



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Africa Innovation and Investment Forum 2020

15– 19 June 2020

Online forum

Introduction

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and its partners are pleased to invite and welcome you to the COVID-19 Innovation and Investment Forum 2020. This online Forum will showcase Africa's innovation and production potential, promote knowledge exchange and information exchange, link investors and innovators as well as facilitate collaboration and technology partnerships.

Specifically, it will bring together innovators, investors, government officials and researchers to showcase their innovations and strategies as well as identify innovation gaps, investment needs and industrial opportunities. There is an increasing recognition that most national healthcare infrastructure and medical supply chains are more vulnerable to shocks than previously thought. Countries that have developed and retained domestic capabilities to produce their own supplies (e.g. Germany and Korea) have surmounted the COVID-19 induced global shortages of medical supplies better than those with deep pockets but dependent of international suppliers.

While Africa, like the rest of the world, have celebrated the novel designs of a wide range of medical products, very few are likely to enter the market and even fewer are likely to remain in the market past the COVID-19 pandemic. It is for this reason that Africa should mobilize resources (i.e. financial, technical, human, business etc) to support burgeoning innovation and entrepreneurial talent to seed start-ups, support SMEs and invest in research and development to enhance resilience of its domestic capacity to respond to current and future disasters.

The Forum will serve as a platform for interrogating some of these issues, stimulating public and private sector development and for forging global partnerships and collaborations. Specifically, the Forum will focus on the following areas:

- i. Affordable rapid testing;
- ii. Enhance medical devices and personal protection gear design and production
- iii. Improve efficiency and effectiveness of contact tracing and isolation
- iv. Strengthen the capacity to develop and produce drugs and vaccines
- v. Government led innovation to ensure key services are delivered safely (remote learning, service delivery etc...)



Format and components of the Forum

To achieve these goals, the Forum will have at least four main components organized in different formats:

i. High level panels discussion

Virtual meetings will be held to discuss the role of science in shaping global responses to COVID-19. High level representatives from governments, innovation hubs, international cooperation, academia and the private sector will share their views on how to harness and invest in technology and innovation for COVID-19 response.

ii. Tech Exhibition for Entrepreneurs and Investors

This window will provide firms, public institutions and individuals with the opportunity to exhibit and showcase their innovations and products to potential clients, users and investment partners. This component will focus on products (i.e. goods and services) in the market, about to enter the market or are likely to be in the market in the near future.

If you wish to exhibit, enter the Innovation Challenge here <https://www.uneca.org/aiif-covid-19-ic/pages/africa-innovation-and-investment-forum-2020-covid-19-innovation-challenge> or <https://innovationbridge.info/ibportal/?q=user>

iii. Innovation in Government

This call is reserved for governments to showcase innovative solutions that have or are empower(ing) citizens to determine their own futures, enhance business competitiveness and offer key services during and after the lockdowns – both technological and non-technological innovations. They may also be efforts, strategies and models for mobilizing key stakeholders at national, regional and international level to harness technology and innovation in the COVID-19 fight.

Detailed information can be found here <https://www.uneca.org/disgec/pages/innovation-government-challenge-covid-19> .

iv. Youth Innovators Competition and Design Bootcamp

This online bootcamp will focus on innovative concepts and ideas to fight COVID-19 by young innovators below the age of 30. The youths will improve their concepts and designs by working in groups, having access to mentors and coaches as well as lecturers from some of the world's leading innovators and researchers and interact with business leaders.

The bootcamp will be held virtually from 15-26 June 2020. Detailed information will be found here <https://platform.ubora-biomedical.org/> .