

# RESEARCH M\*ONITOR

Issue No. 12

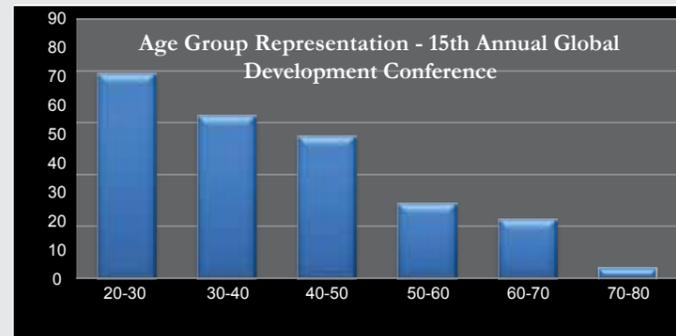
September 2014

  
**GDN** Global  
Development  
Network  
15 Years of Research Capacity Building  
1999 - 2014

**GDN's 15th  
Annual Conference  
'Structural Transformation  
in Africa and Beyond'**

**GDN's 15th Annual Global Development Conference Insights**  
**18-20 June, 2014**  
**Accra, Ghana**

*Here is a bird's eye view of participants, demography, gender and geographic representation at the Conference.*



**Issue No.12**  
**CONTENTS**

**Page 2**  
The Role of Structural Transformation in Development  
Africa Has Grown Rapidly But Will It Last?  
Tackling Poverty

**Page 3**  
Building Capacity for Natural Resource Management and Structural Transformation  
Agriculture in Africa  
Key Drivers for Industrialization

**Page 4**  
Keynote Address: Eleni Gabre-Madhin (including interview)  
Social and Economic Transformation: Virtuous or Vicious Circle?  
Figures of the Conference Participation

**Page 5**  
Interviews and Events:  
Frannie Léautier & Célestin Monga

**Page 6**  
Keynote Address:  
Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala  
The Challenge for Research on African Continent

**Page 7**  
African Economic Outlook 2014 Book Launch  
Scientific Committee of the 2014 Conference

**Page 8**  
Essay Competition  
Figures of the Essay Competition  
Workshop for Students  
Some Words from Winners

**Page 9**  
Awards and Medals Competition  
Winners of the A&M Competition

**Back cover**  
About GDN  
The 16th Forthcoming Annual Global Development Conference

**INTRODUCTION**

***Structural Transformation in Africa and Beyond***

The African continent has undergone major transformation over the last two decades. Growth has been buoyant despite the deep and continuous effect of the 2007-2008 financial crisis. Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced an average real rate of growth of about 5 percent since 1995 and has been able to sustain such growth in recent years. Transformation is at play, with its host of structural, political, economic, social and human challenges.

The big questions are whether and how such growth may be sustainable, not only from an economic, but also from social and environmental perspectives. As we address these challenges, it is also crucial to look at how transformation has been taking place in other parts of the world - in Latin America, in Asia or in Central and Eastern Europe. The 15th Annual Global Development Conference drew the attention on the major theme of "Structural Transformation in Africa and Beyond" and featured some of the work supported by GDN and its Regional Network Partners, as well as research studies from all over the world.

GDN introduced significant innovation in its 2014 Annual Global Development Conference. Our overarching goal was to provide young researchers with a unique opportunity to interact with their peers and with top researchers in the profession, and to help them identify issues, methods and partners so that they are encouraged to produce good quality research and contribute to better policies.

The Conference was organized around a competitive call for sessions and papers, in addition our annual Global Development Awards and Medals Competition. It showcased the work conducted by young researchers through presentations, discussions and posters exhibition. An essay competition, in partnership with UNECA, was organised that gave the opportunity to 50 young African students to present their views on the topic "Imagining the Future of Africa 2025". Finally, over 430 participants from almost 70 countries shared their views on the major theme of 'Structural Transformation in Africa and Beyond', through 7 plenary sessions, 22 parallel sessions, 3 keynote speeches (such as Dr. Eleni Gabre-Madhin, Dr. Célestin Monga and Nigeria's Coordinating Minister for Economy and Minister of Finance Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala). Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is also GDN's board member.

