



**Africa Talks Jobs –
Equipping the Youth with Adaptive Education and Skills for Employment and Entrepreneurship**

Conference Communiqué

October 30 – November 1, 2017

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The African Union Commission, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Business Africa has convened a Conference under a banner "Africa Talks Jobs – Equipping the Youth with Adaptive Education and Skills for Employment and Entrepreneurship" from 30 October to 1 November at the African Union Commission premises in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This is one of the high-level engagements prior to the 5th AU-EU Summit meeting under a theme "*Investment in Youth for accelerated inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development*" in Abidjan, from 28 to 29 November 2017.

The objective of this conference was to consult and exchange ideas with a host of stakeholders in fostering youth skills development and employability through education, vocational training and entrepreneurship and promote the involvement of the Business Community in providing productive and decent jobs and fostering sustainable enterprises.

THE CONFERENCE:

Guided by the African Youth Charter which acknowledges the pivotal role of young people for Africa's socio economic development and the imperative of education and skills development for that purpose;

Recalling Agenda 2063's aspiration for young African men and women to be the path breakers of the African knowledge society and contribute significantly to innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship;

Reaffirming Agenda 2063's aspiration for elimination of youth unemployment from Africa and guarantee full access to education, training, skills and technology, to health services, jobs and economic opportunities, recreational and cultural activities;

Recalling SDG's declaration to promote policies that encourage entrepreneurship and job creation and in the end to achieve the goal of decent work for all women and men by 2030;

Appreciating that 70 percent of Africa's population is under the age of 35 and the trend is continuing to grow;

Acknowledging that the AU declared 2017 as the year of Harnessing the Democratic Dividend through Investing in Youth and accordingly focus on key thematic areas — namely, education and skills development; employment and entrepreneurship; and youth empowerment, health and wellbeing.

Recalling

- that all African Member States committed to strengthen their national education systems by investing at least 4% to 6% of GDP to education and/or to allocate at least 15% to 20% of public expenditure to education, in line with the Education 2030 Framework for Action;
- the recommendation that each Member State commit 1% of GDP to research and development to maximize ownership and responsibility for own developmental

path and accelerate implementation and reduce over-reliance on external resources through the mobilization of domestic and alternative financial resources;

Reaffirming the commitment to implement the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025) which seeks to reorient Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the national, sub-regional and continental levels;

Reaffirming Commitment to the implementation of the Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to foster youth employment;

Recalling the AU Heads of State and Government declaration of 2007 "as the launching year for building constituencies and champions for Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa;

Recalling that the AU Heads of State and Government declared the period 2017- 2027 as the "African decade for technical, professional, entrepreneurial training and youth employment";

Reaffirming the commitment of African Heads of State and Government to support the implementation of Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) based on adoption of its priorities in the context of national, regional and continental development policies, programmes and frameworks;

Recalling the interest in deepening collaboration between researchers, innovators and the business sector within Africa and between Europe and Africa within the Africa-EU partnership schemes;

Acknowledging the initiative led by AUC; NEPAD and Business Africa to support the commitment from 120 individual companies and associations from across the continent to invest in youth and initiate partnerships with the education sector for improved employability;

Recalling the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) as the key catalyst/engine for mobilizing Business Community investments with high potential for regional economical development and job creation;

Recalling the Declaration of Lomé 2017 for the STC on Transport, Intercontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism, that member states formulate harmonized policies and regulations for infrastructure development promoting the use of local content and industrial integration to create local jobs particularly for the youth, strengthen African Small and Medium Enterprises and ensuring technology transfer through vocational training;

Appreciating that safe, orderly and regular migration and mobility of youth has the potential to enhance development and economic growth of countries in Africa and Europe by addressing skills gaps;

Acknowledging the Abidjan Declaration 2017 coming out of the 4th EU-AU Youth Summit organized by Youth Networks aiming at strengthening cooperation to face common challenges.

RECOMMENDS TO THE AFRICAN UNION AND EUROPEAN UNION THE FOLLOWING:

1. Support to Quality Education at all levels

- a. Intensify joint efforts to attain **universal, inclusive, gender sensitive and equitable access to high quality education at all levels for all**, to ensure the acquiring of requisite skills, competencies and behaviors. In this regard, the conference calls on all governments to implement their commitment to invest at least 4% to 6% of GDP to education and training and/or to allocate at least 15% to 20% of public expenditure to education and training.
- b. Support the **recognition and harmonization of post-secondary education and skills development across Africa to improve mobility, enhance quality assurance, and advance international competitiveness**. To this end, the conference calls on all governments to foster the ratification and implementation of the Addis Ababa Convention 2014 on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States.
- c. **Strengthen Pan African identity and resilience of youth** on the continent by advancing culturally relevant education as enumerated in the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance by among others investing in the creative industry – arts, music, film, drama and sports. Member States, the business sector and the media commit to support, promote and encourage talented African youth in the creative industry and sports that seeks to promote African culture and identity.

2. Strengthen Skills Development for Employment through Education and Training

- a. **Promote, implement and domesticate the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025)**, which seeks to reorient Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to match employment market needs.
- b. Invest in relevant education and training that equips learners including women and girls with appropriate and dynamic skills, competencies and behaviors that match the **current and future needs of labor market** through among others, curriculum alignment with national visions and development aspirations. To this end Member States commit to develop national labor market information systems (LMIS) and benefit from the PIDA Job Creation Tool Kit to match skills demands in different sectors.
- c. Creating incentives, favorable policies and collaboration to promote entrepreneurship, **industrial and vocational training, apprenticeships and internships**.

