

HER Impact

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION



2023 Highlights



Introduction

In the spirit of [Sankofa](#), looking back to go forward, 2023 was a big year with big promises. Three particular events stand out for me:

1. SDG Summit (New York) – we agreed to accelerate action for people, planet and peace. From fostering youth action to ensuring equal access to technology, the shared vision embraced integrated solutions. “[We committed](#) to enhancing global, regional, national and local partnerships for sustainable development, engaging all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, private sector, academia and youth, recognizing the important contribution they can make toward achieving the 2030 Agenda, and the localization of the SDGs.”
2. COP28 (Dubai) – emphasised the fact that “we don't have time”. We agreed to higher ambition including a pathway to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, better inclusion and sustainable financing. “[The COP28 agreement](#) signals the “beginning of the end” of the fossil fuel era by laying the ground for a swift, just and equitable transition, underpinned by deep emissions cuts and scaled-up finance.”
3. Africa Women and Children's conference ([Accra](#)) and follow up events in [Nairobi](#) and [Dubai](#) – placed a spotlight on Africa's youth and women's voices, entrepreneurship and innovation as being central to inclusive, resilient and sustainable development.

Looking forward, it is all hands on deck for the [Summit of the Future](#) in September 2024 that will consider ways to lay the foundations for more effective global cooperation that can deal with today's challenges as well as new threats in the future. Coming up with integrated solutions through an inclusive process that places the voices, aspirations and solutions of youth and underrepresented groups will be key to unlocking the creativity and innovation of all Africans to build the bright future we all want.

In the symphony of retrospection and anticipation, this Newsletter presents a summary of my monthly articles for 2023. I wish you enjoyable reading and extend my gratitude to everyone that's been a part of the process. Together, let us look towards 2024 with great hope, ambition and the unwavering pursuit of a brighter future for all.

Dr. Angela Lusigi
UNDP Resident Representative in Ghana



Women and Girls in Science and Technology: Bridging the gender gap



In February, on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, I noted that despite progress, women remain underrepresented in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), and STEM fields. While recognising positive changes in Africa where an increasing number of female scientists are driving innovations for sustainable development, the article highlighted some persistent challenges such as limited access to funds for female scientists.

To strengthen support ecosystems for the inclusion and retention of women in science, I proposed enhancing business and financial competence through mentoring and financial literacy initiatives. I also suggested empowering female scientists by promoting knowledge sharing and collaboration through networks and communities of practice. Encouraging men to act as allies in fostering gender equity in science policy and practice was also highlighted.

In conclusion, the article stressed the urgency of ensuring full and equal participation of women and girls in science. Recognizing women's untapped talent and eliminating barriers to their sustained success is crucial for addressing global challenges.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.undp.org/ghana/blog/women-and-girls-science-and-technology-bridging-gender-gap>

Leveraging Resilience for Happiness in Africa



In March, I highlighted the disparity between happiness levels across African countries as indicated by the 2023 World Happiness Report and the actual state of happiness in many of these nations. I argued that conventional measures, primarily based on income, fail to capture the nuanced aspects of happiness in the African context, which emphasizes the importance of community, culture, and resilience. I suggested that the key to addressing this issue lies in understanding and harnessing the continent's resilience as a pathway to happiness and proposed three levels of resilience that African countries can draw upon to increase their happiness: inner resilience, community resilience, and pan-African resilience.

Inner resilience emphasizes tapping into Africa's inherent strengths—its people's ingenuity and resourcefulness. By fostering locally contextualized solutions that integrate traditional knowledge into emerging technologies, the continent can address development challenges while preserving its culture.