**CONFERENCE PARTNERS**

The 2014 Conference, held in Accra, Ghana on 18-20 June, 2014, was organized in partnership with the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), the University of Ghana and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and with the support of The World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Department for International Development (DFID), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada.



### Tackling Poverty

Despite 30 years of sustained growth in Africa, as Adebbe Shimeles explained, the facts show that indexes of poverty have stagnated and Gini coefficient has increased since the beginning of the 2000s. Specifically, the agricultural sector is particularly sensitive as it harbours 54% of African poor.

To reduce poverty, the three panellists in parallel session 15 agreed that structural transformation, triggered by enhanced policies, was necessary. Abebe Shimeles insisted on the need for massive investment in two fields: physical infrastructure and human capital. Mina Balioune-Lutz stressed the key role of trade to tackle poverty.

Even though trade has considerably increased in Africa since the 1970s, there is still room for improvement – especially through trade policies, exchange rate policies, banking systems, aid for trade or regional integration. Lastly, Francis Mulangu presented a simple partial equilibrium model that simulates the impact of economic shocks on cash and food crop prices.

The insights derived from this study are of great relevance to economic transformation, and in particular, for the transformation in agriculture in Africa.

### The Role of Structural Transformation in Development

The first plenary session of GDN's 15th Annual Conference introduced extensively the core topic that led the sessions for next three days: the key roles of structural transformation (ST) in development. Setting the debate, Ernest Aryeetey reminded that, despite high growth rate in Africa during the past 25 years, ST had remained very low. We even witnessed “negative diversification”, movement from under-performing agricultural sector to less productive services sector. Stephen O'Connell pushed in this direction, insisting, for instance, on the productivity gap between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

The evolution of economic context in developing countries has deeply changed over the period and new needs of ST have consequently emerged. If the organization of the economy improves broadly, followed – though more heterogeneously – by industrialization, formalization of the economy still has to be achieved, pointed Ravi Kanbur. Beyond the economic scope, Helen Milner focused on democratic transformations that call for new strategies: the number of democracies in sub-Saharan Africa has exploded – as well as participation, competition, and, consequently, accountability and legitimacy of leaders. Focus should now be towards responsibility of executives, through increased roles and independence of Parliaments and the judiciary.

Stephen O'Connell finally introduced the core of the Conference: suggesting solutions to move forward keeping in mind, as Ravi Kanbur highlighted, that “ST of the past may not be the ST of the future”. The gap may be reduced by labor mobility, which would be determined by external factors, including rule of law, he stated. The diverse questions that followed the presentation showed the burning importance of the topic of ST.

**Africa has grown rapidly but will it last? Will growth expand formal employment to bring about shared prosperity? The African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) proposed an answer to these questions in its African Transformation Report presented in parallel session 3.**

### Africa has Grown Rapidly but will it Last?

Africa has grown rapidly but will it last? Will growth make African countries internationally competitive and resilient? Will growth expand formal employment to bring about shared prosperity? The African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) proposed an answer to these questions in its African Transformation Report launched in April and presented during parallel session 3.

ACET views economic transformation as economic growth plus structural transformation. The aim of this report is to focus economic policy on transformation, to provide analyses in order to build sound transformation strategies and to provide a tool to measure transformation: the African Transformation Index (ATI).

The ACET proposes to look at the DEPTH Indicator, based on five components reflecting economic transformation: Diversification, Export Competiveness, Productivity Increases, Technical upgrading and Human Well-being. The audience shared interests and concerns regarding data measurement and methodology. However, everyone acknowledged that it constitutes a first step towards economic transformation that fosters job creation and shared prosperity.

