

EVID4Dev | Evidence for Development **CONFERENCE**



Call to Action

**Optimising the Role of Data, Evidence, and
Innovations in Africa's Development Efforts**



May 6-8, 2025

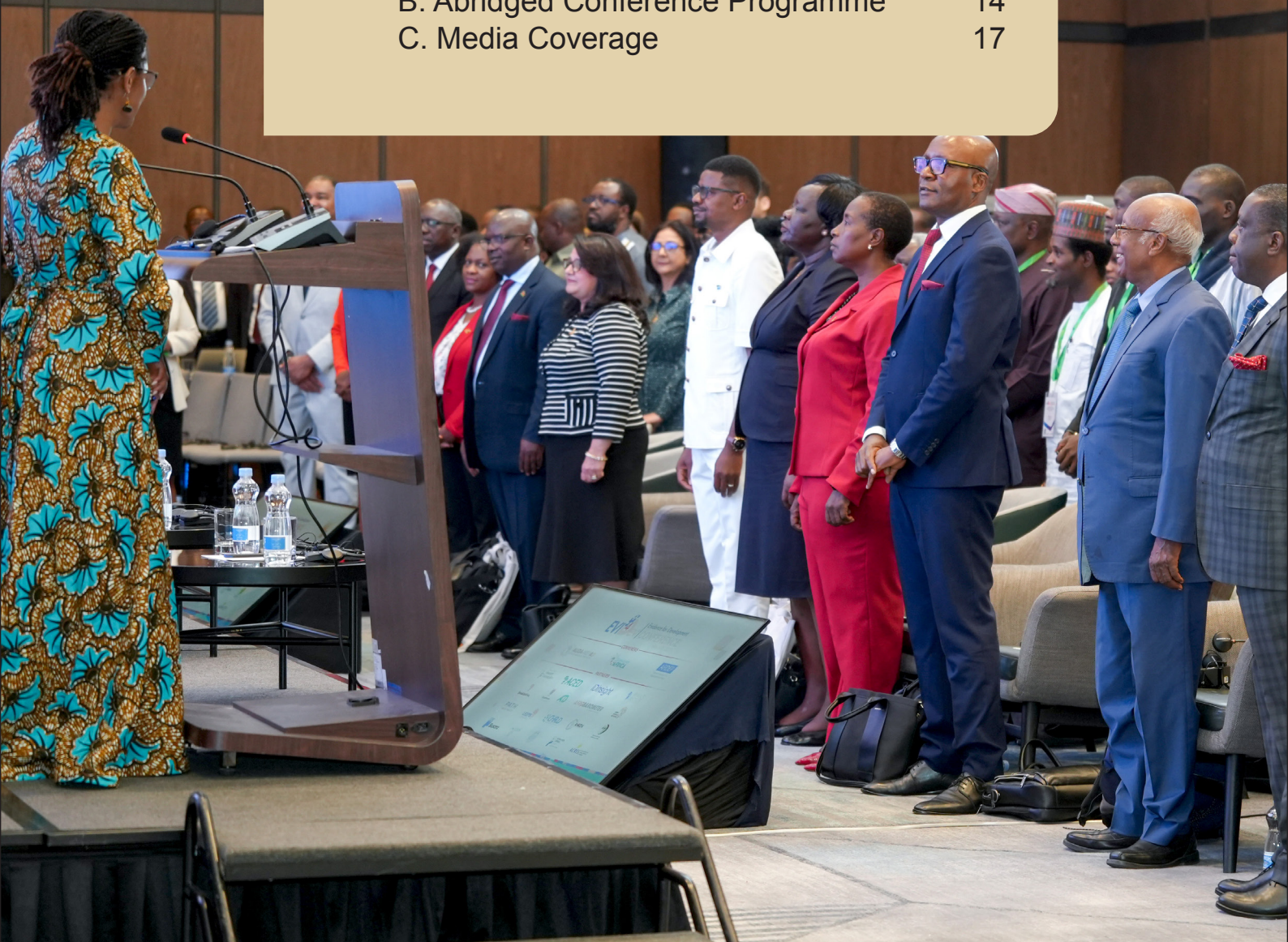


Hyatt Regency Hotel, Nairobi

Table of Contents



0.1	Overview	2
0.2	Conference Call to Action	4
	2.1. Cross-cutting themes	4
	2.2 Issue-Specific Themes	8
03	Annexes	
	A. Conference Plenary Sessions	11
	B. Abridged Conference Programme	14
	C. Media Coverage	17



01

Overview

The inaugural Evidence for Development (Evi4Dev) Conference, held from May 6-8, 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya, convened 408 delegates from 29 countries across Africa and beyond. The gathering included policymakers, researchers, innovators, development partners, civil society actors, and youth innovators, all united by a shared commitment to harness science, technology, innovation (STI), and evidence-informed policymaking (EIP) to accelerate Africa's development agenda.

Under the overarching theme *"Optimising the Role of Data, Evidence, and Innovations in Africa's Efforts to Create Wealth, Empower Citizens, and Foster Responsive Governance,"* the conference served as a platform for critical discourse on aligning STI and EIP with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The event was co-convened by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), and the Science for Africa (SFA) Foundation, with support from other key development partners.