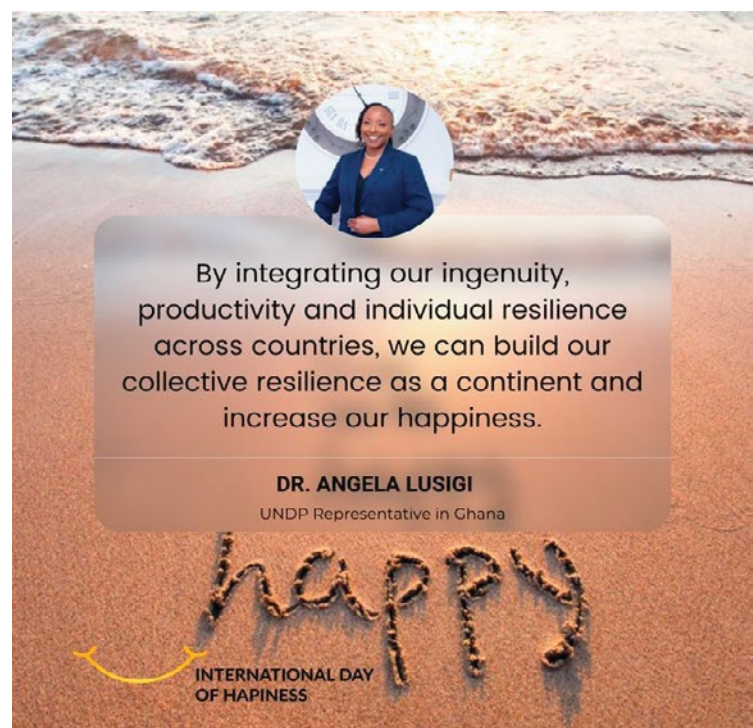
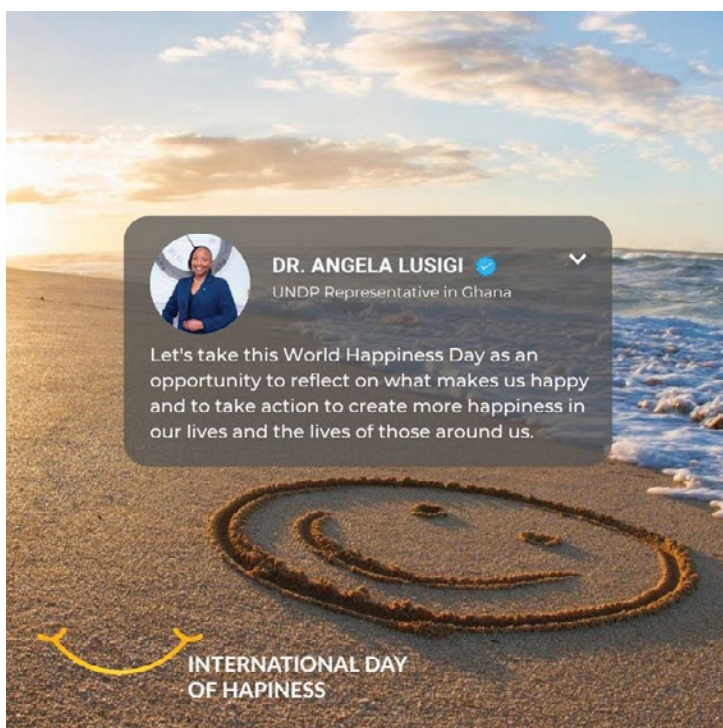
Community resilience centres around family, community, and culture, acknowledging their pivotal role in shaping individual happiness. Strengthening these bonds can lead to greater security and the emergence of community-led initiatives, fostering a more equitable society.

Pan African resilience advocates for breaking down borders and leveraging the interconnectedness of African countries. Initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can enhance economic transformation and cross-cultural understanding, contributing to overall happiness.

In conclusion, the article urges a shift in perspective on happiness, viewing it as a journey rather than a destination. African countries can improve their rankings on the global index by intentionally building resilience at the individual, community, and pan-African levels.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.undp.org/ghana/blog/leveraging-resilience-pathway-happiness-africa>



Accelerating Creativity and Innovation in Africa

In April, I reflected on the transformative power of creativity and innovation in propelling human development. Despite being one of the world's fastest-growing sectors, Africa's share of the global creative economy stands at only 2.9%, a mere fraction of its potential. Challenges, including inadequate infrastructure and limited access to funding, hinder the growth of this promising sector.

I argued that Africa's creative industry holds vast potential, driven by a growing youth population, increasing urbanization, and a rising middle class with changing consumption patterns. To harness this potential, I proposed nurturing innovative thinking from an early age through an enhanced education system and dedicated talent growth spaces. Additionally, recognizing Africa's diverse culture and heritage as a source of talent and content is crucial for global recognition and economic growth. Finally, I emphasized the importance of strengthening intellectual property systems and supporting creatives to access and utilise existing legislation and policies.

