

# AERC INSIGHT

The African Economic Research Consortium



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of Dr. Adelaide  
Retselisitsoe  
Matlanyane  
to the AERC  
Board of  
Directors

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# Climate Change

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AERC alumni association  
is a huge resource base



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and health training

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## Appointment

Dr. Adelaide Retselisitsoe Matlanyane was appointed as Director at Large on the AERC Board, effective December 15, 2021.



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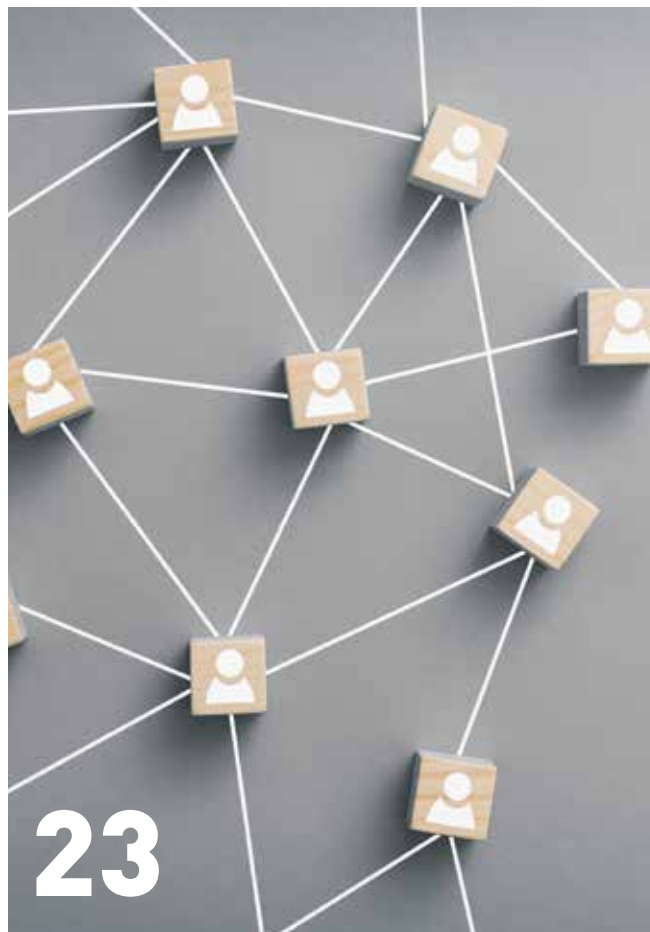
## Note from the Executive Director

This issue is dedicated to Climate Change. This is also the theme of the next AERC Senior Policy Seminar that is scheduled for late March 2022.

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## Virtual JFE and SFSE Expand Access to More Students

Implementation of a virtual rather than residential Joint Facility for Elective (JFE) and Shared Facility for Specialization and Electives (SFSE) has provided greater latitude for expanding access to more students.



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## Building Inclusivity

The AERC in collaboration with INCLUDE hosted a special session on the African Policy Dialogues (APDs) recently. The session was aimed at contributing to knowledge on inclusive development themes and broadening the approaches for evidence-informed policy making.



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## AERC in T20 Think Tanks

AERC is one of the few think tanks from Africa participating in the T20 and supporting the G20.

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## AERC Training Innovates on Virtual and Blended Disseminations

Two blended thesis dissemination workshops, combining face-to-face and virtual participation were held in Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

# Note from the Executive Director

Dear Esteemed Readers,

This issue of **Insight** is dedicated to Climate Change. This is also the theme of the next AERC Senior Policy Seminar that is scheduled for late March 2022.

This issue of AERC **Insight** is dedicated to Climate Change and Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan Economies. This is also the theme of the next AERC Senior Policy Seminar that is scheduled for late March 2022. That climate change is having a growing impact on the African continent, hitting the most vulnerable hardest, and contributing to food insecurity, population displacement and stress on water resources is not news. The increasing threat of climate change has negative impact on human health, food and water security are already affecting socio-economic development in Africa.

This project has provided an important off-shoot: In our research themes; climate change and central banking in Africa with an objective of developing supply side monetary policy instruments to deal with supply shocks.

We also know that the Covid-19 pandemic and effects linger on and may not be resolved soon. Restrictions on domestic and/or international travels are likely to continue being imposed in the coming days and this will continue to affect the

implementation of AERC's activities that cannot be conducted virtually. Given that this was the theme for the recent plenary of the AERC Biannual Research Workshop, viz. "Poverty, Growth, Redistribution and Social Inclusion in Times of Covid-19 Pandemic in Africa," it is also a major item in this issue.

Programmatically, we also share in the AERC **Insight** recent research and training activities including the thematic and collaborative research as well as the Joint Facility for Electives, as AERC flagship activities.

We have lined up for you various articles on policy forums, development of the new website and testimonials from network members among other items of interest.

I will appreciate all feedback and questions you may have on anything about the information provided, and suggestions of topics you would like to see in future newsletters. We look forward to your response. Welcome!

*Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u*  
Executive Director, AERC



**That climate change is having a growing impact on the African continent, hitting the most vulnerable hardest, and contributing to food insecurity, population displacement and stress on water resources is not news.**



# Feature

Senior  
Policy  
Seminar  
on

# Climate Change

and Economic  
Development  
in Africa

**T**he African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) will use a Senior Policy Seminar as the primary dissemination vehicle for the outputs of the AERC collaborative research project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) on “Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa (CCEDA).

The overarching goal of this AERC Collaborative research project is to improve Africa’s readiness to confront climate and environmental shocks and leverage the opportunities they present through climate-smart sets of economic policies.

Climate change has emerged as one of the key socio-economic and developmental challenges confronting policy makers in Africa, with the potential for reversal of the significant gains made in poverty reduction and inequality, economic growth, and development in Africa in the last two decades. According to experts, Africa will bear the brunt of

the effects of climate change despite it contributing less than 4% of the total greenhouse gas emissions.

Widespread poverty in the continent implies that Africa may not have the requisite capacity to cope with the vagaries of climate change which is expected to result in increases in both the frequency and severity of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods, decline in agricultural productivity, shorter agricultural seasons, and the possibility of reduction in the sustainability of agricultural activities. This is of immediate policy concern given that 65–70 percent of the workforce in

Africa depends on agriculture and supports livelihoods of 90% of its population. Additionally, about 15% of Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is derived from agriculture – mostly rain-fed agriculture, with some countries deriving as much as 50% of GDP from agriculture.

Economies that depend heavily on sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and tourism will be hardest hit by these phenomena. The impacts, however, will not be limited to agriculture. Infrastructure is one area where impacts are likely to be significant, with negative implications for trade and development. Similarly, the energy sector presents both challenges and opportunities for Africa but remains under-explored.

To enhance mitigation and adaptation to climate change, African governments are required to make major structural investment and policy decisions that will influence the rate, structure and character of economic growth and development for the long term. This is especially so given the path-dependence and lock-in nature of most infrastructure investments. While there is strong appreciation by African policy makers on the need to strengthen mitigation and adaptation, as exemplified by their overwhelming endorsement of the Paris Climate Accord, African governments have not yet succeeded in integrating environmental challenges and climate issues into the decision-making processes at the national level.

Part of the challenge is the lack of adequate knowledge and expertise in the region on climate issues and their developmental implications. There is a dearth of appropriately contextualized, robust scientific knowledge to inform policy making on these issues. Thus, enhancing the capacity of African governments to confront development challenges in a 21st Century context is fundamental to improving the capability of the continent (and its policy makers) to confront climate and environmental changes, and leverage the opportunities they present, as it confronts its development challenges.

Over the last three years, the AERC, with support from the Norwegian Agency for



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Development Cooperation (NORAD), has implemented several activities under the “Economic Development in sub-Saharan Africa” Programme. Key components of the programme are:

- (i) Capacity building for policy-oriented economic research undertaken within the AERC thematic research capacity building program.
- (ii) Bridge programme for participants from fragile and post-conflict countries.

**90%**

Percentage of livelihoods in Africa supported by Agriculture.