The Conference sessions were organised around three core themes: The generation and translation of scientific research and innovations; the strengthening of evidence-informed policymaking; and the governance of science, technology, and innovation (STI), with a focus on the domestication of STISA 2034. These themes were explored through the lens of five key development sectors—wealth creation, physical and digital infrastructure, food production, education, and health—highlighting the vital role of evidence and innovation in driving sustainable growth across the continent.

The Conference was graced by:

- Kenya's Cabinet Secretary (CS) for Education, Mr Julius Ogamba, represented by Dr Roselida Owuor, Director of Research Development at Kenya's Ministry of Education;
- Malawi's Minister for Higher Education, Dr Jessie Kabwila;
- Sierra Leone's Deputy Minister for Technical and Higher Education, Hon. Aziz Sarjoh Kamara;
- Egypt Member of Parliament, Hon Dr Neveen El-Antouny; and
- Kenya's Deputy Director General, Ministry of Health, Dr Sultani Matendechero.

A speech delivered by Dr Owuor on behalf of the Kenya Education Cabinet Secretary, emphasised the urgency of using evidence to address Africa's most pressing challenges, highlighting the Kenyan government's commitment to research and innovation as a building block for achieving Vision 2030, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The CS noted that while progress had been made, significant gaps remained in transforming research outputs into actionable policies, and called for stronger partnerships between researchers, policymakers, and citizens to close the research-policy divide. Thanking the organisers, the CS welcomed the conference as an important milestone toward realising a culture of accountability, transparency, and citizen-centred governance.

Hon. Dr Kabwila, Malawi's Minister for Higher Education, urged African governments to take full ownership of their development agenda by prioritising locally funded research and higher education, noting that universities are engines of innovation and inclusive growth. She noted the continent's low higher education enrolment and underinvestment in research compared with other continents, and challenged leaders to reverse these trends by investing in robust knowledge ecosystems. She further stressed the need to strengthen linkages between researchers and policymakers to

Conference Core 3 Themes:

Generation and translation of scientific research and innovations

Strengthening of evidence-informed policymaking

Governance of science, technology, and innovation (STI).

ensure evidence is actively used in decision-making. She reiterated the central role of gender equity across all efforts by government and other development actors in the generation and use of data, research and innovation, and in decision-making.

Dr Eliya Zulu, Executive Director of AFIDEP, on his part, emphasised that Africa's wealth and governance challenges cannot be resolved without evidence-informed action. Dr Zulu reminded delegates that Africa is at a defining moment, facing shrinking fiscal space and rising debt. Yet, he noted, the continent's youthful population and abundant resources present a powerful opportunity, if smart investments are made in quality education, health, innovation, and decent jobs. He called for a people-centred approach to development, driven by locally relevant and timely evidence, and urged African governments to take ownership of the development agenda by investing in research and domestic resource mobilisation.



Africa's wealth and governance challenges cannot be resolved without evidence-informed action.

Prof. Brando Okolo, Senior Advisor for Science, Technology, and Innovation at AUDA-NEPAD, reaffirmed the agency's commitment to driving Africa-led transformation through the strategic financing and scaling of evidence-based, homegrown innovations. He emphasised that the Evi4Dev Conference is not just a platform for reflection, but a call to action to apply data purposefully in advancing justice, equity, and innovation towards achieving Agenda 2063.

Dr Tom Kariuki, CEO of the Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation), echoed Dr Zulu's sentiments. He emphasised the critical role of data, evidence, and innovation in driving Africa's development across sectors. Highlighting areas like agriculture, health, education, climate change, wealth creation, and governance, he underscored how leveraging evidence can enhance productivity, resilience, patient outcomes and service delivery. He further noted the collective responsibility to harness data and innovation for tangible impact, cautioning against complacency with the status quo where talk is easy but achieving measurable results requires accountability and dedicated effort.

The conference attracted participants across Africa and beyond, reflecting a diverse representation across regions:

- **East Africa:** Kenya (271), Uganda (17), Ethiopia (7), Tanzania (5), Rwanda (2), Burundi (1), Somalia (1), and Democratic Republic of Congo (1).
- **West Africa:** Nigeria (14), Senegal (6), Ghana (6), Benin (5), Burkina Faso (4), Côte d'Ivoire (4), Sierra Leone (4), Mali (1), Niger (1), and Togo (1).
- **Southern Africa:** South Africa (19), Malawi (16), Zambia (5), Zimbabwe (3), and Botswana (2).
- **North Africa:** Egypt (1) and Tunisia (1).
- **Other regions:** United Kingdom (4), United States of America (4), Canada (1), and Germany (1).

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the conference proceedings, call to action, discussions, and key recommendations, aimed at guiding policymakers, researchers, development actors, and communities towards building a stronger, evidence-driven Africa.



Part of the delegates pose for a group photo during the Evi4Dev Conference.

