

# UN enlists influencers to drive Africa's development agenda

Under the aegis of African Influencers for Development (AID), several current and future African leaders in business, academia and the arts have been enlisted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to steer drive Africa's development agenda.



Image source: Gallo/Getty.

This UNDP's new partnership strategy is aimed at engaging with African champions who are already working to drive sustainable development across the continent, according to a media release from the UN entity. The release includes the following:

“This initiative proves that Africa’s rapidly evolving development challenges can be met by upscaling Africa’s own innovative solutions. I agree with the view that Africa should no longer be treated as a space for testing ideas, many of which eventually fail, but as a goldmine where development takes place”, Amina Mohammed, deputy secretary-general of the United Nations noted at the launch.

Supergroups of present and future champions in business, academia, arts and entertainment including youth, women, start-ups and SMEs will partner with UNDP in 46 African countries to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“Africans need to ‘own the space’ and become stronger actors - with stronger voices - in the development of the continent. Key stakeholder groups such as Africa’s private sector and academia must play a greater role in achieving sustainable development”, said Ahunna Eziakonwa, assistant secretary general and director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, UNDP.

During the event, a key product of the AID initiative, the African Business Map, was unveiled. The map is a one-stop shop for curated data on African businesses that identifies business opportunities and allows partners to co-discover and co-create innovative development solutions tailored to Africa’s opportunities and challenges. The plan is to create other products such as the Africa Genius video series, the AID lecture series and various knowledge products.

In addition, an innovative platform, the African Renewable Energy Forum, co-created by UNDP and the Sahara Group was introduced to participants. This forum aims to expand access to clean and affordable energy (SDG 7) through policy dialogue, partnerships and new energy initiatives to help Africa achieve its renewable energy potential.

“As a leading energy provider in Africa, the Sahara Group sees its partnership with UNDP as very critical in facilitating access to reliable, clean and affordable energy across Africa. We are excited about the journey towards transforming Africa and keen on building more partnerships for the achievement of the SDG7,” stated Kola Adesina, group managing director, Sahara Group.

Discussions at the launch of the AID initiative focused on leveraging Africa’s creativity and innovation through technology, innovative financing and engaging Africa’s youth and growing women-led SMEs. Various areas of collaboration on the SDGs were identified for programming, to connect the Diaspora to the continent’s development.

*Source: Africa Renewal.*

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