### Proposed Topics for Senior Policy Seminar

1. Urbanization and Climate Change Vulnerability. What next?
  2. Energy and Climate Change: What Policy options exist.
  3. Climate Change, Poverty, Inequality and Covid -19: Avoiding the Worst Impacts.
  4. Climate Change and Agriculture: Challenges, Opportunities and Policy Options.
- (iii) Institutional Partnerships.
  - (iv) Technical skills enhancement workshops.
  - (v) Enhancing skills for non-state actors in SSA.
  - (vi) Policy outreach and research dissemination, and
  - (vii) Collaborative research projects in two key areas of contemporary policy interest in Africa, namely, the growth-poverty-inequality nexus, and climate

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change and economic development.

The Collaborative research project on 'climate change and economic development in Africa' involved both framework papers and country case studies. The framework papers sought to improve the capability of the continent (and its policy makers) to confront climate and environmental change, and leverage the opportunities they present, as it tackles its development challenges. The country case studies on the other hand sought to deepen understanding of environmental challenges and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures by paying greater attention to nuances in specific countries in Africa.

To assist policy makers and other actors understand better the impacts of climate change on growth and inform policies on building and strengthening resilience (climate proofing) of sub-Saharan African countries to ensure sustainability of growth and development, AERC intends to disseminate the findings from the climate change studies to senior African policy makers through its flagship dissemination vehicle, the "Senior Policy Seminar" (SPS).

Presentations synthesized from the 'climate change and development in Africa' research project, will be shared with senior policy makers in Africa in a one-day virtual seminar. The senior policy seminar will feature four synthesis papers and a roundtable discussion.

## AERC Senior Policy Seminars

One of AERC's major activities is bridging the gap between economic research and economic policy.

The gap is not only in implementation of policy, but also arises in translating research findings into policy. AERC addresses these concerns through a variety of forums, the flagship of which is the Senior Policy Seminar.

These seminars are intended to bring together the economic policy researchers and policy makers, along with high level private sector and non-state actors, to discuss key policy research issues in sub-Saharan Africa. A typical seminar features about 100 policy makers and private and non-state sector actors discussing AERC collaborative research findings and research of other thought leaders presented for dialogue between researchers and policy makers.

The AERC Senior Policy Seminar provides an opportunity for policy makers and researchers to engage in uninterrupted deliberations on a set of important issues considered significant to policy. The seminar format insulates the policy makers from pressures related to their responsibilities and, thus, creates an environment for lively professional discourse on the selected issue.

Aside from the specific aims of bringing researchers and policy makers together, the seminars are directly useful to AERC because they help identify research imperatives facing a transforming Africa

to be considered a network of researchers and educators. They also improve prospects for policy involvement of the researchers and enhance AERC's visibility in the policy community. Thus, they serve to highlight the growing capacity in the region for policy research and, overall, provide important feedback to AERC for its research and training programs.

Exchange of country-specific experiences is particularly important in these seminars. The policy makers are normally identified for their interest in policy research issues and the level of seniority of the policy makers is generally right, leading to detailed discussions. Researchers are reasonably well balanced between anglophone and francophone.

Policy makers report that they have found their experiences in the seminars very useful. The information exchanged helps them update their knowledge on current research and sieve out issues that are relevant to their duties. Some have been dismayed to find that, during negotiations with international financial institutions, they have agreed to certain policies without understanding the full implications of the policy package. Seminars of this kind, while not intended or able to make the policy maker an economist, nevertheless afford the opportunity of considering the wider ramifications of their policy decisions.

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## Nurturing Research and Policy Relationships

**B**ecause they give a human face to the practitioners of the respective trades, the senior policy seminars are extremely useful for their potential to promote cooperation between policy makers and researchers for evidence based policy making process.

Most participants, therefore, carry the message of success to policy research institutions in their respective countries. By sharing country experiences, interacting with researchers, and discussing problems and solutions in policy implementation, the participants discover a great deal that can be used in future planning.

The seminars also provide a new thinking on how policy makers and researchers can maintain a more effective interaction at the national level. Among these ideas are: making policy makers more aware of research issues and the applicability of research techniques; involving researchers in analysing technical policy proposals; exchanging information

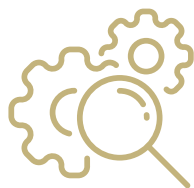
on best practices in other countries; and improving researchers' access to policy makers.

Policy making in Africa is a particularly difficult task, and AERC strives to provide policy makers with the information they need to perform their duties adequately. Research should not simply concentrate on the identification of problems, rather, it should provide concrete suggestions as to how to overcome the

**The Consortium supports a variety of research efforts that respond to policy concerns of wide application to the region.**

problems. And Africa has the human resources to be able to effect a change for the better.

The Consortium supports a variety of research efforts that respond to policy concerns of wide application to the region. Although AERC's operations are region-wide, much of the research it supports is country-specific in nature through commissioned country case studies that provide a wide cross-section of experiences. This approach lends itself easily to compilation of experiences on best practices and avoidable mishaps in the policy sphere. In all these instances, care is taken to ensure that research being pursued has policy value and addresses issues that are pertinent to current and prospective policy concerns, and these are then synthesized and shared in the Senior Policy Seminars and other forums. Thus, with the commitment and partnership between policy makers and researchers, Africa can overcome most of her economic development problems.



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## AERC Senior Policy Seminar (SPS XXIV)

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) will host a senior policy seminar, the twenty fourth in the series with a broad theme as **Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa**. The conference will be held on **March 30, 2022**. Four papers will be presented followed by a policy roundtable. The aim is to synthesize frontier knowledge and evidence from country case studies so that a process of packaging evidence based policy making process is comprehensive. The roundtable will be a mix of policy makers, paper presenters, and private sector actors.

### The four main objectives of the Senior Policy Seminars are:

- To provide an opportunity for policy makers and researchers to exchange their experiences and views on policy issues.
- To improve the prospects for policy involvement by AERC-funded researchers.
- To increase AERC visibility in the policy community, highlighting the growing capacity in the region for policy research.
- To identify possible areas of policy-oriented research for AERC-funded researchers to consider.

### These are achieved in four ways:

- By synthesizing and disseminating the results of AERC-funded research to senior policy makers.
- By generating an interaction between the policy makers and AERC-funded researchers on the results of existing AERC research.
- By encouraging sharing of experiences among policy makers, on the lessons and details of macroeconomic policies.
- By receiving feedback from policy makers on the key current policy-related research issues in Africa.

### The concrete outputs of the seminar are expected to be:

- Major input into AERC's policy-oriented research agenda, in the form of suggestions for key priorities in each of the policy areas examined.
- Ideas for methods and structures to promote closer collaboration among

policy makers and researchers, both within individual countries and collaboratively across the continent.

- Wider dissemination of AERC materials to policy makers, and ideas for forms and methods of dissemination most convenient to them.
- Proposals for how to follow-up the seminar.



**Four papers addressing issues on Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa will be presented. The four papers will emanate from AERC research and there will be a robust exchange of ideas.**

### Expected Outcome of the Senior Policy Seminar (SPSXXIV)

- Raised awareness and knowledge among senior policy makers, private sector, and non-state actors on the role of Climate Change in Africa through evidence-based research.
- Identification of enabling government policies for climate change, and exchange of country-specific experiences through a roundtable discussion.
- Enhanced relationship between researchers and policy makers by bringing them together to discuss key policy research issues on climate change.
- Provide an opportunity to policy makers and researchers, along with the private sector and non-state actors, for uninterrupted dialogue on a set of key climate change issues considered significant to policy.
- Equip African policy makers in decision making using up-to-date research findings.

### Format

- Four papers synthesizing frontier knowledge on climate change and economic development in Africa will be presented.
- The Four papers will emanate from AERC research.
- A roundtable discussion of senior policy makers and other stakeholders will be held.
- There will be a robust discussion and exchange of ideas.
- A focus on policy proposals that can be adopted for implementation.

