

Healthcare innovation will cure a lot of Africa's economic woes

Additional investments in science, technology, and innovation in Africa will improve health, spur economic growth, and reduce poverty across the continent.

This was the common denominator at a meeting of African and global leaders representing governments, the private sector, and civil society to discuss health innovation and research capacity on the continent. The event – a precursor to the [World Economic Forum on Africa 2017](#) being held in Durban, South Africa - focused on the need for meeting highlighted promising initiatives and aimed to foster new partnerships and drive investments that will strengthen Africa's role as a major player in global health technology development and innovation.

The event also highlighted a number of recent examples of how African scientists, entrepreneurs, and innovators are meeting local health challenges and contributing to economic development. One of them was the need for better drugs to treat TB.

"Africa's future depends on its scientists," says Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, president of the Republic of Mauritius and an internationally renowned biodiversity scientist, delivered the keynote address. "It urgently needs science, technology, and innovation to secure a prosperous, healthy, peaceful, and sustainable future."

Similarly, Naledi Pandor, the South African minister of science and technology, says South Africa has increased its investments in health research because “we believe that a stronger innovation ecosystem will deliver improved health outcomes as well as boost economic growth and create jobs”.

“New funding is opening up opportunities for health innovation across Africa,” says Dr Felix Olale, LeapFrog partner and global co-leader for health investments. “Through a combination of government-endorsed plans for science and technology, and financing by private investors and multinational donors, a sustainable landscape for research and health care can be established. This approach will over the long term, deliver true community-based social and economic benefits.”

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