OPINION PIECE

Emerging technologies and the future of African manufacturing

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African countries have, largely unsuccessfully, tried many approaches over the past 50 years to develop manufacturing. Despite this, the ambition remains. However, new and emerging technologies associated with the "new industrial revolution" (Marsh, 2012) will have to be mastered. These technologies include advanced automation (robots); additive manufacturing (3D printing); the Internet of Things (IoT); and perhaps most sito improving food production from the "farm to the fork", for instance, by helping farmers to monitor growing conditions and to identify crop diseases timeously, by tracking products along the entire supply chain, by improving food-sorting and equipment-cleaning, by monitoring hygiene in factories, and by helping TJ T* [(f)-6.2 (o)-13.2 (r e)-5.9 (x)-14.1 (a)-15.6 (m)-12.9 (p)-13.5 (l)-13.5 (e i)-12.7 (n t)-8.5 (h)-13.1 (e 3)-21.2 (D p)-13.6 where useful learning can occur in the age of disruptive digital manufacturing. In fact, it may only serve to lock certain countries into dead-end manufacturing sectors. What is far more sensible today is to invest in entrepreneurial ability. Africa has great entrepreneurs. Let's start now to build the start-up ecosystems that can generate the future giants of African (digital) manufacturing.