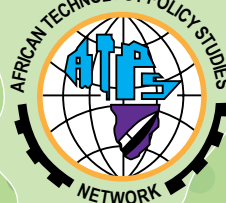


Women Innovation Challenge Programme “We Can”

“The hen knows the dawn is here but watches the mouth of the rooster”

Swahili Proverb



Giving Voice to African Women to Discover, Decipher and Develop Advances in Science and Technology.



The African Technology Policy Studies network (ATPS) places a huge emphasis on building capacities of African women as drivers of their own destinies and Africa’s development, through dynamic engagement in science, technology and innovation (STI) policy research,

policy process and policy practice. It was in pursuance of this objective that the African Women Forum for Science and Technology (AWFST) was initiated in 2007. Building upon this platform, The ATPS is now pleased to announce the launch of a new program, “**The Women Innovation Challenge (WE CAN) program.**”

The WE CAN Program

WE CAN is an Innovation Network for Transformational Change for women in STI. It is centred around an innovative Mentoring Programme, which joins Strategic Women Leaders to at least 5 women each year, working on individual **BreakThrough Innovations** (BTIs) across Africa.

In Africa, science and technology sits within the heart of culture and how African people see themselves. African women have a rich cultural heritage of geometry, calculation and skills acquired at an early age through the practice of crafts. These traditional crafts like textiles and pottery should act as springboards for industrial capacity building and economic growth. Such skills of precision and creativity can easily be transferred to the technological world.

African women have an important part to play in African development, especially those who can imaginatively apply their human ingenuity to promote advances in science, technology and innovation (STI). Already, they constitute 29% of researchers in Science and Technology in Africa, according to UNESCO, yet more must be done to increase gender equity, equality and empowerment to ensure an integrated, developed and prosperous continent. There are numerous opportunities and challenges facing the African continent now, women as half of the population can help it to solve.

1. How to create sustainable systems for utilising the vast natural and human resources?

2. How to manage the resplendent biodiversity, large forests and a rich culture?
3. How to obtain food security and reach the Millennium Development goals by 2015.

African women are still under-represented in mathematics, science, technology, and engineering, due to many social, economic and cultural barriers. “That is the biggest challenge that we in this generation can bequest the next generation and to change the history of Africa” *Phumzile Mlambo-Nguka. South African Deputy President. 1st AU Women in Science Conference - Aug 2007.*

In order to address these challenges, WE CAN will be implemented under the “Pay It Forward” (PIF) mentorship concept described below:

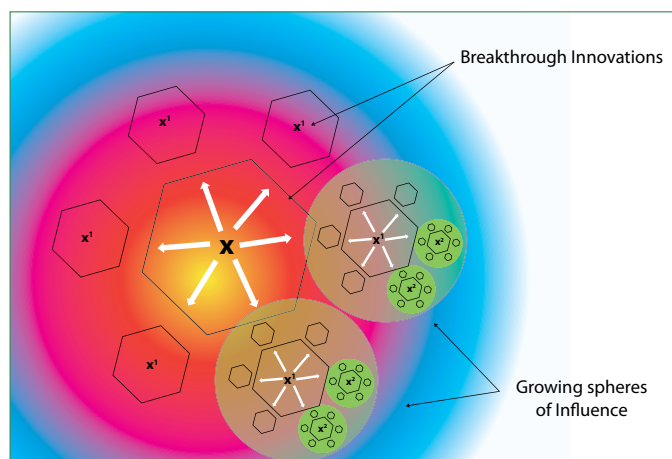
Paying it Forward Initiative (PIF) *

Successful Women “**Pay Forward**” to a new generation of women leaders, by investing their skills, sharing their knowledge and providing personal support to at least 5 Women, with important spheres of influence in different sectors of science, technology & innovation. The BTIs which are generated out of the programme, are carefully designed to solve an important development problem using innovations in science and technology. The results of each year’s endeavours will be published in **The WE CAN Change Africa Report**. WE CAN will work with all the women to achieve their individual BreakThrough Innovations, through **four strategic pathways**,

using our infrastructural support networks and professional capacity building expertise across our Pan African networks.

Inequality between men and women represents a structural barrier to growth in Africa. Women are an important source of economic growth and we must consider ways of promoting the active participation of women in the economy as well as in the society in general

Luísa Dias Diogo, Member of the Africa Commission



*The PIF concept is adapted from a community leadership model developed in Nigeria.

