The New Partnership for Africa's Development : Startups as a catalyst for Sustainable Growth

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Abstract *This study explores the relationship between the* ***New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)*** *and the role of startups in fostering sustainable growth across the African continent. It examines NEPAD's theoretical framework, including its origins, renewed vision for development, and core pillars aimed at achieving economic and social integration while addressing global dimensions. The study also delves into the concept of startups and the significance of sustainable growth, positioning startups as vital engines of innovation within Africa's entrepreneurial ecosystem.*

The research highlights how startups contribute to building a robust entrepreneurial system that diversifies economies, accelerates digital transformation, creates youth employment opportunities, and attracts domestic and foreign investments. It also addresses challenges facing African entrepreneurship, such as limited funding, infrastructural gaps, and skill development and managerial competency deficits.

By spotlighting emerging startups projected to gain prominence by 2025, the study offers a forward-looking perspective on sustaining growth beyond this year, emphasizing these enterprises' role in driving balanced and responsible economic recovery.

Key findings suggest that adopting supportive policies for entrepreneurs—aligned with NEPAD's vision—can serve as a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable development in Africa. Such synergy promises to build a more prosperous future for the continent, where innovation and strategic collaboration pave the way for long-term resilience and equity.

Key words: *NEPAD****, startups, Africa, sustainable growth***

Introduction

Africa currently faces profound economic and social challenges that demand innovative and sustainable development visions and strategies. In this context, the "New Partnership for Africa's Development" (NEPAD) has emerged as a comprehensive strategic framework aimed at achieving balanced, inclusive development, enhancing economic and social integration, and advancing sustainable growth across the continent. Since its inception, NEPAD has championed a new vision for development, anchored in core pillars designed to foster economic and social progress, global integration, and long-term sustainability.

To realize its objectives, NEPAD has focused on several foundational pillars, including infrastructure development, improved education and healthcare, promotion of sustainable agriculture, and the establishment of robust democratic institutions. These efforts are intrinsically linked to the initiative's global dimension, which seeks to attract foreign investment and forge alliances with organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank.

Within this framework, startups have gained prominence as catalysts for sustainable growth. While startups are widely recognized as engines of innovation and renewal, they also play a pivotal role in strengthening Africa's entrepreneurial ecosystem. This enhances the continent's ability to address entrenched economic challenges and achieve balanced economic recovery. By leveraging technological advancements, generating employment opportunities, and offering adaptable solutions to local issues—such as water scarcity or lack of financial services—these startups are revitalizing economic activity.

As we analyze how startups can drive economic recovery and responsible growth, questions arise about ensuring the continuity of sustainable development in Africa over the coming decades. Here, the

importance of integrating social and environmental responsibility into startup business models becomes evident. Such integration ensures that economic recovery is pursued without compromising environmental protection or social equity.

1.Theorical framework

1.1.The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

The **NEPAD** initiative is a strategic framework aimed at restructuring Africa, freeing it from underdevelopment, promoting independent development, enhancing governance, fostering economic growth, investing in African people, and addressing the continent's pressing challenges, including rising poverty, underdevelopment, disease, divisions, and state fragility. The term **"NEPAD"** stands for the **New Partnership for Africa's Development**. This strategy emerged from the mandate given to the heads of five African states—**Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa**—by the **Organization of African Unity (OAU)** to formulate a unified initiative that integrates the continent's social and economic development efforts.

1.2.Origins of NEPAD

At the dawn of the new millennium, African heads of state and government committed themselves to launching an African-led initiative based on the principles of the **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)**. This commitment reflected their responsibility for the future of the continent and the establishment of a new relationship with bilateral and international development partners, as well as multilateral organizations.

These efforts culminated in the integration of three independent initiatives into **a unified framework**:

- **The Omega Plan**, introduced by **Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade** in 2001.
- **The Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP)**, spearheaded by **South African President Thabo Mbeki** in 2001[1] (necir & zine, 2019, p. 32).

1.3.The New Vision for Development within NEPAD

For forty years since their independence, African nations have sought financial resources to fund their development projects. However, the continent's weak economic structure, inherited from colonialism, has led to a reliance on loans and aid, which have become the dominant approach to African development. Yet, as former Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade pointed out, no country has ever truly developed through aid or loans alone. This approach has proven its limitations and has exacerbated the issue of debt, burdening future generations with repayment obligations.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development **(NEPAD)** aims to reverse this unsustainable model by redefining the relationships that sustain it. Africans do not seek continued dependency through aid, nor are they looking for marginal privileges. Instead, the initiators of NEPAD believe it presents a historic opportunity to end Africa's underdevelopment. The continent has abundant resources, and what is needed is bold, visionary leadership committed to sustainable human development, poverty eradication, and fostering a new global partnership based on shared responsibility and mutual interests.

[1] *necir, a., & zine, y. (2019, 01 31). good governance within the direction of the iniative for the developement of the african continent "nepad". Journal of El-Maqrizi for Economic and Financial Studies , pp. 22-47.*

What distinguishes NEPAD from previous initiatives is the determination of African leaders to take control of their own future. Learning from past experiences, they now recognize that **pea3ce, security, democracy, good governance, and respect for human rights** are essential for sustainable development. Additionally, NEPAD's proponents do not solely attribute Africa's underdevelopment and impoverishment to colonialism, the Cold War, or the global economic system. They acknowledge that African governments, through failed policies and the exclusion of their populations from development processes, bear a significant share of the responsibility.

