



Building and integrating Africa's manufacturing capacities

The Welding Federation (TWF) held a webinar on the 21 October at which Ayorinde (Ayo) Adeniyi of the Nigerian Institute of Welding reviewed manufacturing in Africa through the 20th century, the practices that have caused Africa's growth in manufacturing to stagnate and the new concepts being implemented by TWF to industrialise and add value to economies across the continent.



Market friction across Africa's industries has reached a level beyond the capacity or capability of any single member state. The isolated approach that has been applied by a number of member states through the decades has made no significant impact on accelerating GDP growth. Rather, it has established a premise for stagnated capacities and growing friction across Africa's industries.

Africa is still absorbed in the misconception of benchmarking economic growth on her array of natural resources. Although the continent boasts an impressive 10% of global oil reserve, 40% of gold deposit and a host of others, her continuous embrace of an evidently erroneous practice is inconsistent with evolving realities and compounded by her growing responsibility to an emerging 2.5-billion persons' needs with massive infrastructural deficit.

According to a Goldman Sachs report of 2019, commodities have accounted for only 30% of Africa's GDP growth since the year 2000. This economic model, which was tightly embraced by all of Africa throughout the last century, therefore favoured her economy for a limited window of time. Weak performances of Africa's economy in the latter half of last century revealed the need for a new construct towards improving Africa's growing but underperforming economy.

In reality, Africa's poor approach, embraced for too long, resulted in more harm than just underperforming economies, but also deeper cuts and stagnation of capabilities that have and still do characterise her industries. The collection of decades that make up the years between 1980 and 2020 is in some way regarded as Africa's golden decades. Within this window of time, Africa experienced some of her most explosive economic activities. A situation which offered a plethora of opportunities to

build and expand her problem solving capacities, premised on the volume of investment inflow. Unfortunately, her industrial adventures were centred mostly on her immediate interest i.e. natural resources, without extensive consideration of the fragility of economies heavily dependent on these. This triggered a gross imbalance in the relationship between Africa's growing economies and her manufacturing capabilities to solve her industrial challenges. Despite the avalanche of economic activities during this window period, Africa's experienced a slow and linear progress in terms of her manufacturing capacity development drive. A situation yet to be addressed.

Market frictions across Africa's industries are more engineered than real, through uncensored inflows of parties with vested interests; and an unequal basis for competition against established systems with nurtured economic interests in Africa's maturing markets. Africa continues to engage her energies and focus in attempting to counter business interests rather than focusing on addressing the frictions of her industries thereby growing and sustaining capacity to solve problems.

The best way to make it easier for new industrial investment is to develop and deploy capacities for solutions with fairness, quality and consistency. Africa would be better served if she deployed her energy to address industry friction effectively rather than deploying measures to hold onto historical economic interests, which may never be eliminated. Without a strategy change, this problem could be with us forever!

The need to engineer a strategy at deeper levels in order to manage value chain activities in her industries requires Africa to have better control and knowledge of industrialisation. This can best be achieved through an effective and efficiently integrated system of interac-



At the presentation of an IIW International Welding Specialist Diploma to Joseph Jarrell of Aveon Offshore are, from left: David Adidi, Examination and Certifications, NIW-ANB; Joseph Durotoye, GM, Aveon Offshore; Joseph Jarrell, Welding Specialist, Aveon Offshore; Ayo Adeniyi, CEO, NIW-ANB; and Hamza Boutaleb-Joutei, Welding Engineer, Aveon Offshore.

tion across Africa's industries. A system is needed that is based on establishing a wider network that goes beyond the socio-political manipulations of member state governments; a system initiated, evaluated and professionally managed for evidential impact in addressing real industry challenges.

The proposal to effect an integrated system goes beyond national talk-shops and changing nomenclature of qualification and certification schemes for unsustainable deals. A well-engineered dynamic to effect management efficiency over the pace, quality, economics and how manufacturing impacts on Africa's GDP change is necessary.

Effectively and efficiently implemented, the manufacturing and service sector are both sure to stir job creation along every step of the welding value chain, including active engagement of Africa's learning institutions. The path of positive GDP growth can be continuous if such an integrated system is applied with steady commitment to continual improvement.

To get involved in the new Africa awakening, get involved with the TWF.

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