

## DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

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### **Innovation Accelerator to stimulate growth for youth promoting democracy and governance in Africa concludes.**

An Innovation Accelerator for the young African Innovators focused on promoting democracy and governance on the continent, has concluded after an intense program aimed at bridging the gaps in technical skills needed to stimulate growth and expansion of their innovative solutions. The Accelerator program was tailor-made for the selected Top 20 innovators on the Youth Innovation Challenge on Democracy and Governance in Africa, a project by the African Union led by the African Governance Architecture (AGA). The project is aligned to the AGA Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES) to build capacity for the continent's most promising digital and non-digital innovators by exposing them to a wealth of knowledge, experience and skills to enable them scale their innovations, create partnerships and explore opportunities on the continent.

In the course of the Accelerator, the innovators, incubation centres and hubs interacted and benefitted from the insights from experts and coaches and a thorough exposure to crucial industry, technical and business knowledge and tools. The programme entailed a joint goal setting session with innovators and their coaches; a one-week intensive virtual training sessions; daily coach check-ins with innovators; talk sessions by top industry professionals and a Pitch Day. The virtual accelerator program was implemented under the AGA – COMESA joint project on youth engagement in democratic governance and sociology economic development processes in Africa and supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and AfriLabs.

From the pitch sessions, AGA and COMESA will now proceed to a selection process of the final Top 5 innovators who will be accorded continental recognition by the African Union and benefit from exposure to other opportunities relevant to their innovation. The unveiling of the TOP 5 will be held on the 9<sup>th</sup> High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human rights and Governance scheduled to be held virtually from 10-11 December 2020. Selection will be based on different evaluations carried out pre, during and post the program.

Some participants shared on why they believe their innovations are a game-changer in addressing the democracy and governance deficits in consideration of the nexus between governance, security and development.

"We believe that the future of democracy and governance can originate from the African continent. We have had the privilege of working with 11 African governments. Our ambition is to continue to support these and other African countries to adopt innovative frameworks that redefine sociopolitical risks and governance at a continental level. To expand and replicate our approach, we have built a range of scalable tools to support public leaders and practitioners to design and implement risk-informed strategies across geopolitics, security, sustainability and socioeconomic development", **Benazir Hilali- Axle International, Comoros.**

"At HeLawyer, we believe that protecting one's life, family and investment cannot be a matter of class and that true peace on the African continent cannot be achieved without equitable access to justice for all people. That is why at HeLawyer, we enable people living on less than a dollar a day, especially those in rural areas, to have easy access to counseling and legal assistance just by using their phones. With HeLawyer the cell phone becomes a real weapon for people to defend their rights and a shield to protect them from injustice. Our ambition is to position ourselves within 3 years in the Sahel countries (Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Chad). And in this period of pandemic, HeLawyer is positioning itself as the easiest way to allow the population to have access to legal advice and assistance services", **Semanou Noé cham- HeLawyer, Bénin.**

"Our market represents 55 African countries, it is more than 1.2 Billion consumers, almost 3 times the size of the population of the European Union, more than 440 Million mobile Internet users or 5 times the number of Amazon customers in the USA with a growth rate of more than 20% in 2017, more than all Asian countries. Our position on the market will be significant because we believe we are capable of reaching 13% of our target in our first year of activity, with an annual increase of 12%", - **Yves-Blandis Ganfere- Schou'Apps" innovation, Congo.**

"This project is a game-changer in my country because we are on a quest for building largest grassroots social accountability movement in Africa, I believe AGA acceleration program is an opportunity that will provide us necessary skills, tools and platform to expand our initiatives throughout the African continent", **Muazu Alhaji Modu-Citizen-Led Tracking, Nigeria.**

"CareersMaster is an online platform that helps the youth discover who they are, where they are going and how to get there. The Platform helps government extend career guidance services to the youth and offers keys insights to governments in preparing labour market information. Our future vision to be a reliable and most trusted source of career information and inspiration for all students while preparing them for the diverse labor market", **Kaweesi Simon Peter- CareersMaster, Uganda.**

"This project will bring Sustainable peace and stability by military work together with Citizen in Western Equatoria. Our vision is to build and enhance trust and confidence

in the people and showcase their understanding of national identity and having a unifying vision of belonging to the nation”, **Justin Anthony Ngbapai, Prevention from conflict Related Sexual Violence and Confident building between the civilians and military’s in Western Equatoria, South Sudan.**

“One of the major challenges that negatively influence sustainable development globally, in Africa and Mozambique is related to governance systems highly influenced by corruption, which reflects in the deficiency and inefficiency of public services provided to citizens, also in social exclusion, which is why with this new approach we seek to introduce innovation to improve the quality of public services, because we believe that this innovation is fundamental for the reduction of social gaps, social exclusion, marginalization and devaluation of the most disadvantaged groups, with emphasis on low-income citizens, people with disabilities, children, women and young people, unemployed, and others”, **Etelvino José Armando Mozambique- Improving the quality of public service delivery to reduce social inequalities and tensions, Mozambique.**

“This innovation responds to the critical issue of the restoration of sustainable peace through helping the rural population getting clean, affordable, reliable and sustainable energy by empowering women and youth to mitigate conflict”, **Lohose Talopondja Joe, Addressing Conflict and Inequity through Energy Access in the Masisi district, Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.**

Learn more about the Democracy and Governance in Africa, Youth Innovation Challenge-<https://au.int/en/newsevents/20200625/democracy-and-governance-africa-youth-innovation-challenge>

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