



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION | FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

5TH AFRICA THINK TANK SUMMIT

Tackling Africa's Youth Unemployment Challenge: Innovative Solutions from Think Tanks





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Accra, Ghana



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ACRONYMS

AAP	Alliance for African Partnership
ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
AfDB	African Development Bank
ATTN	Africa Think Tank Network
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
CFA	Communauté Financière Africaine / African Financial Community
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
R&D	Research and Development
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
ReNAPRI	Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STISA	Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa
TTs	Think Tanks
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UEMOA	Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference for Trade and Development
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa



SUMMARY OF KEY MESSAGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

This Report on the 5th Africa Think Tank Summit outlines key messages and recommendations for tackling youth unemployment.

A number of **key messages** emerged from the Summit, some of which include the following significant points:

Unemployment is a multi-dimensional development issue that may best be addressed through multi-stakeholder partnerships that can work to develop holistic solutions to address fundamental challenges of youth unemployment.

Working in multi-stakeholder partnerships on expanding job opportunities for the youth would effectively lead to job creation in sectors needed for building requisite capacities for sustainable economic growth and development; thereby creating an economy driven by what Africans want.

Key recommendations for tackling youth unemployment in Africa, by topic:

Topic	Suggestions
What is Expected from African Think Tanks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with educational institutions, policymakers, the youth, private sector groups, cities/towns/communities, social groups, among others;• Hire young researchers;• Mobilize internally generated resources;• Consider best practices for producing local knowledge; and• Offer evidence-based research to inform policy-making.
Leadership and Africa's Youth Unemployment Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redefine "successful careers", by placing more emphasis on ethics than mere material accumulation;• Retrain academic administrators and faculty to change mindsets of students to enable them become thinkers and innovators who offer committed, accountable and internally driven leadership; and• Accelerate diversification of African economies to create more jobs.

Topic	Suggestions
Developing the Requisite Private Sector that can Create Jobs for the Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector should collaborate with think tanks and government on research and entrepreneurial training; • Corruption and nepotism must be aggressively discouraged; • Incentivize SMEs to create jobs for youth; • Promote value-added agricultural transformation, by providing easy access to investment capital and reorienting training to focus on technical and vocational education; and • Accelerate efforts toward continental cross-border trade.
Building the Critical Technical Skills for Sustainable Youth Employment Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest heavily in TVET • Establish science resource centers and encourage youth to engage in R&D • Interventions should take place at primary and secondary school levels to promote life skills and to professionalize young rural farmers/entrepreneurs
The Role of Entrepreneurship and Agricultural Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider job creation in agricultural transport and storage sectors • Add value by Africanizing products, to appeal to internal and external markets

Detailed lists of recommendations made in plenary, side events and breakaway sessions may be found in Annexes I and II of this report. The report also includes the Communique (Annex III), which was issued at the end of the Summit.

1

BACKGROUND

The **Fifth Africa Think Tank Summit** was held on 5 - 7 April 2018 at the Labadi Beach Hotel in Accra, Ghana, under the theme ***“Tackling Africa’s Youth Unemployment Challenge: Innovative Solutions from Think Tanks”***.

The Summit’s theme was based on the fact that jobs and opportunity for the youth are top priorities in the world today and while needing jobs, young people are also critical in creating them. It is with that understanding that the African Union Commission declared the years 2009–2018 as the “Decade for Youth Development”. A review, as the decade winds to an end, shows that while some African countries are experiencing high economic growth rates, these have not translated into jobs. The unemployment rate on the continent was approximately 8.0 percent in 2016–2017, which, translated into absolute terms, corresponds to an increase in total unemployment of 1.2 million from 2016 to 2017.

The reality, against which the Summit’s theme was designed, was that across Africa, youth are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults! The Summit’s concept paper, quoting a report from the African Development Bank, notes that “half of all youth (in Africa) are either unemployed or inactive while 35 percent are in vulnerable jobs. While gender inequality remains a challenge, a big concern and paradox is that youth unemployment rate is increasing with the level of education, suggesting that Africa’s education systems are not preparing people enough for the labour market”. Thus, despite the numerous policies and strategies that have been implemented across African countries to address youth unemployment, these have not led to any major breakthrough in job creation especially among the youth.