*Transparent and accountable governance would help tackle this problem and lead to more precise policies going beyond the commonly used taxation approach. In this framework, Building Capacity is the solution for countries to enforce so as to understand better their particular interests and challenges, reduce the asymmetry of information and focus on the real interest of Africa by acting with local communities.*

### Building Capacity for Natural Resource Management and Structural Transformation in Africa

Africa is endowed with a rich and various set of natural resources. She has still to find the best way to leverage these assets and avoid the Natural Resource Curse. In parallel session 4, panelists and discussant, though walking on different paths, commonly identified three main aspects. Based on the motto that “one size does not fit them all”, they emphasized the necessity of incorporating national specific aspects in Natural Resources Management policies.

They have to be holistic, going beyond sectors and scale without forgetting the particular context of the country. Post-conflict times might sadly be the nest of short-term strategies focusing on extraction as a source of revenue and employment. Beyond this aspect, asymmetrical information between governments and other agents is the second issue to be tackled. While negotiating contracts of exploitation, governments often tend to underestimate the power they have. Because they don't have access to proper data, they lack arguments and fail to maintain their Sovereign Rights. Once contracts are signed and exploitation starts, governments struggle with the monitoring of activities. Finally if policy designs are usually well managed, policy implementation still lies behind.

Transparent and accountable governance would help tackle this problem and might as well lead to more precise policies going beyond the commonly used taxation approach. In this framework, Building Capacity is the solution for countries to enforce so as to understand better their particular interests and challenges, reduce the asymmetry of information and focus on the real interest of Africa by acting with local communities.

### Agriculture in Africa

The world around African agriculture has known major changes in the past 30 years (prices volatility, income growth, etc.) and so have the needs for structural transformation of agricultural production on the continent. However, it appears that the common wisdom (For instance, use of fertilizers, chemicals or improved varieties is low) on which most analysis and prescription are based on, has not. With no doubt, proposing tailored and efficient policies is conditional for a refresh.

The aim of World Bank's programme 'Agriculture in Africa: Telling Facts from Myths', presented in parallel session 13, is to lead extensive surveys throughout the continent to provide up-to-date data on agriculture in order to confirm or to deconstruct such “quasi-axioms”. The first tool for proposal of efficient ST in African agriculture – this is a more realistic mental representation of current reality and issues – is now surely available, opening the way towards a closer fit of policies to farmers, consumers and traders' expectations.

### Key Drivers for Industrialization

UNU-WIDER's parallel session focused on three areas of major importance for structural transformation. Firstly, Dr. John Page tackled the issue of too little industrialization in Africa and identified three drivers that would help African industries learn to compete: the importance of “investment climate”, “learning by exporting” and “industrial agglomerations”.

Based on a structural probabilistic approach, Dr. Channing Arndt then argued that only environmental policies can avoid drastic negative economic impacts. Finally, Dr. Tony Addison presented the Research and Communication on Foreign Aid (ReCom) Program which aims at identifying what fails and what could be improved through development assistance. Addressing the audience, Frannie Leautier brought the three approaches together by highlighting following core issues: solving the energy problem, giving birth to dual world ideas and pushing the aid envelope of “what will work”.



## Keynote Address

**Eleni Gabre-Madhin**

Renowned economist and public intellectual



**The keynote address for the second day of the GDN Conference in Accra was delivered by renowned economist and public intellectual Eleni Gabre-Madhin.**

Her refreshingly original presentation combined a bird's-eye view with a concrete example to back it up. Dr. Gabre-Madhin stated that the possibility of an African structural change would be conditioned by 3 "i"s – incentives, institutions and infrastructure. Africa needs to "dare to dream" and invest in people and eco-systems for the long term. She forwarded the example of the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX), which had faced enormous skepticism when the idea of a world-class commodity exchange had first been floated. Within 4 years of starting of operations, the skeptics had been silenced, with ECX having an annual trading value of \$1.4bn in 2012, with more than 40% returns on investment. The exchange had also reached 2.4mn farmers.

