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Dear Reader,

Since the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on 1 January 2016, there have been massive multi-stakeholder efforts and collaboration across board to accomplish these 17 SDGs. However, gaps still exist in areas of policy development and implementation, sourcing financing for infrastructure, agriculture development, and enabling grassroots access to healthcare, amongst many others. These gaps threaten the realisation of these noble goals across the globe. With 2030 just around the corner, we need to ask ourselves important questions about how we are contributing to ending poverty once and for all.

Here at TEF, we remain resolute that empowering young African entrepreneurs is the only solution to transforming our continent for good, and that by empowering these small

businesses, we will eradicate poverty and generate the jobs and revenue that will lead to mass wealth creation.

For the October edition of TEF Circle, we engage our alumni network and partners alike to explore their contributions to the accomplishment of the 2030 agenda especially in the areas of poverty eradication, jobs creation, and gender equality.

Our cover story explores the areas of Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure with Maureen Ideozu, the Programme Coordinator for the Export Expansion Facility Programme (EEFP) who is a TEF Fellow and alumni of the Elumelu Fellows, where Fellows were placed in key positions across the public sector in Africa to engender public sector competitiveness. Maureen sheds more light on the newly signed partnership with the Foundation which is empowering young entrepreneurs in Nigeria's non-oil export ecosystem.



We also speak to Clement Kandodo, a 2019 TEF Alumni and CEO Ecogen Malawi, on his mission to reduce food shortage, poverty, and climate change in Malawi and some of the exciting initiatives his company has embarked on to further advance this mission.

We hope you enjoy reading!





STORY OF THE MONTH



EXPLORING TRADE: OPPORTUNITIES IN NIGERIA'S NON-OIL EXPORT ECOSYSTEM

with **Maureen Ideozu**, Programme Coordinator, EEFP

In this interview, Maureen emphasises on the importance of capitalising on non-oil exports as they have the potential to redefine our national economic and socio-development status in an all-inclusive and sustainable way. She tells us more about some of the significant progress made by the Export Expansion Facility Programme (EEFP), as well as newly signed partnership with TEF which is expected to equip entrepreneurs with the relevant resources they need to explore the opportunities within the non-oil export ecosystem.

It is good to catch up with you Maureen. How have you been and what does life look like as the Programme Coordinator for the Export Expansion Facility Programme (EEFP) who was once a TEF Fellow?

It's nice to catch up with the TEF team as well! I've been great, thanks for asking. Life as the Programme Coordinator for the Export Expansion Facility Programme has been very interesting, challenging but at the same time, fulfilling. It's a phenomenal transition. I started off as a TEF Fellow attached to NEPC seven years ago as a Technical Advisor for three years. During that time, I worked on strategies, institutional repositing, communications and partnerships. Key among our achievements was developing the Zero Oil Plan, Institutional and Functional Review and restructuring of NEPC, winning the World Trade Promotion Organisations Award for the first time in NEPC's history, signing up Nigeria to a global call to increase women's participation in trade - SheTrades. I've returned as the Programme Coordinator for the Export Expansion Facility Programme, where along with my new team, we are implementing a full bouquet of interventions to energise the non-oil exports ecosystem. This for me is the fulfilment aspect of my current job, where we are addressing several bottlenecks identified, expanding participation of excluded groups through formidable partnerships, improving the export infrastructure and creating market access for Nigerian exporters.

TEF & NEPC through the EEFP just announced a N400m partnership to provide second-stage funding for TEF Entrepreneurs. What are some desired outcomes?

The NEPC-TEF partnership through EEFP is a very exciting one for us. We are looking to see that the 50 TEF Alumni beneficiaries under the partnership will gain sufficient technical support in addition to the grant, to enhance their ability to export their products and services to the international market, as part of Nigeria's growing army of non-oil exporting SMEs.

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This must feel like a full circle moment for you. Years ago, you were a fellow and now you are implementing a partnership with the Foundation. What are some of the most interesting aspects of the Foundation's work that you hope to leverage?

Tell me about it, it's a real full circle. So as a TEF Fellow, I provided technical advice broadly on enhancing the overall effectiveness of NEPC. What that offered was an opportunity to thoroughly understand the organisation, its strengths, challenges, potentials etc. This background has been extremely useful in my current role. I basically hit the ground-running. To put things in perspective, I was appointed mid-January and by the time we had our first Steering Committee meeting on 18 February, we presented proposals for the Programme Structure, Operational Manual, Monitoring and Evaluation as well as the Grant Management System for approvals. Keen on delivering our targets to plan, we also identified viable partners. Of course, TEF came naturally to us. It has history with NEPC, its mode of implementing the Entrepreneurship programme produces market ready entrepreneurs, mentored and skilled with the ability to cope with the rigours of business which can be easily transferred to international trade. So, for us, it was a field ready to harvest.