Given these realities and building on the successes of the first, second, third and fourth Africa Think Tank, the fifth was being organized to harvest evidence and proffer actions to tackle youth unemployment on the continent. The 2018 Summit was organized in partnership with the Government of Ghana and the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), a leading think tank in Ghana. Other collaborating partners were the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Think Tank Initiative, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ReNAPRI) and the Alliance for African Partnership (AAP).



2

OBJECTIVES

The 2018 Africa Think Tank Summit aimed at proposing strategies and actionable recommendations for think tanks to meaningfully contribute to the promotion of job creation while sharing knowledge and good practices and developing solutions to effectively tackle youth unemployment issues within the context of Africa's vision as reflected in Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The specific objectives of the Summit were to:

- Discuss the role that effective leadership can play in addressing Africa's youth unemployment challenge.
- Share experiences on how to develop the requisite private sector that can create jobs for the youths.
- Reflect on how to build the critical technical skills necessary for sustainable youth employment opportunities.
- Offer practical solutions for youth employment in Africa, through the sharing of innovations and good practices, including entrepreneurship and agricultural enterprises.

These objectives were addressed over the three-day summit through various keynote speeches, presentations, discussions, interactions and side-events. A total of **113 participants** attended the Summit, and these had come **from 32 countries** across Africa and beyond. Twenty-eight (**28**) were females, representing 24.7% of the participants.



3

OPENING CEREMONY: WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Participants were welcomed, and the organizers were commended for their role in nurturing the development of the Africa Think Tank Summits, which began as platforms and gatherings in South Africa, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Cote d'Ivoire. Participants were encouraged, as think tanks, to provide some transformational thinking and actions at the Summit.

It was acknowledged that while the issue of youth employment is dictated by the mismatch between education and requirements of the job market, job creation holds the key to solving this problem. Think tanks were urged to become more proactive and innovative in offering home grown solutions for policy makers to address the issue.

The organizers expressed gratitude to the Government and people of Ghana for graciously hosting the 5th African Think Tank Summit. Participants were informed that the increased attendance and high representation of about 200 participants, from an initial 40 at the maiden event in Pretoria in 2014, was in indication of the success of the Summit. It was said this reflected a growing maturity among think tanks to understand the importance of platforms for sharing knowledge and solutions. Therefore, more partnerships were deemed necessary, to enable think tanks make meaningful contributions to society.

Unemployment was likened to an economic catastrophe, which threatens stability. It was posited that economic growth cannot eradicate poverty on a sustainable basis, unless such growth is tied to job creation. Think tanks were challenged to develop statistical data bases, disaggregated by gender and other dimensions of the youth population, to present credible evidence-based research for promoting socially inclusive solutions. In recognition of the critical role think tanks can play in promoting economic growth and development, calls were made for all African governments to lend their support to African TTs.

Box 1. Keynote address on “Tackling Youth Unemployment in Africa: What Is Expected from African Think Tanks?”

The Keynote Address focused on the challenges of tackling youth unemployment in Africa, with an emphasis on what is expected from think tanks. The seriousness of the unemployment situation in Africa has compelled governments to articulate more effective policies that can address youth unemployment issues.

The speaker illustrated his point with the *Ghana Beyond Aid* agenda, which he asserted ties in perfectly with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while striving to expand youth employment opportunities. He noted the serious unemployment situation in Ghana, which has led, ironically, to the establishment of an Association of Unemployed Graduates whose increase in membership is staggering.

Continuing with the country-specific example, the speaker said Ghana was projected to be the world's fastest growing economy in 2017, which he credited to sound economic management and the implementation of strategies such as the removal of nuisance taxes and the adoption of a 'planting for food and jobs' program, basically targeting the youth.

He stressed further that Ghana's 2018 budget hammers on entrepreneurship, as a means of job creation, with a conscious emphasis to: a) provide free Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); b) encourage enrolment; and subsequently c) build a solid middle-level technical manpower base for the country.

The keynote speaker drew attention to the fact that achieving these goals for meeting the socio-economic needs of nations and the continent would require the support of African TTs. Think Tanks were encouraged to: (1) hire young researchers as a means of developing capacity and promoting youth employment; (2) intensify internally generated resources campaigns; (3) consider the experience of US think tanks that offer best practices for generating local knowledge; and (4) provide research-based evidence for sound decision-making.

