ABWA The Association of Accountancy Bodies in West Africa

E-BULLETIN

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Table of Content

- Decoding AI and What it means for developing economies 1
- IFAC Holds Hybrid Board meeting 3
- Coming Event 4
- LICPA host the August 2026 ATSWA Harmonisation Committee Meeting 4
- LICPA Plays host to Speaker of Liberian Parliament 4
- Annual Conference of ANAN 5
- ABWA Staff gets long service Awards 6
- Beyond the Classroom: Eight Ways Learning Outcomes are Shaping the Future of Accounting 6
- About ABWA 14

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September 22, 2026

Most of what we hear about artificial intelligence comes through the lens of advanced economies: the race to build the most powerful models, the fear that white-collar jobs will disappear. That framing misses AI's biggest opportunity. In much of the developing world, the problem is too few skilled workers, not too many — too few doctors to diagnose disease, too few agronomists to advise farmers, too few officials to deliver services. AI, which has reached lower-income countries 40 times faster than the internet did, can extend scarce expertise to far more people in far less time.

This blog draws on the World Development Report 2026: The Promise of Artificial Intelligence, which examines what AI means for development through the lens of three interconnected questions: what AI can do, who controls it, and what it needs to work.

Capabilities: a century of progress in a decade

By guiding decisions where expertise is scarce, AI can do in a decade what would otherwise take a century. Consider a few examples:

- Lower-income countries have fewer than 20 radiologists per million people, roughly a fifth of what is considered adequate, and AI is beginning to close the gap.
- In Bangladesh, AI-assisted screening raised the number of patients checked for diabetic retinopathy in a day by 40 percent.
- In India, AI-supported weather forecasts tailored to local rainfall patterns and languages reached more than 30 million farmers, giving most earlier warning of monsoons than ever before.

- In Ghana, the Rori math tutor, delivered by text message on basic phones, produced a year of learning gains at US$5 per student.

Concentration: access today, but on whose terms?

A few companies in a few economies control the most advanced AI models, the chips they depend on, and the data centers that run them. This cuts both ways. Developing economies can customize world-class AI without spending billions to build it from scratch. But the terms matter.

Many AI providers price access below cost to drive adoption, gather data that improves their models, and embed themselves in how firms and governments work. Early ride-hailing platforms followed the same approach: low fares built a user base, and prices rose once the platform became the default. Today's low prices with AI products may likewise be an introductory offer. Once adoption crosses a threshold and switching becomes costly, developing economies—with limited bargaining power and thin competition-policy capacity—are the most exposed to becoming dependent on a few AI providers.

Complements: the bigger constraint

Without reliable infrastructure, foundational skills, and capable institutions, AI's benefits will be slow to arrive. Its expected productivity impact in advanced economies is twice that in developing economies, and three-quarters of that gap reflects differences in adoption. Harms spread quickly too: countries with little capacity to detect malicious uses of AI are more vulnerable to cyberattacks.

What countries should do: adopt, adapt, and then advance

Pushing the AI frontier is enormously expensive: hyperscalers' capital expenditure is projected to exceed US$750 billion in 2026, more than the GDP of many countries. Adopting existing AI is the natural starting point, but off-the-shelf tools are not enough. A clinical decision-support tool trained in high-income countries can recommend what does not fit local medical norms.

Adaptation grounds AI in local realities, which drives adoption.

Adapting AI is also a path to advancing it: India's Sarvam AI and Africa's InkubaLM are language models built from scratch for local languages. Such efforts, along with open-weight models, give countries alternatives — and in a concentrated market, alternatives are the foundation of bargaining power.

What governments should do: make cost-conscious choices

Governments shape AI's impact as enablers, users, and regulators. In each role, they should plan for how costs evolve after introductory prices end, not just costs today.

As enablers, governments must build AI's digital and analog foundations. In Sub-Saharan Africa, nearly a third of rural schools lack reliable electricity, more than two-thirds lack dependable internet, and nearly nine in ten 10-year-olds cannot read a simple text.

Data matters too: almost half of internet-derived training data is in English, while more than 2,000 languages are spoken in Africa alone. Local-language data is both a necessity and an asset to bargain with.**As users**, governments need frameworks to procure, evaluate, and scale

up AI.

