



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY  
BUILDING FOUNDATION

FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT  
DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

# Role of African Think Tanks in spearheading the African Development Agenda

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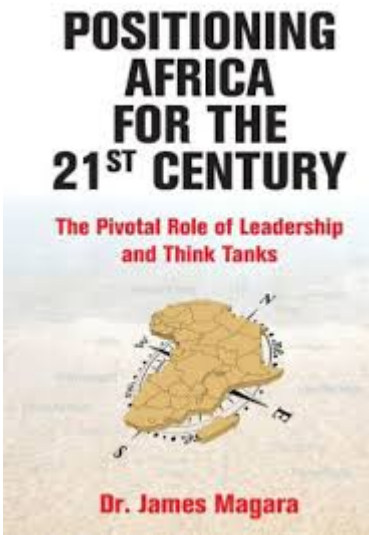
**The African Capacity Building Foundation**

**AFRICA-CHINA THINK TANK FORUM**

23 May 2019

Lusaka – Zambia





**“A national think tank is to a nation what the brain is to the body”** Dr. James Magara (author of the book *Positioning Africa in the 21st Century: The Pivotal Role of Leadership and Think Tanks*)



# OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Objectives of the presentation
- 3 Africa's development agenda: overview of the role of think tanks
- 4 Spearheading African development agenda: potential role of think tanks
- 5 Efforts and initiatives by African Think Tanks: Some illustrations
- 6 Supporting think tanks to better play their role
- 7 Conclusion

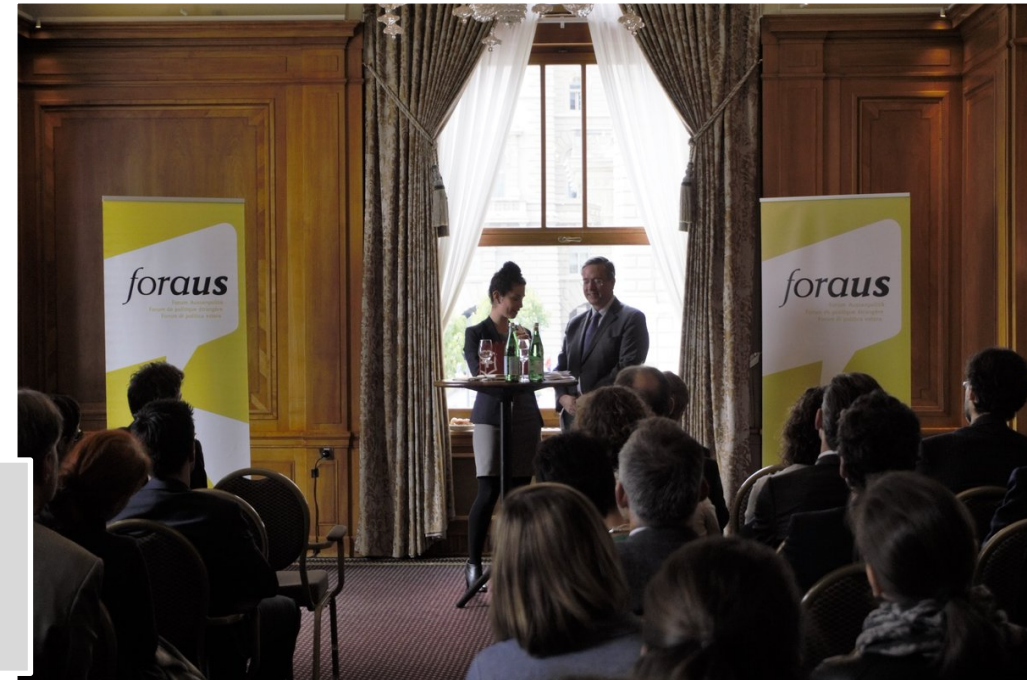


# 1. Introduction: stories



March 2019: visit of International Cooperation Center of the National Development and Reform Commission (ICC-NDRC) of the People's Republic of China

*foraus* trusted partnership with the Swiss Foreign Ministry and no foreign policy is drafted and implemented without consultation with the think tank



# 1. Introduction: key questions



- ❖ Do African think tanks really support the continent's development agenda?
- ❖ What has been the experience of African think tanks in spearheading Africa's development agenda?
- ❖ How can African think tanks better spearhead the development agendas of the continent?
- ❖ What kind of support is required for think tanks to better play their role?



