



PRÉSIDENCE
DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE
DU BÉNIN



Africa Think Tank Summit

12th Edition

28 OCT
to
30 2026
COTONOU,
BENIN

MEDIA KIT



1. An Invitation to Key

ACBF Events

Media Invitation: 28–30 October 2026 → 2026 Africa Think Tank Summit

Dear Media Practitioner

It is with pleasure that I invite you to attend the **12th Africa Think Tank Summit 2026**, convened by the **African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)** in partnership with the African Union Commission, and co-hosted by the Government of the Republic of Benin through the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

The event will be held in **Cotonou from 28 to 30 October 2026**. Partners and supporters include the **World Bank Group, the Hewlett Foundation, the African Development Bank (AfDB), AUDA-NEPAD, the African School of Regulation (ASR), the African Guarantee and Economic Cooperation Fund (FAGACE), the WINGS Network, and the Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF)**. The African Center for Equitable Development (ACED) is the Summit's local partner in Benin and Chatham House serves as knowledge partner.

The Summit, themed **«From Energy Access to Economic Transformation: Practical Policy Pathways for Power Sector Viability, Growth, and Reform in Africa»**, will bring together more than 300 institutions from over 50 countries, including policymakers, think tanks, researchers, civil society, private sector leaders, and development partners.

This year's program features a Ministerial Roundtable, high-level plenary and breakout sessions on financing, utility reform, industrialization, and regional power integration, an ATTP Research Showcase, and an Innovation Showcase for young African researchers. These activities will highlight practical, evidence-based pathways to turn energy access into industrialization, jobs, and inclusive growth.

A key highlight of the program will be the official launch of the **Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2025 (AECR 2025)**, ACBF's flagship analytical publication on Africa's export performance, produced with the Shared Value Africa Initiative and the Institute for Competitiveness India, which offers evidence-based recommendations to strengthen Africa's export competitiveness and economic transformation.

Your participation as a journalist will be vital in amplifying the Summit's messages, sharing insights, and shaping the narrative on Africa's energy-driven transformation. Media representatives attending will have access to exclusive interviews, high-level panels, and knowledge resources that support Africa's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

We look forward to your participation.

Fatou DIOUF,

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS & INFLUENCING – ACBF



MINISTÈRE
DE L'ÉCONOMIE
ET DES FINANCES
RÉPUBLIQUE DU BÉNIN



12th Edition

Africa Think Tank Summit

28 OCT
to **2026**
30 COTONOU,
BENIN

From Energy Access to Economic Transformation: Practical Policy Pathways for Power Sector Viability, Growth, and Reform in Africa

Accès à l'énergie et transformation
économique : Dispositions pratiques pour la
viabilité, la croissance et la réforme du secteur
de l'électricité en Afrique



Hosted by the Government of the Republic of Benin
Accueilli par le Gouvernement de la République du Bénin

Register here
Inscrivez vous ici

For more information, contact
Pour plus d'informations, contactez
atts2026@theacbf.org

2. Unlocking ATTS 2026:

Helping You Craft Your Story

We are pleased to share a guide to support your coverage of the Summit. This section provides background information, story angles, and key messages you can use to develop compelling articles and media pieces.

Here are some suggestions on how to make the most of this content:



STANDALONE STORIES

Capture the essence of the Africa Think Tank Summit 2026. Highlight its impact, relevance, and the opportunities it presents for shaping Africa's energy future, especially around power sector reform, financing, and regional integration.



AMPLIFY WITH QUOTES

Enrich your coverage with impactful quotes from ministers, African Union and ACBF leadership, keynote speakers, think tank leaders, and development partners. Their voices can add depth and authenticity, making your stories more engaging and credible.



TAILOR TO YOUR CONTEXT

Adapt the story guide to fit your country or regional context. Show how energy access, utility reform, and power sector financing challenges play out locally. Interview national delegates, experts, or policymakers attending the Summit to give your audience a perspective that resonates directly with their realities.



A MODEL FOR MORE

Use this guide to craft additional narratives. Explore themes such as clean cooking and gender, regional power trade, or youth-led energy innovation. Spotlight sessions like the Ministerial Roundtable, the launch of the Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2025, or the ATTP Research Showcase to show how Africa is building practical, scalable models for energy reform.