The speaker concluded by underscoring the need to arrest high unemployment rates among graduates, noting that only a few of the 10 – 12 million students in Africa who exit school annually are successful in finding gainful employment. This situation could be compounded by the ever-increasing rate of Africa's current 262 million youthful population.

Questions & Answers

Answering a question about the status of West African integration, the keynote speaker explained that in the pursuit of a common currency in West Africa, the Governments of Ghana and Ivory Coast have made good strides towards meeting the convergent criteria to operationalize this in 2020. Nigeria and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (also known under the French acronym, UEMOA) are yet to take a decision on whether to participate.

On the question of consequences of enrolment explosion emanating from the introduction of free basic education up to the senior secondary school level, the speaker explained that free education was a preferential option for the poor and suggested its success would be determined by Ghana's determination to provide social interventions such as free senior high school education, reduction in energy tariffs and strengthening of the country's national health insurance scheme (NHIS). He emphasized that no country can solve its medium-term development problems, such as youth unemployment, without education. He cited the Germany type of skills-based education and training, as a best practice needed for Ghana's development.

On the question of abolition of nuisance taxes, the speaker maintained that the state should not be seen as unnecessarily coercive and as such, taxes that are disincentives needed to be removed. By abolishing these taxes, Ghana lost about one billion *cedis* in revenue in the past year, but their removal has also stimulated economic growth. He stated that the more freedom granted the people, the easier for them to respond positively to national policies.

In conclusion, the keynote speaker commented on the drowning voices of universities for fear of political victimization and urged all, particularly think tanks, to assume their proper roles as strategic partners in development, generally and specifically, in tackling youth unemployment.

4

PLENARY SESSION I: THOUGHT LEADERS PANEL ON “LEADERSHIP AND AFRICA’S YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT CHALLENGE IN AFRICA”

Key Messages

The persisting youth unemployment problem was laid at the doorsteps of leaders. Indeed, political leaders incorporate unemployment issues in their manifestoes to win power but, once in power, they pay lip service to their promises. In the view of some panelists, Africa needs to depoliticize youth employment programs, so that there would be continuity of implementation, even with change of political administrations. It was not entirely agreed that there was a mismatch between the requirements of the job market and the graduates churned out from the universities, because there are several educational reforms to prepare students for the world of work. University education enables the student to apply the competencies acquired into the wider world of work.

It was noted that despite the absence of data, the problem of youth unemployment is widely known. Think tanks were called upon, as knowledge organizations, to facilitate the use of policy making, as a catalyst for growth. TTs need to build the capacity of leaders to become transformational agents in all fields of endeavor (e.g. political, industrial, civil, etc.), because without innovation, Africa cannot leapfrog its development challenges. African countries were encouraged, through a robust engagement with the private sector, to promote youth entrepreneurship for employment generation.

The panelists agreed that leadership is critical for transforming the African economy, particularly since 12 million young Africans are churned out annually into the job market and only 3 million get jobs. They suggested establishing business incubators, as a means of accelerating the development of the African private sector. Therefore, a call was made for an inspiring vision that leads to the development of an entrepreneurial culture for graduates to enter self-employment, after completing tertiary education.

While skills training and other micro-finance projects implemented in different countries may be useful, the panel cautioned against piecemeal approaches which stall progress toward addressing the unemployment problem. Along with visionary leadership and strategic plans that are tied to Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, they advocated for a leadership mindset that is committed, accountable and internally driven.

Open Discussions & Recommendations

Participants shared the following **recommendations**:

- Holistic approaches to address youth unemployment are required and would entail paying equal attention to increasing: a) professional qualifications; as well as b) literacy among the youth who are not in school, particularly the illiterate;
- There is a need to examine formal/informal sector dynamics and to develop pragmatic employment programs to create jobs for the youth in the informal sector;
- Stakeholders need to: a) review values and ethics that underpin industry and the definition of “successful careers”; and b) change mind set in children, so they can appreciate how success can be achieved by valuing ethics over mere accumulation of wealth;
- An assessment of how employment policies promote interaction between and among relevant government agencies, the private sector and other stakeholders is required to solve and curb unemployment;
- As the world witnesses the trade war between America and China, African leaders should do away with protectionism to expand economic prospects and to expand youth employment opportunities. South-south cooperation, including Afro-Arab cooperation, should be considered as a strategic way forward;
- The continent needs leadership that enforces innovation – i.e. Africa needs economies with thinkers and innovators, with an overall entrepreneurial skills mindset;
- In a world where “elderly analogs” are leading the “digital youth” and where knowledge, skills and expectations are mismatched, there is a fundamental need to retrain academic leaders and faculty of tertiary institutions;
- Employment is a human rights issue, therefore, accelerating the diversification of African economies to create more jobs, should be a primary focus; and
- Africa needs to revisit its educational system and lay emphasis on TVET.

