



Transcript Title: Opportunities for Economic Growth in Africa

Date: June 2007

Podcast Length: 5:14

Summary: Hubert Danso, one of IBM's partners in the Global Innovation Outlook and Vice Chairman of NEPAD's business group is also Managing Editor of Africa Investor. Hubert speaks about the role of public and private partnerships to enable economic growth in Africa.

Host: Verna Grayce Hamman, Global Innovation Outlook, IBM

HERMES: Hello, and welcome to The Global Innovation Outlook Podcast Series, where IBM demonstrates the innovative value of collaboration. Verna Grayce Hamman is in Dakar Senegal and with one of our GIO Deep Divers.

HAMMAN: We're here in Dakar, Senegal, with Hubert Danso, Vice Chairman of NEPAD's business group and also Managing Editor of Africa Investor. Welcome, Hubert.

DANSO: Thank you.

HAMMAN: As one of IBM's partners in the Global Innovation Outlook, could you speak about the role of public and private partnerships to enable economic growth in Africa?

DANSO: Since the emergence of Kofi Annan's initiative to support public and private sector development worldwide, we've seen a real uptake from African policy makers and African business leaders and companies operating in Africa to really work together to stimulate the creation of greater employment and a better understanding of shared resources and knowledge pursuant to development goals.

HAMMAN: As someone who advises the investment community both within Africa and internationally, can you share with us some of your observations on the opportunities you see around enabling as well as expanding financial services and the financial sector in general?

DANSO: I think one of the challenges but also one of the opportunities is the fact that certain sectors within

the continent are under developed, and there is a willing to transform and leapfrog to make development really work economically.

So if you look at the financial services, one of the biggest issues is how to engage and work with the unbanked masses. And you're seeing new innovation from the financial services sector, a number of the financial institutions, as well as the mobile and cellular telephone companies to create products and services for this massive market.

HAMMAN: Along lines of strategies for the private sector to effectively transform thinking and potentially impact policy that will enable opportunities for economic growth, how could the private sector think about their strategies for that?

DANSO: I think in many respects the private sector know exactly what resources they can bring. And we've been at pains to point out to governments yes, the private sector are obviously good partners and long-term investors, but they also have a wealth of knowledge and expertise which is probably in many respects more valuable than that investment, because the investment is there but the know-how and the partnership required to really unlock it and in a sustainable way create employment needs to be further developed.

And I think organizations like the NEPAD business group that creates specific sectoral opportunities, so if you're from the IT sector, you can come into a group that brings together the thought leaders that really want to help the NEPAD program, the ICT program, one of their very specific and priority initiatives. And it works right across. There's financial services, there's capital flows, amongst others.

HAMMAN: One of the unique characteristics of the

GIO Podcast Series: An Innovation Conversation about Economic Growth in Africa

African continent is in a sense its lack of entrenched infrastructure, and that possibly makes it an open proving ground for new technologies and industries.

Do you see that as a potential opportunity for companies to come in and do innovation that is appropriate for the African market but also can be exported to other markets?

DANSO: Absolutely. I think one of the key issues there is the under regulation and it's really creating a sort of open playing field for responsible corporate partners to use the continent as a test case for innovative adaptable technologies that are capable of helping Africa leapfrog some of the development challenges particularly in the area of mobile telephony, we're seeing climate change initiatives so the Clean Development Mechanism -- the CDM -- technology to really help capture the emissions and help Africa trade emission carbon credits is a huge opportunity.

HAMMAN: And these seem like areas where Africa as a continent could really develop a unique economic expertise and competence that would allow it to compete in a global economy.

DANSO: Precisely that. And that's why we encourage initiatives like the IBM Global Innovation Outlook, because this is where you capture those ideas. This is where companies, stakeholders within the IBM ecosystem really feel comfortable enough to share, you're meeting the [UN] Millennium Development Goal number eight, that's a fantastic contribution towards this space. And we look forward to bringing some of this thinking and taking it forward within the NEPAD Business Group.

HAMMAN: And one final question. As you look across the private sector industries in Africa, do you think of any ways that the private sector can identify, you know, the silos that inhibit them to work more efficiently, and think

GIO Podcast Series: An Innovation Conversation about Economic Growth in Africa

about new models of shared risk across potential industry silos?

DANSO: I think there are definitely silos, but there are definitely examples of where companies have broken outside of their own sort of IP constraints, their own capacity to be able to share what is perceived to be competitive information.

You can look to a number of the national and industry specific sectoral organizations, identify some of the non contentious, non competitive issues, and really make a good contribution towards the continent's development in your sector. And I think that's a good starting point, because there's a test case.

And then bring that thinking into the continent, and then vice versa. There are lots of interesting perspectives that are being developed within Africa that again could contribute towards the global environment.

HAMMAN: Hubert, thank you for time today, and thank you for being such a great partner.

DANSO: We look forward to working with you. Cheers.

HERMES: For more information about the Global Innovation Outlook please visit www.ibm.com/gio.

[END OF SEGMENT]