## Themes of Previous AERC Senior Policy Seminars

Theme	Dates	Venue	Participants
1. Economic Research and Policy Making in Sub-Saharan Africa	March 1995	Nairobi, Kenya	40
2. Financial Sector Reforms, Domestic Resource Mobilization, and Investment in Africa	November 1996	Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire	48
3. Fiscal Policy in Africa	October 1997	Accra, Ghana	52
4. Revenue Mobilization in Sub-Saharan Africa	February 2000	Gaborone, Botswana	56
5. Macroeconomic Policy and Poverty Reduction in Africa	February 2002	Dar es Salaam, Tanzania	60
6. Financing Pro-Poor Growth in Africa	March 2004	Kampala, Uganda	63
7. Poverty, Growth, and Institutions	March 2005	Cape Town, South Africa	66
8. Governance and Pro-poor Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa	March 2006	Dakar, Senegal	72
9. Managing Commodity Booms in Sub-Saharan Africa	February 2007	Yaoundé, Cameroon	78
10. Climate Change and Economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa	April 2008	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	80
11. The Global Financial Crisis and its Implications for the African Economies	April 2009	Lusaka, Zambia	92
12. Bank Regulatory Reforms in Africa: Enhancing Bank Competition and Intermediation Efficiency	March 2010	Mombasa, Kenya	72
13. Natural Resource Management in Sub-Saharan Africa	March 2011	Maputo, Mozambique	103
14. (a) Health, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa	March 2012	Dar es Salaam, Tanzania	107
(b) Challenges Associated with the Development of Oil Sector in Uganda (Special Policy Seminar)	February 2012	Kampala, Uganda	160
15. Youth and Unemployment in Africa	March 2013	Kigali, Rwanda	113
16. Capital Flight from Africa	April 2014	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	101
17. Agriculture in Africa's Transformation: The Role of Smallholder Farmers	March 2015	Maputo, Mozambique	90
18. Financial Inclusion in Africa	March 2016	Nairobi, Kenya	100
19. Industrialization in Africa	March 2017	Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire	121
20. Rethinking Regional Integration in Africa	March 2018	Kampala, Uganda	115
21. Fragility of Growth in African Economies	March, 2019	Harare, Zimbabwe	131
22. Agriculture and Food Policies for Better Nutrition Outcomes in Africa	March, 2020	Abuja, Nigeria	117
23. The Global COVID-19 Health Pandemic and Its Implications for the African Economies	March, 2021	Virtual	307
24. Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa	March, 2022	Virtual	----

# Climate Change

brings communities in Africa to their knees

The African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET), one of African Economic Research Consortium's (AERC) staunch partners, shares some of their experiences in this partnership.

ACET founder and president, Dr. K.Y. Amoako, unveils some of the takeaways from the partnership.

"We have seen in the past year how droughts, floods, storms, and infestations have brought communities in every corner of Africa to their knees, and this will only get worse in the years to come," he said, adding: "Against this backdrop, ACET will continue its focus on climate change, paying attention to the impacts on and opportunities for women."

Dr. Amoako said they will help shape the policy agenda for Africa in major global gatherings such as Tokyo International Conference of African Development (TICAD) and COP27 and share the latest edition of the African Transformation Index which will quantify transformation for 33 countries and point to policy actions that can speed up progress for all Africans.

Against this backdrop, ACET will continue its focus on climate change, paying attention to the impacts on and opportunities for women."

## Appointment of Dr. Adelaide Retselisitsoe Matlanyane to the AERC Board of Directors

**T**he African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) is delighted to announce the appointment of Dr. Adelaide Retselisitsoe Matlanyane as Director at Large on the AERC Board, effective December 15, 2021.

Dr. Matlanyane is the immediate former Governor and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Lesotho, a position she held from 2012 to December 31, 2021. She was the first female Governor in the history of the Bank. Dr. Matlanyane joined the Bank in April 2006 as the Second Deputy Governor to oversee the research, financial markets, and operations departments. She was promoted to the position of First Deputy Governor in April 2007 and later as the Acting Governor, a position she held until her appointment as Governor.

Dr. Matlanyane has been associated with the AERC for more than 20 years in various capacities. She has served as a member of the AERC Programme Committee (2008-2014) and was the Chair of the Programme Committee over the period 2010-2014, having taken over from the late Prof. Benno Ndulu. In the capacity of the Chair of the Programme Committee, Dr. Matlanyane also served as an ex-officio member of the AERC Board. She is an AERC alumnus of the Collaborative Training programmes.

Dr. Matlanyane is an accomplished economist and seasoned policy maker with vast experience in Finance. Prior to her illustrious career at the Central Bank of Lesotho, Dr. Matlanyane was a Lecturer at the Economics Department of



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the National University of Lesotho. She previously served at various universities and regional and international institutions in different capacities, including as Board Member and Vice Chair of the Board of the Lesotho Revenue Authority; Chair of the African Rural and Agricultural Credit Association; Chair of the Executive Committee of the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute (MEFMI) and a member of the Steering Committees of AFRITAC (Technical Assistance Centre) South of the IMF and Africa Training Institute (ATI). She has also served as an Economist in the African Department of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). She continues to serve various local and international professional institutions in varying capacities, including as representative of SADC Central Bank Governors in the Financial Stability Board Consultative Group for Sub-Saharan Africa; a Board Member of MEFMI. In addition, she has, and continues to lead financial sector reforms including modernization of payment systems, legislative changes that enable development of the financial system, promotion of financial inclusion, modernization and strengthening of governance structures of financial institutions and advocacy for access to finance, especially for women.

Dr. Matlanyane holds a PhD in Economics with specialization in Macro-econometric and Economy Wide Modelling from the University of Pretoria, South Africa, a Master's in Economics from the University of Botswana and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the National University of Lesotho. She was named among the Inaugural List of 100 Most Influential African Women in 2019 by Avance Media.

## Prof. Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile, a member of the AERC Governors' Forum and an AERC Supporter Passes On

**P**rof. Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile, the Governor of the Bank of Uganda passed away on 23 January 2022, at the age of 72.

He was the Governor and Chairman of the board of directors of the Bank of Uganda from 2001 until his death. The Bank of Uganda is a member of the AERC Forum of African Governors of Central Banks, commonly known as - AERC Governors' Forum. The participating Governors in this forum have a strong vision on capacity building for their institutions and belief in the need for robust participation by African central banks and other institutions in AERC's activities.

"We have lost a very influential member of the AERC Governors' Forum. Prof. Tumusiime-Mutebile was a stalwart supporter and has been paramount in this Forum. The AERC has been very fortunate to benefit from the long experience and insights of Prof. Tumusiime-Mutebile over the years through his unwavering intellectual contribution and participation in our activities. The AERC leverages the Governors' Forum for policy research discussions and dissemination of research findings. This includes determination of research priorities, particularly in the areas of monetary policy, finance and macroeconomics policy



directions and high-level policy dialogue," said Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u, AERC Executive Director.

Governor Tumusiime-Mutebile was the longest-serving chief executive in the Bank of Uganda's history as well as Africa's longest-serving central bank governor at the time of his death. He was first appointed to this position on 1 January 2001. He was a Ugandan economist and banker who graduated with a PhD from the University of Oxford and a bachelor's degree in Economics and Politics from Durham University. Upon his return, he joined the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania as a lecturer. It is during this period that he first associated with the AERC and supported its establishment in the late 1980s. He has remained a close friend of the AERC over the years with his last contribution being as a member of the AERC Governors' Forum.

**The AERC has been very fortunate to benefit from the long experience and intellectual insights of Prof. Tumusiime-Mutebile over the years through his unwavering contribution and participation in AERC activities.**

He is credited as a Policy Leader for the sound economic policies adopted by the Ugandan government in the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s, when he was the Permanent Secretary. He is also remembered for spearheading the design and implementation of the Economic Reform Programme which restored Uganda from the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s to sound economic performance during his service as the permanent secretary and secretary to the Treasury in the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development.