NEPAD believes that current conditions present a real opportunity for Africa's advancement. Domestically, democratic traditions and human rights cultures are taking root and must be reinforced. Internationally, the **United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000)** signals the global community's willingness to support Africa's efforts to overcome marginalization and underdevelopment[2] (BETATACHE, 2017, pp. 134-135).

1.4.NEPAD Objectives

The **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)** aims to achieve several key objectives, which can be summarized as follows:

-Eradicating poverty.

-Placing African nations, individually or collectively, on a path of sustained growth and development.

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[2] *BETATACHE, A. (2017, 06 19). The new partnership for africa's development « NEPAD »: . Revue Académique de la Recherche Juridique , pp. 132-142.*

-Ending Africa's marginalization and fostering its full and meaningful integration into the global economy.

-Eliminating gender disparities and promoting the inclusion of women in development efforts.

1.5.Key Pillars for Achieving NEPAD's Goals

Achieving these objectives requires intensified African efforts in several areas, including:

Attaining an average annual GDP growth rate of 7% over the next 15 years, as set by the **United Nations Millennium Declaration**.

Ensuring the fulfillment of key international development goals for Africa, including:

- **Reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half** between 1990 and 2015.
- **Achieving universal primary education enrollment for all children by 2015.**
- **Advancing gender equality and empowering women by eliminating disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005.**
- **Reducing child mortality rates by two-thirds** between 1990 and 2015.
- **Lowering maternal mortality rates by two-thirds** over the same period.
- **Ensuring universal access to reproductive health services by 2015.**
- **Implementing national sustainable development strategies by 2005, with the aim of halting environmental degradation by 2015.**

Reshaping Africa's Future

NEPAD aspires to **reshape Africa's future** through a **comprehensive development program** designed to free the continent from **underdevelopment, poverty, and marginalization in the era of globalization** while ensuring sustainable development. This initiative is built on a **new global partnership between Africa and the international community**, emphasizing **shared responsibilities, commitments, and mutual benefits**.

1.6.The Global Dimension of NEPAD

Although NEPAD is **an African-led initiative**, the continent's economic struggles have pushed it onto the global stage in search of support. Consequently, NEPAD leaders presented the initiative at the **G8 Summit in Italy on July 20, 2001**, where it was warmly received. The participating nations pledged to uphold the following core principles:

-**Promoting democracy and strengthening good governance.**

-**Preventing, managing, and peacefully resolving conflicts**[3] (Youssef & Mubarak, 2017)**.**

1.7.The concept of startups

The term **"startup"** originates from the English word **"Startup"**, which signifies the launch and growth of a company. For this reason,

[3] *Youssef, S., & Mubarak, K. (2017, 08 11). The role and future of NEPAD in the African continent. Retrieved 02 03, 2025, from democraticac: https://democraticac.de/?p=48402*

many people believe that startups refer exclusively to newly established companies. This type of business first emerged in **the United States in the early 1970s**, closely linked to the **venture capital industry** and predominantly focused on the **technology sector**, particularly **information and communication technology (ICT)**.

As a result, many associate startups primarily with the **technology sector**, as reflected in the **French dictionary's definition**, which describes them as "innovative technical enterprises operating in modern technology fields." However, researchers are now striving to provide **more comprehensive and precise definitions**, emphasizing the concepts of **creativity and innovation**.

Regardless of how startups are defined, their **true foundation for success** lies in the **personal attributes** of their founders and managers, with **innovation** being the most critical trait[4] (Litim, 2022, p. 127).

1.7.1.Dimensions and Criteria for Evaluating Startup Success

Many entrepreneurs, investors, venture capital funds, and experts have discussed the key factors that drive startup success, regardless of their industry. One study categorized these factors into **four main dimensions**, forming a **guiding framework** for entrepreneurs worldwide.

- ✓ **Economic Dimension**
- ✓ This focuses on growth, financing, and profitability, assessed by:
  - Business expansion, job creation, and market share.

[4] *Litim, N. (2022, 06 04). An overview on the success factors of Emerging institutions. Journal of cognitive issues , pp. 124-134.*

- Availability of funding options, self-financing, and bank loans.
- Return on equity (ROE) and future profitability outlook.

✓ **Social and Environmental Dimension**

✓ Evaluates the startup's impact on the environment and society through:

- Development of eco-friendly solutions.
- Innovation in socially beneficial services.
- Fair value distribution among stakeholders.

✓ **Innovation Dimension**

✓ Concerns product, service, and business model innovation, measured by:

- Introduction of new products/services.
- Novel market entry strategies.
- Development of innovative business models.

✓ **Responsible Governance**

✓ Focuses on employment quality, management, and social responsibility, assessed by:

- Balance between permanent and temporary jobs, and gender equality.
- Adoption of governance and inclusion principles.
- Monitoring environmental and social impacts of operations[5] (benali, 2022, pp. 612-613).

