

# **Inaugural Conference of the West African Think Tank Network (WATTNet)**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016**

**Venue: La Palm Royal Beach Hotel, Accra, Ghana**

## **Theme: Transforming West Africa for Inclusive Development**

In September 2015, a number of member Think Tanks of the Think Tank Initiative (IDRC-TTI) met to discuss the formation of a network. They recognized that the enormity of the challenges facing the sub-region stemmed in part from the absence of sustained, evidence-based research to inform national and regional policies. The think tanks therefore decided to harmonize their efforts as a way of creating synergy to better target and address the socio-economic and political challenges of the region. It was in this spirit that the WATTNet was born.

The West African Think Tank Network (WATTNet) comprises a network of ten think tanks from five West African countries. They are: African Heritage Institution (Nigeria); Center for Studies, Documentation, Economic and Social Research (CEDRES, Burkina Faso); Ivorian Center for Economic and Social Research (CIRES, Cote D'Ivoire); Center for Population and Environmental Development (CPED, Nigeria); Consortium for Economic and Social Research (CRES, Senegal); Center for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA, Nigeria); Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG, Ghana); Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA, Ghana); Prospective Agricultural and Rural Initiative (IPAR); and Institute for Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER, Ghana). The Network is supported by the Think Tank Initiative (TTI) and the International Development Research Center (IDRC, Canada).

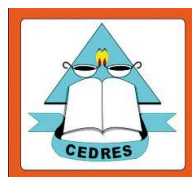
The Inaugural Conference of WATTNet will be held in Accra from 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016. In attendance will be His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor, former President of the Republic of Ghana, and former Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) who will deliver the keynote address. Also in attendance will be Mr. Kalilou Traore, Former Chairman of the ECOWAS Regional Committee for the Development of Common External Tariff; Prof. Takyiwaa Manu, Director of Social Development Policy Division of the UN Economic Commission for Africa; and Dr. Peter Taylor, Programme Manager of the Think Tank Initiative (TTI).

Representatives of African Development Bank (AfDB), West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ), African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and ECOWAS will deliver solidarity messages in support of the network. Altogether, the conference is expected to bring together about 200 participants comprising government officials, policy makers, academics, business leaders, development partners, and heads of think tanks and research institutions from across the sub-region.

Presentations and discussions will focus on Trade and Regional Integration, Natural Resource Management, Private Sector and Infrastructure for Inclusive Development. Ultimately, the conference will develop action plans that will address some critical issues pertaining to the sub-region, and obtain commitment from Heads of Governments on the action plans.

The IEA will play the role of Secretariat in organizing and hosting this two-day conference.

## Members of WATTNet:



**Host of Conference:** The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA, Ghana)

## Partners of WATTNet:



## Contacts:

### For the Conference

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