I concluded by stating that supporting youth in the creative industry allows them to design sustainable solutions, shaping a brighter future for all. African countries must renew their commitment to harnessing the power of creativity and innovation for the benefit of their communities and the continent as a whole.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.undp.org/ghana/blog/accelerating-creativity-and-innovation-africa>



WORLD CREATIVITY & INNOVATION DAY

Funding for incubators and platforms to support talent development in Africa is woefully inadequate. We need to attract more investors willing to provide longer term financing and a robust ecosystem to support young people's talent and experimental ventures.

Dr. Angela Lusigi
UNDP Representative in Ghana

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WORLD CREATIVITY & INNOVATION DAY

As we commemorate this year's World Creativity and Innovation Day, let us be reminded of the pivotal role that creativity and innovation play in shaping our world. Let us renew our commitment to harnessing the power of creativity and innovation for the benefit of all.

Dr. Angela Lusigi
UNDP Representative in Ghana

Building Peace from the Ground Up: Nurturing Harmony and Resilience in Communities

“Cohesive and healthy societies rest on three pillars – peace and security, development, the rule of law and respect for human rights.”

Kofi Annan

In May, as we celebrated 75 years of UN Peacekeeping, my reflections centred on the theme of the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers: 'Peace Begins with Me.' Drawing upon a recent UN Secretary-General's report that highlighted the interconnectedness of instability, conflict, and the deepening of poverty in Africa, my argument underscored the critical importance of local engagement, dialogue, and community-driven initiatives in achieving sustainable peace, even as global efforts remain indispensable.

Strategies focusing on prevention, early warning, and protection were identified as key pathways to fostering harmony, resilience, and enduring peace. The article emphasized the pivotal role of prevention in the peace-building process, particularly given the alarming spread of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. Noteworthy was the call for the active involvement of young people in decision-making processes and development initiatives, with the UNDP

and National Peace Council of Ghana e-Youth Impact Series serving as an exemplary illustration of successful youth engagement. I further highlighted the significance of early warning systems in averting the escalation of disputes into large-scale conflicts and commended the UNDP in Ghana for empowering women and youth with skills to serve as peace ambassadors in their communities.

I concluded with a compelling reminder of the cost-effectiveness of investing in prevention as opposed to dealing with the aftermath of instability through military interventions.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.undp.org/ghana/blog/building-peace-ground-nurturing-harmony-and-resilience-communities>

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**INTERNATIONAL DAY
of UNITED NATIONS
PEACEKEEPERS** 29 MAY



Empowering diverse local peace actors to engage early and effectively can help prevent conflicts and promote peace among warring communities. This calls for deliberate efforts in empowering community members and building resilient peace defenders.

Dr. Angela Lusigi
UNDP Representative in Ghana

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**INTERNATIONAL DAY
of UNITED NATIONS
PEACEKEEPERS** 29 MAY



We must always remember that investment in prevention is far more cost-effective than allocating resources to deal with the consequences of instability and violence through military interventions.

Dr. Angela Lusigi
UNDP Representative in Ghana

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Connecting the Unconnected: Empowering Women and Youth-led MSMEs for Africa's success

In June, I explored the dynamic role of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Africa's economic growth and sustainable development. Constituting nearly 90 percent of businesses and generating two-thirds of employment opportunities, MSMEs stand as hubs of innovation with the potential to drive Africa's industrialization, agricultural development, and food security. I highlighted the challenges faced by women and youth-led enterprises in accessing markets beyond borders and building resilient value chains.

I stressed the urgency of unlocking the transformative potential of these enterprises through enhanced access to markets, financing, and technology

in alignment with the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Connecting the unconnected women and youth-led MSMEs across Africa involves linking ideas, people, and products, forging invaluable partnerships that drive progress and unlock the immense potential within these MSMEs. I stated that connecting people through training and mentorship programs enhances competitiveness and integration into global supply chains. Connecting products builds resilient supply chains, as exemplified by initiatives like the Ghana-Kenya Market Entry Expo which helps build business-to-business engagements and expand market opportunities for MSEM

across borders. Lastly, connecting ideas through innovation hubs and collaborative platforms fosters groundbreaking solutions for sustainable development.

I concluded by urging recognition of the transformative power of connecting unconnected women and youth-led MSMEs and prioritizing their integration into regional and global value chains for an inclusive and prosperous future.

