CENTRAL AFRICA THINK TANK FORUM 2024

Concept note

Theme: Empowering Independent Voices in the Central African Region”

August 21 - 22, 2024
Djeuga Palace Hotel
1. Background

Among many other challenges that have plagued the region over the years and which continuously account for the low rates of development witnessed across the region, the ability for think tanks in Central Africa to effectively operate has been a daunting challenge that has consequently led to the short life span, fragmentation and ineffectiveness of some think tanks, research centres and advocacy groups.

In reality, think tanks and research centres are reputed for their ability to champion intensive advocacy campaigns on cross-cutting thematic issues backed by objective, impartial and evidence-based research. Indeed, they play a central role in promoting open and transparent governance, the rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights, inclusive and sustainable conflict resolution, and much more. Unfortunately, the shrinking civic-space in the region orchestrated by economic disparities, deeply rooted socio-cultural practices, governance defiances and anti-democratic practices such as authoritarianism, electoral malpractices, coups and hiking corruption.

Building on the successes of the 1st edition which held in Yaounde, Cameroon in September 2023, the 2nd edition of the Central Africa Think Tank Forum which is scheduled to hold from the 21 - 22 of August 2024 under the theme, «Empowering independent voices in the Central African Region» will provide a platform to harness and amplify independent voices for policy change, actionable reforms and positive development of the Central African Region.

Mindful of these, the Nkafu Policy Institute through its mandate to catalyze Africa’s economic transformation is committed to bringing together policy makers, donor organizations, renowned researchers, think tankers, and practitioners from all over the world in a common platform to deepen understanding and brainstorm across common challenges, enhance the potential and empower independent voices in the Central African Region.

2. Objectives of the forum

Primary objective:

The 2nd edition of the Central African Think Tank Forum will specifically aim to empower independent voices from the Central African Region.

Secondary objectives:

✓ Identify key opinion leaders, think tanks, research centres and advocacy groups.
✓ Establish a platform for exchange of knowledge and shared experiences between the various Think Tanks in the Central African region.
✓ Analyse specific challenges facing Think Tanks in the region, and opportunities for improvement.
✓ Explore best practices and effective strategies for empowering independent voices.
✓ Promote collaboration and partnerships between Think Tanks in the region and other key players, such as universities, governments and the private sector.

3. Target Audience
The event targets think tank practitioners, advocacy groups, independent researchers, donors, women leaders of civil society organizations, youth leaders, policy-makers, scholars, international organizations and regional bodies including the UN, the AU and the RECs as well as members of civil society.

4. Event Format
The forum will comprise a series of:
✓ Plenary sessions and panel discussions with key presentations and policy recommendations by renowned international development experts across the globe.
✓ Thematic workshops to practically boost capacities of participants.
✓ Round table discussions to share experiences between participants.
✓ Case studies to learn best practices.
✓ Pitching sessions

5. Themes of the panel discussions
The various themes of the forum will be framed around the following discussions and sessions:

DAY 1 (ONE)
- Panel Discussion: Enhancing the Policy Influence and Outreach of Central African Think Tanks"
- Panel discussion: Opportunities and Challenges in fostering Central Africa's Engagement with the G20-T20
Breakout session 1 - Workshop on Building resilience of TT amidst the closing civic space in Central Africa
Breakout session 2 - Workshop on Leveraging the potential of regional trade and digitalization for development and inclusion in Central Africa
Breakout session 3 - Workshop on Enhancing Emergency Preparedness and Response in Central Africa

DAY 2 (TWO)

Panel Discussion: The role of think tanks in strengthening the Governance environment in Central Africa
Panel Discussion: Empowering Women in Central Africa: Breaking Barriers to Gender inequality

6. Expected Outcome

✔ The forum is expected to identify and empower independent voices in the region for increased operationalisation and effectiveness of think tanks.

✔ Furthermore, the forum is expected to serve as platform for increased awareness of challenges plaguing the region with the view of gathering actionable recommendations.

✔ With the objective of fostering collaboration among think tanks, the forum is expected to bring together think tanks from the region operating in similar sectors for experience exchange and sustainable partnerships.

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