Since 2006, Prof. Tumusiime-Mutebile was a visiting professor in the Department of Economics at Makerere University, the oldest and largest university in Uganda. He was the chancellor of the International University of East Africa. He also worked as a consultant for multilateral and regional organizations including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of East and Central Africa, United Kingdom Department for International Development, the North-South Institute in Canada as well as for the governments of Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Eritrea, and Nepal.

Prof. Tumusiime-Mutebile was a member of the High-Level Panel of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) advising on Human Development Report of the UNDP; the Management Group for overseeing the evaluation of the implementation of the Comprehensive Development Framework of the World Bank in 2001; and the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons to advise the President of the African Development Bank on the strategic future of the African Development Bank in 2006.

He holds Fellowships of the World Bank Institute, and Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, as well as an honorary Professor of Makerere University, a Companion of the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management (CPTM), and a Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa) of Bishop Stuart University. Makerere University honoured him with the establishment of the Prof. Emmanuel Tumusiime-Mutebile Chair of Monetary Policy.

# Workshops

## AERC's 55th Biannual Research Workshop Plenary on Poverty, Growth, Redistribution and Social Inclusion in Times of Covid-19 Pandemic in Africa

**H**undreds of Economic Policy Researchers, Scholars, Public Policymakers, non-state actors and practicing Economists recently participated in a Research Workshop hosted by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC).

AERC, led by former Central Bank of Kenya Governor Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u, hosted its 55th Biannual Research Workshop Plenary Session virtually, exploring the theme: *Poverty, Growth, Redistribution and Social Inclusion in Times of Covid-19 Pandemic in Africa*.

The plenary session which kicked off on Monday, November 29, 2021, was chaired by Prof. Yaw Nyarko, a Professor of Economics at New York University (NYU). Prof. Nyarko, one of the most highly ranked African economists in the world also serves as the Director of NYU Africa House, the Center for Technology and Economic Development (CTED), and the DevLab at NYU Abu Dhabi, as well as Co-Director of the Development Research Institute (DRI).

Kenya's Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) Chairperson Dr. Jane Kiringai chaired and led a policy panel discussion session on public/private sector policy featuring distinguished panelists, that included distinguished economists, private and public sector leaders from across the continent.

British Economist and Political Scientist, Prof. James Robinson, of the University of Chicago delivered the Prof. Benno Ndulu Memorial Lecture on "Africa's Latent Assets" in honour of the former Governor of the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) and renowned African

**On the question of inequality as a barrier to economic and social growth, Prof Ndung'u noted that delegates attending the conference explored the question of whether inequalities pose a major obstacle to raising and sustaining a growth trajectory that will be instrumental to eradicating poverty in the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic impacted times."** The AERC research suggests that strong growth supplemented by targeted social protection, programmes will be effective in fighting poverty, inequality and improved social inclusion. AERC research

Economist, the late Prof. Benno Ndulu, who passed on in early 2021. Prof. Ndulu was the first African Executive Director of AERC.

Speaking during the opening session, The AERC Executive Director Prof. Ndung'u said, "this Plenary session demonstrates AERC's continued commitment to provide a range of policy solutions to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through sustained engagement with policy makers, researchers and practitioners."

On the question of inequality as a barrier to economic and social growth, Prof. Ndung'u noted that delegates attending the conference explored the question of whether inequalities pose a major obstacle to raising and sustaining a growth trajectory that will be instrumental to eradicating poverty in the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic impacted times.

"In both cases, the redistribution of income might achieve not only greater equality, but also faster growth. We all know that poverty can dampen growth when market imperfections combine with other economic factors. On the other hand, income redistribution can lower poverty by reducing inequality if the process follows a good and sustainable process," said Prof. Ndung'u.

He added that: "However, it may not accelerate growth in any major way, except perhaps by reducing social tensions arising from inequality. With the advent of Covid-19, the situation could be even worse,

but perhaps the lessons learnt can foster a renewed inclination and energy on reforms and structural economic transformation. Poverty, growth, redistribution, and social inclusion in times of the Covid-19 pandemic in Africa is one area of focus for the AERC capacity building and knowledge generation that inspired the theme of the 55th Plenary Session of the AERC's Biannual Research Workshop."

The Plenary session featured four presentations by distinguished economists. Dr. Simone Schotte, UNWIDER, Research Fellow started off the proceedings with a look at *"The labor Market Impact of COVID-19 Lockdowns: Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa"*. This was followed by the presentation on *Poverty, Growth, Redistribution, and Social Inclusion in Times of COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa* by Prof Germano Mwabu, University of Nairobi, Kenya. The next presentations featured *"Covid-19, Poverty and the Role of Social Protection Systems in Africa"* by Dr Kibrom Abay, Country Program Leader and Research Fellow, IFPRI, and finally a presentation on *"The Interaction among Growth, Inequality and Poverty: Implications for Improving Covid-19 Pandemic Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa"* by Erik Thorbecke, H.E. Babcock Professor of Economics Emeritus, Cornell University.

AERC's Biannual Plenary is one of the most respected and highly regarded events that has over three decades continued to attract world class development economists and experts on African economies. The insights presented in this plenary offer fresh perspectives and define new frontiers of research that respond to the pressing needs of policy makers.

The December 2021 Biannual plenary brought into sharp focus the opportunities and challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic brought in the areas of growth, poverty, redistribution, and social inclusion in Africa. The following issues, among others, were covered by the plenary:

- What organizing framework could be conceived to forge an inclusive, rapid, and sustained growth in Africa?
- What are the policy options for



redistribution and equal opportunities?

- How has the Covid-19 pandemic shaped the nexus between growth, inequality, poverty, and social inclusion in Africa?
  - What new insight could be gleaned from recent work on inequality of opportunity and social inclusion in our understanding of growth-poverty-inequality nexus?
  - Social protection program has increasingly become an important policy construct in recent years. How can it be implemented in Africa and what are the experiences?
  - The Covid-19 pandemic brought into sharp focus the roles of digital finance and specifically retail electronic economic payment platforms in facilitating risk-sharing and protecting millions of households from imminent hunger and interpersonal income transfers. How can these experiences be harnessed for anti-poverty strategy?
- A public/private sector policy panel

followed the opening session featuring distinguished panelists that included renowned economists, private and public sector leaders from across the continent:

Chair and Lead Panelist:

- **Dr. Jane Kiringai**, Chair, Commission on Revenue Allocation

Distinguished Panelists:

- **Nnenna Nwabufo**, Director General for East Africa, AfDB
- **Jane Mariara**, Professor of Economics and Executive Director of Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP)
- **Margaret Chitiga**, Dean and Professor, University of Pretoria
- **Clara Mira**, Deputy Division Chief, Africa Region, IMF

Following the plenary session, AERC conducted the Binannual Thematic Research Workshop Concurrent sessions from Tuesday, 30 November to Thursday, December 2, 2021, which included five parallel Thematic Groups that cover the focal areas of AERC's thematic research programme; the pillar for capacity building through research:

- **Group A:** Poverty, Labour Markets, and Income Distribution
- **Group B:** Macroeconomic Policy and Growth
- **Group C:** Finance and Resource Mobilization
- **Group D:** Production, Trade and Economic Integration
- **Group E:** Agriculture, Climate Change and Natural Resource Management

AERC's Biannual Plenary attracts hundreds of researchers, academics, policy makers, non-state actors and economists, providing a forum for participants to interact with a worldwide network of professionals to discuss issues relevant to Africa's economic development. They also provide an opportunity for monitoring the progress and quality of the various research projects supported by the AERC, fulfilling one of our major mandates - to strengthen local capacity for conducting independent, rigorous inquiry into problems facing the management of economies in sub-Saharan Africa.



## Institutional Partnerships

The AERC has developed various institutional partnerships with research and policy making institutions to strengthen capacity building and research between the institutions. With support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) under the project **Digital Financial Services and Market Development in the East African Community Region (DFSP-EAC)** the AERC, in partnership with research and economic policy making institutions from six (6) East African Community Economies (Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda), is undertaking in-depth country case studies on issues relating to financial inclusion and financial market development. The institutions are expected to provide practical policy issues to be discussed with policy makers with a view to formulating and or designing a set of

implementable policy package. The institutions include Kenya Bankers Association (KBA)-Kenya, Bank of South Sudan (BoSS) in partnership with Ebony Center for Strategic Studies (ECSS) – South Sudan, the Economic Policy Research Network (EPRN)-Rwanda, Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organization (STIPRO)-Tanzania, Centre Universitaire de Recherche pour le Développement Economique et Social (CURDES)-Burundi, and Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)-Uganda.