Use this kit to:

- Highlight the Summit's significance for Africa's energy and economic future.
- Tailor the story to your national or regional context.
- Enrich your reporting with quotes and insights from ACBF leaders, government ministers, and think tank experts.
- Spotlight the launch of the Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2025 as a milestone for Africa's trade and competitiveness agenda.

We are eager to see where your creativity on the topic “From Energy Access to Economic Transformation” takes you. Share your unique angle, whether it is highlighting utility reform, regional power trade, or the role of think tanks in shaping energy policy.

Please share your story with the ACBF Communications Team. It might be featured in our Summit News Updates.

Stay tuned for daily updates during the Summit. For assistance, contact:

comms@theacbf.org

3. ACBF Key Events:

Key Messages & Guiding Your Story

We encourage journalists to use these key messages to inform their reporting on ACBF's key events and highlight the Foundation's crucial role in advancing Africa's development.

Overarching Messages

- The Africa Think Tank Summit 2026 is the continent's leading platform for dialogue between policymakers, think tanks, and development partners on Africa's most pressing development challenges.
- The 2026 theme, “From Energy Access to Economic Transformation: Practical Policy Pathways for Power Sector Viability, Growth, and Reform in Africa”, responds to Africa's urgent need to build energy systems that are not only expanded but financially viable, investment-ready, and growth-enabling.
- ACBF, as the convener, plays a central role in building institutional capacity, advancing evidence-based policy reform, and strengthening Africa's knowledge ecosystem.

Policy and Development Messages

- Energy is a foundational enabler of Africa's structural transformation, underpinning industrialization, digital economies, agricultural value addition, and job creation.
- Expanding electricity connections is necessary but not sufficient; Africa needs reliable, affordable, and high-quality energy systems capable of supporting productive transformation at scale.
- Financially viable utilities and stronger power sector governance are prerequisites for attracting private capital and reducing dependence on public subsidies in a constrained fiscal environment.

- Regional power integration offers one of Africa's most significant and underused opportunities to lower costs, improve reliability, and accelerate the deployment of renewable energy.
- Clean cooking is not a peripheral issue; it is central to health, gender equality, and Africa's broader energy transition agenda.
- Think tanks play an essential role in generating the evidence, analysis, and context-specific policy options needed to move from reform commitments to measurable implementation outcomes.

ACBF Key Events: Guiding Your Story

ACBF – Advancing Africa's Energy Transformation Agenda

The African Capacity Building Foundation will make a significant contribution to Africa's economic transformation agenda through the 2026 Summit in Cotonou. From 28 to 30 October, the Foundation will host the 12th Africa Think Tank Summit, a premier platform for think tanks, policymakers, researchers, and development partners.

The program will feature a Ministerial Roundtable, high-level plenary and breakout sessions, and an ATTP Research Showcase. A highlight will be the launch of the Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2025, which captures Africa's export performance and the policy actions needed to strengthen competitiveness across the continent.

The Summit will focus on moving Africa's energy discourse from access to transformation, mobilizing private and domestic finance for the power sector, and strengthening the role of think tanks in shaping evidence-based reform, in support of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

ACBF's Legacy and the Path Forward

With more than three decades of experience, the African Capacity Building Foundation has been at the forefront of building institutional and human capacity across Africa. Its work spans more than 40 countries, in partnership with institutions such as the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the African Union, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

ACBF's legacy includes training over 100,000 professionals and nurturing a network of more than 60 think tanks that influence policy across the continent. This legacy will be reinforced during the 2026 Africa Think Tank Summit, as ACBF continues to promote evidence-based energy reform, financially viable power systems, and inclusive economic transformation.

4. The Africa Think Tank Summit 2026:

From Energy Access to Economic Transformation

The **12th Africa Think Tank Summit, scheduled for 28–30 October 2026 in Cotonou, Benin**, serves as the continent's top platform for dialogue among think tanks, policymakers, civil society, and development partners. The agenda features a Ministerial Roundtable, high-level plenaries, breakout sessions, and an ATTP Research Showcase, designed to move Africa's energy discourse from access to economic transformation. Discussions will explore key topics such as

Energy Financing and Utility Reform

Exploring strategies to mobilize domestic and private finance, strengthen utility governance, and improve cost recovery in a debt-constrained fiscal environment.