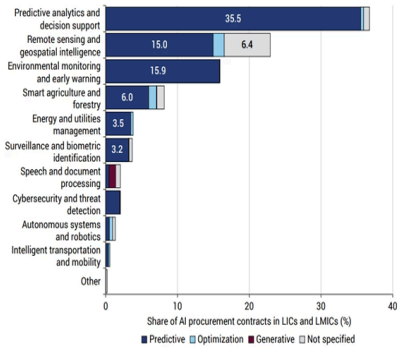


Figure 1: Governments in lower-income countries use AI mostly for decision support, and overwhelmingly rely on predictive AI

Only 17 of nearly 10,000 published studies on AI in health care show causal evidence of impact in low-resource settings, and 80 percent of digital agencies in lower-income countries have no or only basic ways to evaluate AI tools. The most immediate opportunity lies in proven back-office tools for predictive analytics and decision support (see figure 1). Procurement should guard against lock-in through price protections, data portability, exit clauses, and interoperable systems. .

As regulators, governments can start with voluntary testing standards and existing rules on data protection, consumer safety, and cybersecurity. As risks evolve, they should close regulatory gaps, push for more inclusive international standard-setting, and build competition authorities that understand AI markets — before concentration hardens into dependence.

Neither hype nor hysteria

Developing economies should be swayed by neither the hype nor the hysteria in global headlines. Their priority is to use AI to raise productivity, strengthen public services, and solve problems that have resisted solutions for generations: adopting, adapting, and then advancing AI, with care but without delay, and on terms that keep the gains, and the choices, in their own hands

Source: World Bank, World Development Report 2026: The Promise of Artificial Intelligence

The 3rd quarter hybrid IFAC Board meeting held between September 2-3, 2026 was hosted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Attended by board members, technical advisors, Category A Observers and other Observers, the meeting was presided over by Mr. Jean Bouquot. The ABWA Executive Secretary attended as an Observer and representative of ABWA, a Network Partner of IFAC.

IFAC Member Value Proposition (MVP)

The agenda of the Board Meeting expressly contained the following IFAC MVP to stir the consciousness of members

- IFAC, by connecting and uniting its members, makes the accountancy profession truly global
- IFAC member-organisations are champions of integrity and professional quality and proudly carry their membership as a badge of international recognition
- IFAC and its members work together with the Forum of Firms and other key stakeholders to shape the future of the profession through learning, innovation, a collective voice and commitment to the public interest.

Technical session

During the meeting, some technical presentations were made by carefully selected resource persons on:

- Technology, Trust and Future-Ready Chartered Accountant-Lessons from India;
- From ambition to Implementation: how to build a technology-enabled, trusted profession; etc.

In addition, the Board had a session with Securities and Exchange Board of India as well as Ministry of Corporate Affairs of

India. There was also a session with the Indian Minister of Commerce, Hon Piyush Goyal during which India's economic development issues and the role chartered accountants were expected to play in the evolving AI-driven ecosystem were discussed.

KEY TAKE AWAYS

- AI will transform how accounting work is done. You must train people on the use of AI. Without IT skills, an accountant would be irrelevant.
- Training and retraining on technology and standards. Professionals must understand the technology they are adopting
- PAOs need to develop data security and cyber incidence standards
- IFAC was encouraged to bring together best practices from different jurisdictions and harmonise them
- In line with IFAC Open Door Initiative, PAOs were encouraged to attract engineers to their fold to take advantage of their technical expertise
- In view of the impact of AI and ChatGPT on young people's education and learning habits, it suggested that case studies and life examples/cases should be deployed to enhance their analytical competences
- Professional accountants were encouraged to acquire ISACA/CISA qualifications

COMING EVENT



LICPA HOSTS THE AUGUST 2026 ATSWA HARMONISATION COMMITTEE MEETING

The ATSWA Harmonisation Committee meeting for the September diet was held between August 17-19, 2026 and hosted by the Liberian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (LICPA) in Monrovia. The meeting was declared open by the LICPA President, Mr Papin Daniels, Jr who was accompanied by the Institute's Vice President and Chief Executive Officer. In his address, he commended the representatives of the PAOs present for their sacrifice and contributions to the development of the Accountancy Profession region.

While promising that LICPA will provide all resources required for them to carry-out the harmonisation exercise, Mr Daniels, Jr, charged the Committee to sustain the standards for which the examination is reputed.

In his response on behalf of the Committee, the Executive Secretary expressed the gratitude of Council to LICPA not only for hosting but for providing a conducive environment for the exercise to take place. He urged LICPA to work out a mechanism that will facilitate the absorption of graduates of the Accountancy Professionalisation Initiative (API) being promoted by PAFA into the ATSWA Scheme. According to him, the API qualification is not only a terminal qualification but cannot qualify its holders to be admitted as members of any PAO. The LICPA President assured that Council of his PAO would develop a proposal on this and share with ABWA and the committee.



The Speaker of the Liberian House of Representatives, Hon, Richard Nagbe Koon paid a working visit to the Secretariat of the Liberian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (LICPA), Monrovia on August 17, 2026.