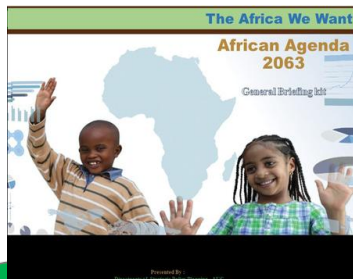
## 2. Objectives



- ❖ discuss the potential role of think tanks in supporting Africa's development agenda
- ❖ share some of the experience of African think tanks in spearheading Africa's development agenda
- ❖ propose some recommendations on how think tanks can be better supported to play their role for the socio-economic transformation of the continent.



# 3. Africa's development agenda: overview of the role of think tanks



## FTYIP (Agenda 2063)

20 Goals, 39 Priority Areas, 256 Targets, 248 Indicators

- Social Sustainability Cultural
- Economic Political Others

## 17 SDGs

- Social - 169 Targets
- Economic - 231 Indicators
- Sustainability Issues

Assimilation/infusion/incorporation  
/integration/mainstream

## National

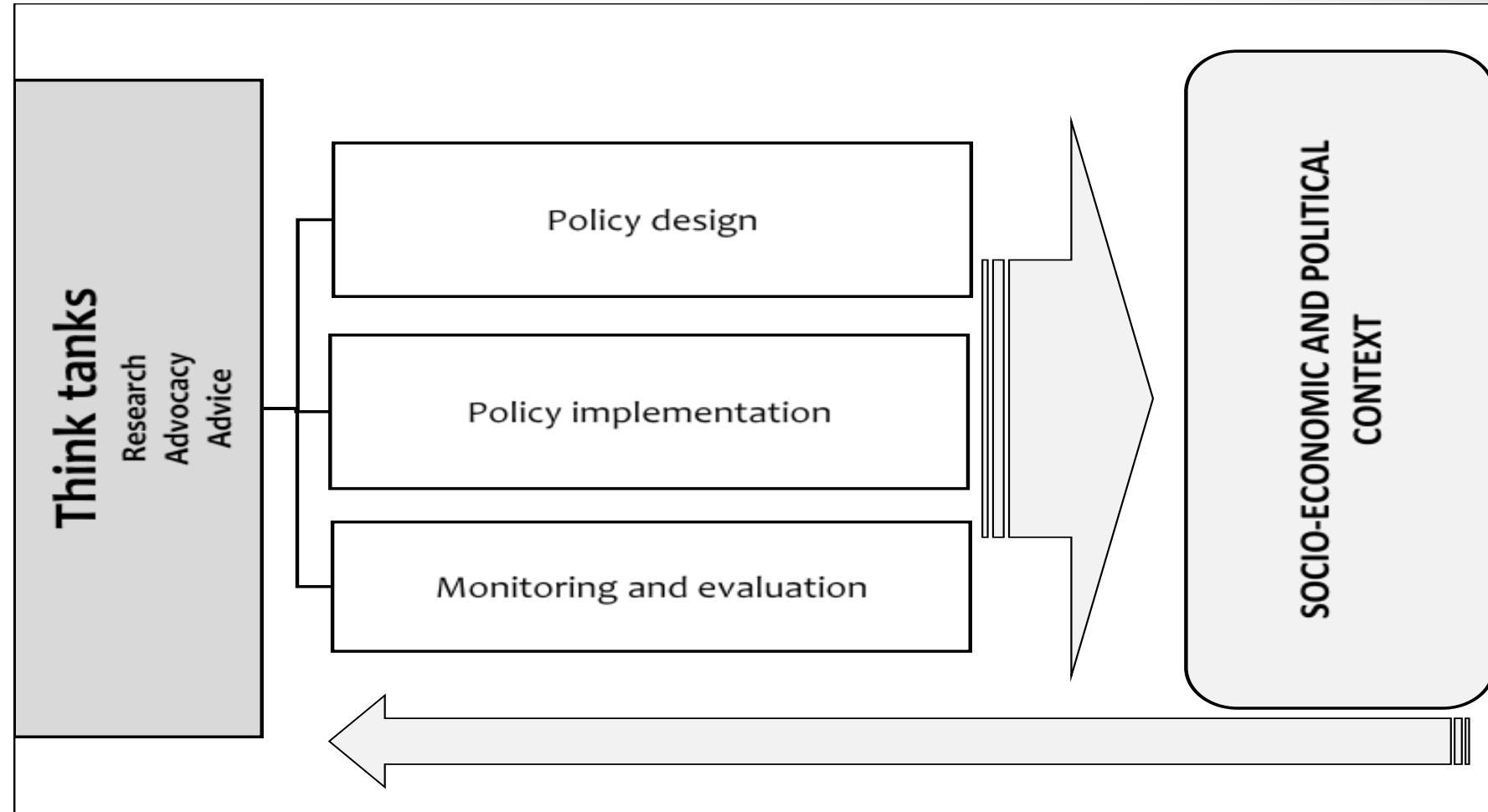
- Strategic Frameworks
- Action Plans

## RECs

- Strategic Frameworks
- Actions



### 3. Africa's development agenda: overview of the role of think tanks





## 4. Spearheading African development agenda: potential role of think tanks

Evidence-based  
research, policy and  
analysis

- ❖ *Address critical policy issues.* Stakeholder consultations reveal that think tanks are adept at providing relevant research on critical and emerging policy issues and are often considered experts by stakeholders that often rely on their input and advice.
- ❖ *Actively participate in policy discourse.* Think tanks are often requested to participate, or lead, in policy discourse by key government officials through the development of policy research and/or dissemination.