**The institutions are expected to provide practical policy issues to be discussed with policy makers with a view to formulating and designing a set of implementable policy package.**

## Strengthening Technical Capacity

AERC continues to improve the skills and capacity of the individual researchers to carry out policy relevant research and to influence policy through the technical research workshops and visiting scholars exchange and mentorship programmes. A Time Series training workshop officially launched by the AERC Executive Director Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u and facilitated by Dr. Eliab Luvanda (University of Dar es Salaam) was held from 20 September - 1 October 2021, with 31 (14 female) participants from 13 countries in attendance – and with francophone and anglophone representation. Following the research methods, proposal writing, and presentation skills technical workshops held in May 2021, a proposal development/mentorship workshop for 20 women researchers who received proposal development grants was held from 15 – 17 September 2021. Two concurrent similar workshops for 26 researchers from Fragile and Post Conflict States in Sub-Saharan Africa were held from 3 – 4 December 2021. With the support of the instructors as mentors, the participants of the proposal development workshop are required to develop a research proposal which will feed into the AERC thematic research.

To expand influence, the AERC virtually held a Non-State Actors workshop On 25 – 27 October 2021 to help trainees understand the role of contract farming and to acquire skills to build and implement effective contract farming arrangements for Non-State Actors. The workshop facilitated by Dr. Kingstone Mujeyi from Zimbabwe, had 22 persons (9 female, 13 male) from 5 different Sub-Saharan African countries participating. The AERC/World Bank visiting scholar programme the period 2021 kicked-off with three researchers selected. The researchers are; Ibrahim Okumu, Victor Ajayi and Janvier Kasiwa.

# Collaborative Research Projects:

Collaborative research brings together seasoned African researchers and other thought leaders from outside Africa to work collaboratively on large scale projects of contemporary policy interest in Africa. The AERC continues to implement various collaborative projects all of which are at various stages (see Table below)

Project	Progress
1 The AERC-Oxfam-IDRC project on “The Impact of COVID- 19 Pandemic on Livelihoods in Africa	Inception (July 2021), Gender mainstreaming (July 2021), Mid-review(Nov 2021)
2 AERC-SIDA Health Care Financing and Covid-19 in Africa	Inception (June 2021), Mid-review(Nov 2021)
3 Re-Examining the Growth, Poverty, and Inequality Relationships in Africa (GPIR)- Country Case Studies	Inception (October 2021)
4 Climate Change and Economic Development in Africa (CCEDA) -Country Case Studies	Inception (August 2021); Mid-review (Jan 2022)
5 Inclusive Finance for Fragile and Post-Conflict States in Africa	Inception (July 2021), Gender mainstreaming (August 2021), Mid-review(Nov 2021)
6 AERC-ERF Disruptive Technologies project	Thematic review workshop (December 2021)
7 BMGF Building Policy Research Institutions to Support Human Capital in Africa (HCA)- Framework and Country case studies (CCs)	Framework phase Final Review(August 2021) CCs Inception workshop (October 2021)
8 Value Chain Development, Trade and Economic Transformation in Africa	Inception (June 2021) Mid-review (Nov 2021).
9 Advancing Digital Financial Services for the Poor in the East African Community Region (DFSP-EAC)	Mid review (August 2021)
10 Work and Income for Young Men and Women in Africa: A Political Economy and Social Equity Approach to the Employment Potential of Specific Sectors and Subsectors in African Economies – Growth Sectors project- Framework and Country case studies (CCs)	Framework Final Review (Aug 2021), CCs mid-review (August 2021); CCs Mid-Review- Jan 2022
11 Data Governance and Sound Policy Making	Mid-review (Sept 2021), Final Review (Oct 2021), Regional Policy Forum (Nov 2021)
12 African Public Service Delivery Index (PSDI)	Implementation plan (Nov 2021)
13 Research Assignment on Benchmark Models for Macroeconomic Policy Management in Africa	Draft Report review meeting (Jan 2022)
14 Climate Change and Central Banking in Africa	Research paper (Nov 2021)

The COVID-19 pandemic is not only a global health risk, but also an economic and social shock. Two out of the 14 collaborative research projects are on the impact of COVID-19 global pandemic on African economies. (1) **The AERC-IDRC-OXFAM Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Livelihoods in Africa** project comprises of case

studies conducted in six African countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Zambia. The project aims at shedding light on the gendered impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on livelihoods in selected African countries with special emphasis on vulnerable groups who bear the brunt disproportionately, economically, physiologically and emotionally.(2) **The**

**AERC-SIDA Health Care Financing and Covid-19 in Africa** project aims at examining the multidimensional impacts of the COVID-19 starting from the macroeconomic tremors it has already caused, and tracing them to the household and individual levels, with a focus on the health and healthcare for poor and vulnerable populations.

## Enhanced platforms for cooperation and information sharing

The Knowledge Platform on Inclusive Development Policies (INCLUDE) held its annual conference with the theme ‘Building forward more inclusively’ in June 2021. The conference featured five sessions: the (un)expected evidence on COVID-19 and inequalities; merging perspectives on decent employment for Africa’s youth post pandemic; Uganda’s way on youth employment and participation post-COVID; donor meets policymaker through modelling social protection responses on the continent;

and resilience amidst COVID-19 based on approaches and strategies from the African Policy Dialogues. Outputs from the 7 African Policy Dialogues include 64 research reports, 73 policy briefs, 52 workshops, 65 engagement forums with policy actors, 53 blog posts, a panel discussion on radio and 3 newspaper articles. In July 2021, INCLUDE launched a new programme titled ‘Making basic services more inclusive through digitalisation in Africa’. In response to a call for proposals, 40 were submitted by researchers from Africa.

After preliminary review, 20 of them were shortlisted and during the final review, 5 proposals from Benin, Ghana, Mauritius, Rwanda and Uganda were selected for funding. An inception workshop for the study was held in October 2021. After successful discussions, INCLUDE in collaboration with IDRC and ILO launched 6 webinar series on youth employment in Africa. The webinars started in October 2021 spotlighting the evidence synthesis papers that were commissioned by INCLUDE.

## Virtual Joint Facility for Electives and SFSE Expand Access to More Students Across Africa

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) continued with the implementation of virtual Joint Facility for Electives (JFE) and Shared Facility for Specialization and Electives (SFSE) based on assessments of the Covid-19 situation in the continent.

The virtual learning for the JFE and SFSE that ended in December 2021 was delivered through live or synchronous lectures via the Zoom platform and AERC’s Learning Management System (LMS). These were complemented by the AERC online library (e-Library) where textbooks, reference journal articles and lecture materials were easily accessible, and lecture recordings were made available for asynchronous access to lessons by students.

In terms of student participation in the CMAP JFE 2021, a total of 121 (36 female – 30%) students drawn from 12 African nationalities were in attendance. The implementation of a virtual rather than a residential JFE has provided greater latitude for expanding access to more students and/or universities, this is inclusiveness for JFE. In the preceding years, the number of students participating in the CMAP JFE had gone down significantly to 55 in 2019, 54, 61 and 68 in 2018, 2017 and 2016, respectively.

Other than the traditional seven (7) Category “B” institutions (Makerere, Botswana, Cape Coast, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, and Zimbabwe), this time around, three (3) Category “A” universities (National University of Lesotho, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and the University



### 49

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### 121

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of Zambia) participated in the virtual CMAP JFE. Addis Ababa University made a come-back to the CMAP JFE since 2011 when they were elevated to Category “C” status alongside the Universities of Dar es Salaam, Ghana, and Nairobi. The University of Mauritius was also back in the JFE after a two-year hiatus, having had no student admissions in the 2018/19 and 2019/20 academic years.