He was received by the LICPA President, Mr. Papin Daniels, Jr, Vice President, Mr Mohammed B. Korleh and the Executive Secretary of ABWA , Dr Abel Aig. Asein, FCA and the Executive Director of LICPA, Mr. Charles S. Kpadeh.

The Speaker, a thorough-bred professional accountant and a renowned accounting teacher in Liberia was very delighted to visit the Secretariat of LICPA. The visit was to enable him ascertain how the government can support the LICPA as it presses forward with its mandate of producing professional accountants required to drive the development of the country.



In response the leadership of LICPA presented a comprehensive proposal on its requirements to the Speaker who assured that the Parliament will make adequate provisions in the forthcoming Appropriate Act to cater to the rehabilitation of the LICPA Secretariat.

In response the Executive Secretary commended the fledgling partnership which exists between the government and the Institute. While advocating for a sustenance of the relationship, he urged the government to financially support LICPA so that it can press forward with its mandate of producing professional accountants required by the government to successfully implement its policies for the economy. He also underscored the role of professional accountants in public financial management.



Hon Koon with the LICPA President, Vice President, Executive Director and ES, ABWA

Before addressing the press, the Speaker toured the LICPA Secretariat to ascertain the extent of work to be done. He assured the LICPA leadership that the Parliament will support the refurbishment of the Secretariat.

The vote of thanks was moved by the LICPA Vice President, Mr Mohammed B. Korleh.

31st ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTANTS OF NIGERIA(ANAN)

The 31st Annual conference of the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) took place at Bola Ahmed International Conference Centre on September 8-12, 2026. The theme of the conference was, ***"redefining the accountant's role in governance, reform and national development."***





ANAN President, ICAG President & ES, ABWA at the ANAN conference

The ABWA President sent a pre-recorded audio goodwill message to felicitate ANAN on the auspicious occasion of the international conference while the ABWA Secretariat was represented by the Executive Secretary and the Manager. The following PAOs were also in attendance: ICAG and

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ONECCA, Senegal. We commend ANAN for the hugely successful conference.
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On October 4, 2026, the Management of ABWA Secretariat under the leadership of the Executive Secretary honoured its staff with long services awards for meritorious services to the Association. Mrs Regina Ugeh, Manager, Administration/Translation was honoured for her 20 years unblemished service to ABWA. Similarly, Mr Gideon Barua was honoured for 15 years. They were given cash prizes and plaques to appreciate their invaluable services to the Association.





On behalf of the ABWA President, Council and Management, we warmly congratulate these staff and wish them well in the service of the Association.





Accountancy education is a dynamic and transformative process that equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for professional success. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on defining and measuring learning outcomes—both in education generally, and in accountancy education specifically.

Since 2019, the International Education Standards (IES) have promoted a learning outcomes-based approach to accountancy education. Alongside this, there continues to be rapid changes affecting both the environment as a whole and the profession in particular. This has led to an increase in the complexity and ambiguity that professional accountants are faced with, making it more important than ever for them to obtain and maintain their knowledge, skills and competence to meet market expectations.

But what exactly are learning outcomes, and why do they matter? What Are Learning Outcomes?

Learning outcomes focus on what a student is capable of doing, rather than just what instructor should teach. They define the knowledge, skills, and competencies students should acquire by the end of a course or program. This approach shifts the conversation from what is *taught* to what is *learned,* ensuring that students grasp and can apply what they've learned.

By advancing a globally consistent approach to learning outcomes, IFAC and our members are

shaping the future of the profession—fostering learning, innovation, and a shared commitment to high standards that transcend borders.

Why Learning Outcomes Matter in Accountancy Education

Learning outcomes serve as a roadmap, guiding both educators and learners toward clear goals. They play a crucial role in ensuring alignment with global standards, enhancing professional competence, and improving the overall quality of accountancy programs.

In the context of accountancy education, learning outcomes are important as they emphasize the professional nature and focus of the IESs. The standards support the education of future professionals by emphasizing the minimum expected of them at the end of initial professional development (IPD). And, by extension, the content of professional accountancy programs that develop students for various business environments. A professional accountant should not only have knowledge of concepts and theories relating to the practice of accountancy but must also be able to integrate and apply their expertise in varying professional contexts.

Learning outcomes strengthen accountancy education in several important ways.

Aligning with International Education Standards

Clear learning outcomes ensure that accountancy programs align with globally recognized benchmarks set by IFAC's International Education Standards. These standards define the foundational competencies needed for accounting professionals, helping educational institutions tailor their curricula to meet international expectations.

This promotes greater consistency in accountancy education across jurisdictions while allowing programs to reflect local needs.