1.8.The Concept of Sustainable Growth

Sustainable growth is defined as a phase of sustainable development that relies on real savings to finance increasingly capital-intensive

[5] *benali, s. (2022, 12 01). Start-ups in Algeria between chances of success and threats of failure: case study of Noycy star-tup in the Wilaya of Annaba. Forum for economic studies and research journal , pp. 609-626.*

production structures. Sustainable growth has three fundamental dimensions: economy, society, and environment. It can only be achieved when each dimension is reinforced in coordination with the others. These dimensions are as follows:

- **Economic Dimension**: Aims to maintain societal well-being over time by improving living standards, increasing per capita national income, and reducing the depletion of natural resources. This includes lowering energy consumption levels through efficiency improvements and changing consumption patterns that lead to biodiversity loss.
- **Social Dimension**: Centers on human well-being as the core and ultimate goal of growth by ensuring social justice, combating poverty, and providing essential social services to those in need.
- **Environmental Dimension**: Involves a set of criteria that must be considered in all economic activities to optimize the use of natural resources and enable biological systems to maintain their functions and processes over time[6] (husni, Basioni, Awad, & Ghanimi, 2022, p. 400).

1.8.1.Sustainable Growth Today: Pillars and Applications

Modern sustainable growth relies on three core principles: **repeatability, ethics, and responsibility** toward both present and future societies. It is a critical factor for long-term business success. To achieve this goal, companies must adopt a collaborative approach that integrates diverse leadership at all levels while asking the right questions to ensure accountability.

[6] *husni, M., Basioni, M., Awad, M., & Ghanimi, I. (2022). the role of financial engeering in promoting sustainable growth in Egypt. Journal of Commercial Studies and Research , 1 (3), pp. 391-416.*

✓ **Repeatable Growth**

This focuses on building continuous economic growth by emphasizing six key areas:

- **Customer**: Anticipating future customer needs.
- **Competition**: Turning competitors into potential allies.
- **Costs**: Reducing expenses and increasing profit margins.
- **Capital**: Ensuring adequate funding and attractive returns for investors.
- **Community**: Enhancing reputation as a responsible company.
- **Corporate Culture**: Developing a flexible culture that adapts to change.

✓ **Ethical Growth**

Ethical growth requires embedding values into daily decision-making rather than limiting them to slogans. For example, in the case of **AT&T**, a commitment to integrity and customer focus helped the company avoid unethical practices like those of **MCI/WorldCom**, which falsified growth data to mislead the market.

✓ **Responsible Growth**

Responsible growth goes beyond profit to include **people and the planet**, aligning with the **triple bottom line** concept (Profit, People, Planet). Former IBM CEO **Sam Palmisano** outlined four fundamental questions:

- **Why do people work with you?**
- **Why do investors put their money in your company?**
- **What sets you apart from others?**
- **Why do communities allow you to operate in their areas?**

Today, corporate responsibility extends to issues like **poverty, education, equality, and environmental justice**, in line with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2015)**. To meet these challenges, companies must:

- Assess their **environmental footprint** (e.g., water consumption, carbon emissions).
- Shift from a **"do no harm"** approach to **actively improving the environment**.
- Use their **influence** to support public policies that promote social good[7] (Miller, 2018).

2.The Alignment between Startups, sustainable growth, NEBAD

2.1.Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Africa

Africa is home to a vast number of entrepreneurs, ranging from street vendors to young tech innovators and self-made investors. With limited government safety nets and insufficient job opportunities, many turn to entrepreneurship as a means of survival. However, the perception of entrepreneurship in Africa has evolved—it is no longer just a means to earn a living but is now associated with systematic growth and success, making it a recognized and growing career path.

In this context, Pierre Omidyar, founder of the Omidyar Network, released a report titled **"Accelerating Entrepreneurship in Africa"** in collaboration with Monitor Group. The report surveyed 582 entrepreneurs from six sub-Saharan African countries, comparing their

[7] *Miller, R. (2018, 08 16). What Does Sustainable Growth Really Mean? Retrieved 02 05, 2025, from forbes: https://www.forbes.com/sites/rickmiller/2018/08/16/what-does-sustainable-growth-really-mean/*

experiences with those in China, India, and the United States. As one of the most comprehensive studies on African entrepreneurship, it highlights the disparity between macroeconomic growth and individual livelihoods, as Africa's per capita GDP remains relatively low.

Omidyar believes that entrepreneurship can bridge the continent's severe income gap if it shifts from being merely a necessity to becoming a robust driver of sustainable economic growth, generating long-term employment opportunities and improving livelihoods across Africa.

- ✓ **Funding**

As in most emerging markets, institutional funding remains limited for entrepreneurs in the surveyed countries. About 45% of entrepreneurs rely on personal savings or family loans, while 71% find the cost of loans or capital excessively high.

According to the International Finance Corporation (IFC), nearly 84% of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Africa are either underfunded or entirely excluded from financing, with a credit gap estimated between $140 billion and $170 billion.

On the other hand, investors argue that many businesses are unviable or lack long-term sustainability. Venture capitalists attribute the low number of deals to weak business plans, unclear feasibility of ideas, and insufficient commitment from entrepreneurs.

- ✓ **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure remains a major hurdle for entrepreneurship in Africa. While high-speed fiber-optic internet in countries like Kenya supports tech innovation, many regions suffer from weak connectivity,

unreliable electricity, poor road conditions, and underdeveloped railway networks. These issues drive up operational costs, restrict market access, and lower business efficiency. For example, in Tanzania, 52% of respondents believe that startups cannot afford the necessary infrastructure, with only 38% and 23% of entrepreneurs respectively feeling that current infrastructure is supportive and affordable.