5

LUNCHEON DISCUSSIONS

The Luncheon provided a unique opportunity for junior and young professionals/fellows/interns to sit at various lunch tables and present their research papers to seasoned and expert participants of the Think Tank Summit for “peer assistance.” This session deepened their understanding of the multiple dimensions to their respective topics. The interaction enabled young researchers to clarify the purpose of and way forward in their respective projects. The following topics were proposed and discussed, during the “Peer-Assist” Session on “Practitioners of Today for Africa’s Tomorrow”:

- **The Role of Foreign Aid in Youth Employment in Africa** – *How has foreign assistance helped or hindered jobs and opportunity?*
- **Introducing Social Entrepreneurship to Curb Youth Unemployment** – *Could this be a solution?*
- **The Informal Economy and Youth Employment** – *Could a rethinking contribute to solving youth unemployment in Africa?*
- **Addressing Graduate Unemployment in Africa Through National Education Systems** – *What can be done to improve the responsiveness of the education system to the job market?*
- **The Effects of Environmentally Friendly Policies on Economic Growth** – *What are the implications for the job market?*
- **Implementation Challenges to Youth Employment Policies** – *What blockages continue to inhibit success*
- **Promoting self-employment opportunities in the informal sector** – *Could government leverage the informal sector to address youth unemployment?*
- **The Role of Vocational Education in Addressing Youth Unemployment** – *Could vocational education be given more attention in mainstream education?*
- **The Role of the Agriculture Sector in Combatting Youth Unemployment** – *Is Ghana’s Planting for Food and Jobs Program the answer?*

Box 2. Luncheon Keynote Address on “Learning from Other Developing Countries: What Can Think Tanks do to Contribute to Solving Youth Unemployment Issues in Africa?”

On what Africa can learn from other continents and what think tanks can do to solve the youth unemployment issues in Africa, the speaker said think tanks are actually part of the solution to the problem and the most effective way to help is to form partnerships and work collaboratively to provide a holistic solution to the problem.

He noted that unemployment is a global challenge, because young people everywhere are virtually left behind. They, however, present an untapped audience for think tanks to partner policy makers to proffer solutions. He suggested that policy ideas should revolve around better informed decision making, online job board, TVET, and investing in wellbeing.

6

PLENARY SESSION II: “DEVELOPING THE REQUISITE PRIVATE SECTOR THAT CAN CREATE JOBS FOR THE YOUTH”

Key Messages

Having highlighted that 73 million youth are currently looking for jobs, of whom two thirds are underemployed, the panel focused on how to strengthen the capacity of the private sector to expand employment opportunities. The panel presented the private sector, as the hub of job creation, since it contributes both to economic development, and to private and public sector jobs. The panel outlined ways that the private sector can support employment, among which include, but are not limited to: a) skills development and training; and b) policy making and advocacy.

Panelists emphasized the roles of think tanks as intermediaries between the private sector and government to ensure that employment projects are multi-sectoral. Citing the experiences of Korea, which has established an Economic Development Board that gives incentives to help build private companies, panelists urged think tanks to change the mindset of African governments from thinking of the private sectors as competitors to embracing them as collaborators.

There was general agreement that political will is needed for a development agenda catapulted by private sector-led growth. Policy makers were urged to: a) raise confidence and create an enabling environment to attract private sector investment; and b) discourage corruption and nepotism in all sectors. In promotion of private sector-led growth, panel members advised African states to shift from producing people for white collar jobs to encouraging them to undertake technical and vocational education and training. Toward this end, the panel called for easy access to investment capital, particularly for SMEs, and advocated an agricultural transformation, based on large-scale farming for export, and agro-processing for value addition. Together with unleashing potentials from the energy sector, the panel viewed this as the type of political will that would facilitate the diversification of economies and increase intra-African trade.

