



Digital Transformation in Africa: AfDB and Club de Madrid Forge Path for Inclusive Growth



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News

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African Development Bank and Club de Madrid partner to advance digital transformation in Africa. Discover how digital tools are boosting farmer revenues and how digitization could unlock \$687 billion in additional revenues across the continent.



The African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Club de Madrid have joined forces to accelerate digital transformation across Africa, aiming to drive inclusive economic growth and enhance governance. This strategic partnership was highlighted during a high-level side event at the AfDB's 2025 Annual Meetings in Abidjan, themed **"Driving Africa's Economic Future: Digital Transformation for Inclusive Growth and Governance."**

Digital Tools Boosting African Farmers' Revenues

One of the most compelling outcomes of Africa's digital revolution is seen in agriculture. According to Julia Duncan, Global Director for Development Finance at Bayer, African farmers adopting digital tools are experiencing annual revenue



Kevin Urama, AfDB's Chief Economist and Vice President for Economic Governance & Knowledge Management, emphasized the vast potential of digitizing Africa's public sector systems. He noted that such efforts could unlock up to **\$687 billion** in additional revenues continent-wide. Specifically, digitizing tax systems alone could yield up to **\$125 billion**—without the need to raise tax rates.

Panel Insights: Leadership, Education, and AI

The panel, moderated by Dr. Victor Oladokun, featured distinguished leaders including Mehdi Jomaa (former Prime Minister of Tunisia), Dr. Obiageli "Obi" Ezekwesili (former Nigerian Minister of Education and World Bank Vice President), Mame Omar Diop (UNESCO Representative to Côte d'Ivoire), Julia Duncan (Bayer), and Pren-Tsilya Boa-Guehe (Google).

- **Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili** highlighted Africa's unique opportunity: "We are a continent that missed out on the agrarian and industrial revolutions. But one revolution we are not missing out on is the digital revolution. We are not just participating, but also showing that we can be part of the production systems driving the revolution."
- **Pren-Tsilya Boa-Guehe** of Google stressed that Africa is not lagging in Artificial Intelligence (AI), as the field is still emerging globally. She announced a forthcoming AI sandbox initiative under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, designed to foster innovation through collaboration among policymakers, startups, and the private sector within robust regulatory frameworks.
- **Education Reform** was underscored by Ezekwesili, who warned that "nine out of ten African children are not attaining basic literacy. The system is failing them. If we want to lead in the digital revolution, we must start by rethinking teacher training, teaching methods, and curricula, using evidence-based approaches."
- **Mehdi Jomaa** attributed Tunisia's digital success to strong political will and a clear reform strategy, centered around the Tunisia Digital 2020 Plan. "For us, digital is not just about economic growth, it is about institutional reform and



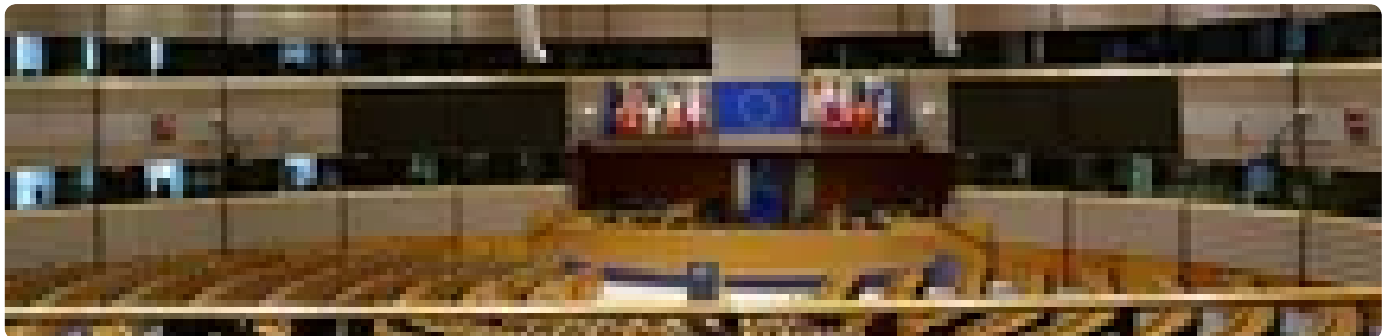
highlighting UNESCO's leadership in developing global standards to ensure AI systems uphold human rights and freedoms.

The Road Ahead: Institutional Anchors and Continental Collaboration

Boa-Guehe concluded by emphasizing the importance of strong continental institutions: "For the private sector to scale digital solutions across Africa, it needs strong institutional anchors. The African Union and the African Development Bank have the convening power and credibility to lead this transformation."

As Africa embraces the digital revolution, the partnership between the AfDB and the Club de Madrid, alongside the commitment of public and private sector leaders, signals a new era of inclusive growth, innovation, and governance reform across the continent.

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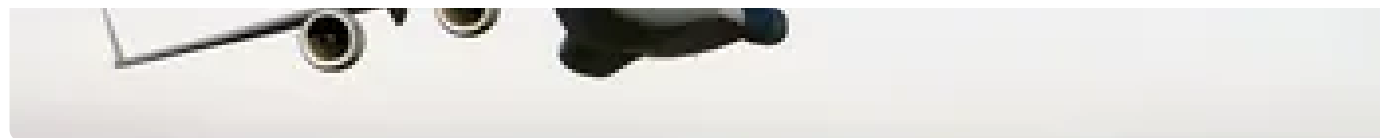
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