02

Conference Call to Action

We, the delegates (policymakers in government agencies; government officials; researchers based in universities, research institutes and think tanks; policy implementers and practitioners; knowledge brokers; civil society; media; development partners; and private sector representatives) from 29 countries across the world attending the Evidence for Development (Evi4Dev) Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, from 6-8 May 2025, call on governments, policymakers, researchers, Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) / Evidence-Informed Policymaking (EIP) practitioners, funders and the private sector to undertake the critical actions in key areas to centre data, evidence and innovation in Africa's development efforts.

As conference delegates, while we acknowledge the strides African countries have made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union Agenda 2063, we understand that significant challenges persist across various sectors including wealth creation, education, health, food security, and infrastructure development (digital and energy). We also recognise that the current global political and economic environment disproportionately affects Africa and could reverse key development gains. The effects will particularly be felt mostly by the poorest and most vulnerable segments of Africa's population. We therefore call for actions in the priority areas discussed below at this very first of its kind critical and much needed science and policy conference.

2.1 Cross-Cutting Themes

2.1.1 Harnessing data, evidence and innovation to accelerate Africa's development progress

The discussion in this theme focused on the importance of high-quality data and evidence in improving decision-making and accelerating Africa's development. It further highlighted the importance of applying a nuanced, gender-responsive data lens, alongside strengthening data interoperability and harmonising datasets across the region. We therefore call for the following actions by key stakeholders.

Call to action:



1. Increase the generation of high-quality and policy-relevant evidence and innovations:

- Researchers and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) need to amplify the role of data and evidence in Africa's development agenda.
- Researchers, policymakers, CSOs and private sector need to partner to ensure that evidence generation and translation align with development priorities.
- CSOs and the media need to advocate for increased and efficient production of data and evidence.
- Governments should strengthen national data access frameworks to ensure timely, transparent and equitable access to public data for research, policy development and innovation.

2. Increase resources to support quality data and evidence production, translation and innovations

- Private sector and development partners need to provide resources and partner with researchers and knowledge practitioners to support co-creation in the research and innovation cycle, as part of efforts to mobilise sustainable resources.

- Governments need to fulfil and progressively increase GDP allocation commitments to research and development with clear accountability mechanisms, while countries without such commitments should establish formal policy or legislative frameworks to do so.
- Governments need to develop robust Intellectual Property (IP) support systems to protect and commercialise African innovations.
- Governments need to establish formal incentives to support cross-border trade in innovations and knowledge-based products.

3. Promote the utilisation of high-quality data and innovations in decision-making

- The generation of high-quality data and innovation is not sufficient to guarantee uptake and use in decision-making. Efforts, including strengthening capacity of researchers and policymakers, must be made to create the culture of consistent evidence use in decision-making.
- Researchers and knowledge practitioners need to ensure that research initiatives and innovations include community context/needs, knowledge translation and policy communication components to promote uptake by policymakers.
- Researchers and knowledge brokers need to promote evidence-based conversations and budget discussions with policymakers and communities.
- Governments, researchers and development partners should allocate dedicated funding to strengthen systems, institutional capacities and incentives that support the consistent uptake and use of high-quality data and innovations in decision-making.

2.1.2 Integrating STISA 2034 in national development agenda

The African Union regards STI as the cornerstone of Africa's socio-economic development and growth. Thus, the Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024-2034 outlines the critical strategies for achieving this aim. This discussion on STISA aimed to identify policy priorities, address challenges, share success stories, and make a robust call to action for the incorporation of science, innovation, gender equality, and youth empowerment into Africa's long-term transformation strategy, Agenda 2063.

Call to action:



1. Collaboration to realise STISA 2034

- All actors (policymakers in government agencies, government officials, researchers based in universities, research institutes and think tanks, policy implementers and practitioners, knowledge brokers, civil society, media, development partners, and the private sector) should actively pursue cross-sector coordination to implement STISA 2024-2034 and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Policymakers, academic institutions, and the private sector must collaborate to align national development agendas and industrial needs with university curricula.
- Policymakers in government institutions should increase regional and continental collaboration under the STISA agenda for shared learning and faster progress.

2. Prioritisation of STEM, digital education and gender equity

- Governments and academic institutions need to strengthen STEM education across all levels while addressing persistent gender gaps in higher education and career progression in STEM fields to ensure greater participation and retention across the genders.
- Governments and academic institutions need to prioritise digital technology skills development to equip young people with the capabilities required for emerging digital economies and innovation ecosystems.
- Policymakers, policy implementers, and practitioners should pursue the development and implementation of gendered policy-making frameworks, particularly in education, science, and leadership, to ensure gender equality in development.

- Governments and policymakers should increase public investment in academia and research institutions and create enabling mechanisms to mobilise private sector investment.
- Governments and academic and research institutions should invest in basic research while strengthening the enabling ecosystem, including infrastructure, funding and institutional support, needed to develop and utilise cutting-edge research capacity.
- Universities and research institutions should integrate indigenous knowledge systems into innovation and research processes across disciplines, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration that includes the social sciences and humanities.