The panel discussed constraints associated with agriculture, such as high interest rates charged by the banks and the high school dropout rate, which limit the expansion of job opportunities in the agricultural sector. Due to lack of big corporations and agro-businesses, the panel suggested that incentives must be offered to SMEs to give them more impetus to create jobs and absorb the teeming unemployed youth. Suggestions were also made to re-orient educational training to

focus on technical and vocational education, as a means of producing graduates needed for the job market.

Despite the much-touted economic growth rates of some African countries, the panel contended that some of these cases entail jobless growth and therefore are not sustainable. The reason for the apparent contradiction was that market forces, which determine the direction of job skills requirements, have not achieved their desired goals. Joint efforts by both the private and public sectors to create the requisite jobs for the unemployed was therefore recommended. The example of South-East Asia was held as a model for long term development planning and for creating an enabling environment for other sectors to thrive.

From the premise that the task of job creation is the preserve of the private sector, not governments, the panel proposed public-private sector dialogues to bridge the gap and to reach consensus on priorities and related challenges. Regulations to promote intra-continent trade and tax reforms were suggested, so that small businesses would not be “crowded out” by corporate taxes. Other stated challenges included the absence of intellectual property policies and R & D funding, which contribute to the redundancy of local enterprises.

To build capacity of the private sector, specific proposals were advanced as follows: a) integrate SMEs into global and regional supply chains; b) establish incubation funds (e.g. 10% of contract amounts going into an SME fund); and c) create value-addition enterprises. In addition, African governments were urged to develop an effective industrialization strategy, which entails identifying new requisite skills sets and tailoring programs and projects to develop them. A complementary idea was proffered to create an African Entrepreneurial Hub that would annually bring entrepreneurs together to network around issues like private sector capacity building and job creation for the youth. Examples of young African entrepreneurs who had creative innovations like waterless toilets and the use of waste to produce bricks, were cited as replicable models for expanding job opportunities.

Open Discussion & Recommendations

Discussions on the panel presentations generated the following recommendations and points:

- Africa should promptly discontinue playing the basic role of “consumer of global research output” and should rigorously shift to innovatively generating research to meet her own needs;
- Governments should not stifle the private sector, which has the comparative advantage of empowering the youth to be productive agents of development;
- To create employment, governments need to pay attention to:
 - Developing a coherent FDI policy and change the practice whereby governments incentivize foreign investors at the expense of local investors;
 - Countries should endeavor to grow dynamic and vibrant domestic investors;
 - Countries should correct structural deficits through policies and programs that promote linkages between small and large firms; the formal and informal sectors; and local and international firms to ensure the survival of the local SMEs; and
- There is need to close the weak linkages between universities and industry and to develop best models that make the public and private sectors see themselves as complementing each other’s efforts, rather than competing between themselves.

In response to concerns raised about the mismatch between the job needs of industry and their training from the universities, it was explained that in Nigeria, the National Universities Commission has benchmarks for university-industry interactions. While it is mandatory for all Nigerian universities to set up entrepreneurial centers, it was acknowledged that the impact on graduate employability is yet to be fully realized.

In yet another country-specific example, the youth were represented as assets and the Rwanda De-

velopment Board was viewed as the key driving force of the job creation agenda. Moreover, it was clarified that it is governments, not universities, that enact policies. Hence, any strategic policy should be between governments and the private sector.

Still another country example was highlighted to demonstrate efforts to curb unemployment. A recent study was cited as illustrating that Kenyan university graduates have low chances of landing jobs after leaving school, and this worsens the longer they stay at home. On the other hand, graduates from technical universities had a higher chance of securing jobs because of their better preparedness from school. The unpublished survey also revealed that manufacturing firms were more likely to employ secondary school leavers, because of the low salary requirements. In terms of career development, the survey results indicated that those looking for jobs first opt for public sector employment, because of job security and career growth. While the panel recognized Kenya's policy commitment in having set aside 30%

of its procurement budget into a Youth Fund for youth entrepreneurial activities, it was acknowledged that criteria for tapping into the fund needs a review.

Youth unemployment was described as a “time bomb” waiting to explode, particularly since the youth constitute a high percentage of the electorate and whose issues are often manipulated by politicians. In some countries, initiatives for professional training had been launched, however, panelists cited political turbulence and crises as reasons programs had not chalked significant successes. In other cases, university graduates end up in the informal sector, which suggests incentives for them to add value to training.

