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**UNU-WIDER**

World Institute for Development  
Economics Research

## CALL FOR PAPERS

UNU-WIDER Conference on

### **Learning to Compete: Industrial Development and Policy in Africa**

Helsinki, 24-25 June 2013

*The first of the two 2013 UNU-WIDER Development Conferences will be held on 24-25 June in Helsinki, Finland. The conference titled ‘L2C – Learning to Compete: Industrial Development and Policy in Africa’ builds on the research from the collaborative project between UNU-WIDER, the Brookings Institution and the African Development Bank, and aims to bring together research on industrial development and industrial policy in Africa. The conference will feature a mix of plenary speakers and panels, sessions based on invited papers and those submitted through this call for papers, which will be open from 22 November 2012 to 31 January 2013.*

While the last three decades were boom times for industrial development in low- and middle-income countries, industry has been moving *out* of Africa. Between 1995 and 2008, manufacturing growth in developing economies was more than six per cent per year, yet in Africa it was only about three per cent. Since 1980 industry in Africa has declined as a share of both global production and trade.

Africa has ‘deindustrialized’. Manufacturing value added has declined as a share of GDP since the mid-1980s. New evidence shows that between 1975 and 2005 the diversity and sophistication of industrial production and exports declined in most African economies. Today, Africa’s industrial sector is in many ways less advanced than in the first decade following independence.

Industry is most often the leading high-productivity sector, and recent research indicates that economies with more diverse and sophisticated industrial sectors tend to grow faster. In spite of the positive growth performance of the African economies since 1995, lack of structural change—the shift of resources from low-productivity to higher-productivity sectors—limits the continent’s long-term growth prospects and opportunities for productive employment.

Not surprisingly, Africa’s lack of industrial development has begun to occupy the attention of a growing number of researchers and development practitioners. The June 2013 UNU-WIDER conference will be an appropriate time to take stock of this body of work, encourage an exchange of views between researchers and selected policy makers, and lay out an agenda for future research and policy. It offers an opportunity to showcase results of [‘Learning to Compete \(L2C\): Accelerating Industrial Development in Africa’](#) project, but also, importantly, to place them in the context of other research.

## **Submission procedure**

The conference is intended primarily for researchers and policy makers from the academic, government, and development communities. Female and developing country participants are actively encouraged to apply. All participants may be requested to serve as discussants.

Those interested in presenting original research on the themes listed below are invited to submit an extended abstract of 1-2 pages by 31 January 2013. Sponsored participants, accepted through this call for papers, are expected to transfer copyright of their paper to UNU-WIDER, if selected for publication after review. Please complete the online application form at [www.wider.unu.edu/L2CConf](http://www.wider.unu.edu/L2CConf), and attach your abstract and CV. All submissions will be reviewed and authors will be informed of the outcome by 28 February 2013. In the case of accepted abstracts, full papers will be required by 31 May 2013.

Sessions will cover the following (preliminary) list of themes:

- Industry and Growth: What's New?
- Deindustrialization in Africa: What Went Wrong and Why?
- Breaking-in: Can Africa Enter Global Markets?
- Industrial Development and Infrastructure: How Large a Constraint?
- Industrial Development and Learning: The Role of Exports
- Industrialization and the New Economic Geography: Industrial Clusters
- Industrialization and Skills: Is Human Capital a Constraint?
- Firm Capabilities: Does Management Matter?
- Foreign Direct Investment: Are There Spillovers?
- Industrialization and Natural Resources: Diversification
- Industry without Smokestacks: Agro-value Chains and Tradeable Services
- Business-Government Relations: Coordination or Capture?

Submission of comparative research on industrialization experiences outside of Africa will also be encouraged where appropriate.

Those wishing to attend without presenting (e.g. PhD students, policy makers, journalists) should also submit the online application form and briefly explain (under 'Remarks') their interest in the conference and attach their CV. Accepted applicants will be informed.

## **Publication opportunities**

Papers accepted through this call for papers will be considered for publication in the WIDER Working Paper series and possible further academic publication emanating from this conference.

## **Financial support**

For accepted participants, UNU-WIDER will cover accommodation and meals of one person per presented paper during the conference period. Subject to UN procedures, travel expenses to and from Helsinki can also be covered for some participants, with preference given to those from developing countries. There is no conference fee.

The conference will be held in English (simultaneous translation will not be available).