SIDE EVENT

Do you have great ideas for the sustainable industrialization of Africa in the digital era? This is your chance to influence policy!

Why?

In the current state of affairs, there are visible policy gaps in many African countries when it comes to fostering the development of start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises, and their linkages with the industrialization process. With the aim of enabling member States to address these policy gaps and with the prime focus of gaining clear insight from the side of small and medium-sized enterprises and start-up representatives from the various parts of Africa, the ECA Centre of Excellence on digital identity, trade and the digital economy is organizing a side event under the aegis of the Conference of Ministers 2020. The event aims to explore the main challenges facing small and medium-sized enterprises in the digital era and to engage in a solutions development and policy framework hackathon to be undertaken by small and medium-sized enterprises and start-up ecosystem representatives from the various parts of the continent. The hackathon aims to serve as a sounding board for ministers and policymakers at the Conference and to identify lasting solutions for innovation and small and medium-sized enterprise engagement in sustainable industrialization using state-of-the-art digitalization processes in the continent.

Such an event brings in fresh outlooks and grassroots perspectives during the usual Conference of Ministers by sharing new insights and outlooks which are critical in enabling policymakers and decision makers to devise strategies that are further aligned with the needs on the ground.

How?

The event will bring together experts, practitioners, key members of the public sector, small and medium-sized enterprises and young people in a collaborative three weeks of online co-creation of ideas and concepts. These will be further refined in a one-day solutions refinement challenge geared towards exploring challenges through the various lenses of digitalization applications for sustainable industrialization from ecosystem actors' points of view. The solutions development and policy framework hackathon will explore topics such as financial inclusion, infrastructure and connectivity development, technological skill sets and capacity development needs, industrial innovation and financing mechanisms, industry and innovation linkages, etc.

All ideas will be reviewed by expert panellists and recommendations will be presented to Ministers at the Conference.

Timeline

3–14 February 2020: Join the online solution challenge on the AfriLabs/ECA portal and share your ideas at https://discourse.uneca.org/t/policy-solutions-development-challenge-for-harnessing-opportunities-in-digitalization

17–21 February 2020 - Ideas will be shortlisted

22–26 February 2020: Online voting for the top 15 solutions

22 March 2020: Face-to-face solution refinement challenge: the top five finalists and the first 15 contributors will be invited to participate in the hackathon event during the Conference of Ministers 2020.