Regional Power Integration

Examining how cross-border electricity trade and regional power pools can lower costs, improve reliability, and accelerate the deployment of renewable energy.

Inclusive Energy Transition

Exploring clean cooking, gender equity, and decentralized energy solutions, and how think tanks can support governments in translating reform commitments into measurable outcomes.

ACBF's Commitment to Africa's Future

The 2026 Africa Think Tank Summit is a call to action for Africa and the world. The insights, best practices, and commitments generated will be disseminated widely to inform and inspire future reforms in energy policy and economic transformation. ACBF is committed to ensuring the Summit's outcomes translate into tangible actions that advance power sector viability, private investment, and inclusive growth for Africa.

As ACBF prepares to host this important event, we invite stakeholders from across the globe to join and help shape Africa's development. Together, through collaboration, innovation, and strategic action, the 2026 Summit in Cotonou will chart a path toward viable power systems, resilient economies, and a continent that finances its own transformation.

Stay informed and be part of this transformative journey by following updates on the ACBF website and social media platforms.

Event Theme:

“From Energy Access to Economic Transformation: Practical Policy Pathways for Power Sector Viability, Growth, and Reform in Africa”



Context

As Africa's economies grow, the continent faces an urgent challenge: how to turn energy access into productive, industrializing economic growth. Despite progress in electrification, nearly 600 million people in Africa still lack electricity access, and many of the region's power utilities cannot recover their own operating costs, constraining reliability, investment, and industrial competitiveness.

The 2026 Africa Think Tank Summit will confront these challenges directly. It will focus on closing the gap between energy access and economic transformation, ensuring that power sector reform, financing, and regional integration are converted into engines of sustainable, inclusive growth.

This year's Summit, convened by the African Capacity Building Foundation in partnership with the African Union Commission, co-hosted by the Government of the Republic of Benin, will bring together more than 300 institutions from over 50 countries, including policymakers, think tanks, civil society actors, private sector leaders, and development partners.

By the end of this event, participants will:



- Gain a deeper understanding of the link between energy access, utility viability, and economic transformation, and explore practical reform pathways to close that gap.



- Learn how to strengthen domestic and private financing for the power sector through improved tariffs, governance reforms, and blended finance instruments.



- Explore regional power pools and cross-border electricity trade as levers to lower costs and improve reliability.



- Share experiences and research on how think tanks can support governments in designing, sequencing, and monitoring energy reforms.



- Connect with peers and partners to build collaborative networks for future reforms.



- Follow the launch of the Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2025, a new knowledge resource linking energy reform to Africa's trade and export competitiveness agenda.

Key Facts and Figures

- **12th edition of the Africa Think Tank Summit**, convened annually since 2014.
- **28–30 October 2026, Cotonou, Republic of Benin**; hybrid format, in English and French with simultaneous interpretation.
- **More than 300 institutions** expected from over **50 countries**.
- **Nearly 600 million people in Africa** still lack electricity access (IEA).
- **72.1% of firms in Sub-Saharan Africa report power outages**, facing roughly 14 hours a month without electricity on average (World Bank).
- **Africa's public debt reached about 67% of GDP in 2024**, with debt service absorbing around 10% of government revenues (AUC/OECD).
- **Mission 300 partners** have pledged more than **USD 50 billion** to expand electricity access across Africa.
- **Nearly 1 billion Africans** still lack access to clean cooking solutions.

5. Reporting Angles

1.

FROM ACCESS TO TRANSFORMATION

Highlight why counting new electricity connections is no longer the right measure of Africa's energy progress, and what it means to build power systems that drive industrialization and jobs.

2.

THE UTILITY CRISIS BEHIND THE OUTAGES

Explore why most African power utilities cannot recover their own operating costs, and what a financially viable turnaround looks like.

3.

FINANCING REFORM IN A DEBT-CONSTRAINED AFRICA

Discuss what happens when infrastructure ambitions meet shrinking fiscal space, and how blended finance and private capital can help close the gap.

4.

FROM ENERGY ACCESS TO EXPORT COMPETITIVENESS

Feature how the Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2025 links reliable, affordable energy to industrial competitiveness and Africa's position in regional and global trade.

