Policymakers and scientists, and industry leaders from across Africa and the Home – African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) will convene in Lilongwe, Malawi, on 4th September to launch a regional dialogue aimed at leveraging emerging technologies to improve healthcare delivery systems in Africa.

The meeting is organised by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) and African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) under their joint initiative, Platform for Dialogue and Action on Health Technologies in Africa (Health Tech Platform).

Latest estimates show that key emerging technologies prioritised by the African Union (AU) as having potential to revolutionise healthcare in Africa include artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Medical Things (IoMT), blockchain, drones, genetically based vector control, and genomic medicine, among others.

According to the statement announcing the event, these emerging technologies, if well developed and deployed, can enhance diagnostic accuracy, treatment efficacy, and operational efficiency in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

AFIDEP

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AFIDEP is collaborating with AUDA-NEPAD to build evidence for advocacy to advance policy reforms on the application of emerging technologies, and improve healthcare delivery systems in Africa

It said however that issues such as inadequate health governance structures and weak institutional capacity serve as barriers preventing the realization of the full potential of these technologies.

It is expected that the two-day dialogue will allow African stakeholders in health sector to engage in critical conversations on accelerating Africa's efforts to harness emerging technologies for healthcare system strengthening.

The dialogue will examine economic, ethical and socio-cultural and regulatory considerations towards harness these emerging technologies to improve health on the continent. Representatives from government, private sector and other non-state actors will share their experiences on developing, piloting, or deploying emerging technologies.

Ahead of the dialogue, AFIDEP and AUDA-NEPAD will convene African Union High Level Panel on Emerging Technologies (APET) for a two-day meeting on September 2–3, 2024.

The Panel, which was initiated, according to the statement through an endorsement of the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government, comprises ten imminent experts which provide recommendations on harnessing existing and emerging technologies for Africa's economic advancement.

This outcomes of the APET meeting, and recommendations of the Panel, will feed into the regional dialogue the statement said.

As part of these efforts, AFIDEP is collaborating with AUDA-NEPAD to build evidence for advocacy to advance policy reforms on the application of emerging technologies, and improve healthcare delivery systems in Africa.

The collaboration aims to foster evidence-informed policymaking and enhance investment in health research and innovations to address Africa's critical health challenges and drive positive health outcomes across the continent.