Maureen Ideozu, Programme Coordinator, EEPF

As one of the earliest beneficiaries of the Tony Elumelu Foundation almost a decade ago. Tell us, what did that experience do for you and your career?

It basically moved me from working and consulting in the international development space to implementation from within and in this case international trade and institutional reforms. What my role as an Elumelu Fellow did was to bring my varied experiences throughout my career, from oil and gas, to banking, corporate communications, service delivery and institutional reforms into one basket. It took away the frustration of just saying to actually doing and demonstrating things can be done differently in the public service. It has really broadened my experience and knowledge of institutions, countries, administration, strategy, and policies.

There are ongoing conversations on how to increase Nigeria's private sector participation in global trade beyond oil and gas. What would you say is the current state of non-oil export ecosystem in Nigeria? What are the challenges and opportunities?

You might be surprised to know that there is a lot of private sector involvement in the non-oil export ecosystem. These range from logistics, storage, packaging, production, processing, finance, and other services. The significant point to note in non-oil exports is that it has the potential to redefine our national economic and socio-development status in an all-inclusive and sustainable way.

This can be achieved by developing product value chains, product variations, strengthening processes for quality and standards, removing logistics bottlenecks, encouraging better coordination among relevant government agencies, and creating platforms for business to government engagement. We developed the Zero Oil Plan in 2015 while I was still a TEF Fellow. That plan lays out a non-oil exports led economic development blueprint for Nigeria. It gives very detailed opportunities around 22 key products and proposes strategic interventions on infrastructure, logistics and finance to galvanise the ecosystem.

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While non-oil export value in 2016 was \$1.2bn, it grew to \$6.9bn in 2019.

How has NEPC/EEFP fared with respect to its mandate to promote the diversification of Nigeria's export portfolio to sustain and grow the economy?

Extremely well, I will say. Over the years, there is more participation in non-oil export trade and significant trade in more products besides oil. While non-oil export value in 2016 was \$1.2bn, it grew to \$6.9bn in 2019 before coming down to \$3.76bn in 2020, obviously due to COVID. The top performing non-oil products in their order of ranking as of 2020 statistics are ships, boats and floating structures; oil seeds, grains etc; cocoa and preparations; fertiliser; edible fruits; aircraft parts; tobacco and raw hides.

The value of these eight products in 2020 was \$3.3bn. Save for ships, fertiliser and aircraft parts, the value chains for the products begin upstream in the farms, at community level. This is the reason we say that an export-led economic agenda is what is required for our sustainable national socio-economic development.

What do you envisage as the impact of this partnership on export inclusion, market access among African entrepreneurs?

The main beneficiaries of this partnership belong to a network of thousands of entrepreneurs across Africa through the TEF Entrepreneurs platform. We envisage they will leverage the network to develop cross border trade linkages and partnerships especially within the continent, to enable them take on maximise the opportunities presented by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). In addition to the entrepreneurial skills, they developed through the TEF mentorship programme, they will benefit from export specific training to enhance their capabilities for international trade.



While we encourage trading within Africa, we should look to replace products and services from outside the continent.

Are they any significant milestones or accomplishments by EEPF that you can share with us?