Read the full article here: <https://www.undp.org/ghana/blog/connecting-unconnected-empowering-women-and-youth-led-msmes-africas-success>.



MSME DAY 2023

This MSME Day, let us recognize the transformative power of connecting the unconnected. By empowering women and youth-led enterprises with improved access to markets, financing, and technology, we can enable them to thrive and make substantial contributions to Africa's transformation.

Dr. Angela Lusigi
UNDP Representative in Ghana



MSME DAY 2023

Africa must redouble efforts to unlock the transformative potential of women and youth-led MSMEs by connecting them to the opportunities available under the single African Market facilitated by free movement of persons, goods, services and investment across borders.

Dr. Angela Lusigi
UNDP Representative in Ghana

Positioning Africa's youth to win by harnessing AI for development

In July, I delved into the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Africa's development, especially considering its youthful population. As we marked World Youth Skills Day on July 15th, I underscored the importance of empowering Africa's youth to leverage AI advancements in revolutionizing lives and economies.

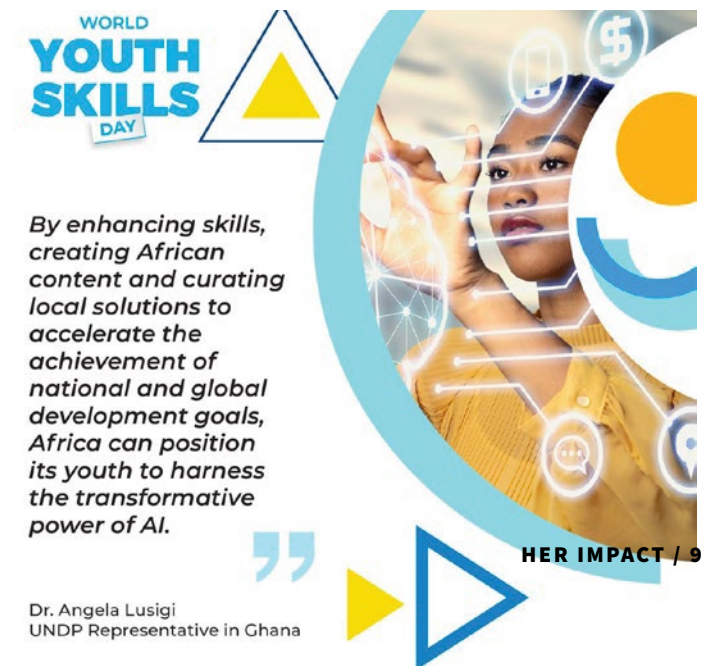
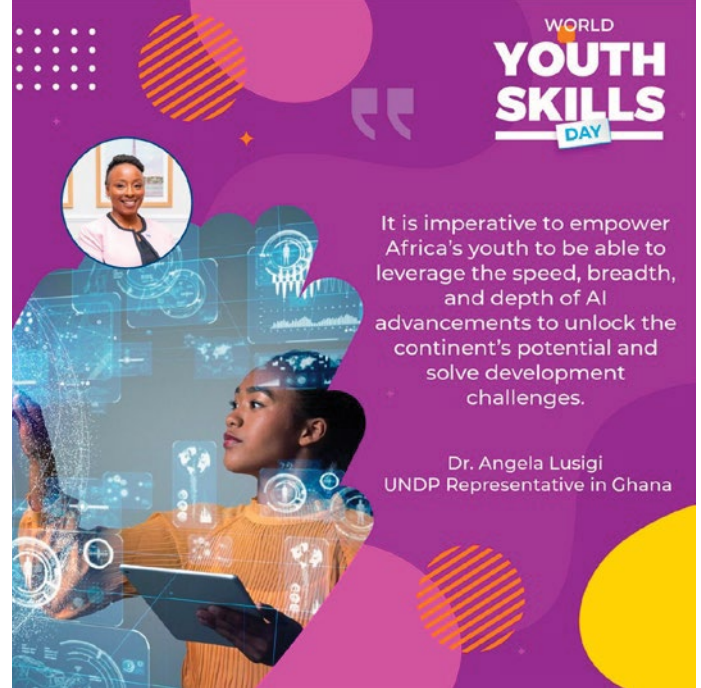
In the article, I proposed three strategic steps to position Africa's youth for AI success:

1. **Enhancing AI Skills:** Prioritize cost-effective, AI-focused education and skills development programs to ensure diverse youth are equipped with relevant technological skills, fostering innovation.
2. **Creating African Content and Diverse Data Sets:** Encourage the development of African content and the collection of high-quality datasets specific to the continent. A regional and continental approach is proposed to pool resources, share knowledge, and establish a unified AI strategy.
3. **Nurturing Local Solutions:** Foster the development of AI solutions tailored to local challenges by supporting startups, incubation hubs, and accelerators. Highlight the transformative potential of AI-driven innovations addressing sustainable development goals.