What was behind this remarkable achievement? According to E. Gabre-Madhin - the right system, the right processes, and most importantly, the right people. ECX represented what she called was a New African Model, with its operations currently being replicated in Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon and Mozambique. ECX embodied Hope - in what Africa can achieve when people can think outside of the box, dream big, and work to transform those dreams into reality. Excerpts from an interview:

**Should we keep focusing or start acting now, and take actions?**

I am a big believer in research, there is a spectrum of researcher (who think that) you can do basic research or you can do applied research, (but) we need the entire spectrum. We have a gap in Africa: a lot of people do basic research but few people do practical and actionable research. We need to build capacities to bridge this.

**According to you, what is the role of the private sector in structural transformation?**

I think that we are seeing a new paradigm slowly emerging in Africa where the government is becoming an enabler of private activities. A vibrant private sector is critical for structural transformation. But you can't get a vibrant private sector if you don't take away the risks and the concerns that the private sector would have and you can only do that if you have an active government.

**Social and Economic Transformation: Is it a virtuous or vicious circle?**

Structural transformation relies deeply on social and economic transformation - the second plenary session focused on such pre-requisites. Macro-economic conditions may have evolved towards better environment in several development countries (be it opening to trade, investing massively in human capital, etc.), this has hardly proved sufficient – as Santiago Levy illustrated with the Mexico example. The dimensions of economic transformations are multiple. Agriculture is one key on which Alexandros Sarris insisted.

Industry is also a major one and John Page suggested various ideas to be developed – like encouraging clusters, echoing Célestin Monga's keynote – towards industrial diversification in Africa. We cannot afford to leave social structure apart from development. On this field, gender topics are essential, as explained and deeply documented by Elaine Zuckerman. Incentives – especially in tax policies – will be one of the keys towards achieving this structural transformation, supporting high productivity along with providing assistance to low income workers. More broadly, both qualitative and quantitative efforts have to be made towards all these directions by development agencies.



**Interview with  
Célestin Monga  
(The World Bank)**

**Do you think research is good for structural transformation in Africa or should we act now and not wait any longer?**

There is good and bad research. What we need is to free ourselves from the old models. The Structural Transformation will not magically take place and markets will never address by themselves the issues of coordination and externalities that are crucial. What we need is a facilitating state and a proactive government that does things more aggressively and more transparently.

**You said that there is a mismatch between education and job creation, what would the measure to take?**

There are several types of inconsistencies in African education policies: sometimes we train people that we don't need, sometimes we train people that we actually need but they leave the country. Migrants can send remittances but these are not a substitute to human capital that works well at home. The main idea is that education policies should be more focused and oriented towards the development of industries which have more competitive and comparative advantages, not just generic education ending up with lots of diplomas and degrees.

**In terms of industrial policies, could you give a concrete example of a labor-intensive measure?**

The structure of almost all African economies is that they are capital poor and labor rich. Wages are thus not that high. The idea is to have economic policies focusing on the development of industries which absorb a lot of labor: agribusiness, light manufacturing producing garments, textiles, not very complicated things to do that do not require a lot of technologies and a lot of capital but that can absorb a lot of people including women.

**"Africa needs to create jobs for young people."  
Frannie Léautier, Partner and CEO, Mkoba Private Equity**

**What is the contribution of ACBF to ST?**

The first role the foundation plays is in supporting autonomous Think Tanks that need to have this kind of capacity so they can do context-specific research. The second was to create a knowledge platform and bring researchers, policy-makers and decision-makers in a common place where they can share ideas and learn from each other. The third one was to invest in data collection and the foundation when I was there, launched the African Capacity Indicators Report, which assesses at every stage what countries have achieved in terms of capacity: to deliver results, to build a dynamic society, including the capacities to manage the society and then the capacity to implement.

**You now work in a private equity fund that boosts SME. Do you think SME represent a possible motor of ST?**

My motivation for going to the private sector and particularly to focus on the role of private equity to support SME comes from three realizations. Africa needs to create jobs for all the young people. They are 200 million young people who need jobs. SME employ between 70 and 80% of all people in Africa. If you want to create jobs, it's one of the best ways to do it. Then there is the opportunity to move activity from the informal towards the formal sectors. Thirdly SME do not receive enough funding: not from the banking sector that favors bigger and more collateralized companies, not from family wealth that is too limited, not from micro finance that focus on micro enterprises. At Mkoba, we take a minority share and after five years of transforming the company and making it profitable, we sell our shares and invest the return to finance a new pool of companies. This is a sustainable model of financing. You actively managed these companies and help them succeed.