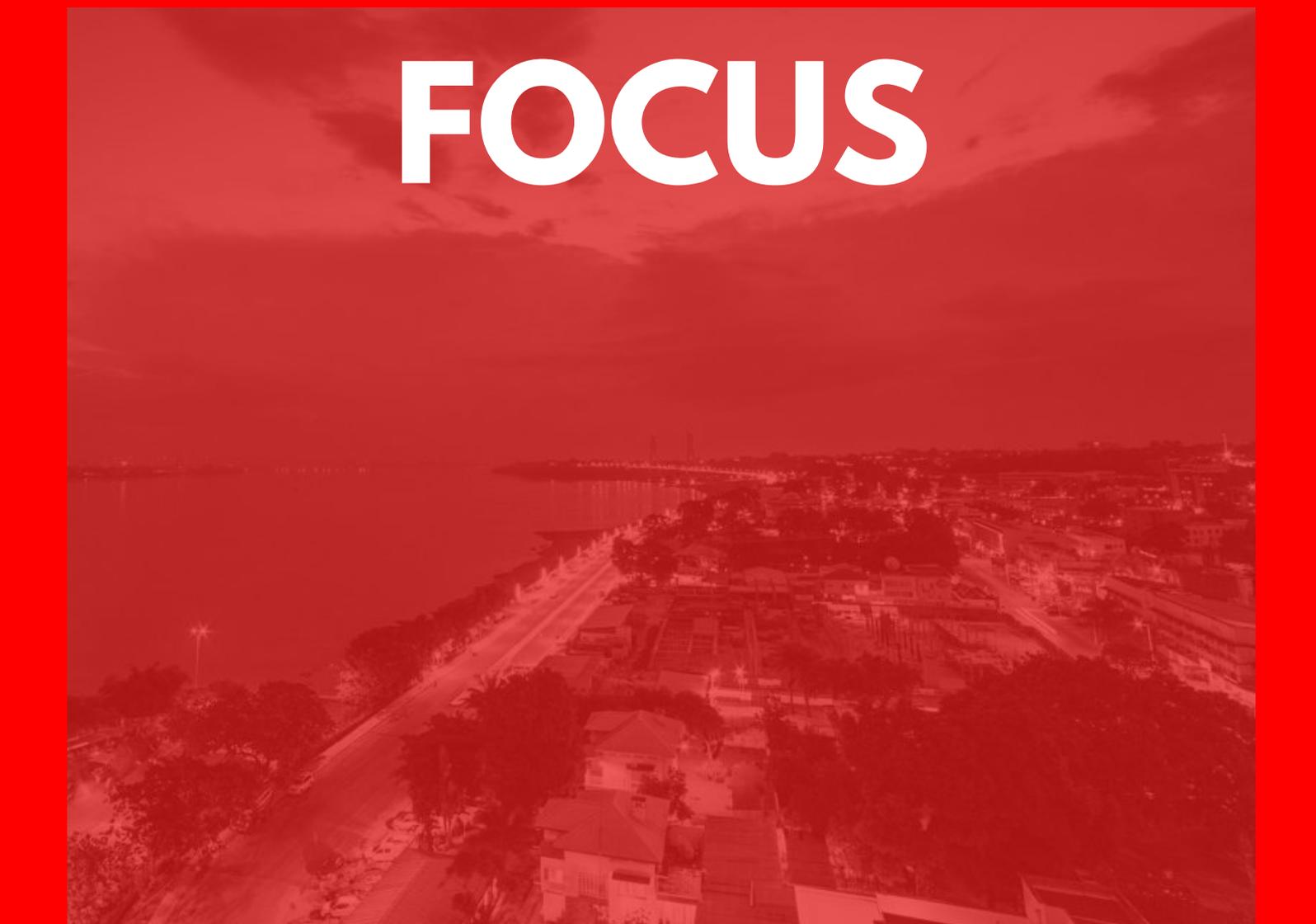
There are quite a few milestones we have been able to achieve through the EEPF. To start with, we have activated a statutory incentive for NEPC, the Export Development Fund (EDF), which had been dormant for over 40 years. This incentive is a post-shipment incentive designed for SMEs. For the first time in the history of NEPC, SMEs have applied for and received funds to support their pre-shipment export activities. We put in place a transparent and accessible grant management system which made it easy for people to apply from across the country. We are also creating access for Nigerian SMEs to have their products listed on Amazon through a partnership with Export & Sell. Just last week, we launched the first Amazon warehouse in Nigeria and already over two hundred entrepreneurs have received training on how to sell on Amazon. We aim to register 500 SMEs within six-months, and they will all have the relevant certifications to sell on Amazon US. We have provided grants to export logistics companies to establish Domestic Export Warehouses to ease the burden of delays at the ports. These are just to mention a few milestones achieved since we took off effectively in May 2021.

The Tony Elumelu Foundation is currently training hundreds of thousands of African entrepreneurs, what advice would you give the 2021 cohort?

The training they are getting is invaluable. I can say so having mentored in the first two cohorts. They should look beyond their immediate markets and think global. While we encourage trading amongst ourselves within Africa, we should look to replace products and services from outside the continent and also sell out.