1. Peer-to-Peer Collaboration



The picture* above shows a team effort in Bolgatanga, Ghana. A teenager does her school homework on a blackboard painted on the wall of her house, while her older sister checks the girls exercise book. With a literacy rate of around 57.9% in the 2006, the nation is working to improve this figure. According to UN's Report on Africa for 2007, the Millennium Development Goal to provide Universal Primary Education for all is most likely to be met by 2015. Enrolment at primary school has increased from 57% in 1999 to 70% in 2005,

an increase of 13% in 6 years. The hardest goals for Africa to meet by 2015 are those that affect women most directly. Goal 3, Gender Equality and Goal 5; Improving Maternal Health. Promoting gender equality will increase growth and reduce poverty, because of the unique multiplier effect on other development efforts. Women invest more in children's education and health than men. However, women's pay is often lower than that of men. It is not efficient that half of the world's population does not have equal access to resources such as property, finance, education, labour and business services.

In sub-Saharan Africa, subsistence agriculture is largely the domain of women, who contribute a large percent in food production. Agricultural productivity can increase by up to 20 per cent if women's access to resources such as land, seed and fertilizer is equal to men's.

The WE CAN Programme therefore intends to establish networks which enhance inter-regional collaboration between women and girls across Africa. It will also foster new North-South and South-South Partnerships to increase women's entrepreneurship and its contribution to economic growth.

2. Innovation Challenge Awards



The WE CAN programme invites women from sub-Saharan and North Africa to participate in this Pan-African initiative.

The WE CAN programme will be launched with an Advisory Panel of 12 Inspirational Leaders in Science and Technology in Nairobi, July 2009.

An Innovation Challenge Award scheme will be launched to recognise outstanding achievement in addressing development challenges in specific sectors, including Climate Change adaptation and mitigation in Africa; agricultural innovation systems; public health and disease prevention (including HIV/AIDS, malaria and Cholera); Water and sanitation, and sustainable management of ecosystem services.

3. Innovation Incubator Initiatives (3-Is)



This is a strategic mentorship initiative where competition winners are given the chance to Take Ideas to Market. Innovative women will translate ideas (tacit or codified) into actual technologies for addressing specific challenges in a production or service chain, across different specified sectors or stakeholder communities.

Specific attention will be paid to the inclusion of ideas based on tacit or codified knowledge, scientific research and/or management, climate change, health and agriculture.

The idea or prototype technology should be aimed at solving a specific problem in the production or service chain of a target industry or stakeholder community in Africa. It could be in the form of a specific research idea, science manuscript or craftsmanship that requires testing in a target laboratory, a private industry or a government ministry.

Particular attention will be paid to developing the capacity of women who work in the informal sector, an area where women predominate and where a consistent lack of government support has failed to recognize their pivotal importance to the survival of many African economies.

ATPS will work with policy-makers to address the inequalities in supporting these sectors, particularly in areas such as foreign-exchange earning and export-oriented economic activities, where government support largely favours men.

Successful applicants will be deployed with relevant actors in the relevant areas (private or public sectors) on the continent for 3-6 months to incubate the idea or turn it into tangible technologies /innovations to solve practical problems identified.

4. Post-Doctoral Fellowship & Internships Programme



Professor Tebello Nyokong of Lesotho is a winner of the award L'Oreal and UNESCO award in science. Her research concerns the development of drugs to treat cancer. As a young girl, Professor Nyokong says she went to school on some days and took care of sheep on other days. She did jobs that were usually done by boys.

She said this had a good effect, because she was permitted to explore as she grew older. She says the biggest problem was feeling very alone as a woman in science. Professor Nyokong says she wants to support young women in science so they do not have to experience this.**

The WE CAN programme seeks to provide opportunities for short-term mentoring of students in college, undergraduate and postgraduate levels in STI policy related subjects.

The 3-6 month placements and staff exchange programmes aim to enable women at the beginning of their research careers to work in a multidisciplinary environments, under the supervision of senior colleagues in Africa, to establish networks to foster systems thinking and innovation under close supervision by experienced colleagues. The programme will also include training and mentorship for scientific writing; science publications and science journalism.

Call for Expression of Interest (EOI):

ATPS is pleased to call for expressions of interest (EOI) for participation in these initiatives from:

| Category | Who Should Express Interest? | Program Contact e-mail |
|----------|-------------------------------|---|
| A | Potential Applicants | African women from sub-Saharan and North Africa |
| B | Potential Mentors | Relevant experts from the triple helix (Science Institutions, Private Sector Actors, and Government Ministries) |
| C | Institutional Partners | Industries, Science Laboratories, Government Ministries, Academies of Science, NGOs, UN Agencies, etc |

Development Partners, Private Sector Entrepreneurs, Government Agencies, and Donors who wish to support this initiative are requested to contact Dr. Kevin Urama, the Executive Director by email at: ExecutiveDirector@atpsnet.org

Expression of Interest (EOI) application form:

If you are interested in participating in these initiatives in either of the above categories kindly fill in the form and submit it to the relevant email addresses specified above or to the address provided overleaf. The Y I CAN Steering Committee will revert to you regarding further procedures for participation.

Please tick the appropriate title Prof. Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms.