**Do you also fund projects focusing on improving productivity?**

SME sectors are less productive than bigger ones. And we have to make profit, as it is one of our drivers along development results and sustainable business. Clearly productivity appears as a key determinant. You improve productivity as you bring in a degree of mechanization and sophistication of product and techniques. Productivity also benefits from better accounting and management. The investment is very important not only for the company but for the country as a whole as it helps building appropriate taxation structures. The third one is more around business strategy, marketing and branding. One of the trade-offs is, as productivity increases, the number of jobs diminishes or at least reallocates from low skilled to high skilled profiles. The advantage we have in Africa is that we are still at a stage of low structural transformation and this type of investment is still labor and productivity enhancing.



## Keynote Address

### Political Economy of Structural Transformation

#### Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Nigeria's Coordinating Minister for Economy and Minister of Finance and GDN Board Member



The keynote address delivered by Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala focused on one of the most important topics of the Conference which is the political economy of structural transformation.

In highlighting the topic of her discussion, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala underlined that the political calculus that determines the structural transformation is often missing from relevant academic debates and the research and policy-makers need to engage more to have better understanding of this. Dr. Ngozi highlighted that while academic discussions on structural transformation consistently downplay political economy questions of structural transformation, policy-makers are often at a loss to make systematic efforts to isolate the effects of policy changes on potential beneficiaries or the burden of cost. This is perhaps one of the key factors that dissociates research from policy-making. To reinforce her point, Dr. Ngozi, drew from her wealth of experience as an eminent policy-maker of one of the largest economies in Africa.

Nigeria, had undertaken some key reforms for power sector privatization, removal of fuel subsidy and reforms in industrial policy. Before the reforms kicked in, these sectors were highly inefficient, under-performing and fraught with corruption and rent-seeking behavior. The reforms proposed by the Government of Nigeria had to undergo a costly and tortuous path before being adopted because of vested interests and more often than not information on potential benefits and costs to the most relevant stakeholders were missing or misrepresented, giving rise to lack of consensus. This led to the reforms being inordinately delayed or partially rolled-back. The lack of information often also creates a lack of trust on the government, as highlighted by one of the participants from the floor, leading to unwarranted social and political tension.

Dr. Ngozi emphasized that researchers need to work very closely with policy-makers to understand the political calculus of structural transformation and in turn help policy-makers quantify the benefits and costs and identify more effectively the beneficiaries and detractors of certain policy changes. In tune with some of the suggestions from the floor, Dr. Ngozi accepted the fact that high quality research capacity is really weak in Africa especially since resources and institutions and infrastructure is lacking and more importantly budgetary support for research has been traditionally missing.

To overcome these impediments, the minister emphasized that countries in Africa identify priority areas in which research is required and invest heavily in it and also be open to processes of mutual learning from other countries in the region who are facing similar problems.

### The Challenge for Research on African Continent

The sixth plenary session, gathering panelists from African research institutions, aimed at discussing the challenges as well as the promises for research on the African continent. A consensus emerged on the need for research to be more policy-oriented and for bridging the current gap between academic research and the policy-makers' needs. The first challenge is thus to use the knowledge and the outcomes of African universities and researchers for policy-making. In order to bridge this gap, research should move from supply-driven to demand-driven mechanisms. The panelists also emphasized that the lack of data is an impediment for evidence-based research, which is of the most importance to conduct sound structural transformation. Furthermore, they pointed out the need to create an enabling environment in order to facilitate long-term financing as well as investments from domestic or international industries. Private sector financing in fields with a huge potential for research, such as renewable energies, is a premise for a more demand-driven research. It is also a key for African researchers to reinforce their integration into global research and networks all over the world.