3. Research and policy interactions

Researchers should develop strengths in science diplomacy as well as science communication and public engagement to get scientific evidence into policy. This can be pursued through:

- Universities and research institutions introducing courses in science communication and diplomacy for higher-level (master's and PhD) students to equip them for working outside the academic and research spheres.
- Researchers and academics prioritise communicating their research in ways that better fit the needs of policymakers.
- Governments need to recognise and champion the need for researchers while researchers intentionally need to engage with technical staff in government agencies to help in developing and utilising policies.

2.1.3 AI and digital innovations for Africa's development

The sessions discussed Artificial Intelligence and digital tools and models that are being deployed in various development sectors in Africa, including healthcare and service delivery, education, agriculture, research and monitoring and evaluation. The discussion specifically focused on experiences, lessons, challenges, gaps, opportunities and recommendations for advancing AI and digital tools.

Call to action:



- African governments need to establish an enabling environment and governance frameworks for AI technology that aligns to the African cultural context, encourage creative expressions, promote transparency and protect users through appropriate regulations.
- Developers of AI and digital technologies need to generate and use robust and contextualized evidence and their linkages to key aspirations to show the benefits of AI and digital technologies in various sectors including health, education, agriculture etc.
- African governments and their technical and financial partners need to integrate digital tools into existing routine and health surveillance and outbreak response practices including integrating molecular tools into routine facility workflows.
- African governments and their development partners need to invest to develop and expand their AI and digital technology capacity with a focus on upgrading skills and promoting AI literacy.
- African AI and digital technology developers should be supported to commercialise their models to attract investment and foster job creation.

2.1.4 Optimising domestic financing of Africa's development

The discussions in this theme focused on optimising Africa's domestic financial resources for accelerating development. The discussions specifically focused on increased resource mobilisation and strengthening public financial management systems.

Call to action:



- African governments need to increase domestic resource mobilisation through various innovative measures including implementing public-private partnerships in development financing and earmarked taxes for development financing.
- African governments need to transform government expenditures to tackle inefficiencies and wastage including deploying AI and emerging technologies, decentralising spending and prioritising sectors that generate the most returns.
- African governments need to strengthen and enforce the governance of public financial management systems to respond to the changing global development landscape and align financial structures with the time.

2.1.5 Strengthening STI and EIP partnerships

The discussion in this thematic area focused on making a case for collaborations, strengthening capacity for STI and EIP and developing communities of practice and champions in STI and EIP.

Call to action:



- Efforts must be made by governments, development partners and researchers to expand and deepen partnerships for centering data, evidence and innovations in Africa's development efforts.
- Foster public-private partnerships to promote inclusive innovation and technology adoption.
- Encourage cross-country and inter-regional partnerships and collaborations in designing and implementing STI and EIP interventions.
- Promote equitable partnerships across countries and regions, and deliberately invest in building each other up through respectful capacity development initiatives.
- Nurture trust and ownership among government and non-government actors in STI and EIP initiatives.

2.1.6 Fostering youth innovation

Central to the Evi4Dev conference is the creation of a platform that ensures effective youth participation and innovation in STI and EIP. The discussion in this theme focused on youth as catalysts for evidence-informed decision-making, and called for youth innovation and participation in Africa's development agenda.

Call to action:



- Governments should acknowledge existing gaps in youth-related policies and education systems and proactively redesign them to align with Agenda 2063 while equipping youth with the skills and mindset needed for wealth creation and sustainable development.
- We call for strengthened collaboration between governments and the private sector to link innovators with local industries through joint initiatives, innovation hubs, and funding for youth-led solutions.
- Academia should promote open access and visibility of youth empowerment research to make evidence accessible to policymakers, practitioners, and young innovators.
- Policymakers should engage youth at all levels of policy implementation, ensuring they are active contributors—not just beneficiaries—in development agendas.
- Programme implementors should ensure that youth are meaningfully incorporated into programme implementation, including participation in data collection and analysis, to ensure their perspectives influence policies and interventions.

2.1.7 Advancing equity and inclusion in development through STI, data, evidence and innovations

The discussion in this thematic area focused on strengthening pathways for inclusive development, where marginalised voices are amplified, and data-driven solutions shape policies and programmes that are equitable and impactful.

Call to action:



- Governments should strengthen the implementation of inclusive, evidence-based policies that promote equal opportunities for all genders in innovation and leadership.
- Governments should redesign learning programmes to accommodate diverse learning needs, ensuring inclusive and equitable access for all.
- Policymakers should prioritise and fund research that advances the equity and inclusion objectives of Agenda 2063 and other development frameworks.
- Development actors should integrate community-led models that leverage local data to inform the design and implementation of gender responsive policies and programmes.
- Funders should adopt inclusive funding approaches that intentionally support marginalised and underrepresented groups in the innovation ecosystem.

2.2 Issue-Specific Themes

In addition to the above cross-cutting themes, the Evi4Dev conference discussed and proposed actions in specific sectors including wealth creation, infrastructure, food security, education and health.

2.2.1 Wealth creation

The session discussed the role of research and innovation in driving sustainable wealth creation that is aligned to the Africa Union Agenda 2063. The discussion specifically showcased practical models and initiatives that are fostering economic empowerment among women, youth, and rural populations in Africa.