2.2.Startups in Africa

Unlike Europe, African startups struggle with inadequate state-provided infrastructure, particularly outside major urban centers. However, these very startups are driving innovation by delivering essential services to underserved communities. A notable example is **M-Kopa**, which supplies electricity to Nairobi's slum residents, reducing reliance on hazardous kerosene lamps.

Skills and Talent

Startups in Africa face a challenge similar to those encountered worldwide: finding experienced managerial talent to support their technical teams. Possessing technical skills as a developer or engineer does not automatically equate to being an effective manager or leader.

Due to limited funding and incentives available to employees in startups—aside from their belief in the company's future success—these companies often lose their top talent to larger, more stable organizations such as telecommunications firms and banks.

The report also points out that the shortage of managerial talent is often linked to the education system. In Africa, educational systems primarily prepare the workforce for stable companies, while specialized entrepreneurship training—or the lack thereof—plays a crucial role in enabling entrepreneurs to establish and grow their ventures.

Additionally, entrepreneurs require a skilled workforce to achieve their business goals (Kalan, 2013).

Innovation is no longer optional for businesses; it is crucial for survival in an era of ever-evolving needs. Africa holds two key assets for fostering innovation: its youthful population—expected to reach one billion under-18s by 2050—and widespread mobile phone adoption. These factors are fueling the rise of digital startups, contributing to Africa's ongoing economic transformation[8] (Afif, 2022, p. 639).

Table01:Opportunities and Challenges Facing African Startups

Challenges	Opportunities
In Africa, startups face a significant funding gap, with extremely high interest rates—ranging from 25% to 30% in some countries, including Ghana. Therefore, they need public-private partnerships, awareness of engagement platforms, and access to proper testing environments.	Startups can make agribusiness in Africa more productive, inclusive, and sustainable. The African food and beverage market is currently valued at $313 billion and is expected to triple, exceeding $1 trillion by 2030.
There are no official databases on startups in Africa. However, measuring startup dynamics has become essential for informing	The African diaspora is estimated at around 200 million individuals and contributed approximately $33 billion in remittances to the continent in

[8] *Afif, h. (2022, 04 30). The reality of emerging African companies - an analytical study -. Journal Of economics studies and researches in renewables energies (JoeRRe) , pp. 636-655.*

policies across the continent.	2016. This diaspora can create opportunities for startups and businesses by leveraging networks, skills, and expertise to drive development.

Source: prepared by the researchers based on afif, hana; The reality of emerging African companies - an analytical study -, Journal Of economics studies and researches in renewables energies (JoeRRe),p 642.

2.3.Rising African Startups To Watch Out For In 2025

Africa's tech ecosystem is rapidly emerging as a vibrant hub of innovation and opportunity, with startups tackling a wide range of industry challenges. From fintech and ed-tech to e-commerce and renewable energy, these companies are not only drawing significant investment but also pioneering creative solutions tailored to the continent's unique needs. Despite facing economic uncertainties and regulatory challenges, many African startups are thriving, often setting examples for scaling in emerging markets globally.

The table features some African startups that are leading the way into 2025. These companies operate across diverse sectors, including digital finance, e-commerce, electric mobility, and ed-tech. They embody Africa's innovative spirit by combining advanced technology with local insights to address real-world problems. By analyzing their strategies, achievements, and funding milestones, we can see a clear roadmap for Africa's growing influence on the global tech stage.

Focusing on startups that are making waves not just locally but also expanding into regional and international markets, this collection

highlights Africa's potential as a powerhouse of transformative ideas[9] (Luke, 2025).

Table02:Top African rising startups to watch

Startup name	Field
Sukhiba (Kenya)	Sukhiba, founded in 2020, revolutionizes Kenya's e-commerce with a B2B WhatsApp-based platform, securing $1.5M in 2024.
KopoKopo (Kenya)	KopoKopo, founded in 2012, provides payment and credit solutions for SMEs in Kenya and was acquired by Moniepoint in 2023.
Craydel (Kenya)	Craydel, launched in 2021, streamlines university applications in Africa, connecting students to over 600 institutions worldwide.
FoodCourt (Nigeria)	FoodCourt, founded in 2021, revolutionizes food delivery in Nigeria with a multi-restaurant ordering platform and cashless payments.
BasiGo (Kenya)	BasiGo advances electric mobility in East Africa, raising $42M in 2024 to expand sustainable public transport solutions.
Userguest (Morocco)	Userguest, founded in 2018, optimizes hotel revenue with AI-driven marketing, generating $100M in direct bookings across 30+ countries.

[9] *Luke, A. (2025, 01). 20 Rising African Startups To Watch Out For In 2025. Retrieved 02 05, 2025, from africanfolder: https://africanfolder.com/rising-african-startups-to-watch-out-for-in-2025/*

LabLabee (Algeria)	LabLabee, founded in 2021, provides hands-on 5G and AI training, raising $3.4M in 2024 to bridge Africa's tech skills gap.
Cleva (Nigeria)	Cleva enables secure USD accounts for Africans, raising $1.5M in 2024 to simplify cross-border payments and combat hyperinflation.
Uncover (Kenya)	Uncover, founded in 2021, merges K-Beauty with inclusivity, raising $1.4M in 2024 to expand its skincare solutions for women of color.
Chowdeck (Nigeria)	Chowdeck, founded in 2021, serves 500K users across Nigeria, leveraging technology to streamline food delivery and enhance efficiency.