The AERC will continue to encourage female participation in the CMAP, CMAAE and CPP through stricter application of affirmative action in the award of scholarships to qualified female students as well as implementation of other female/family friendly

initiatives, while continuing to give strategic prominence to this. While it is good to note that steady progress has been made on the gender front over the years, a lot more needs to be done to sustain the momentum.

On the Collaborative PhD Programme (CPP), a total of 49 (16 female – 33%) students drawn from nine (9) African nationalities participated in the JFE 2021. This is one of the highest enrolments in the programme so far. The Universities of Burundi, Rwanda, and Zambia, all classified as CMAP Category “A” universities, participated in the CPP JFE for the first time, while the University of Cape Coast (a CMAP Category “B” university)



and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (a CMAP Category “A” university) participated for the second year running. The virtual delivery of the JFE also allowed more students in other CPP universities to participate, including privately or self-sponsored students. Hence, the Universities of Dar es Salaam and Ibadan had higher enrolments this time round, with 12 and 11 students, respectively.

During the inaugural virtual CPP JFE in 2020, there were a total of 32 students. The students were drawn from two (2) CPP universities (Cape Town and Dar es Salaam) and three (3) non-CPP universities (Addis Ababa, Kwame Nkrumah, and Cape Coast). By comparison, there were 13 students in the CPP Class of 2018 who attended the CPP JFE 2019, while 26 students in 2018, 22 in 2017,

18 in 2016, and 19 in 2015. The progressive decline in enrolment can largely be attributed to the reduction in the number of AERC-sponsored students and the low or non-participation of privately sponsored students in the CPP JFE in those years. But it is heartening to note that this trend is already being reversed with the implementation of online learning, judging by the significant increase in student enrolments in both 2020 and 2021.

Although enrolment

**Although enrolment of female students into the CPP has not attained the peak recorded in the CMAP or the Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE), gradual improvements have been made over the years, with the CPP averaging a respectable 31% over the last nine (9) years.**

of female students into the CPP has not attained the peak recorded in the CMAP or the Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE), gradual improvements have been made over the years, with the CPP averaging a respectable 31% over the last nine (9) years. The 45% female enrolment in the 2017 CPP JFE was the highest ever. The low female enrolment into PhD studies reinforces the need for a strategy for women inclusive capacity building.

Supply bottlenecks that result in few women enrolling into PhD studies need to be identified as more affirmative actions in the award of scholarships to qualified women are implemented together with family-friendly policies.

The virtual CMAAE Shared Facility for Specialization and Electives 2021 commenced on 2 August and ended on 3 December 2021. A total of 101 students drawn from eight (8) CMAAE accredited universities (Egerton, Haramaya, LUANAR Bunda Campus, Makerere, Sokoine, Nairobi, Pretoria, and Zimbabwe) were in attendance. This was lower than the participation of 117 students in the 2020 virtual SFSE, but still a significant increase compared 81 in the 2019 SFSE held physically at the University of Pretoria. In terms of gender distribution, 34 (34%) of the 101 students were female.

## AERC-SOAS Conference Casts Spotlight on Digital Finance and Inclusion in the Time of Pandemic

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) in collaboration with the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) held a productive two-day conference on September 8 to 9, 2021, to explore inclusive financial services policy platform in the time of Covid-19.

H.E. Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, was the guest of honour at the official opening of the seminar. The keynote was delivered by Dr. Vera Songwe, Under-Secretary-General at the United Nations & Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. A total of 200 delegates took part and 20 papers were presented in plenary and parallel sessions. Additionally, there was also a magnificent book launch.

The digital finance revolution is in full swing. It is one of the megatrends in global finance today. Digital finance is revolutionizing the role of financial institutions, the behaviour of financial markets and the scope of financial

instruments in developing as well as developed economies. It is transforming our daily economic activity such as sending and receiving money, paying bills, reshaping business models, facilitating financial

**During Covid-19 and associated lockdown across the globe, digital finance has been the lifeboat for sustaining financial transactions and economic activity, especially in Africa.**



inclusion and driving regulatory changes.

Indeed, during Covid-19 and associated lockdown across the globe, digital finance has been the lifeboat for sustaining financial transactions and economic activity, especially in Africa and many developing economies. However, there are many serious gaps in knowledge, policy and practice that require urgent attention. For example, existing literature has not identified the crucial country characteristics which facilitate the use of digital finance: Why is the diffusion of digital finance, especially FinTech, high in some countries and very low in others?

In addition, notwithstanding the fact that the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the G20 High-Level Principles for Digital Financial Inclusion highlight the importance of digital financial inclusion in promoting inclusive growth and sustainable economic development, some research questions remain unanswered and innovations in policy and practice are urgently required. For instance, what policy initiatives are governments putting in place to ensure that digital finance supports the growth of

the private sector in developing countries, or empower women through financial inclusion, or promote financial literacy, trust, and confidence?

“That the financial system plays a critical role in economic development and growth has long been established in the economic literature. Today’s conversation pushes that well-known maxim of finance and development further up in a digital ecosystem. We will all agree that the Covid-19 Pandemic did not only uncover some of the socioeconomic vulnerabilities in our societies, but the Covid experience also highlighted some of the endless possibilities in leveraging digital technology to drive an inclusive growth powered by greater access to finance of the unbanked and a more efficient payment system, said H.E. Dr. Bawumia.

“Many economies in Africa remain undiversified due to low levels of innovation and investment, limited productive capabilities, and low quality of education. Financial innovation to support financial inclusion is a promising option to increase opportunities for firms and households, thus translating growth into less inequality. The private sector, as the engine of growth, can help catalyze investment in infrastructure and industrialization and so can contribute crucially to post-Covid-19 economic recovery. The digital revolution underway in Africa, currently mainly based on mobile phone networks, presents opportunities for scaling up alternative finance and sustainably developing private sector finance,” Dr. Vera Songwe, Under-Secretary-General at the United Nations & Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa said during the conference.

On his part, AERC Executive Director Prof. Njuguna Ndung’u in his opening remarks said: “The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the G20 High-Level Principles for Digital Financial Inclusion highlight the importance of digital financial developments in promoting inclusive growth and sustainable economic development. Digital financial transformation is a major

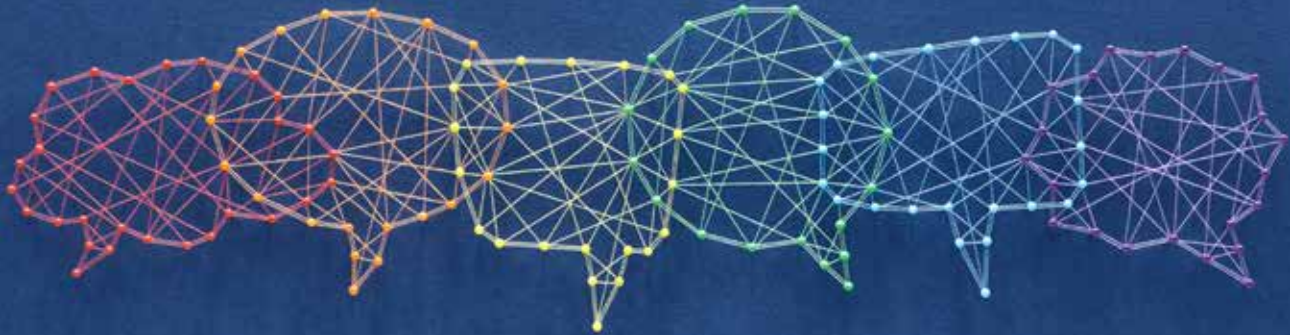


“ trend in global finance and digital platforms are transforming the role of financial institutions, behaviour

**The digital revolution underway in Africa, currently mainly based on mobile phone networks, presents opportunities for scaling up alternative finance and sustainably developing private sector finance,” Dr. Vera Songwe**

of financial markets and the scope of financial instruments. It is important to note that digital financial platforms are an efficient enabler of financial inclusion and financial development,” Prof. Njuguna Ndung’u, AERC said.