Call to action:



- African governments need to strengthen their manufacturing value chains to increase free trade and reduce dependence on raw materials. Strong regional value chains and formal incentives should be established to support cross-border trade in innovations and knowledge-based products.
- African governments need to develop robust Intellectual Property (IP) support systems to protect and commercialise African innovations. We call on governments to link innovators with local industries and strengthen research and innovation in underperforming regions, for equitable development.
- We call for collaborative efforts among government, private sector, and academia to develop impactful youth policies and expand entrepreneurial training programmes to equip young people with practical business skills and the creation of gender-responsive funding initiatives to improve equitable access to finance, especially for women and marginalised groups.

2.2.2 Digital infrastructure

The discussions in these sessions focused on how appropriate digital infrastructure can help to address Africa's development challenges. The sessions specifically highlighted practical case studies and local innovations in Africa; fostered dialogue on digital transformation; advocated for collaborative and scalable solutions; and advocated for digital inclusion for marginalised groups.

Call to action:

- We call on African governments to invest in the development of robust digital infrastructure that connects rural and urban communities alike, enabling equitable access to opportunities and services.
- We call for partnerships and a multisectoral approach involving governments, NGOs, private sector, and local communities in strengthening digital skills and upscaling solutions.
- We call on governments and partners to focus their digital investments on Africa's youth as a massive opportunity for accelerated and inclusive innovation ecosystems.

2.2.3 Food security

Recognising that sustainable food systems are critical to Africa's development and resilience. These sessions highlighted the urgent need for data-driven policies, climate-smart agriculture, and scalable innovations to reduce post-harvest losses, enhance nutrition, and empower smallholder farmers.

Call to action:

- Governments need to promote investments in data-driven decision-making and innovative tools to increase agricultural production.
- Governments need to promote trade policies that ensure market access and partnership with private sector players to improve food production and lower prices.
- Governments need to increase resource allocation to at least 10% of national budgets to increase agricultural productivity and reduce malnutrition.
- Public-private partnerships and regional collaborations are needed to develop drought resistant food crops such as cassava and creating a business case for investments in such products to improve nutrition and guarantee food security.
- Governments and private sector players need to collaborate in the development of scaledown versions of innovations for testing by communities and improvements before investment in large-scale production.

2.2.4 Education

The conference spotlighted education as a foundational pillar for Africa's transformation. The session showcased critical insights into the misalignment between research outputs and development priorities, systemic exclusion in education policy, and innovative models led by youth, communities, and marginalised groups. The discussions underscored the urgent need for inclusive, locally relevant, and evidence-driven educational reforms, underpinned by data systems and equitable funding.

Call to action:

- Governments need to prioritise investment in education that is focused R&D and explicitly linked to Agenda 2063 and national policy priorities.
- Ministries of Education, regulatory bodies, and teacher training institutes must embed disability-responsive practices into national education frameworks. This includes revising curricula, equipping schools with adaptive infrastructure, and strengthening teacher preparation to support learners with disabilities, including neurodivergent students such as those with autism.
- Governments, in partnership with the private sector and development partners, should expand access to ICT infrastructure in public schools. At the same time, they must invest in local innovations to enhance digital accountability and streamline day-to-day school operations for teachers, learners, and parents.

- Education ministries and Educational Management Information System (EMIS) developers should work with local authorities and civil society organisations to embed community-led tools. By institutionalising these participatory mechanisms, policymakers can ensure education interventions are shaped by those they are meant to serve.
- Policy institutions and development agencies should expand the reach of youth-led platforms which are decentralising evidence-informed decision-making innovation across the continent. These efforts should include funding training, embedding youth in policy dialogues, and supporting the use of plain-language briefs to bridge the gap between data and decision-making.

2.2.5 Advancing health and research for Africa's future

The sessions in this theme focused on enhancing collective commitment to building resilient, equitable, and locally grounded health research ecosystem that reflect the realities, needs, and aspirations of African people.

Call to action:



- We call on researchers to ensure that health priorities include mental health, neurodiversity, and culturally embedded care approaches.
- Researchers and knowledge institutions need to ensure that they streamline transdisciplinary approaches into systems transformation, integrate science communication into their training and support policymaking through tailored evidence.
- Governments need to spearhead the urgency and support in the development and consumption of African-made solutions, guided by indigenous knowledge and ancestral wisdom.
- African Governments need to significantly increase public investment in academia and research while ensuring that education curricula align with industrial and societal needs.



The Youth-Chat Session at the Conference.



A. Conference Plenary Sessions

Opening Ceremony

The Evi4Dev Conference commenced with a ceremony hosted by Dr Rose Oronje (Director of Public Policy and Knowledge Translation, AFIDEP, Kenya). The event set the tone for collaborative action.