5.

POWER WITHOUT BORDERS

Examine whether regional power pools can finally deliver on decades of promised cross-border electricity trade.

6.

EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Conduct interviews with ministers, ACBF and African Union leadership, utility executives, think tank leaders, and development partners to provide insights on how Africa can move from energy access to economic transformation.

Note for Journalists

These reporting angles are central to shaping the narrative of the 2026 Summit theme:

« From Energy Access to Economic Transformation: Practical Policy Pathways for Power Sector Viability, Growth, and Reform. As a journalist, your role is crucial in sharing these insights with broader audiences, building awareness, and encouraging action toward viable, inclusive power systems across the continent. Of course, you are free to report on any angle not listed. The above is meant for guidance. »

Speakers to Watch

Speaker information below is drawn strictly from the Draft Agenda dated 19 August 2026, the latest available version. The full agenda lists well over 100 confirmed speakers and can be shared with accredited media on request.



H.E. Mr. Aristide Medenou

Minister of Economy and Finance, Benin



Mr. Luc Gnacadja

Mayor of Cotonou



Mr. Mamadou Biteye

Executive Secretary,
African Capacity
Building Foundation
Lead Convener



Dr Ngueto Tiraïna Yambaye

President FAGACE

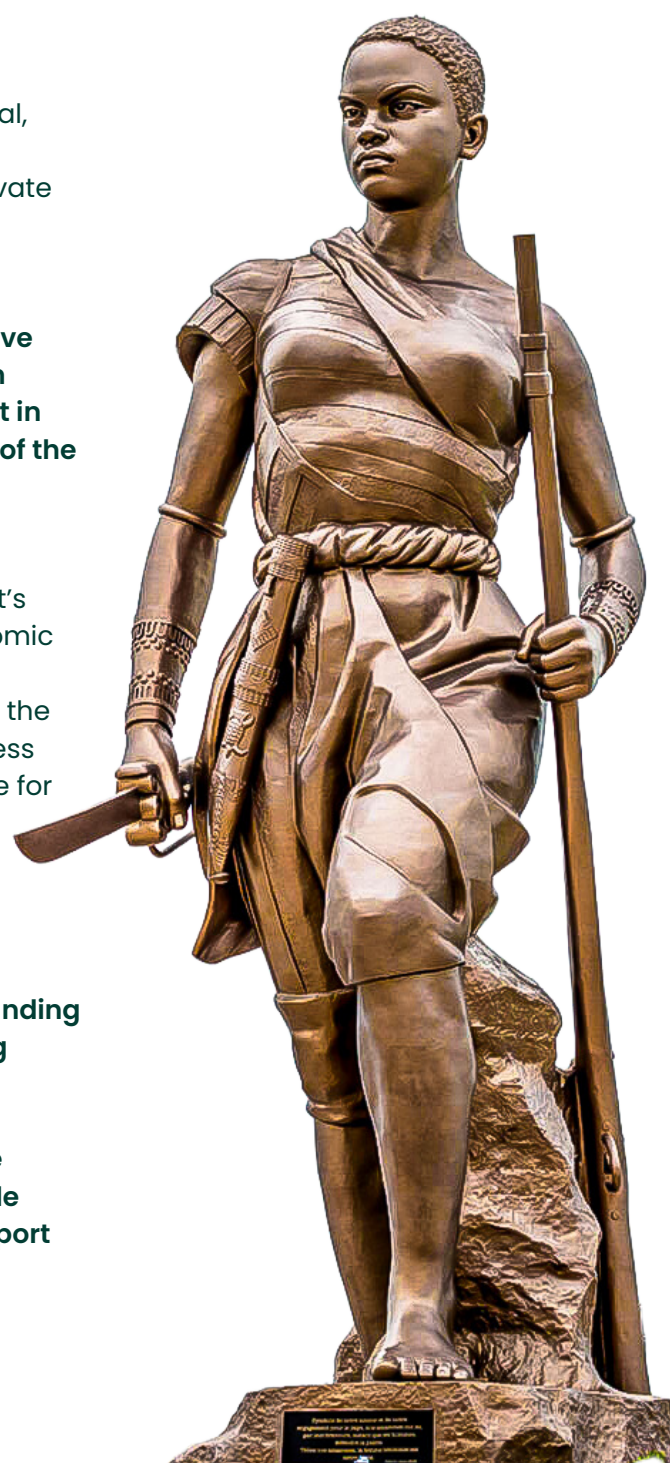
The **Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2025** will be officially launched during the **Africa Think Tank Summit 2026** in Cotonou.