I concluded by reemphasizing the rapid development of AI globally and the imperative for Africa's diverse population to embrace its transformative power. By equipping youth with skills, fostering local solutions, and contributing to global development goals, Africa can thrive in an AI-driven future.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.undp.org/ghana/blog/positioning-africas-youth-win-harnessing-ai-development>



Breaking the cycle of crisis by building resilience in response and recovery

In August, I explored the escalating humanitarian crises driven by a complex interplay of factors such as climate change, conflicts, and economic disparities. Referring to the 2023 Global Humanitarian Overview, which revealed a 30% increase in global humanitarian need since 2022, I urged readers not to lose sight of addressing the root causes.

I emphasized the importance of reframing humanitarian action as a pathway to sustainable transformation. Proposals to break the cycle of crises and humanitarian response included focusing on the holistic approach of anticipating and reducing risks, building resilience during crisis responses, and engaging and empowering affected communities for long-term solutions.

I highlighted the role of data, technology, and cross-sector collaboration in early warning systems, citing examples like UNDP's Crisis Risk Dashboards. The article underscored the need for a shift from conventional responses to building resilience during crises, noting evidence that this approach lays a foundation for social cohesion and peace.

Lastly, I emphasized the crucial role of engaging and empowering communities, particularly women and youth, in decision-making processes to ensure more holistic and effective solutions.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.undp.org/ghana/blog/breaking-cycle-crisis-building-resilience-response-and-recovery>

Transforming tourism by investing in people and planet

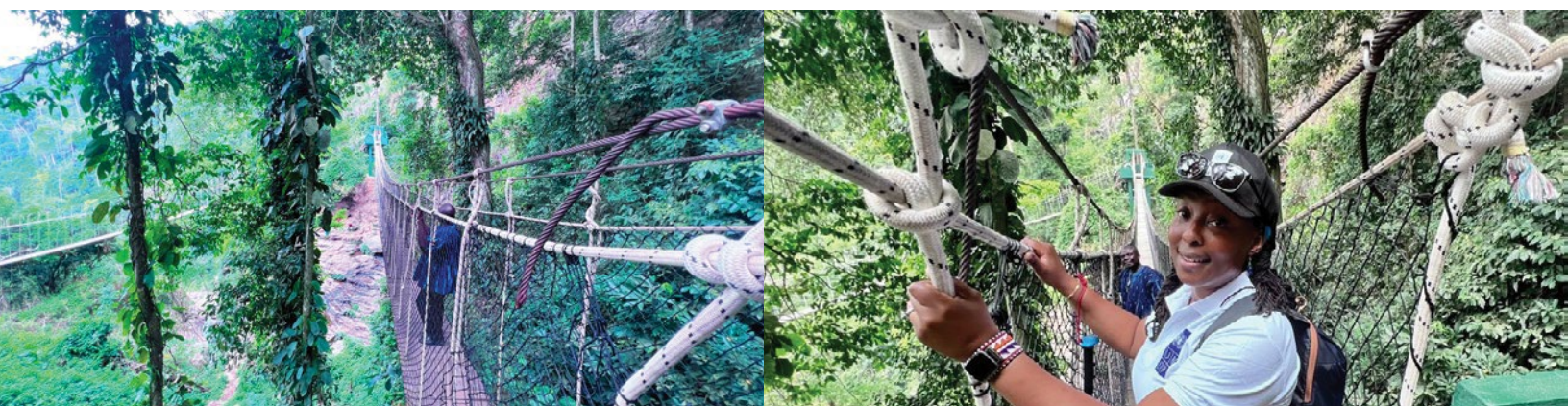
In September, I explored the transformative potential of tourism, emphasizing sustainability and positive change. Considering tourism's significant contribution to many African economies, the World Tourism Day theme, "Tourism and Green Investments," served as a reminder of the imperative for sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism practices.