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on 20 Rising African Startups To Watch Out For In 2025 | African Folder

2.4.Sustainable growth in africa beyond 2025

Looking beyond 2025, Africa has the opportunity to redefine its global position by leveraging its strengths and developing innovative solutions to its challenges. Success will hinge on strategic investments, strong partnerships, and a unified vision for sustainable growth. The decisions made today will not only shape Africa's future but also influence global economic and social dynamics. By focusing on key priority areas, the continent can build a resilient, inclusive, and prosperous future for generations to come. These priorities include:

- **Climate Action and Renewable Energy Transition**

Climate change poses an existential threat to Africa, a continent that contributes the least to global carbon emissions yet bears the brunt of its impacts. Extreme weather events, desertification, and rising sea levels are already affecting food security, water resources, and infrastructure. Beyond 2025, African nations must adopt long-term strategies to build climate resilience and accelerate the transition to renewable energy.

Initiatives like the **Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI)**, which aims to achieve 300 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, and the **Green Recovery Action Plan (GRAP)** provide a clear roadmap. Investments in energy storage technologies, regional power grids, and cross-border energy projects will be essential to achieving these goals and positioning Africa as a global leader in sustainable energy transitions.

- **Advancing Regional Trade to Integrate Africa's Economies**

The **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** has the potential to be a game-changer for the continent. Encompassing 54 countries, over 1.3 billion people, and a combined GDP of USD 3.4 trillion, it could create the world's largest single market. However, its full potential can only be realized through progress in trade facilitation, infrastructure development, and regulatory harmonization.

Beyond 2025, African nations must focus on increasing intra-African trade, which currently accounts for just 16% of total trade volumes. This will require digitizing customs systems, strengthening logistics networks, and developing regional value chains in manufacturing and agriculture. By fostering competitive industries, Africa can become a significant player in global trade.

- **Harnessing the Digital Economy to Transform Key Sectors**

Africa's digital revolution is reshaping industries such as finance, healthcare, and education. The continent's fintech ecosystem, led by pioneers like Kenya's M-Pesa, has revolutionized financial inclusion. With internet penetration on the rise, Africa's digital economy is projected to contribute USD 180 billion to GDP by 2025, and over 800 million Africans are expected to be online by 2030.

To capitalize on this momentum, countries must prioritize investments in digital infrastructure and support the growth of regional tech hubs. Cybersecurity frameworks and data governance policies must also evolve to meet global standards. Encouraging investments in emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain will ensure Africa's digital economy thrives in a globalized world.

- **Addressing Food Security and Agricultural Transformation**

Agriculture remains the backbone of Africa's economy, employing 60% of its population. However, the sector faces significant challenges, including climate change, fragmented markets, and outdated farming practices. Ensuring food security beyond 2025 will require a focus on innovation and value chain development.

Smallholder farmers must be equipped with climate-smart agricultural technologies, such as drought-resistant crops and precision farming tools. Public-private partnerships in agro-processing can boost incomes and reduce post-harvest losses. Additionally, the AfCFTA can play a pivotal role in integrating regional food markets, paving the way for a secure and sustainable agricultural future.

- **Strengthening Governance and Institutions**

Good governance is the foundation of sustainable development. As Africa's economies grow, so must the transparency, accountability, and

efficiency of its institutions. Beyond 2025, fostering democratic governance and combating corruption will remain critical priorities.

The African Union's **Agenda 2063** envisions an "Africa-driven" future anchored in strong institutions. Achieving this vision will require investments in technology-driven governance, inclusive policymaking, and robust civic engagement. Regional bodies must also strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms to ensure peace and stability across the continent.

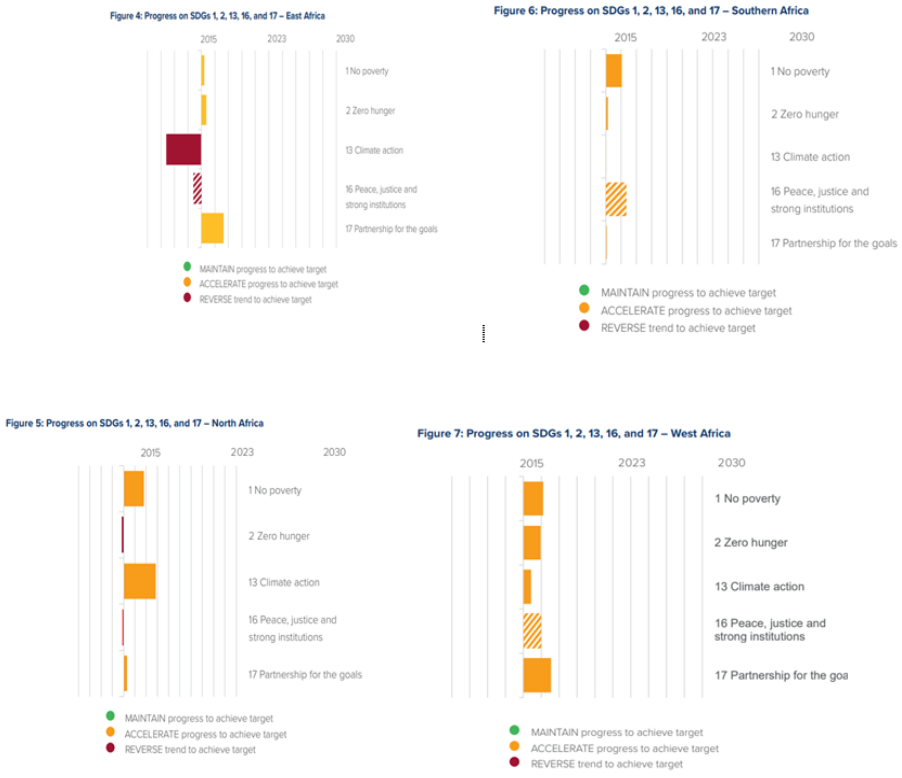
❖ Bolstering Africa's Role in the Global Economy