The panel concluded by asserting that the sooner Africa implements the continental cross border trade agreement, recently signed in Rwanda, and realizes the *Africa without Aid* agenda, the greater the potential for economic growth and job creation in individual countries.

Box 3. Reception Keynote Speech on “Advancing Research and Training to Inform Youth Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa”

The speaker posited that applied research can inform policies on how to tackle youth unemployment on the continent and, in this respect, called on researchers and think tanks to involve themselves in applied research for practical, applicable and workable solutions. In this regard, employment quality matters and so it is essential to unlock the value of digital technology for the youth, which requires building the capacity of young African researchers.

Building successful partnerships was also underscored, as critical for building capacity for research and collaborative programs to upgrade quality of training for the youth, women, small farmers and SMEs. Because youth are a heterogeneous population, a one-size-fits-all intervention was declared an inadequate approach. The speaker contended that policy solutions to the youth unemployment problem, should identify four types of youth employment categories, namely: rural youth, skilled/self-employed youth, youth apprentices, and urban enterprises. Nollywood in Nigeria, which is creating new livelihoods for the arts industry, was cited to illustrate successes with private sector intervention and initiatives.



7

PLENARY SESSION III: “BUILDING THE CRITICAL TECHNICAL SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES”

Key Messages

The session was opened with a special request that participants take time to view the AU's Agenda 2063 as Africa's renaissance. Three issues were the focus of deliberations, namely: a) leadership; b) the creation of a conducive environment for private sector growth; and c) critical skills needed by the job market.

Dispelling notions that high employment rates are only generated in the formal sector, attention was drawn to the fact that some countries have high employment rates in the informal sector. For instance, Cambodia enjoys the lowest unemployment, due to an 80% rate of employment in the informal sector. However, efforts to accelerate African industrial development and to expand job opportunities are often aimed at the formal sector.

Swaziland was referred to as a country with extremely high unemployment, which disproportionately affects women. Furthermore, only 1 in 5 graduates from the nation's TVET system will be qualified for jobs in industry. In a bid to address employment challenges, research was conducted to identify existing and potential areas of youth employment, the results of which reveal that the largest number of employed youth were in government/public sector, followed by the NGO sector, with yet fewer numbers in business/private sector. Within this context, panelists noted there is neither incentive nor a national research agenda on R & D for the private sector to take advantage of existing opportunities. Likewise, academic curricula are not frequently reviewed, which is compounded by a lack of nationally endorsed competent-based standards.

Proposed solutions to redress youth unemployment issues, included the need to:

- Build human resource skills, through the development of incentives to incite young people to engage in industrial R&D;
- Increase investment in R&D infrastructure, thereby strengthening the national system of innovation;
- Promote investment in TVET, which will necessarily produce economic benefits to the nation; and

- Link the university and TVET system, by establishing coordinating body such as a Directorate on TVET in the Ministry of Education.

Apart from national policies, others mentioned continental policies and strategies in place, such as Agenda 2063, Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) and TVET strategy that aim to create jobs and employment avenues for graduates.

In support of calls for TVET and in recognition of the importance of technical skills, panelists acknowledged challenges in the mindset of African people. They remarked that many are still not receptive to change, which thwarts efforts to address the employment problem. Pleas were made for African countries to commit to solving unemployment and to dedicate 1% of their GDP to research and development, in line with the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action.

The panel maintained that politicians be held accountable, during elections and in budget allocations for tackling youth employment issues. Conventional wisdom and the mentality that jobs should be created **for** the youth were criticized as passé. Instead emphasis was placed on promoting African education that enables the youth to creatively come up with new sectors and industries. An analogy of the technology industry in the United States, where much of the jobs in the past 25 years had not been conceptualized until the founders of technology companies emerged, was used to demonstrate how one generation could shape the future, without knowing the requirements of future job requirements.

Attention was also paid to building critical skills required by the private sector, through mentorship programs that assist the youth to set up small businesses. Arguing against old practices of foreign investors who use African labor without adequate transfers of skills and know-how, governments were advised to be proactive investors in industrialization and to ensure that policies on foreign direct investments provide value addition to nationals, as well as create youth employment opportunities.

