge-based research which has a clear impact on policymaking. These recommendations might come in the form of public and private funding initiatives to support innovative, evidence-based, policy research, joint ventures between think tanks that would focus on the difficult policy choices that Africa countries will face in the next decade, ways to effectively utilize the internet and social media, and strategies to more deeply affect policy formation.

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11.30 a.m.

Closing Remarks

Jakkie Cilliers, Institute for Security Studies

Emmanuel Nnadozie, Ph.D. Executive Secretary, Africa Capacity Building Foundation, Zimbabwe

Funmi Olonisakin, Ph.D. Founding Director, Africa Leadership Center, Kenya

James McGann, Director, Think Tanks & Civil Societies Program, University of Pennsylvania

12.00 p.m.

Lunch

Departure

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