Africa's vast resources, youthful population, and growing markets position it as a key player in the global economy. To fully capitalize on these advantages, the continent must strengthen trade relationships, attract foreign direct investment (FDI), and enhance its competitiveness in global value chains.

The AfCFTA serves as a gateway to global markets, while partnerships with entities like the European Union, China, and the United States can boost exports and technology transfer. Strategic investments in manufacturing, mining, and service sectors, as outlined in Agenda 2063, will reduce dependency on raw material exports. Aligning with global frameworks like the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** will further enhance Africa's global standing and ensure its growth aligns with international priorities[10] (aln.africa, 2024).

[10] *aln.africa. (2024, 12 31). Africa's Key Priorities for 2025 and Beyond: Charting a Sustainable and Dynamic Future. Retrieved 02 06, 2025, from aln.africa: https://aln.africa/news/africas-key-priorities-for-2025-and-beyond-charting-a-sustainable-and-dynamic-future/#:~:text=Beyond*

Figure02: *Regional Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa by 2030*



Source: *United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2024). Africa Sustainable Development Report 2024. Addis Ababa,p27*.

The image contains four charts illustrating the progress of different African regions in achieving specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely:

- **No Poverty (SDG 1)**
- **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)**
- **Climate Action (SDG 13)**
- **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)**

- **Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17)**

The analyzed regions include: **East Africa (Figure 4)**, **North Africa (Figure 5)**, **Southern Africa (Figure 6)**, **West Africa (Figure 7)**

2. Analysis of Colors and Their Significance:

- **Green:** Progress is on track to achieve the target (**MAINTAIN**).
- **Orange:** Progress needs to be accelerated to meet the target (**ACCELERATE**).
- **Red:** Performance is declining, requiring a reversal of the trend (**REVERSE**).

3. Regional Comparison in Achieving the SDGs:

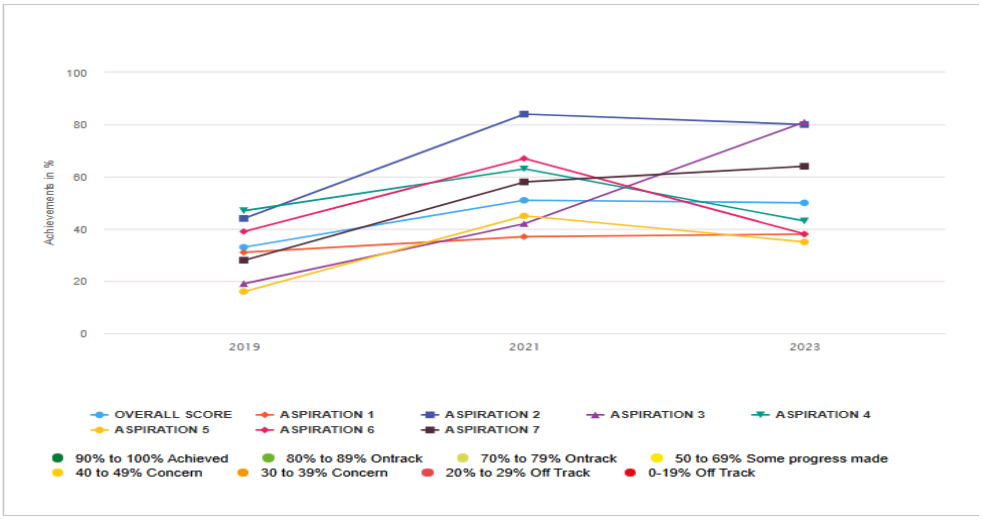
Region	Key Observations
East Africa (Figure 4)	A significant decline (**red**) in some goals was observed in 2015, with slight improvements by 2023, though further acceleration (**orange**) is required. Some targets demand a reversal of negative trends.
North Africa (Figure 5)	Performance in 2015 was mixed, but most goals require accelerated progress (**orange**) by 2023 to be achieved by 2030. Governance and climate-related targets remain challenging.
Southern Africa (Figure 6)	Some goals require accelerated progress (**orange**), but no major declines are observed (absence of **red**). This suggests relative stability compared to other regions.
West Africa (Figure 7)	The region requires a widespread acceleration of progress across most goals (**orange**), with some indicators showing the need for a reversal (**red**).