- d. Promote national and regional campaigns to promote **TVET as an equally alternative learning pathway**. Member States and the Business Community commit to undertake sensitization and education campaigns uptake, mobility and recognition of TVET qualifications competencies and skills.
- e. Extend support for knowledge sharing to facilitate the exchange of good practices on skills development for employment between EU and AU Member States. To this end, the AUC and EC are requested to take the necessary action to develop programmes that address the exchange of good practices to enhance youth employment and employability including **life skills and career guidance programmes**.
- f. The Member States are requested to put in place policy and legal frameworks that enable the development and the implementation of career guidance and life skills systems. To this end, the AU is mandated to establish a **Continental Framework on Career Guidance and Life Skills in Africa**.
- g. Strengthen skills development through scaled up investments, as for example the **establishment of a pool of high-quality regional TVET centres across Africa**.
- h. The Member States commit to require large scale companies to contribute to the **skills development of the local young people**.
- i. Promote modern and demand driven TVET system to improve the competitiveness of African products and services.

3. Promote Youth Entrepreneurship

- a. AU Member States commit to provide support and incentives to the Business Community to **mentor and incubate youth involved in value addition in agriculture and exploitation** of natural resources.
- b. Promote **entrepreneurship education and** recognize and support the skills acquired through non-formal and informal education and training including peer-to-peer skills transfer.
- c. AU Member States commit to establish and **strengthen the legal framework for availing start-up capital** and business financing facilities for youth and develop **eco-systems to support them**. Developing special windows for support to marginalized groups.

4. Up-scale Public Private Partnership

- a. The Business Community commits greater responsibility in partnership and collaboration with governments to support quality education and skills development of young people in Africa. To this end the Business Community undertakes a more **pro-active role in delivery of quality and relevant education, skills development and training of youth at all levels** for employment and entrepreneurship. This will be done

through among others establishing innovation hubs, industrial parks linked to universities and research, venture fund as well as opportunities for mentorship opportunities for young people.

- b. The Business Community, Member States and training institutions commit to **broaden apprenticeships and internships** through effective and efficient design, delivery, assessment, job placement, further education, particularly involving innovation and technology transfer.
- c. The Member States commit to support the initiative led by by AUC, NEPAD and Business Africa to recognize the commitment from 120 individual companies and associations from across the continent to invest in youth and initiate partnerships with the education sector for improved employability. To this end AUC, NEPAD and Business Africa are mandated **to develop an action plan to support, expand and coordinate the effective implementation of this initiative.**

5. Enhance Research, Innovation and Technology

- a. AU and the EU Member States commit to work together through the AU-EU Joint Strategy to among others expand African Science Technology and Innovation (STI) programmes **to support effective implementation of STISA-2024**, with a view to enhance youth employment, and strengthening funding instruments i.e. the African Research Grant.
- b. Support the innovation potential of African Scientists. To this end, Member States to promote research and innovation capacity and professional development opportunities for researchers that could include **North-South and South-South cooperation and exchanges especially among young scientists and academics.**
- c. Establish and strengthen national and continental **innovation hubs and incubation centers to create jobs and opportunities for young people** across the continent.
- d. Research institutions and the Business Community commit to collaborate in undertaking **research that addresses the needs of business, industry and society.**
- e. To expedite the **enforced implementation of the Pan African Intellectual Property Rights Organization (PAIPO)** to protect youth innovations.
- f. Provide support to regional education and research communication networks and high-capacity internet connectivity, with a gateway to global research collaboration, through initiatives such as the on-going EU-supported AfricaConnect2 project **to provide employment to the youth.**

6. Strengthen Youth Leadership and Mentorship Programme Development across the continent

- a. Strengthen and expand **Youth Leadership, Volunteer and Mentorship programmes** in partnership with training institutions, business sector, civil society especially youth organizations.

7. Enhance Cooperation and Collaboration on Education and Skills Development

- a. Enhance cooperation and collaboration between the AU and the EU to **improve skills, quality and relevance of education to youth employment** through twinning arrangement such as exchange and mobility programmes.

8. Institutionalize a Continental Platform for youth networks and diaspora organizations for Dialogue and Cooperation in Education and Skills Development for Employment and Entrepreneurship

- a. Implement the AU Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.652 (XXIX) of July 2017 that was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia declaring 2018-2027 as the “**African Decade for Technical, Professional, Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment**”.
- b. Develop and implement a detailed plan of action for the Decade and set up a Continental Dialogue Platform on Skills Development in Africa as an avenue for **continuous physical dialogue on “Africa Talks Jobs” accompanied by virtual means**, to serve as a continental platform for dialogue on good practices and necessary framework conditions for education and skills development for employment and entrepreneurship. To this end, the AU and its Member States commit to **institutionalize the Africa Talks Jobs platform** as a platform for engagement of different stakeholders including governments, business community, education institutions, the youth association, civil society and development partners to share experiences and inform policy making across the continent on youth employment, entrepreneurship and issues affecting the future of youth and their access to the labor market.