In 2021, the African Union Commission and the African Centers for Disease Control set out a collective vision to enable the continent to produce at least 60% of its vaccines domestically by 2040, and to increase the overall capacity for pharmaceutical manufacturing in general in Africa. However, financial investments into specific projects, coupled with technical assistance on a product-by-product basis alone, will not be enough to reach these objectives. Technology access, tacit know-how sharing, and learning are central pieces of the production capacity puzzle. More innovative approaches based on partnerships, intellectual property, and domestic capabilities that focus equally on building block technologies, as much as on end products, will be required to promote sustainable and resilient pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity in Africa.

Acknowledging the central role played by technology in any strategic, long-term plan to build manufacturing and innovation capacity in the pharmaceutical sector, the African Development Bank has launched a new institution: The African Pharmaceutical Technology Foundation (APTF). This side event will introduce the APTF and discuss the relevance of its new and holistic approach to promote technology access across Africa.