Welcome and Opening Remarks:

1. Dr Eliya M. Zulu, Executive Director, African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)
2. Dr Evelyn Gitau, Chief Scientific Officer, Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation)
3. Dr Fréjus Thoto, Executive Director, African Center for Equitable Development (ACED)
4. Ms. Ngcwabe Siziwe, Director, African Evidence Network, South Africa
5. Prof. Abdulrazak Shaukat, Principal Secretary, Science, Research and Innovation, Ministry of Education, Government of Kenya
6. Prof. Abegaz Berhanu, AU High Level Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET)
7. Prof. Brando Okolo, Senior Advisor Science, Technology and Innovation, AUDA-NEPAD

Youth in Innovation Chat on The Role of Youth in Africa's Innovation Ecosystem:

Moderator: Dr. Jabhera Matogoro, Lecturer, University of Dodoma

Panelists:

1. Yohane Chepe, Digital Education Youth Innovator, Malawi
2. Richmond Yeboah Appau Siaw, Climate Smart Agriculture advocate and innovator, Ghana
3. Angela Waithera, AI-driven wildlife monitoring system developer, Kenya

Keynote Address:

Dr Tom Kariuki, CEO, Science for Africa Foundation, delivered a compelling speech on the conference's theme: "Optimising data, evidence, and innovations to create wealth, empower citizens, and foster responsive governance in Africa."

Guest of Honor Remarks:

1. Hon. Dr Jessie Kabwila, Minister of Higher Education, Malawi
2. Hon. Julius Migos Ogamba, Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kenya

Plenary Sessions

Plenary 1: High-Level Panel on Integrating STISA 2034 into National Development Agendas

Moderator: Dr Eliya M. Zulu, African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)

Speakers:

1. Hon. Dr Jessie Kabwila, Minister of Higher Education, Malawi
2. Dr Roselida Owuor, Director of Research Development, Ministry of Education, Kenya
3. Hon. Aziz Sarjoh Kamara, Deputy Minister of Technical and Higher Education, Sierra Leone
4. Hon. Prof Dr Naveen G. El-Autouny, Member of Egypt Senate
5. Prof. Brando Okolo, Senior Advisor Science Technology and Innovation, AUDA-NEPAD

Plenary 2: Science Leadership: Bridging the Gap between Science and Policy

Moderator: Dr Evelyn Gitau, Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation)

Panelists:

1. Prof. Tatien Masharabu, East African Science & Technology Commission (EASTEKO)
 2. Prof. Ikram Guizani, Director, African Leishmaniasis Consortium (ALC) - Institut Pasteur de Tunis
 3. Prof. Richard Okoth -Professor of Molecular Biology, Kenyatta University
 4. Dr Naa Doodoo, Senior Research and Policy Analyst, African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)
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Plenary 3: Harnessing AI and Digital Innovations to Accelerate Agenda 2063 Progress

Moderator: Dr. Barbara Glover, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)

Presenters:

1. Matthew Grollnek, Lead, Employability and the Future of Work, Mastercard Foundation
 2. Fargani Tambeayuk, Director of Public Policy for Francophone SSA and Head of our SSA Cluster on Innovation and Connectivity, Meta
 3. Shikoh Gitau, CEO and Founder, Qhala
 4. Wanjiku Jean Munyaka, Partner Development Manager, Microsoft Tech
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Plenary 4: Optimising Domestic Financing for Development in Africa

Moderator: Dr Cleopatra Mugenyi, Senior Fellow, AFIDEP

Panelists:

1. Prof. Victor Murinde, Executive Director, African Economic Research Consortium (AERC)
 2. Dr Jackson Otieno, Senior Research and Policy Analyst, AFIDEP
 3. Mr. Patrick Zimpita, Principal Secretary, Economic Planning and Development, Ministry of Finance, Malawi
 4. Prof. John Ele-Ojo Ataguba, Executive Director, African Health Economics and Policy Association (AfHEA)
 5. Mr. Kwame Owino, CEO, The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA Kenya)
 6. Dr Bona Mukosha Chitah, Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Zambia
 7. Dr. Daniel Mwai, Presidential Advisor on Health under the Presidential Economic Transformation Team in the Executive Office of the President, Kenya
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Plenary 5: The Central Place of Citizen Evidence in Accelerating Africa's Agenda 2063 Progress

Moderator: Dr Natasha Kimani, Regional Director, Futurelect

Panelists:

1. Matthew Grollnek, Lead, Employability and the Future of Work, Mastercard Foundation
 2. Fargani Tambeayuk, Director of Public Policy for Francophone SSA and Head of our SSA Cluster on Innovation and Connectivity, Meta
 3. Abdelaziz Saidu, Senior Engineer, Cisco Africa
 4. Shikoh Gitau, CEO and Founder, Qhala
 5. Wanjiku Jean Munyaka, Partner Development Manager, Microsoft Tech
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Plenary 6: The Status of Innovation in Africa: Where Did We Wucceed, Where Did We Fail?

