



Current Path

The Abuja Treaty and NEPAD

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Meanwhile, the [Lagos Plan of Action](#) and the African Economic Community initiatives had largely fallen by the wayside. It was followed by the Abuja Treaty that was signed in 1991 which aimed to reconcile pan-Africanist development ambitions with the liberalisation orthodoxy of the time, moving away from the focus on market integration in favour of collaboration, expansion and diversification of production across regions. Although Abuja inspired marginal reforms in some of the continent's RECs and led to the establishment of the African Economic Community (EAC), it faced similar challenges, including reluctant cooperation from member states and subsequently also failed in its ambitions.

More recently the Abuja Treaty was eclipsed by the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2001. NEPAD departed from the Lagos Plan of Action with a greater focus on political reform as a core component of development. Efforts to improve the efficiency and accountability of member states were also strengthened by the institution of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) according to which Africans would commit to peer review and self-monitoring. While remaining Africa-centred and led, [NEPAD](#) eschewed regional isolationism. It embraced global partnerships and has since been integrated into the AU as its core development agency, now named AUDA-NEPAD.

NEPAD focuses on enhancing economic integration, promoting sustainable growth and eradicating poverty. Initially, it focussed on a limited number of locomotive states with more joining over time. It sought to foster partnerships between African governments, the private sector, civil society and global partners to implement development projects across various sectors, including infrastructure, education, healthcare and agriculture. Embracing Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain, its proponents argue, could accelerate industrialisation by creating new digital industries and improving efficiency in existing sectors.

NEPAD continues to play a role in advocating for policies that support Africa's long-term development goals in particular to monitoring and planning for the African Union's Agenda 2063 that was launched in 2013 (also see the [About](#) section). Agenda 2063 is the strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years. Its aspirations include a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, an integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance, and an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.

Climate resilience initiatives are also becoming central to development goals, as Agenda 2063 includes provisions for environmental sustainability, adaptation to climate change and conservation efforts to protect biodiversity.

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About the authors

Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the ISS's founder and former executive director. He currently serves as chair of the ISS Board of Trustees and head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the Institute. His 2017 best-seller *Fate of the Nation* addresses South Africa's futures from political, economic and social perspectives. His three most recent books, *Africa First! Igniting a Growth Revolution* (March 2020), *The Future of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities* (April 2021), and *Africa Tomorrow: Pathways to Prosperity* (June 2022) take a rigorous look at the continent as a whole.

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