- ❖ *Produce quality products and services.* Stakeholders have a strong perception of the ability of think tanks to produce relatively high-quality products and services.



## 4. Spearheading African development agenda: potential role of think tanks



Advocacy and public engagement

- ❖ *Influencing and impacting policy.* This can be done rigorous policy analysis and publications and dissemination as well as policy discourse.
- ❖ *Using different tactics for policy influence .* Policy dialogues and workshops appear to be utilized extensively and have had some impact on policy reform. Other advocacy tools such as television and radio can also be used.
- ❖ *Produce quality products and services.* Stakeholders have a strong perception of the ability of think tanks to produce relatively high-quality products and services.



## 4. Spearheading African development agenda: potential role of think tanks



*Capacity building*

- ❖ *technical research*
- ❖ *developing and training on methods of creating evidence*
- ❖ *facilitating participatory methods*
- ❖ *building alliances for better influence on policy*
- ❖ *training critical masses of the various stakeholders involved in decision-making*



## 5. 4. Efforts and initiatives by African Think Tanks: Some illustrations

1

**Continental level: Africa Think Tank Summits by ACBF paying attention to continental and global agendas**

2016 Summit on “Creating a Sustainable Future for African Think Tanks in Support of SDGs and Agenda 2063 Implementation”

- ❖ evidence policy design
- ❖ implementation and monitoring based on research and analysis
- ❖ capacity development activities for state and non-state actors
- ❖ provision of platforms for stakeholder engagement
- ❖ dialogue and advocacy