The key message underscored the need to align the interests of people, the well-being of our planet, and finding a harmonious balance between the two. My proposed strategies for transforming tourism into a powerful tool for conserving our planet and enhancing human well-being included: tailoring experiences to travellers' habits and preferences, embracing eco-tourism, and investing in sustainable practices. The article highlights opportunities for investment in community-based cultural tourism, conservation efforts, and eco-friendly accommodations are highlighted.

I concluded with a call to action and a strong recognition that if properly harnessed, tourism is the key to expanding livelihoods, preserving culture, and protecting the planet for future generations.

Read the full article here:

<blog/transforming-tourism-investing-people-and-planet>



International Day for the Eradication of Poverty: Dignity for all in practice

In October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty served as a reminder of the global commitment to uplifting communities and restoring dignity to every individual. My article explored the transformative power of dignity through productive work, access to knowledge, and helping others. I showcased the inspiring journeys of three individuals from Ghana who have achieved dignity through different avenues: Ibrahim "Alinko" Yougbare, Regina, and Priscilla Asante.

Alinko's pioneering efforts in recycling plastic waste shows how targeted support can transform lives and contribute significantly to addressing environmental challenges. Regina's inspirational journey in the tech sector and the establishment of Soronko Academy demonstrate the profound impact of access to knowledge in breaking the chains of poverty. Priscilla's mission in the healing power of nature and her entrepreneurial endeavours demonstrate the transformative power of seizing opportunities with courage and inspiring others to pursue their dreams.

The article encourages drawing inspiration from their stories, emphasizing the importance of collective action to empower individuals and communities, eradicate poverty, and uphold human dignity.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.undp.org/ghana/blog/dignity-all-practice>

Empowering African Women in Cross-Border Trade: A Differentiated Approach for Success

In November, guided by the World Bank's forecast of a \$450 billion income boost by 2035 and an 81% surge in intra-Africa exports through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), I focused on the pivotal role of trade in propelling Africa towards export-led industrialization. I specifically highlighted the contribution of informal and often overlooked female entrepreneurs who constitute almost 70% of informal cross-border traders. I argued that the gender gap and systemic challenges faced by women in cross-border trade limit their impact and could hinder AfCFTA benefits, potentially denying Africa a projected \$316 billion GDP boost by 2025.

I emphasized the need for a nuanced understanding of the diverse landscape of women in cross-border trade, ranging from local processors to international exporters. To fully unlock their potential, I proposed a tailored approach. For small agro-processors, initiatives promoting mechanization and quality standards are pivotal. Medium innovators were identified as needing harmonized standards and access to supply chains, facilitated by mentorship programs and technology adoption. Large-scale exporters were shown to demand streamlined customs, transparent

taxation, and efficient logistics.

I concluded with a call to recognize the significant role that women play in cross-border trade, emphasizing the necessity for a more inclusive and robust industrial landscape that fully leverages the opportunities presented by AfCFTA and contributes to the continent's economic growth.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.undp.org/ghana/blog/empowering-african-women-cross-border-trade-differentiated-approach-success>



The Team



Linda Lumbasi

Project Coordination & Management
| International Development | UNDP
ExpRes Consultant

A professional writer, editor and researcher, Linda contributes to my article research. She is passionate about international development issues and is currently a part of the UNDP GPN Roster. Linda has extensive experience in project/programme coordination and management having worked with multiple stakeholders in Africa and Europe including Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ghana, and Ireland.



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Vida Joan

Brand Strategy | Digital Marketing |
Communication | Innovative Strategies |
Visual Communication

Vida is responsible for designing the digital images/assets that bring my articles to life. An experienced digital marketer, brand strategist and visual communicator, she has collaborated with diverse clients including prominent brands like Safaricom, Nation media Group, RwandAir, KWAL, Reckitt Benckiser and Bidco Africa, among others.



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Praise Nutakor

Communications
and Partnerships

As head of Communications and Partnerships at UNDP in Ghana, Praise is responsible for ensuring wide circulation of the articles through various platforms in order to reach the target audiences be they policymakers, development partners, practitioners or changemakers. Due to her influence, some articles have been published in local newspapers and magazines.



<https://shorturl.at/efsEF>



Angela Lusigi



info.gh@undp.org