This publication is a landmark contribution to Africa's knowledge ecosystem, capturing the continent's export performance and competitiveness and offering practical, evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, regional institutions, development partners, and the private sector.

The report is ACBF's flagship analytical publication, produced together with the Shared Value Africa Initiative (SVAI) and the Institute for Competitiveness India, with support from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA). It builds on the 2023 and 2024 editions of the report.

The launch will bring together report authors, ACBF leadership, and partner institutions to discuss the report's findings and their relevance to Africa's trade and economic transformation agenda. It is previewed on Day 1 of the Summit through a dedicated roundtable, "Insights from the Africa Export Competitiveness Report: From Energy Access to Export Competitiveness," hosted by ACBF, the Institute for Competitiveness India, Shift Impact Africa, and Institute for Competitiveness Africa, and formally launched on Day 3 with remarks by Dr. Amit Kapoor, Honorary Chairman of the Institute for Competitiveness, India.

Improving export competitiveness is essential for expanding intra-African trade, increasing value addition, creating quality jobs, attracting investment, and strengthening Africa's position in global markets. Linking the report to the Summit's energy theme, the launch programme also examines how reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy strengthens industrial competitiveness and export diversification across the continent.



Key AECR Messages for Media

- The Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2025 provides timely, evidence-based analysis and practical policy recommendations to strengthen Africa's export competitiveness and accelerate sustainable economic transformation.
- The report offers policymakers, regional institutions, development partners, researchers, and the private sector practical insights to inform policy decisions, investment strategies, and regional cooperation, including implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
- Launching the report at ATTS 2026 demonstrates ACBF's commitment to connecting research with policy dialogue and implementation, ensuring that evidence informs practical solutions to Africa's development challenges.

Speakers



Dr Amit Kapoor,

Honorary Chairman, Institute for Competitiveness, India — report launch remarks and keynote.



Mr. Mamadou Biteye,

Executive Secretary, ACBF – Summit spokesperson on the report's strategic significance.



7. ACBF 35th Annual Board of Governors (BoG) Meeting

The 35th Annual Board of Governors (BoG) Meeting of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) will begin the week of events alongside the summit's side event, and the Africa Think Tank Summit 2026 in Cotonou.

Scheduled for October 28, 2026, the BoG Meeting will bring together Africa's finance ministers, senior policymakers, and development partners to review ACBF's progress, set strategic direction, and identify critical capacity-building priorities for the years ahead.

Key Highlights

1. HIGH-LEVEL PARTICIPATION

The meeting will feature the participation of ACBF Governors, primarily Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development, alongside senior policymakers and key development partners.

2. STRATEGIC AGENDA:

The agenda will focus on governance, economic resilience, and the reforms needed to advance Africa's Agenda 2063 goals. Deliberations will be structured to foster dialogue, share lessons, and build consensus around new capacity-building initiatives.

3. KNOWLEDGE SHARING SESSION:

A Master Class on "From Energy Access to Economic Transformation: Practical Policy Pathways for Power Sector Viability, Growth, and Reform." delivered by Dr. Kandeh Yumkella, Chairman of the Presidential Initiative on Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Food Security in Sierra Leone, followed by discussion.

4. ANNUAL REVIEW:

Governors will review ACBF's achievements and progress during 2025–2026, including its role in strengthening ev capacity development, supporting reforms, and advancing Africa's broader development agenda.

5. STATUTORY MEETING:

Formal deliberations of the Governors on ACBF's performance, resource mobilization, and future priorities.

6. ATTS INSIGHTS:

The meeting will also serve as a platform to reflect on the insights and recommendations emerging from the Africa Think Tank Summit 2026, including the outcomes of research and policy work done by think tanks and the launch of the Report on Africa Export Competitiveness.