The opening ceremony was also marked by a presentation by Prof. Victor Murinde, Director of Centre for Global Finance, SOAS University of London, who led the book launch. The book, which is a great read is titled “Inclusive Financial Development.”



# Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Policy Forum

23

This event was attended by 23 stakeholders from research organizations, the academia, and policy institutions.

The African Economic Research Consortium’s (AERC) virtual Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Policy held on November 8, 2021, was a huge success.

The forum, whose theme was **“Innovation for Agricultural Productivity”** disseminated policy-relevant research by AERC network faculty researchers to middle-level policy makers and other stakeholders in the rural development subsector. The Regional Policy Forums

add to the existing AERC policy dissemination forums such as the Senior Policy Seminars, National Policy Workshops, and the Thesis Dissemination Workshops.

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**The Regional Policy Forums add to the existing AERC policy dissemination forums such as the Senior Policy Seminars, National Policy Workshops, and the Thesis Dissemination Workshops.**

opening speeches were made by Ms. Patricia Njeru, Director of Policy and Strategy at the Agriculture and Food Authority, Kenya, and Prof. Njuguna Ndung’u, the Executive Director, AERC.

A total of three (3) faculty papers (University of Zimbabwe, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources - LUANAR, and University of Eswatini), under the project, the Programme Accompanying Research for Agricultural Innovation (PARI) were presented. Prof. Ntengua S.Y. Mdoe from Sokoine University of Agriculture and Dr. Oliver Kirui from the Centre for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, contributed to the panel discussions on the policy roundtable.



**T**he African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) is a member of the T20 Think Tanks.

This is the consortium of think-tanks from G20 countries. Every year, they hold a meeting to submit policy proposals to the G20 leadership. The AERC Executive Director, Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u is one of the co-chairs of the taskforce that will collate and submit proposals on the topic of "Inequality, Human Capital and Well-being." "At this stage, we are soliciting

policy briefs on the theme from researchers around the world," he said.

The T20 Think Tanks is a select group of think tanks associated with the G20 platform. They serve as one of the technical arms of the G20, generating research for policy making

**AERC is one of the few think tanks from Africa participating in the T20. The idea is to bring African voices, based on rigour and evidence, to bear on deliberations in the G20.**

by the G20 countries through the G20 platform. AERC has been participating in virtual T20 Spring Roundtables, which are closed door workshops, the most recent being one of "The Way Out: Exit Strategies from Europe's Extraordinary Measures".

AERC is one of the few think tanks from Africa participating in the T20. The idea is to bring African voices, based on rigour and evidence, to bear on deliberations in the G20. AERC will continued its successful collaboration with the T20 network for international development. A policy brief for G20 international development dialogues under the auspices of the T20 Task Force 9 (TF9) (International Finance) titled "Covid-19: How Can the G20 Address Debt Distress in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)?" was developed and published in September 2021.



# Policy Dialogues on the Future of Work

**T**he African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) in collaboration with Fundación Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (CIPPEC), recently held policy Dialogues on the Future of Work in Africa. The two organizations are working together in the implementation of the Future of Work in the Global South (FoWIGS) project for the sub-Saharan Africa region (SSA). AERC joined a consortium of research institutes across the world convened by the *Task Force on Climate Policy for Development at the International Monetary Fund (IMF)* to support the Intergovernmental Group of Twenty-Four (G24) and the Vulnerable Group of Twenty (V20) Ministers of Finance. The meeting was held on October 5, 2021.

# Building Inclusivity

African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) in collaboration with INCLUDE hosted a special session on the African Policy Dialogues (APDs) recently.

The conference took place on 1 December 2021. This session, which brought together researchers, policymakers, and implementers from Africa and the Netherlands, deliberated on the evidence generated by APDs in the past five years and how the dialogues have strengthened the link between evidence and policy making in Africa.

The session was aimed at contributing to knowledge on inclusive development themes and broadening the approaches for evidence-informed policy making. It consisted of a brief introduction to INCLUDE and a panel discussion, which featured leaders from the APDs on women's entrepreneurship in Mali,

devolved governance in Ghana, Utafiti Sera (research-policy) on social protection in Kenya, and productive and decent work for youth and women in Uganda. During the discussion, the APD leads discussed the evidence that attracted the greatest interest from policy actors, as well as the policy engagement approaches with the greatest potential to bridge the evidence-policy gap.

This event followed the INCLUDE annual conference with the theme 'Building Forward More Inclusively'. The conference featured five sessions: the (un) expected evidence on Covid-19 and inequalities; merging perspectives on decent employment for Africa's youth post pandemic; Uganda's way on youth employment and participation post-Covid; donor meets policymaker through modelling social protection responses on the continent; and resilience amidst Covid-19 based on approaches and strategies from the African Policy Dialogues. Outputs from the seven African Policy Dialogues included four (4) research reports, three (3) policy briefs, two (2) workshops, six (6) engagement forums with policy actors, three (3) blog posts, a panel discussion on radio and three (3) newspaper articles.

**The session was aimed at contributing to knowledge on inclusive development themes and broadening the approaches for evidence-informed policy making.**

# AERC Launches “My Library On Fingertips”

**T**he African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) has installed My Library On Fingertips (MYLOFT) for its library users for ease of accessing resources online.

This is basically an app for accessing, organizing, and sharing digital content and e-resources subscribed by the AERC library. The application allows users to download content and save for offline reading.

Myloft provides a one-stop-shop of aggregated electronic knowledge resources hosted on the AERC e-library. The product is also integrated with Google’s search engine which prioritizes AERC publications and online journals available under AERC’s subscriptions for users.

Additionally, to enhance the reach and accessibility of AERC’s publications including Research papers, a partnership was established with the Kenya

Library Information Services Consortium (KLISC) that has been providing access to a host of over 50 online journals and databases including Journal Storage (JSTOR), Science Direct, SpringerLink, Oxford, Taylor & Francis, as well as EBSCO Host.

The AERC online library w) now has several textbooks, reference journal articles, lecture materials and recordings available for access to lessons by students. The AERC also recently managed to successfully integrate the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) and Myloft through a shared identity management platform. This will allow our users to seamlessly access Myloft resources from Moodle and vice-versa without having to re-login to either application. Apart from improving user experience this also provides a central point of enforcing access controls thereby improving the overall security of applications. With the upgrade of the AERC’s e-Library, accessibility offline through the Myloft web portal and mobile application is a major step forward.

**The AERC online library w) now has several textbooks, reference journal articles, lecture materials and recordings available for access to lessons by students.**



## AERC Alumni Association is a huge resource base

**A**s the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) gears to celebrate its 35 years of capacity building activities in Africa, the Alumni Association has played an integral role of bringing network members together.

Recognized was the need to harness a significant resource base that AERC has produced through its capacity building activities over the years to build a unified voice that articulates the development issues facing the economies in the sub-Saharan Africa and contributes to sustainability of AERC activities.

Noted also was that the AERC network is diverse with representation globally as some of the African Economic Research Consortium fellows hold key positions in international organizations, government departments, and universities, and others are giving back to the community by participating in the AERC training programs, while others are now resource persons in AERC thematic research.

Further, it has been noted that while some fellows are still actively participating in AERC activities, others are caught up in their new roles,

but are willing to support AERC at a different capacity.

Establishing the alumni was thus seen as a channel to harness the synergies of this resourceful membership. We request all stakeholders to spread the word about the AERC alumni association.

Please visit the AERCAA website for more updates.

**The AERC network is diverse with representation globally as some of the African Economic Research Consortium fellows hold key positions in international organizations, government departments, and universities, and others are giving back to the community by participating in AERC training programs. The AERC will develop an alumni platform for policy and topical discussions.**



# Revamping the AERC Website

**T**he ongoing renovation of AERC’s website is a major step towards improving the institution’s online reputation and credibility.

As the website is the organization’s main vehicle for communicating and engaging with a wide range of audiences, the revamped website will offer a more audience-friendly experience, attractively showcase AERC’s activities, provide a high-quality French version of the site to meet international stakeholder expectations, reduce the bounce rate, and increase the unique page views as well as average time spent on the website.