### Africa Economic Outlook 2014

The session Chaired by Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa brought together an eminent group of discussants and panelists to discuss and comment on the contents of the Africa Economic Outlook 2014, produced by AfDB in collaboration with UNDP and the OECD Development Centre. Some of the major points concerning African Economies were highlighted by Abebe Shimeles from AfDB and Angela Lusigi from UNDP. They kickstarted the discussion by highlighting three major concerns with the African economies a) large and persistent unemployment in African development and growth; b) dominance of natural resources in African economic growth story and the challenge of harnessing this to engineer structural transformation and c) the need to re-think structural transformation in the context of emerging global value chains. Their presentation focused on some of the most important characteristics of African economic growth and development.

#### Book Launch:

*International Development: Ideas, Experience and Prospects, Currie-Alder, Kanbur, Malone & Medhora, Oxford University Press [2014]*

#### Interview with Ravi Kanbur

#### How can the academic world shed light on structural transformation?

Structural Transformation (ST) is a complex topic. We view it with the same lens of 50 years ago. One example is informality where the old view would have predicted it to go down with growth but it didn't. The tricky question is: should that worry us or not? Development economics goes in cycles. After focusing on macro-level policies, now we're back to structural composition of output. My warning is, when jumping over these 25 years, be cautious about using the models of that time to assess what the world is going to look like in the coming years.

#### Can educating the next African Generation help ST ?

Regarding this question, we must separate basic and higher-level education. We start seeing the effect of the efforts put in place in the last three decades on the latter. The situation is slowly changing. GDN has a big role to play in that. Basic education is the more general one, which I think is a different kind of animal.



### Scientific Committee of the 15th Annual Global Development Conference

Yaw ANSU (Chief Economist of the African Center for Economic Transformation), Ernest ARYEETEEY (Vice Chancellor of University of Ghana & GDN Board), Elizabeth ASIEDU (Professor at Kansas University & President of Association for the Advancement of African Women Economists), Abdoulaye BIO TCHANE (President of Alindaou Consulting International), Francois BOURGUIGNON (Paris School of Economics & GDN Board), Paul COLLIER CBE (Director for the Centre for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University & Professor of Economics and Public Policy at Blavatnik School of Government), Augustin Kwasi FOSU (Professor of the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research-ISSER at University of Ghana), Alan GELB (Senior fellow at the Center for Global Development), Patrick GUILLAUMONT (Emeritus Professor at Université d'Auvergne & President of Fondation pour les études et recherches sur le développement international-FERDI), Abdalla HAMDOK (Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa-UNECA), Alain HENRY (Director of research at Agence Française de Développement), Pierre JACQUET (President of GDN), Ravi KANBUR (Professor at Cornell University & GDN Board), Hiroshi KATO (Vice president of Japan International Cooperation Agency-JICA & Director of JICA Research Institute), Mwangi KIMENYI (Senior Fellow and Director of the Africa Growth Initiative & Advisory board member of the School of Economics at University of Nairobi), Frannie LÉAUTIER (Managing Partner for Mkoba Fund LLC), Margaret McMILLAN (Associate professor of economics at Tufts University and Research Associate in the NBER's program on International Trade and Investment), Emmanuel NNADOZIE (Executive Secretary of African Capacity Building Foundation-ACBF), Jean-Pierre OLIVIER DE SARDAN (Professeur at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales - EHESS and Director of Research at Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique-CNRS), Jean-Philippe PLATTEAU (Professor at University of Namur & EUDN & GDN Board), Alice Nicole SINDZINGRE (Research Fellow at Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique-CNRS and Visiting Lecturer and Research Associate at School of Oriental and African Studies-SOAS University of London), Lemma W. SENBET (AERC Executive Director & William E. Mayer Chair professor of Finance University of Maryland), L. Alan WINTERS CB (Chair of the GDN Board & Professor at University of Sussex).