Developing Well-Rounded, Ethical Professionals

A strong learning outcomes framework reflects the commitment IFAC's members have made to develop accountants who uphold ethical standards and serve the public interest.

Beyond technical skills, today's accountants must demonstrate ethical awareness, professional judgment, and critical thinking. Learning outcomes ensure that graduates enter the profession with the well-rounded expertise needed to navigate complex financial and regulatory environments.

Detailed Competency Frameworks

Learning outcomes provide IFAC members with a strong foundation for defining competency frameworks, which then assist in articulating the detailed professional accounting education programs in a globally comparable way. This also provides IFAC members with a simple basis for adapting competency frameworks for specialized sectors, such as the public sector, while simultaneously maintaining alignment to the IESs. When this approach is adopted, it helps to focus on the professional nature of the pathways to membership and highlights the emphasis on the competence of professional accountants.

Enhancing Assessment and Evaluation

By defining measurable learning outcomes, educators can develop assessments that accurately gauge students' mastery of technical, professional and ethical concepts. Learning outcomes ensure that the language that describes the learning is consistent through planning, delivery and assessment. This ensures that graduates undergo relevant assessments that focus not only on understanding accounting principles but also on application in real-world professional contexts.

Supporting Global Employability and Mobility

A globally consistent approach to learning outcomes enhances the recognition of qualifications across different jurisdictions. This ensures that accountants trained under the International Education Standards can more easily transition into international roles, strengthening the global workforce.

For IFAC members, this shared commitment to high-quality education is a badge of international recognition,

reinforcing trust in the profession worldwide, and for those seeking IFAC membership, it assists them with a resource to benchmark against and a global standard to aspire to.

Promoting Lifelong Learning

A well-designed learning outcomes framework fosters

continuous professional development. As accounting standards, technologies, and regulatory requirements evolve, professionals must continuously update their skills. Learning outcomes help instill a mindset of ongoing education and adaptation.

Ensuring Quality and Accreditation

For educational institutions, well-defined learning outcomes are essential for maintaining accreditation and upholding high-quality standards. Adhering to IES benchmarks enhances an institution's credibility and ensures graduates are well-prepared for the profession.

Building Stakeholder Confidence

Students, employers, and regulatory bodies all benefit from transparent and specific learning outcomes. Clear expectations reassure stakeholders that graduates possess the necessary competencies to contribute effectively in their roles. This approach also allows for areas of improvement to be targeted, and to focus on where changes are needed, for example, with the recent updates to embed sustainability considerations into the IES. ***CULLED FROM IFAC GATEWAY***



ABWA President, ES, ABWA & Director, ICASL



ABWA Secretariat team



ABWA Past President and ES, ABWA







LICPA President Mr Papin Daniels, Jr presenting a copy of the PAO's proposal to the Speaker, Ho, Koon while others look on.



ABOUT ABWA

The Association of Accountancy Bodies in West Africa was established in 1982 by PAOs in the sub-region. ***At inception, the body had only 2 members.*** But today, it has 16 PAOs:

1. OECCA, Benin
2. ONECCA, Burkina Faso
3. ONECCA, Cameroon
4. OEC, Cote d'Ivoire
5. ICAG
6. ONECCA, Guinea
7. ORDEM, Guinea Bissau
8. LICPA
9. ONECCA, Mali
10. ONECCA, Niger
11. ANAN
12. ICAN
13. ONECCA, Senegal
14. ICASL
15. GICA
16. ONECCA, Togo

ABWA is an IFAC-recognized Network Partner.

ABWA's VISION

To effectively lead the development of the Accountancy Profession in the West African sub-region in the public interest.

ABWA's MISSION

- To promote the growth of and strengthen the Accountancy Profession in West Africa such that it remains a valued partner in the building of strong, sustainable organisations and financial markets for the development of the region's economy while acting in the public interest.
- ***OBJECTIVES***
- To ensure that accounting standards and practices are benchmarked on best global practices.
- To ensure that the accountancy profession consistently delivers on its public interest mandate with great ethical disposition.
- To partner with IFAC and PAFA to drive the development of the Accountancy Profession in the sub-region.
- To set the right tone for public sector financial management practices
- Provide professional information that will enhance the efficiency and technical competence of members.
- Monitor compliance to set professional standards for business, and ethical code .
- Create an interactive forum for professional peers in business
- Continuously educate members of their statutory duties and responsibilities as directors, non-executive directors, chief finance officers, internal auditors, in order to promote good corporate governance
- Assist members in professional practice to appreciate the unique needs of members in business
- Eliminate apathy and arouse members' interest in the Association's activities

ABWA
The Association of Accountancy Bodies in West Africa

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