ECOSYSTEM



FOCUS



Clement Kandodo, Founder/MD of EcoGen, Malawi

"POOR ACCESS TO CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR HOUSEHOLDS AND INSTITUTIONS EXPOSE PEOPLE TO MORE HEALTH RISKS MAKING THEM MORE VULNERABLE TO COVID"

In this interview, 2018 TEF Alumni, Clement recounts how the Tony Elumelu Foundation not only gave financial support but also provided a platform for him to meet potential partners who have been key in supporting and promoting his enterprise, EcoGen, which continues to address climate change in Malawi.

"OVER 96% OF PEOPLE IN MALAWI STILL USE WOOD FUEL TO MEET THEIR ENERGY NEEDS, WHICH PRODUCES NET GHG EMISSIONS"

Clement Kandodo, Founder/MD of EcoGen, Malawi

Hello Clement, it's wonderful to be in conversation with you today. How have you been, and can you share some significant milestones recorded by EcoGen in the last one year?

Thank you very much for this interview. My name is Clement Kandodo a Founder and Managing Director of EcoGen, a leading integrated biogas energy company in Malawi, headquarter in Lilongwe, Malawi, founded in 2018 to provide solutions in clean cooking, agricultural processing, and fertilizer production to small farmers. In a landscape like Malawi, where energy is in short supply, agriculture is the main pillar of national economic development. Due to rapid growth, waste management becomes a big challenge.

EcoGen uses biowaste bin/Bio-digester systems to convert organic waste into renewable cooking gas and organic fertiliser for households and institutions. Through this EcoGen addresses the issues of poor access to clean, renewable energy and waste management for households and institutions in Malawi.

EcoGen has so far won over 9 awards and recognitions the most recent being from Malawi Government Under Environmental Affairs Department called Climate Change and Applied Research Award, Climate Adaptation Award by SEED and Winner for Africavsvirus Challenge by African Development Bank.

EcoGen has also managed to reach over 40,000 people with access to clean energy, waste management and biofertilizer. We have also employed 9 young people and created business opportunities for over 100 women in our rural community biogas projects.

What are some of the insights and resources from the Foundation's Entrepreneurship Programme that have been useful in your entrepreneurial journey so far?

We got our first funding from Tony Elumelu Foundation in 2018, This enabled us to conduct research on the market viability of our solution. This enabled us to find the best technology and financing model that suits our market. Through this strategy, we have managed to penetrate the market which was previously dominated by donor projects now to being dominated by indigenous Malawians owning our technology.

Clement, from your perspective, what progress has been made in advancing EcoGen's goal of reducing food shortage, poverty, and climate change in Malawi?

Our provision of renewable cooking gas, especially to rural customers who mainly relying on wood fuel, takes pressure off local forest resources. Organic fertiliser increases yields and income for smallholder farmers, enhancing their climate resilience.

Since inception, EcoGen has:

- Supported over 100 women with clean cooking energy and economic empowerment
- Increased alternative income generation for dairy farmers
- Provided capacity building on sustainable agriculture, waste management and clean technologies to youth and women
- Converted agriculture waste that would have gone to landfills into organic fertiliser
- Reduced GHG emissions generated from organic waste
- Created permanent jobs for the local population
- Helped farmers to become independent of chemical fertilisers and improve yields by applying organic fertiliser, Saving on average USD 450 per household per year on energy and fertiliser costs.

How important are platforms/partners such as TEF in addressing the issue of climate change in Africa?

TEF gave us a platform to meet likeminded individuals and organisation partnering to promoting. The Foundation not only gave financial support but also provided us a platform to meet potential partners who have been key in supporting promoting our technology for more people to have it so that they can live in harmony with nature. For example, TEF connected us to a partner, who connected us to the network of their chicken farmers across Malawi, giving us an opportunity to reach more farmers with our life changing technology.

What would you say has been the effect of the pandemic on the issue of climate change and the goal of Ecogen?

Poor access to clean, renewable energy and waste management for households and institutions expose people to more health risks making them more vulnerable to Covid 19. Measures to contain the global pandemic (Covid -19) have reduced pollution worldwide; however, lockdowns can strongly limit public and private actions, such as: waste management, access to clean energy and dietary food products to keep immune system health, causing additional stress to society and more healthy complications. In the context of Malawi where over 96% of the population relies on charcoal or wood fuel for cooking, people have high chances to risk their lives when they go out to look for energy for cooking, buy health food products and managing the waste. Our solution aims at promoting self-reliance which prevents people from going to public places to risk their lives to covid-19. Our product enables families to be self-reliant by turning the available home organic waste into clean energy. Every kilo of organic waste fed in the system gives an equal amount of ready to use fertilizer for the production of dietary foods hence preventing them from going out to public places get such services which can expose them to covid-19. Our vision is to be a leading company in providing technically advanced biogas-based technologies for cleaner, healthy, and richer Malawi and Africa at large. Our Mission is to develop innovative ways of turning bio wastes into wealth for our clients to contribute to low carbon pathways but also adhering to Covid-19 prevention measures.