## Figures for the Essay Competition

The competition announcement was launched globally for the benefit of young African graduates and GDN received a large number of applications with innovative, interesting and 'out-of-the-box' thinking in the form of essays on *Imagining the Future of Africa 2025*. Through the open call for essays, 423 essay submissions were received which went through a rigorous multi-level review process resulting in the selection of the top 50 essays written by students of universities from 16 different Francophone and Anglophone African countries (Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania (United Republic of), Togo, Zimbabwe). The selected winners list was well-balanced between female (40%) and male (60%) winners.

## Workshop for Winners

A dedicated workshop for the students was organised with an objective of imparting writing and oral skills, structure and methods to write and presenting a paper with a research problem. The selected 50 teams were split into two groups: English-speaking and French-speaking students. They were given a presentation by GDN senior staff on the building blocks of writing a good essay, methods used to argue in a persuasive manner and how to base their speeches on evidence, facts and figures. The workshop also encouraged the teams, students in groups of four, to collate their ideas on the topic of *Imagining the Future of Africa 2025* from different perspectives, such as how to decide what to highlight in the presentation, the angle and the problem of the presentation. Groups were designed with a careful mix of nationalities to give more space for interesting cross-country ideas and thoughts from all across the African continent. After a workshop of 90 minutes, each group rehearsed the presentation of their ideas in a limited time period in front of the audience including UNECA essay winners and a panel of high-level experts invited for the workshop.

## Essay Competition: 'Imagining the Future of Africa 2025'

In 2014, the Global Development Network (GDN) launched the first edition of an essay competition, in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The essay competition pursued the specific objective of organizing and financing the participation to the Conference of 50 graduate students from the African continent. The students were selected through a broad-based essay competition, open to all sciences and economics graduates on the topic. This essay competition was new and original in its requirement to have submissions with a good academic background and based on evidence and scientific knowledge. Eligibility for the competition was notably conditioned on registration in a graduate curriculum. The selected students received the opportunity to: (i) attend the Conference and interact with senior researchers, policy-makers and representatives of civil society; (ii) interact together and make new contacts; (iii) and attend a specific workshop for them and present some of their ideas in front of some of the Conference speakers. The selected speakers were leading specialist and global experts from the fields of economics and international development, including Dr. Ernest Aryeetey (Vice Chancellor, University of Ghana), Sir Paul Collier CBE (Oxford University), Dr. Frannie Léautier (Chief Executive Officer, Mkoba Private Equity), Dr. Célestin Monga (The World Bank), Professor L. Alan Winters CB (University of Sussex), and the representatives of GDN and UNECA (Professor Pierre Jacquet, President of GDN and Dr. Adam B. Elhiraika, Director of the Macroeconomic Policy Division, UNECA).



"Thank you, words will never be enough. Imagine I didn't pay for anything but got such a wonderful experience in return, it's still hard to believe, too good to be true. I had a memorable experience in Accra, met people I would have never met in my lifetime. All thanks to you GDN, you helped me to discover a world outside my own. That we are all one, that there are people out there very keen to see Africa grow! I learnt and I will forever be grateful. I am overwhelmed. Thank you!" **Nyasha Tendai Muzata, University of Badji Mokhtar Annaba, Algeria.**

Commenting on his achievement in an online newspaper, **a proud graduate from University of Rwanda, Moses Asimwe**, said: "I feel delighted; I am happy with my achievement. It's such an honor seeing my university being represented in this academic venture. This award provides me a big opportunity to share information with other people from different countries. However, most of all I'm looking forward to sharing these ideas with people at home as we seek a way forward to development."



## Medals Competition

For 15 years now, GDN has organized annually a competition for promoting research on development: the Medals for Research on Development (Medals) is a unique program that recognizes and awards completed research by developing country researchers that have engaged in path-breaking approaches in addressing development issues. A spotlight was placed on the six finalists for the Medals program during the Conference and they had an opportunity to present their research during the plenary sessions of the second day of the Conference.

