

## **Africa CEO Forum Launches Pan-African Initiative to Transform Public Governance and Unlock the Continent's Economic Potential**

**Rabat, August 02, 2025** – A groundbreaking initiative aims to address one of Africa's most persistent challenges: transforming the quality of public governance to match the continent's remarkable economic potential. The Africa CEO Forum, together with four leading strategic partners - Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P), Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), and African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) – today announced the launch of LEAD, a pan-African program designed to groom a new generation of public policy leaders who can drive sustainable economic transformation across the continent.

The initiative is a response to a striking paradox facing Africa's development trajectory over the past two decades. Despite experiencing nearly uninterrupted economic growth, the continent's 1.4 billion citizens continue to face significant gaps in public service delivery that constrain both economic development and quality of life. While Africa's GDP has expanded consistently, the translation of that growth into improved governance and citizen welfare has lagged behind other regions with comparable economic profiles.

"We have seen remarkable examples of transformation in the Global South that demonstrate what is possible when public policy excellence becomes the foundation for development," said Amir Ben Yahmed, CEO of the African CEO Forum. "Brazil created a universal healthcare system while digitizing public services. Indonesia became a global nickel leader through strategic industrial policy. India revolutionized financial inclusion with its Aadhaar digital identity program. These successes show that well-designed governance can be the definite engine of economic transformation."

The timing of LEAD's launch reflects several converging opportunities that make this Africa's moment for governance transformation. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), now operational as the world's largest free trade area since the WTO's formation, presents unprecedented opportunities for economic integration. However, realizing its estimated \$450 billion economic potential requires mature implementation capabilities and policy coordination.

Simultaneously, Africa confronts a complex web of emerging challenges that demand sophisticated policy responses. The continent's population is projected to double by 2050, while climate change poses significant challenges to agricultural productivity and urban development. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence presents unprecedented opportunities for leapfrogging development challenges and risks of digital exclusion if governance frameworks keep pace. Supply chain vulnerabilities exposed by recent global disruptions, and ongoing "permacrises" – the overlapping series of global emergencies from health pandemics to geopolitical conflicts – add additional

layers of complexity that require, today more than ever, coordinated, evidence-based policy approaches.

Each year, LEAD will create a dynamic pan-African network of high-potential young civil servants, who share a common vision of service excellence, and will develop the tools, understanding and insights to shape policies in their respective spaces. These leaders will be positioned to work together on continental priorities such as trade integration, climate adaptation, AI governance, digital transformation, and regional security while driving institutional change within their respective countries.

The program will draw inspiration from successful governance transformations worldwide while remaining grounded in African contexts and priorities. The initiative's approach reflects a fundamental recognition that public governance serves as the critical infrastructure for unlocking Africa's competitive advantages. By strengthening policy-making foundations, the program aims to create enabling environments that amplify private sector development and deliver superior economic and social outcomes for citizens.

"Africa has extraordinary potential – abundant natural resources, a young and growing population, increasing digital connectivity, and expanding regional integration," noted Amir Ben Yahmed, CEO of the African CEO Forum. "But we are also navigating complex 21st-century challenges from AI regulation to climate resilience that require a new caliber of public sector leadership. What we need now are inspired, independent, and impactful leaders who can harness emerging technologies while protecting citizens' interests and translate that potential into concrete improvements in people's lives through excellent public policy."

The first cohort of LEAD participants will make their way to the UM6P Campus in Rabat, Morocco at the end of August. They will be joined by a selected set of experts and policymakers to support their learning during this inaugural edition.

**LEAD also benefits from the strong support of actors committed to excellence in public policy and the promotion of good governance. BOAD, ARISE Foundation, African Reinsurance Corporation (Africa Re), and ASAFO & CO are among those providing their expertise and resources to support LEAD's mission.**

For more information about LEAD and application procedures, please contact [lead@theafricaceoforum.com](mailto:lead@theafricaceoforum.com)

### **About the Africa CEO Forum**

Founded in 2012, the Africa CEO Forum is the leading platform dedicated to the leaders of the largest African and multinational companies, investors, heads of state, ministers, and representatives of key financial institutions operating on the continent. It is a high-level meeting place for experience sharing and analysis of business trends. Its annual summit offers concrete and innovative solutions to advance Africa and its businesses. The Africa CEO Forum was created by Jeune Afrique Media Group and its annual summit is co-organized with the IFC, a member of the World Bank Group.

More information: <http://www.theafricaceoforum.com/>

### **About UM6P**

Mohammed VI Polytechnic University is a multidisciplinary institution focused on applied research and innovation, with a pan-African vision and the ambition to join the ranks of globally recognized universities. Committed to economic and human development, UM6P puts research, pedagogical innovation, and entrepreneurship at the service of Africa's and Morocco's transformation, particularly in industrial development, digitalization, R&D, and technology transfer. Its unique partnership-based model reinforces Morocco's leadership in these fields and strengthens relevant skills training for Africa's future.

More information: [www.um6p.ma](http://www.um6p.ma)

### **About Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation**

Founded in 2020, the Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation is a pan-African philanthropic organization dedicated to transforming Africa's public sector. It envisions a continent where every citizen can pursue their aspirations, contribute to their community's development, and live a healthy, productive life. Through targeted investments in the training of senior public officials, public policy improvement, and innovation in service delivery, the foundation partners with African governments and institutions to build more effective, transparent, and impact-driven public administrations.

More information: [www.aigimoukhuedefoundation.org](http://www.aigimoukhuedefoundation.org)

### **About Badea**

Based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) is a multilateral development finance institution owned by 18 Arab countries (62% of which are GCC member states). Founded in 1974, BADEA's mission is to promote, support, and strengthen economic, financial, and technical cooperation between Arab and African countries. Social impact lies at the heart of BADEA's priorities and its "BADEA 2030" strategy. The Bank acts primarily as a catalyst, offering a range of impact-oriented financial instruments, including sovereign loans (mainly for infrastructure), trade and private sector development, agricultural value chains, entrepreneurship, and SME growth. It also provides non-repayable capacity-building grants to support key development projects in sub-Saharan Africa.

More information: [www.badea.org](http://www.badea.org)

## **About Afreximbank**

African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) is a pan-African multilateral financial institution mandated to finance and promote intra- and extra-African trade. For over 30 years, the Bank has been deploying innovative structures to deliver financing solutions that support the transformation of the structure of Africa's trade, accelerating industrialisation and intra-regional trade, thereby boosting economic expansion in Africa. A stalwart supporter of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), Afreximbank has launched a Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) that was adopted by the African Union (AU) as the payment and settlement platform to underpin the implementation of the AfCFTA. Working with the AfCFTA Secretariat and the AU, the Bank has set up a US\$10 billion Adjustment Fund to support countries effectively participating in the AfCFTA. At the end of December 2024, Afreximbank's total assets and contingencies stood at over US\$40.1 billion, and its shareholder funds amounted to US\$7.2 billion. Afreximbank has investment grade ratings assigned by GCR (international scale) (A), Moody's (Baa1), China Chengxin International Credit Rating Co., Ltd (CCXI) (AAA), Japan Credit Rating Agency (JCR) (A-) and Fitch (BBB-). Afreximbank has evolved into a group entity comprising the Bank, its equity impact fund subsidiary called the Fund for Export Development Africa (FEDA), and its insurance management subsidiary, AfrexInsure (together, "the Group"). The Bank is headquartered in Cairo, Egypt.

More information: [www.afreximbank.com](http://www.afreximbank.com)