Since AERC is involved in research, policy outreach and capacity building related to economic policy making in Africa, central to the brand is the website, which aims to be a knowledge centre of insight and resource for various target audience segments.

The ultimate aim of the brand is to show impact – that the research

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work AERC does, and insights shared have a positive impact, particularly with driving the goal of increasing data and research-based economic policy making in Africa, using publications as a tool to achieve this.

AERC’s key “product” is the base of publications, which include research papers, policy briefs, working papers, special papers, reports, and related publications. A large database of publications already exists on the website, and additional publications are released regularly. These publications have a wealth of research and knowledge value, thus the desired visibility and reach.

AERC’s audience includes government representatives, researchers, research and economic students, policy makers, donors and funders, client alumni network and anyone with an interest or involvement with economic policy-making in Africa. However, the main target groups are policy decision-makers and influencers.

# Feature



## Improving RMS Client Experience

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) has set up an easy-to-use self-service portal on the Research Management System (RMS) for our external stakeholders through which they can be able to make requests for services and give feedback.

Historically, our stakeholders have been requesting for support or services or even information through emails. This has made tracing, follow up, visibility to status and performance of the resolution process a challenge, thereby negatively impacting efficiency and clients' experience with our services.

The self-service portal will provide a central interactive system allowing us to collate all requests, assign responsibilities for resolution, monitor support

performance against priority-based service levels (High = 6 hours, Medium=24 Hours, Low = 2 days), escalate issues and even provide remote assistance and live chat. On the external/client side the interaction is quite straightforward through filling in a simple ticket submission form with their email and description of the request. Feedback will be sent to their emails. We have an option of giving the client access to a user portal to track their requests and provide feedback.

The envisioned results include: Increased efficiency of operational support by reducing response/resolution turn-around time and cost; enhanced end-to-end visibility to address root causes, performance reporting and user feedback and improved researchers and resource persons experience with the system and our overall client services.

We have put up a link [African Economic Research Consortium | My Area | Submit a Ticket \(zohodesk.com\)](#) to the ticket submission form on the RMS from which our users will be able to submit support tickets directly to the Research support desk. Subsequently we will onboard other AERC digital products and services e.g., LMS and e-Library and integrate our AERC social media channels to this platform to allow direct private messaging from social media into the self-service portal.

# Testimonials

## AERC experience CMAAE graduate thankful for new knowledge and skills



**M**y name is Gildas Irakoze. I am an awardee of the Collaborative Master of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) program 2019-2021 at Sokoine University of Agriculture. I graduated in November 2021.

I am also an alumnus of the 2017 Master's Bridge

**I would like to express my gratitude to AERC for the opportunity that it offered me. It was a great adventure and occasion to boost my knowledge and skills.**

Program organized by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC).

I would like to express my gratitude to AERC for the opportunity that it offered me. It was a great adventure and occasion to boost my knowledge and skills. I value this much and promise to be an AERC flag bearer and ambassador wherever I will be.

I congratulate AERC as well for its resilience even in difficult moments such as what has been occasioned by the current Covid-19 pandemic. My experience with AERC is beyond description and the organization has shaped my career's vision and path.

# Training

## AERC Training Innovates on Virtual and Blended Disseminations

### Thesis Dissemination Workshops

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Collaborative Master's in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE) conducts thesis dissemination workshops to empower smallholder farmers with best practices, and policy makers on the key recommendations of supported theses research work. Two blended thesis dissemination workshops, combining both face-to-face and virtual participation were held, one each in Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The Tanzania dissemination was held on October 20, 2021 for the graduates of Sokoine University of Agriculture. The other was held for graduates of the University of Zimbabwe on November 10, 2021. An average of 40 stakeholders attended each of the workshops whose composition included small holder farmers, academia, agricultural extension staff and non-governmental organizations.

**Two blended thesis dissemination workshops combining both face-to-face and virtual participation were held, one each in Tanzania and Zimbabwe.**



Delegates of the Thesis Dissemination Workshop, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, October 20, 2021. Seated (right to left) is Dr. Daniel Wilson Ndyetabula, Head of the Department, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, Sokoine University of Agriculture and Prof. Ntengua S. Mdoe from the same department.

### Short-Term Farmer Training

AERC-CMAAE conducts short-term farmer training workshops to enhance engagement of the private sector in its training activities. The sessions take advantage of farmers attending the thesis dissemination workshops and are designed to take farmers to the next level beyond the policy implications of the theses dissemination workshops. The specific objective is to help equip farmers with knowledge and skills on farming as a business to enable the transformation of African agriculture from subsistence to a vibrant, commercialized agricultural enterprise. Two farmer trainings were held, one in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on October 21 to 22, 2021 and another in Harare, Zimbabwe on November 11 to 12, 2021.



Farmers Training, Harare, Zimbabwe, November 11 to 12, 2021.



# Occupational Safety and Health

A few members of the African Economic Research Consortium's (AERC) staff participated in a training to align the organization with measures that should be put in place to guarantee compliance with Occupational Safety and Health requirements.

The AERC as an organization has administratively taken the necessary steps to be compliant with Occupational Safety and Health requirements. This is in a bid to ensure that AERC's workspace is safe for staff and other stakeholders. The organization is also committed to implementing the best practices and achieving the best standards in safety and health.

All these will ensure that AERC undertakes its activities in a manner that: prioritizes protection, safety and health at the workplace by ensuring that safety and health are integral to, and a priority in all operations; positively promotes a safety and health culture awareness throughout the organization at all levels by creating a sense of personal responsibility and accountability; continually monitors, records, and improves on safe work procedures and processes with the aim of minimizing their possible negative impact on the organization and the environment; facilitates continual learning from experience both from ourselves and from best practices and complies with the relevant statutory laws and regulations, as well as the expectations of all stakeholders including customers, suppliers, contractors, industry regulatory and legislative bodies.

All these shall be achieved by: providing and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all employees; implementing compliance requirements in tandem with all the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, 2007, and its subsidiary legislations; providing access and regular training to staff members for understanding

and implementation of this policy like the one that took place recently; developing and maintaining documented safe work procedures and facilitating records for reporting of incidents and accidents; setting and reviewing safety and health objectives and targets and developing Key Performance Indicators as well as providing monitoring of performance of this policy by conducting regular internal and external safety and health audits.

The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) has startling figures on these issues, thus, recording that two million occupational people die from work related causes annually, occupational diseases account for 86%, and the rest is occupational accidents, 313 million non-fatal accidents, 160 million non-fatal occupational diseases, 6,400 occupational deaths daily, 860,000 daily injuries and US\$2.8 trillion is lost to the same.

**All these will ensure that AERC undertakes its activities in a manner that: prioritizes the protection of safety and health at the workplace by ensuring that safety and health are integral to, and a priority in all operations.**



**AERC staff during First Aid training in compliance with Occupational, Safety and Health requirements.**

# Talent News

## New staff



**Natalie C. Chaponda – Program Assistant**

Ms. Natalie C. Chaponda joined the AERC as a Program Assistant in the Research department. She has over five years of experience in project administration.



**Cecilia Mutanu – Program Assistant, Research**

Cecilia joined AERC as Programmes Assistant. She has 15 years' experience in project management and programme administration having served in various capacities in the INGO sector.



**Daniel Kogi Njiru – Knowledge Management Administrator**

Daniel Kogi Njiru joined AERC as a Knowledge Management Administrator. He has experience in Knowledge Management, Digital Libraries, Open Distance and E-learning technologies.



**Lancer Wao – Communications/ Publications Assistant**

Lancer Wao joined AERC as a Communications/ Publications Assistant. She has over three years of professional experience working in communications within the Non-Governmental Sector.

## Staff Recognition

AERC is proud to have long standing committed staff. During the end of the year get together, we recognized two members of staff who have been with the AERC for ten years and eleven years respectively, that is, Tom Kimani, Lead Manager, Training and Bertha Chedeye, Program Assistant in Training.

The AERC would like to thank Gildas Irakoze for his contribution.

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