In what ways have popular belief systems and perspectives on climate change by Malawians impacted the work Ecogen does?

Our technology has come in the right time whereby people are cutting down trees messily. The Minister of Environment and Forestry recently raised a red flag for being worried with the rate at which our natural resources are depleting. Ecogen provides alternative solutions to unsustainable cooking fuels and chemical fertiliser. Now people see that they have the solutions at hand knowing that by having our technology, they are able to solve many problems they are facing but also protecting our mother planet from destruction.

What government policies can advance or support the effort of Ecogen in mitigating climate change in Malawi?

Over 96% of people in Malawi still use wood fuel to meet their energy needs, which produces net GHG emissions. Their alternative is to meet their household and farm energy needs with fossil fuels, creating a development pathway for further GHG emissions. Chemical fertilizers and other agricultural inputs emit GHGs through their production, transport and application, locking farmers into a costly and emissions-intensive production cycle. Finally, agricultural wastes and animal manure, managed inefficiently, create significant GHG emissions, while also contaminating local watersheds.



With government support and conducive environment for investments in eco-friendly technology it will be easy for EcoGen to provide solutions that help people not only to save money but also to solve socioeconomic and ecological problems such as unsustainable energy problems, Waste management problems as well as problems of unsustainable agriculture.

What exciting projects or initiatives can we expect from EcoGen in the next couple of months?

Malawi has over 3 million livestock farmers and this presents a huge market opportunity for our solutions. Large poultry farmers produce a large quantity of organic wastes that can be converted to biogas. Going through the Malawi Milk Producers Association, which is a network of 21,000 dairy farmers is another huge market for biogas systems. EcoGen is working hard to reach as many people as possible with this life changing technology that enables people to live in harmony with nature. Our plan is to install over 10,000 biogas systems by 2026, reaching over 200,000 with access to clean energy, waste management and sustainable agriculture solutions.



FROM THE

TEF NETWORK



WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR AFRICA (WE4A)

To increase economic inclusion and empowerment of women as well as create more decent jobs in African economies, the GIZ Employment and Skills Development in Africa programme in Uganda, co-implemented by the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) launched the Women Entrepreneurship for Africa (WE4A) project. The beneficiaries of this intervention will be Tony Elumelu Foundation-funded businesses managed and owned or co-owned by Ugandan women entrepreneurs. Read more [here](#).



