



## 2019 Annual Adebayo Adedeji Lecture

### Digital transformation of Africa: hype or reality?

#### Background

The media are awash with reports that Africa is going digital. As the developed world, on which the continent depends for technology, is going digital, Africa has no choice but to follow. The future competitiveness of Africa's economies and the prosperity and security of its people depend on the speed and depth with which it goes digital with the rest of the world. Digital technologies and digitally enabled technologies can allow African countries to advance the frontiers of their development, to meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to realize the aspirations of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

The African Union and regional economic communities are taking proactive steps to provide continental and regional frameworks for Africa's digital transformation just as Member States are taking policy actions, including introducing digital identity platforms, to enhance their digital readiness and preparedness. The success of recent continental initiatives, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, Boosting Intra-African Trade and the Single African Air Transport Market, will depend on digital tools and skills.

#### Objectives

Although a lot has been written in the popular press about Africa's digital transformation, not a great deal is known about how much of that is just hype

and how much of it is reality. The objective of the 2019 Adebayo Adedeji Memorial Lecture, therefore, is to raise issues that will help policymakers to disentangle the hype from reality in order for them to make evidence-based and reality-informed policy choices and decisions. The Lecture will interrogate ideas, identify action areas, and propose tangible suggestions for debate and consideration by policymakers. It will help to increase awareness among African policymakers of the promise and perils of the digital economy and promote high-level dialogue on these issues.

#### Distinguished Lecturer

Dr. Omobola Johnson, Former Minister of Communication Technology, Federal Republic of Nigeria; Board Member, Web Foundation

#### Discussants

Amel Saidane, Member of the Advisory Board, ECA Digital ID and Digital Economy Initiative  
Tawanda Sibanda, Partner, McKinsey

#### Access

- RESTRICTED – by invitation only
- The venue is to be confirmed
- 25 March 2019, from 12.30 – 2 p.m.

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