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# Strengthening Capacity for Research and Innovation in Post-COVID-19 Africa: Challenges and Opportunities

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Inclusive Development in Post-COVID-19 Africa

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***“Weak capacity in public and private sectors in Africa is acknowledged as a major impediment to the attainment of poverty reduction goals. It is therefore evident that no matter the amount of financial resources mobilized for Africa’s development, such funds would yield only limited or modest results if countries do not have the human, organizational and institutional capacity to absorb and effectively utilize them.”***

- African Development Bank Group [Capacity Building Strategy](#)

# Where Africa Stands on Various Indices of Research Capacity:

- 0.72% of global **research publications** – World Bank
- 0.12 – 0.28% of global **citations** – World Bank
- 0.1% of global **patents** granted in 2018 – UNESCO
- 0.9% of global **expenditure in R&D** – UNESCO
- 0.37% of **GDP spent on R&D** in Africa – UNESCO
- 1.1% of world **researchers** – UNESCO
- 99 **researchers/million pop.**; World average: 1,235

## Why has capacity remained weak in Africa?

# The Research:

- Interviewed 46 CEOs, Board members & Finance Directors at 21 African research organizations & think tanks
- Interviewed 14 Program Directors and CEOs at 12 bilateral funding agencies and foundations
- Hosted a consultative meeting with CEOs of African organizations, funders and others
- Results summarized in [\*Transforming the Institutional Landscape in Sub-Saharan Africa: Considerations for Leveraging Africa's Research Capacity to Achieve Socioeconomic Development\*](#) report

# The Result:

- African Institutional Leaders
  - *The current funding model (small, short-term, externally led) is a key obstacle to developing strong and robust institutional capacity in Africa*
- Development Partners
  - *Acknowledged the limitations of current funding models and how they may undermine institutional capacity in Africa*
  - *Identified key strengths associated with working directly with African institutions*
  - *Proposed the need to changing the current funding model*

# The Call – a New Funding Model Characterized by:

- Significant domestic investments
  - *Public, private, philanthropic, etc.*
- At transformative scale
  - *JHU 2019 research expenditure: \$2.917 billion*
- Built on a continental strategy
  - *Africa Knowledge and Technology Innovation Fund*
- **With minimum commitment of 10 years**

# Beyond Financing:

- Reimagine the entire research enterprise
- Invest in the ecosystem
  - *Training, governance, systems & processes, ensure there is transparency, trust and quality.*
  - *Translate research to policies, products & practices*
- Mindset change in Africa
  - *Collaborations and partnerships*