SOURCE: prepared by reseasher based on figure02.

- **All regions face significant challenges** in achieving the SDGs by 2030.

- **North and West Africa need to accelerate progress** across multiple goals while addressing certain regressions.
- **East Africa showed considerable setbacks in 2015**, but some improvement has been noted.
- **Southern Africa appears to be in a relatively better position**, though further acceleration is still needed.

Figure03: Continent Performance by All Aspirations



Source: Agenda Dashboard v2 | AUDA-NEPAD

Analysis of the chart based on the provided data:

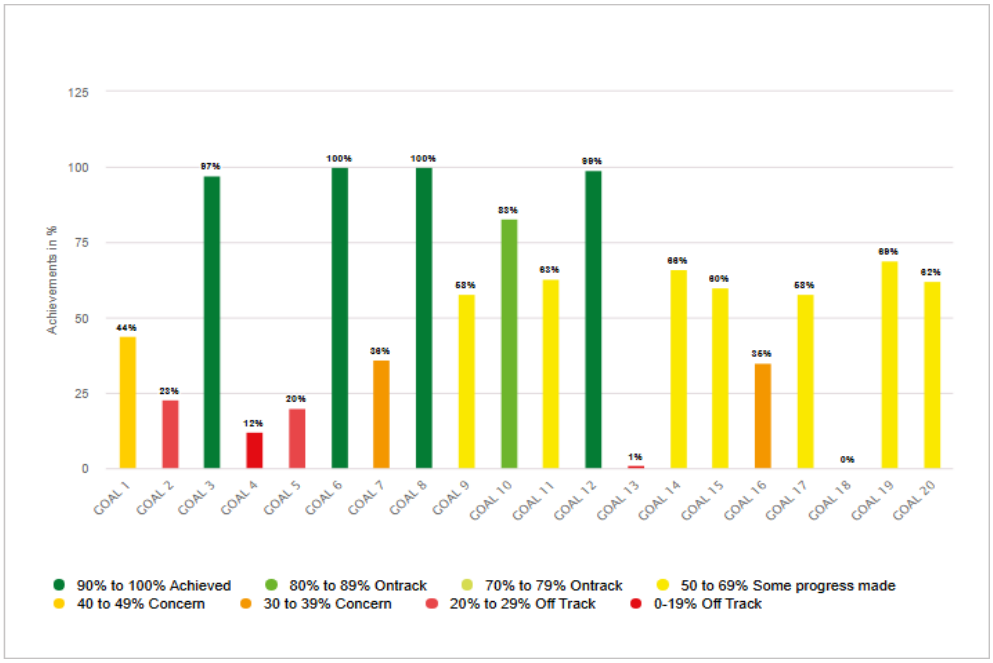
1. **High-Performing Aspirations**:
    - **Aspiration 2 (80%)**: Achieving a politically united and integrated continent based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and a vision of African Renaissance. This indicates significant progress in promoting political unity and cooperation among African nations.

- **Aspiration 3 (81%)**: Achieving an Africa with good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law. This reflects improvements in governance and the protection of fundamental rights.

2. **Moderate-Performing Aspirations**:
   - **Aspiration 7 (64%)**: Achieving Africa as a strong and influential global partner. This suggests moderate progress in enhancing Africa's position on the global stage.
3. **Low-Performing Aspirations**:
   - **Aspiration 1 (38%)**: Achieving an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values, and ethics. This indicates that more efforts are needed to strengthen a shared cultural identity.
   - **Aspiration 5 (35%) and Aspiration 6 (38%)**: Achieving an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of the African people. These low percentages suggest that people-driven development still requires significant improvement.
4. **Overall Assessment**:
   - **90% to 100%**: No aspiration has been fully achieved.
   - **80% to 89%**: Aspiration 2 and Aspiration 3 are on track.
   - **50% to 69%**: Aspiration 7 has made some progress.
   - **40% to 49%**: No aspirations fall within this range.
   - **30% to 39%**: Aspiration 1, Aspiration 5, and Aspiration 6 are of concern.
   - **20% to 29% and 0% to 19%**: No aspirations fall within these ranges.

The general conclusion is that there is notable progress in the areas of political unity and governance, but more efforts are needed to enhance cultural identity and people-driven development.

Figure04: Continent Performance by All Goals



Source: Agenda Dashboard v2 | AUDA-NEPAD

The chart highlights disparities in achieving NEPAD goals, revealing both successes and critical gaps.

1. Strong Performance and Success Factors

Goals **6, 8, and 12**, achieving nearly 100%, indicate effective policies, strong institutional frameworks, and adequate funding. The success suggests that well-implemented strategies and stakeholder commitment can drive sustainable progress.

2. Moderate Progress – Risk of Stagnation

Goals scoring **70%-89%** (e.g., 9, 10, 11, 14) are on track but require sustained efforts to avoid stagnation. Delays in policy implementation,

resource allocation issues, or external economic challenges may slow further progress.

3. Areas of Concern and Strategic Weaknesses

Goals **scoring 50%-69%** show that progress is inconsistent. These areas may face governance challenges, financial constraints, or socio-political barriers limiting effective execution. Without acceleration, these goals risk missing their targets.