## 5.4. Efforts and initiatives by African Think Tanks: Some illustrations

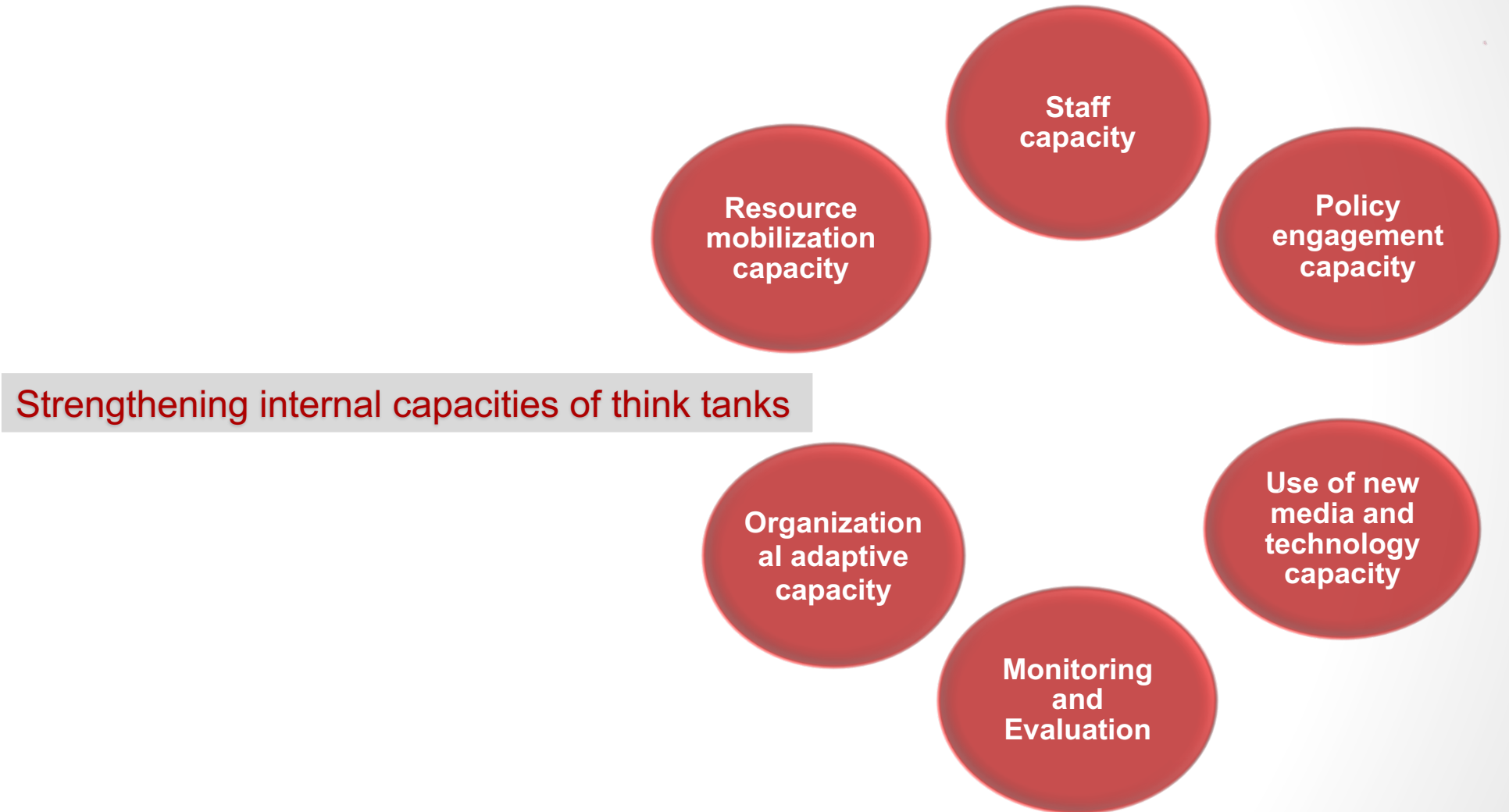
2

### Country level: African Think Tanks supporting global and national agendas

- ❖ **EPRC (Uganda)** – playing a major analytical role in integrating the SDGs in Uganda’s development strategies in the context of the country’s Vision 2040, which EPRC contributed to developing in close collaboration with Uganda’s National Planning Authority
- ❖ **EEPRI (Ethiopia)** – closely consulting with the country’s planning commission in order to integrate the SDGs with the Ethiopian Growth and Transformation Plan. EEPRI has also worked with the country’s subnational governments, supporting them to monitor their progress towards the Growth and Transformation Plan.



## 6. Supporting think tanks to better play their role



## 6. Supporting think tanks to better play their role

### ***Government support to national think tanks – ACBF's call***

- institutionalize the mainly ad hoc arrangements in place in a number of African countries
- provide unrestricted, periodic subvention to enable think tanks to deliver policy-relevant research

### ***Africa Think Tank Support Facility***

- well-resourced from the outset, able to replenish its endowment through philanthropic and market as well as other mechanisms and ensure stable levels of support
- provide a good window for financing as well as political support



## 7. Conclusion



- successful implementation of Agendas 2063 and 2030 as well as the regional and national development plans must be supported by the think tanks and underpinned by evidenced-based policy-making
- **BUT** for think tanks to better play their role, they need to be politically and financially supported – the sustainability of African think tanks is ultimately the responsibility of Africans themselves





....remember...

**Reflection/proverbs**

**“When spiders unite they can tie up a lion.”**

**African Proverb**

**“Men see only the present, but heaven sees the future.”** **Chinese Proverb**



# Thank you for your Attention

Nous vous remercions pour votre  
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