Three plenary sessions were devoted to the research shortlisted for the Medals program and each session was devoted to one of the three themes of the competition: determinants of growth, industrial and trade policies; environmental sustainability, management of natural resources and structural transformations; political, institutional, social and governance transformations. The 6 researchers who passed the selection process are from 4 different countries: Cameroon, Ghana, India and Nigeria.

Every researcher highlighted an aspect of structural transformation and brought an innovative perspective for policy design. Be it land reform, non-tariff barriers and trade or malnutrition and mortality, the content of these sessions were varied and very constructively discussed.

The medals were granted during the closing plenary session on the last day of the Conference. Receiving tremendous recognition and exposure through presenting at the plenary stage, the developing country researchers also obtained insightful comments on their research from high-level discussants and the audience which included academics, policy-makers, development practitioners and young researchers.

All three sessions highlighted important aspects of Structural Transformation and contributed to an enhanced understanding of this complex and extremely important issue.

## Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development and Most Innovative Development Project

The 10th parallel session at the Conference featured the research proposals submitted by finalists of the Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development. The presentations at the session touched on various topics such as restrictions to finance for MSME's, innovative solutions to mitigating risks and lowering vulnerabilities and female entrepreneurship. While varied, each presentation highlighted issues intrinsically important to achieving structural transformation in developing country contexts. A special category of the Awards Competition is the Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project. Under this category, social development projects addressing burning development issues through innovative approaches are selected for scaling up through financing and technical assistance. Three finalist organizations were selected to present their work at the parallel session on how they are working towards solving developmental problems in the fields of health, education and livelihoods using unique and varied solutions.

## Winners: First Prizes

### First prize MIDP:

Science of Life Studies 24/7 in Cambodia for the project on Equal Opportunities for Education.

### First prize ORD:

Ms. Kanchana Wickramasinghe from the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS) with her proposal on Demand for Climate Insurance by Dry Zone Farmers in Sri Lanka.

### First prize Medals per themes:

#### Determinants of Growth, Industrial and Trade Policies:

Dr. Olayinka Kareem from Nigeria and currently at the European University Institute. His paper was on Restrictive Trade Policies as Hurdle to Pass for Africa: Evidence from the European Union's Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

#### Environmental Sustainability, Management of Natural Resources and Structural Transformations:

Dr. Bibhu Prasad and Dr. Veena Aggarwal from The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), India. Their paper explored Trust and Cooperation among Urban Poor for Transition to Cleaner and Modern Cooking Fuel.

#### Political, Institutional, Social and Governance Transformations:

Dr. Neetu Choudhary from the A N Sinha Institute of Social Studies, India. Her paper was on Malnutrition and Mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa and India: A Structural Analysis of Contrasts.

## GDN 16th Annual Global Development Conference



**Location:**  
Morocco

**Date:**  
11-12-13 June 2015

**Theme**  
Agriculture for Sustainable  
Growth: Challenges and  
Opportunities for a New  
'Green Revolution'

The **Global Development Network (GDN)** is a public international Organization that builds research capacity in development globally. GDN supports researchers in developing countries and transition economies to generate and share high quality applied social science research to inform policy-making and advance social and economic development. Founded in 1999, GDN is headquartered in New Delhi.

- Since 1999, GDN has collaborated with more than 12,750 researchers globally and supported grantees from 132 countries.
- Nearly 1900 grants have been given under the Regional Research Competitions.
- Over 1000 researchers have received support, mentoring and opportunities to engage with policy-makers through our Global Research Projects.
- The Global Development Awards and Medals Competition has recognized and empowered over 300 researchers and development practitioners.
- Between 2010 and 2014, 40% of GDN grantees have been female researchers and two-thirds of grantees were citizens of low and lower middle-income countries.
- In just 3 years, around 680 policy-makers have taken part in policy workshops organized by GDN.
- Beyond GDN grants, grantees acknowledge the value of review workshops, mentoring, the Annual Global Development Conferences and networking (Independent Evaluation of GDN, 2013).

For more information about the Conference papers, events, participants and more, please log on to [www.gdn.int/conf2014](http://www.gdn.int/conf2014)