Moderator: Dr Cleopatra Mugenyi, Senior Fellow, AFIDEP

Panelists:

1. Mr. Reaboka Morakabi - Programme Officer - Science, Technology and Innovation, SADC
2. Prof. Tatien Masharabu, East African Science & Technology Commission, EASTEKO

3. Mr. Deo Kamweya, Chief Resource Mobilization & International Cooperation, COMESA
4. Dr Nyambe Sinyange: Director of the Zambia Field Epidemiology Training Programme (FETP) - Zambia National Public Health Institute
5. Mr. Patrick Mugisha: Commissioner: Business Development and Quality Assurance-Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives Uganda

Plenary 7: Empowering African R&D: Practical Pathways to Resilience and Impact-Solutions from Emerging Leaders

Moderator: Kedest Tesfagiorgis, Gates Foundation

Panelists:

1. Prof. Collen Masimirembwa, President & CEO, African Institute of Biomedical Science & Technology
2. Prof. Isabella Oyier, Head, Biosciences Department, KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Program
3. Prof. Nicki Tiffin, Professor, University of Western Cape, South Africa National Bioinformatics Institute
4. Dr Yaw Bediako, co-founder & CEO, Yemaachi Biotech

Plenary 8: Guest Lecture: Vaccine Preventable Diseases Programme – WHO Africa

Moderator: Dr. Evelyn Gitau, Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation)

Panelist:

1. Prof. Charles Wisyonge, Head of Vaccine Preventable Diseases Programme, WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO)

Plenary 9: Reframing Africa's STI financing amid current global geopolitical shifts

Moderators: Lillian Mutengu, SFA Foundation & Dr Engelbert Luchuo - Head of International Programmes, APHRC

Panelists:

1. Dr Jordan Kyongo - Head of the East Africa Research & Innovation Hub, FCDO
2. Dr Anthony Mveyange, Director of Programmes Synergy, APHRC
3. Dr Evelyn Gitau, Science for Africa Foundation (SFA Foundation)
4. Dr Sultani Matendechero, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Health, Kenya



Hon. Dr. Jessie Kabwila, Minister of Higher Education, Malawi addressing delegates at the Evi4Dev Conference

B. Abridged Conference Programme

Day 1: Generation & translation of scientific research and innovations for the realisation of Agenda 2063

7:15-8:15 am	Registration
8:30 am	Opening ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Opening remarks● Youth in innovation chat: The role of youth in Africa's innovation ecosystem● Keynote address● Official remarks by the Government of Kenya
8:30 am	Photo and health break
8:30 am	PLENARY SESSIONS <p>Plenary 1: Ministers high-level panel on integrating the Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2034 into national development agendas</p> <p>Plenary 2: Science leadership: Bridging the gap between science and policy</p>
1:30 pm	Lunch
2:30 pm	PARALLEL SESSIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Research and innovation for wealth creation to realise Agenda 2063● Using digital infrastructure to tackle Africa's challenges● Innovations to enhance food production and food security● Innovations in education to achieve Agenda 2063: Research and inclusion● Digital innovations for healthcare delivery● Achieving responsible and high-performing AI using ethics of AI tools
3:45pm	Health break
4:15pm	Plenary 3: Harnessing AI and digital innovations to accelerate Agenda 2063 progress
6:00-7:30pm	AFIDEP Strategy 2030 launch: Cocktail



Day 2: Strengthening evidence-informed policymaking in Africa for the realisation of Agenda 2063

7:15-8:15 am	Registration
7:15 am	SIDE SESSIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">● From data to action: Developing evidence-based advocacy campaigns● Commercialisation of research and innovations through public-private partnerships● Closed session by the SFA Foundation
8:30 am	PLENARY SESSIONS Plenary 4: Optimising domestic financing for development in Africa
10:30 am	Health break
11:00 am	PARALLEL SESSIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Research and innovation for wealth creation to realise Agenda 2063 – II● Innovations to achieve Africa’s energy infrastructure goals for Agenda 2063● Using evidence to inform educational policy for development● Innovative vector control: Shaping Africa’s next frontier in malaria elimination and public health resilience● Advancing inclusive development in Africa: Experiences and best practices for integrating gender in evidence-informed policymaking processes● Centring equity and inclusion in accelerating progress towards the realisation of Agenda 2063 goals
12:10 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Advancing regional evidence-informed policymaking practice in Africa● Strengthening national gender observatories: Building inclusive data ecosystems for policy impact in West Africa● Building a robust research and innovation ecosystem for sustainable development● Strengthening STI capacity for emergency preparedness in health crises● Advancing maternal and child health: Innovations, evidence, and impact
1:30 pm	Lunch
2:30 pm	PLENARY SESSIONS Plenary 5: The central place of citizen evidence in accelerating Africa’s Agenda 2063 progress
3:55 pm	PARALLEL SESSIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Youth panel● Utilising STI indicators for informed science policy decision making● Harnessing evidence for an inclusive green and digital future of work in Africa● Sustaining investments in Africa’s population and demographic dividend in the context of a changing global funding landscape● Enhancing food production for realisation of Agenda 2063 goals● Innovations in business development for wealth creation

6:00-9:00pm Kenyan Night (Dinner and Entertainment)





Day 3: Science, technology & innovation (STI) governance – Domestication of the *STI Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2034*