Category of Expression of Interest
(Please refer to the table above)

Full Name

Country

Address

Telephone Fax

Email Website

Current Position

Organization

Academic Discipline
 Industry/Policy Sector

(Supporting documentation; CVs/ Institutional Profiles are required for **category A & B only)*

Specialist Interest(s)

Date

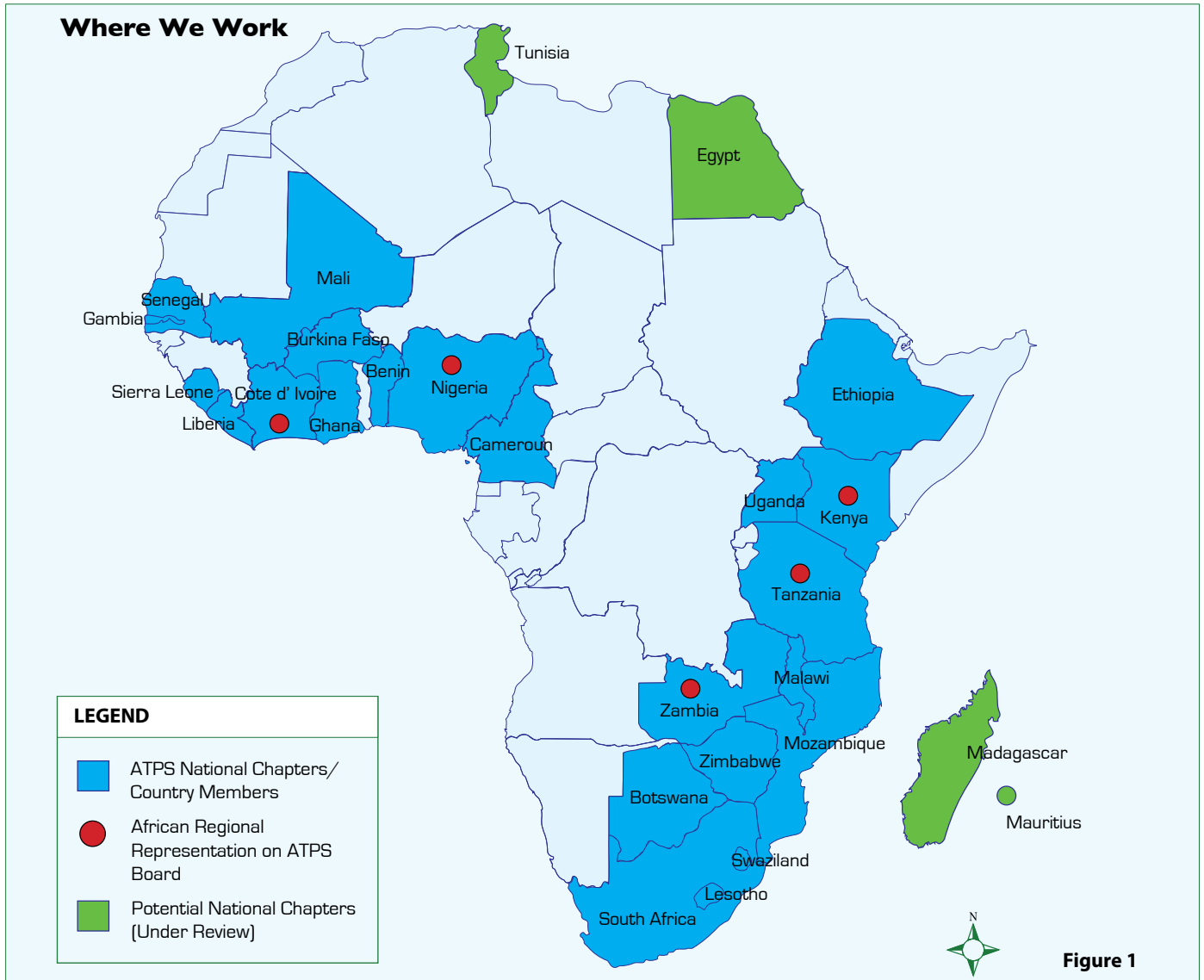
Signature

“ ATPS is committed to working with Africa's women and to building ” their STI capacity today, for sustainable development tomorrow

About the ATPS

The African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) is a leading multi-disciplinary network of researchers, practitioners and policy makers that promotes science, technology and innovation (STI) policy research, dialogue and practice, for African Development. It's mission is to improve the quality of science, technology, and innovation research, policy and practice for sustainable development in Africa, by Africans and for Africans. The fundamental

strategic goal of the ATPS is to build Africa's STI capacity today for sustainable development tomorrow. With a Secretariat Headquarters in Nairobi, the ATPS works through national chapters in 23 countries of sub-Saharan Africa with a vision to cover the whole of the region by 2015 (see Figure 1). The regional secretariat and the national chapters provide ground facilities and platforms for STI capacity building at both regional and national levels.



For more information, please contact:



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