4. Critical Underperformance and Structural Failures

Goals **below 50%** (especially Goals **2, 5, 16, and 18**) highlight major systemic challenges. Low scores suggest governance inefficiencies, lack of resources, or inadequate policy enforcement. **Goal 18 (0%)** signals a complete failure, requiring urgent reassessment and intervention.

2.5.How startups drive economic recovery while growing responsibly

Startups are reshaping global and local economies, generating value comparable to a G7 nation's GDP. With over $600 billion invested in 2021 and a rapidly expanding unicorn ecosystem, their influence is undeniable. Yet, as these companies scale, balancing growth with responsibility is critical. Leaders from innovative startups highlight strategies to foster economic recovery while prioritizing sustainability:

- **Aligning Mission with Impact**

Successful startups address unmet societal needs. For example, Medable's decentralized clinical trial platform improves patient access to life-saving medications while streamlining drug

development for biopharma companies. By centering their mission on impact—such as healthcare accessibility or environmental sustainability—startups create shared value that benefits both their bottom line and society.

❖ **Innovating for sustainability**

Industries like drone logistics and electric mobility are redefining traditional sectors. Wingcopter's delivery drones, produced through innovative manufacturing processes, not only boost efficiency but also create jobs globally. Similarly, Volta Trucks designs electric vehicles to reduce urban pollution, embedding sustainability into materials, suppliers, and operations from the outset. These examples show how startups can lead transitions to cleaner technologies while scaling responsibly.

❖ **Embeding sustainability early**

Integrating environmental and social responsibility into a startup's DNA is no longer optional. ZeroAvia, developing hydrogen-powered aviation, emphasizes that sustainability must be core to the business model. Investors and consumers increasingly prioritize ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) criteria, making responsible practices a competitive advantage. Startups that align with these values attract funding, talent, and market share.

❖ **Cultivating values-Driven cultures**

Agility allows startups to adopt sustainable practices faster than legacy players. Everstream builds a culture around ethical innovation, attracting partners and employees who share its commitment to doing "what's right." By prioritizing transparency and fairness—like Papaya Global's use of payroll data to promote

equitable pay—startups foster trust and loyalty, which drive long-term success.

❖ **creating ecosystem of opportunity**

Beyond job creation, startups inspire broader societal change. Wingcopter's partnership with UNICEF trains African youth in drone technology, opening doors to new careers. Similarly, venture initiatives like LIFTT invest in startups that transfer academic innovations to market, building regional tech hubs outside traditional centers like Silicon Valley. These efforts demonstrate how startups can empower communities and spark economic diversification.

❖ **Leveraging public-private collaboration**

Partnerships amplify impact. Dorae's CEO notes that governments and corporations can lower barriers to sustainable practices by sharing expertise or offering incentives. Such collaborations enable startups to scale solutions—like renewable energy or circular supply chains—that benefit entire industries[11] (Jurgens, 2024).

3.Conclusion

Amid Africa's pursuit of sustainable development, the **NEPAD initiative** remains a vital framework embodying the continent's ambition to transform challenges into opportunities and elevate its economies through integrated strategies. Since its launch, NEPAD has successfully laid robust foundations for regional and international

[11] *Jurgens, J. (2024, 09 10). How startups drive economic recovery while growing responsibly . Retrieved 02 08, 2025, from weforum:*

https://www.weforum.org/stories/2022/05/how-startups-help-drive-economic-recovery-and-growth/

cooperation, with a clear focus on empowering African citizens and building institutions capable of leading the desired transformation.

Startups stand out as one of the most critical pillars reinforcing this vision, representing a new generation of smart solutions aligned with both local and global priorities. Through technological innovation and adaptable business models, these startups address historical challenges such as poverty and inequality while preserving natural resources for future generations. They also demonstrate how African economies can transition from reliance on aid to self-driven growth pathways.

However, ensuring **sustainable growth beyond 2025** requires continuous strengthening of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This entails providing adequate funding, developing digital infrastructure, and fostering partnerships among governments, the private sector, and civil society. Startups must also prioritize environmentally and socially responsible practices to ensure economic growth does not come at the expense of equity or ecological balance.

Key findings from this analysis include:

- **NEPAD's success in fostering regional integration**: By focusing on pillars like infrastructure development and sustainable agriculture, NEPAD has enhanced Africa's appeal to global investors.
- **Growth in entrepreneurial support**: Africa has witnessed significant progress in nurturing entrepreneurship through incubators and increased public-private funding, paving the way for promising startups.
- **ESG integration for long-term sustainability**: Adopting business models aligned with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards—such as renewable energy

projects and inclusive financial solutions—is critical to safeguarding social equity and natural resources.

- **Sustainable development foundations**: Support for startups is not merely a short-term boost but a catalyst for long-term growth built on durable, inclusive frameworks.
- **Resilience through adaptability**: Startups' ability to navigate challenges strengthens Africa's economic resilience, ensuring stability against external shocks.
- **Economic diversification**: Encouraging startups reduces over-reliance on traditional sectors, fostering a more dynamic and adaptable economy.

To sum it up, the partnership between NEPAD's vision and the energy of startups creates a special plan for a successful future in Africa. While NEPAD works on bringing people together and fostering teamwork, startups show that local ideas can make a big difference worldwide. In this way, Africa stands out as an example of sustainable growth—one that includes everyone and supports progress in harmony with people and the environment.