8:30 am	Guest lecture: The role of science, technology and innovation in Africa's development
8:40 am	PLENARY SESSIONS Plenary 6: The status of innovation in Africa: Where did we succeed, where did we fail? Plenary 7: Empowering African R&D: Practical pathways to resilience and impact - solutions from emerging leaders
11:10 am	Health break
11:40 am	PARALLEL SESSIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Aligning national and regional STI policies with STISA 2034: Leveraging APET's expertise in strategy, regulation, and implementation of STISA 2034● Sustainable financing for primary health care: Strategies and innovations● Innovative financing mechanisms for STISA 2034 implementation● Institutionalising evidence-informed policymaking: Lessons across contexts to help Africa realise its development goals● Beyond protection: Enabling equitable and trusted data ecosystems in Africa background and rationale
12:55 pm	PARALLEL SESSIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The role of AI, big data, and digital platforms in strengthening STI governance: Who owns the words? Governance of African language data in the age of AI● Transforming health systems for realisation of Agenda 2063 Goals● Leveraging digital infrastructure for realisation of Africa's Agenda 2063 goals● Transforming education systems for realisation of Agenda 2063 goals● Status of innovation in Africa and how this is contributing to acceleration and progress towards the realisation of Agenda 2063
1:55 pm	Lunch
3:00 pm	PLENARY SESSIONS Plenary 8: Guest lecture: Vaccine preventable diseases programme Plenary 9: Beyond COVID-19: Sustaining Africa's genomic surveillance gains Plenary 10: Reframing Africa's STI financing amid current global geopolitical shifts
5:30 pm	Closing ceremony Presided over by AUDA-NEPAD and the Government of Kenya <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reflections from conference delegates● Closing remarks
5:40 pm	End of Conference



C. Media Coverage

The conference received extensive media coverage across leading news outlets in Kenya. Kenyan media houses, including Royal Media House, The Star, Standard Media, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), and People's Daily Newspaper, covered the event through news reports and interviews. The news stories below captured key outcomes and discussions from the conference and amplified deliberations from participating stakeholders:



1. Evi4DevConference Vox Pop: <https://www.youtube.com/@Evi4Dev/playlists>
2. African governments urged to fully fund primary healthcare through taxes to curb corruption, wastage. (9 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.citizen.digital/news/african-governments-urged-to-fully-fund-primary-healthcare-through-taxes-to-curb-corruption-wastage-n362447>
3. Africa Urged to Focus on Innovative Approaches to Increase Health Financing. (9 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://news.scienceafrica.co.ke/africa-urged-to-focus-on-innovative-approaches-to-increase-health-financing/>
4. Case for evidence-based data in policy decision. (9 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://media.cdn.pagesuite.com/clipping/html5/5b8fbff7-0eab-4cb5-b347-240f252879ef/15/20250509070951705/clipping.jpg>
5. Calls grow by Health experts to turn innovation to tangible results. (9 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2025-05-09-calls-grow-by-health-experts-to-turn-innovation-to-tangible-results>
6. Economists: Africa must plug financial leaks to fund its healthcare. (9 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.the-star.co.ke/health/2025-05-07-economists-africa-must-plug-financial-leaks-to-fund-its-healthcare>
7. Innovation, technology adoption key to strengthening Africa's healthcare financing – experts. (9 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.the-star.co.ke/health/2025-05-07-innovation-technology-adoption-key-to-strengthening-africas-healthcare-financing-experts>
8. African think tanks push for innovation amid funding cuts. (8 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.the-star.co.ke/health/2025-05-06-african-think-tanks-push-for-innovation-amid-funding-cuts>

9. Experts at Evi4Dev conference advocate for tech-driven, cost-efficient healthcare solutions in Africa. (8 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.citizen.digital/news/experts-at-evi4dev-conference-advocate-for-tech-driven-cost-efficient-healthcare-solutions-in-africa-n362326>
10. Tough Choices for African Governments: Experts call for optimized domestic financing for development: <https://www.kbc.co.ke/tough-choices-for-african-governments-experts-call-for-optimized-domestic-financing-for-development/>
11. African nations urged to use data to cut import dependence. (8 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/sci-tech/article/2001518308/african-nations-urged-to-use-data-to-cut-import-dependence>
12. Evidence-based solutions for Africa's development conference kicks off in Nairobi. (7 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.the-star.co.ke/health/2025-05-07-photos-evidence-for-development-conference-kicks-off-in-nairobi>
13. Africa rallies for evidence-based development as leaders convene in Nairobi. (7 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.kbc.co.ke/africa-rallies-for-evidence-based-development-as-leaders-convene-in-nairobi/>
14. Kenya Hosts Landmark Evidence Conference as Africa Rallies Behind Science, Innovation. (7 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/kenya-hosts-landmark-evidence-conference-as-africa-rallies-behind-science-innovation/>
15. Africa Charts Path to Evidence-Based Policy and Innovation-Led Growth at Inaugural STI Conference. (7 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://healthbusiness.co.ke/9026/africa-charts-path-to-evidence-based-policy-and-innovation-led-growth-at-inaugural-sti-conference/>
16. Data, Evidence, Innovation Essential for AU's Agenda 2063. (7 May, 2025). Retrieved from: <https://news.scienceafrica.co.ke/data-evidence-innovation-essential-for-aus-agenda-2063>

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Evidence for Development Conference

Optimising the Role of Data, Evidence, and Innovations in Africa's Efforts to Create Wealth, Empower Citizens, and Foster Responsive Governance



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