7. SIGNIFICANCE:

The BoG Meeting plays a pivotal role in shaping ACBF's strategic direction. It provides a forum for high-level engagement among Africa's leaders and development partners, ensuring that ACBF interventions remain aligned with the continent's evolving needs.

8. MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

Coverage: Journalists will have access to the open session of the Board of Governors meeting, summary reports, and visual assets capturing the deliberations and decisions made



Annex 1: About ACBF

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) is committed to shaping Africa's future by implementing its five-year strategy (2023–2027). Aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063, ACBF is dedicated to strengthening Africa's capacity and driving the continent's transformation across the following key pillars:

- **AGRIBUSINESS AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY:** Strengthen government capacity to attract private sector investment in agriculture. Support MSMEs in value addition, processing, and marketing of agricultural products to reduce post-harvest losses.
- **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY FOR PRODUCTIVE USE:** Support member states in developing bankable climate adaptation projects. Enhance private sector participation, especially MSMEs, in green energy solutions. Improve energy sector reforms to expand off-grid and mini-grid energy solutions..
- **TRADE AS AN ENGINE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Assist governments in implementing trade agreements by integrating them into national laws. Raise awareness and enhance MSME participation in intra-African trade.
- **ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GOVERNANCE:** Strengthen evidence-based policy formulation. Enhance domestic resource mobilization to reduce reliance on external funding. Improve public financial management through leadership development and accountability measures.

Addressing Critical Challenges

- **YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT:** Creating opportunities for Africa's growing youth population through targeted skills programs and policy support.
- **RESILIENCE BUILDING:** Supporting Africa's ability to withstand internal and external shocks, from economic crises to natural disasters, through sustainable fiscal and governance reforms.
- **DIGITAL SKILLS:** Equipping Africans with the necessary skills to leverage technology for innovation across sectors, including energy and trade.
- **GENDER EMPOWERMENT:** Promoting inclusive policies and supporting women's leadership in public finance, energy, and governance.
- **DECENTRALIZATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY:** Strengthening local governance and service delivery systems to ensure resources reach citizens effectively and equitably.

ACBF remains pivotal in achieving Agenda 2063 and realizing the vision of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). By building capacity, the Foundation equips African institutions and individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to drive viable power systems, accountable governance, and sustainable development across the continent.

Annex 2: About the Executive Secretary

Mamadou BITEYE

Mamadou Biteye has more than **30 years of experience** in capacity-building across Africa and globally, in both the private and public sectors, with a background in strategic leadership, program management, public policy analysis, and community development.

He became Executive Secretary of the **African Capacity Building Foundation in May 2022**. He previously led interventions for inclusive growth at Visa and managed Africa operations for the Rockefeller Foundation, prioritizing youth employment, health, and food security, including the Digital Jobs Africa initiative, which benefited over 160,000 young people.

As Oxfam's West Africa regional director, he co-created "**Saving for Change**," which supported more than 700,000 women in Mali and Senegal.



Annex 3: FAQs for Journalists Covering ACBF Events

What is the main focus of the 2026 Summit?

Advancing practical policy pathways for power sector viability, growth, and reform to drive Africa's economic transformation.

Who are the participants?

More than 300 institutions from over 50 countries, including policymakers, think tanks, development partners, private sector leaders, and civil society

What are the expected outputs?

A Summit Communiqué (the Cotonou Action Agenda), a Summit Report, a Newsletter, and the launch of the Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2025.

Why does this matter for Africa?

Reliable, affordable, and financially viable energy systems are essential to unlock Africa's industrialization, job creation, and economic transformation, supporting the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Annex 4: Media Resources

At ACBF, we aim to equip journalists with the information and resources needed to report accurately and effectively on ACBF's flagship events. We believe your coverage can help raise awareness of the critical issues facing Africa and the vital role ACBF plays in driving sustainable development. We look forward to partnering with you to help shape a brighter future for the continent.



9. Media Corner and Accreditation

There is a dedicated media space that is provided online and in person, all media/journalists attending the Africa Think Tank Summit whether online or in person must register for accreditation, please register on [Media Corner – ATTS 2026](#).

This online space will also be used to disseminate media/journalists articles about the summit.

10. Media Inquiries and Contacts

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