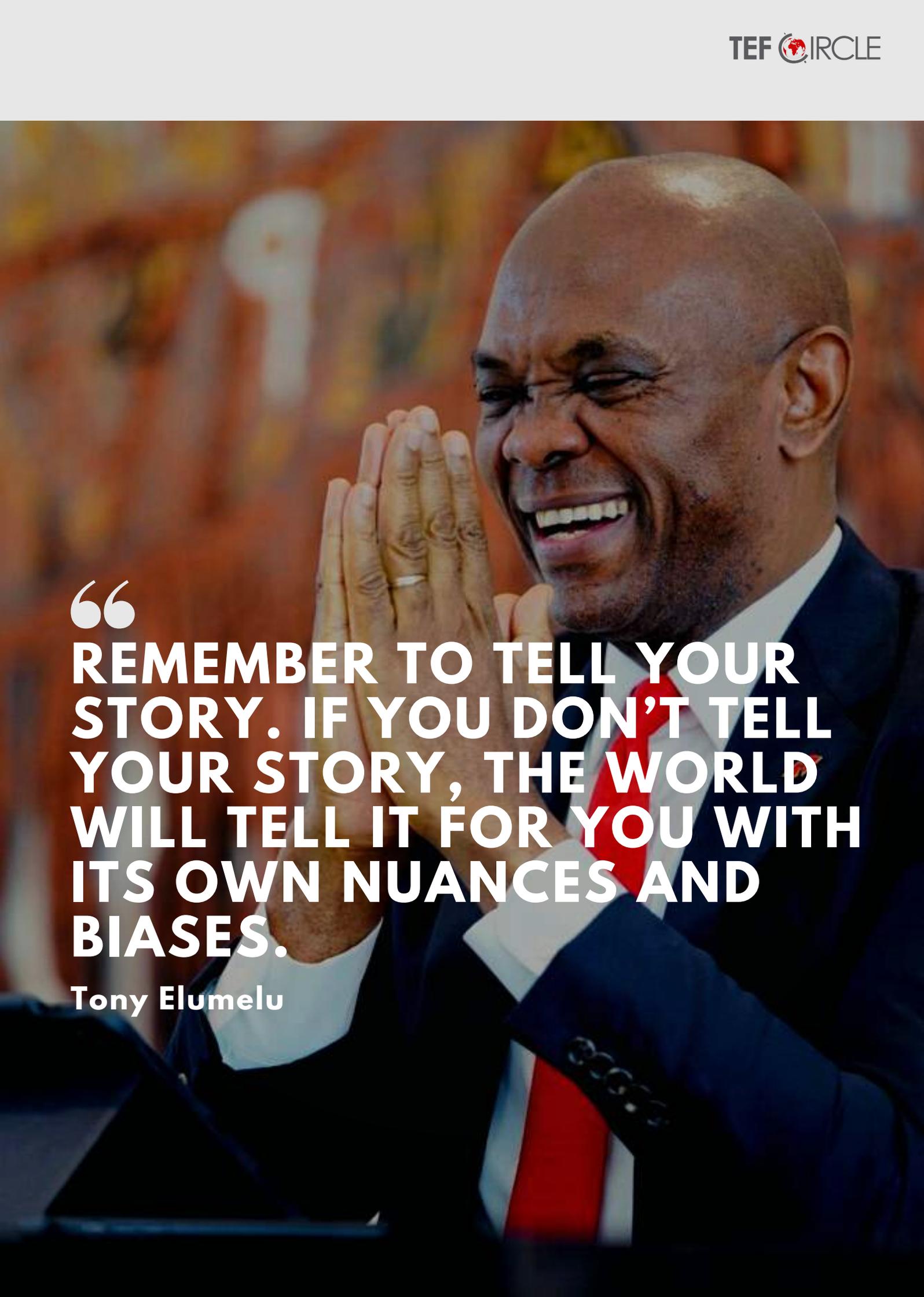
**"Success is walking from failure to failure with
no loss of enthusiasm"**

WINSTON CHURCHILL



SOME LESSONS FROM THE 2ND EDITION OF TOE'S MENTORING SESSION

The Founder of TEF, Tony O Elumelu, interacted with young entrepreneurs from across the world during the second edition of his quarterly mentoring session. The hybrid event is a no-holds-back environment for honest dialogues on what success means and how it can be achieved. Read [more](#).

A close-up photograph of Tony Elumelu, a Black man with a shaved head, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and red tie. He is clapping his hands together in front of his face, smiling broadly with his eyes closed, conveying a sense of joy and celebration. The background is blurred, showing other people in a crowd.

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**REMEMBER TO TELL YOUR
STORY. IF YOU DON'T TELL
YOUR STORY, THE WORLD
WILL TELL IT FOR YOU WITH
ITS OWN NUANCES AND
BIASES.**

Tony Elumelu

FROM THE FOUNDATION

CIRCLE WATCH



WATCH TEF FOUNDER'S ADVISE ON PUTTING TOGETHER AN A-LIST TEAM AND ENABLING THEM



THE \$3M TEF & GOOGLE.ORG GRANT HIGHLIGHTED FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT IT WILL CREATE.

CIRCLE READ

"THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS WHEN TRADE POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONS ON THE CONTINENT ARE ALIGNED"

CEO of Tony Elumelu Foundation, Ifeyinwa Ugochukwu, joined private sector players at the Youth Connekt Africa Summit in Ghana – co-hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – to discuss the opportunities that a single continental market pose. The interactive session explored how Africa's youth demography can be effectively positioned to take advantage of opportunities of the AfCFTA

Echoing the mission of the Foundation, Ifeyinwa reiterated how entrepreneurship has the potential to improve the economic status for both entrepreneurs themselves and their communities. Read more [here](#).



TEF Circle is the Tony Elumelu Foundation's monthly publication sharing updates on our alumni, our TEF Network and the global economy.

www.tonyelumelufoundation.org