The panel presented Ghana as having a reputation for a sound educational system, which at-

tracts students from beyond its borders. However, an underlying challenge for the nation, as is the case in other African countries, is the mismatch between skills acquired by young people and the requirements for accelerating national economic development. While the knowledge-based global economy relies on 60% science and 40% humanities skills-training, Ghana was said to be doing the reverse. Good practices elsewhere that depend upon vocational skills-training were cited. For Africa to move forward, it was argued that prevailing mindset and misconceptions, portraying TVET as the system to serve non-achievers, must change.

Panelists also pointed to the challenges of resource allocation. Employment programs and agencies were said to be among the least resourced. Correcting this problem would require social partnering and proper coordination of multi-sectoral plans of employment, which do not emanate from one department. An example of what works centered around the concept of a nation body, such as South Africa's National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), which coordinates employment issues with various stakeholders (e.g. private sector employment agencies, workers, public sector, CSOs, etc.). This social partnering facilitates good studies on employment gaps, data, etc., which in turn enables stakeholders make good public policy and personal choices about training, education, employment, R & D, and so forth. The panel acknowledged that while employment is a right for all, good labor policies are needed to guarantee employee social protection, job security and social security.

Concerns were expressed over the current educational system, which leads many young people to dropout and to sell on the streets, and where they may face constant harassment and abuse. Panelists echoed the sentiments of those who propose the need to intervene at lower educational levels (e.g. primary and secondary levels of education), rather than the tertiary level to build job skills. While there already exist job skills training for sewing and tailoring, going beyond would entail a full complement of capacity building in life skills training in growing vegetables, tending livestock, fertilizer application, etc. Such training would professionalize young rural farmers/entrepreneurs who would be supported by other young

workers with varying skills sets (e.g. book keeping, ICT skills, bricklaying, mechanical repairs, construction, water piping, carpentry, electrical skills, etc.). The teaching of life skills, side-by-side the normal curriculum would “beef up” the existing infrastructure to equip school dropouts/unemployed to take up middle-level manpower jobs. Calls were made for institutions to also capitalize on modern information and communication technologies to develop skills and thereby generate employment for the youth.

Open Discussion & Recommendations

A key question was why schools in African countries have maintained outdated status quo approaches, even where economic structures have changed. Indeed, it was highlighted that with such systems, educational institutions train job-seekers instead of job creators. In line with earlier suggestions, it was noted that the better engine is a change of mindset towards entrepreneurship and TVET, and called on think tanks to create a strong communication around this to court government “buy-in.”

Yet it was stated that a lot of unemployed come from the TVET sector because of its poor organization and disconnection from the private sector. In fact, the TVET sector may create many training systems, but these may not meet the labor market requirements. In accord with earlier discussants, it was noted technical education must go hand in hand with traditional education to demystify the notion that technical education is for dropouts.

There was a suggestion for the inculcation of soft skills into the educational curricula and to incentivize vocational training to make it attractive, as is the case of Switzerland where only 10% of graduates proceed to the universities while the rest go for TVET. Proposal was made for home-grown development, implementation and monitoring of policies and the weeding out of those models that do not work.

Other suggestions focused on: a) the retraining of TVET teachers; b) internships for trainees; c) training in soft skills; and d) the need to think about nutrition at the early years of a child’s brain development as allegedly, one in three children is stunted and may, therefore, not acquire all the numerous skills set.

Also suggested were ideas to: a) review the role of culture in the acquisition of certain skills; b) change mindsets towards entrepreneurship; c) promote the specialization of TVET, even in traditional university programs such as law and medicine; d) advance the need for institutions providing TVET to rethink and seek international accreditation and certification; and e) stress the African information highway.

Wrapping up, the panelists noted that:

- For long-term development planning, evidence-based planning is critical in labor market information systems, so countries should endeavor to gather information to plan their manpower needs;
- There should be competent skills-based training in all disciplines for the youth to perfect the work in which they are engaged;
- To realize 60% of tertiary education intake in favor of science, there is the fundamental need for infrastructural development, such as establishing Science Resource Centers and making conscious efforts to demystify science and mathematics; and
- African states that have adopted the Addis Convention of 2014 towards the accreditation and harmonization of curricula need to ratify it as well. So far, only one country has ratified it against a minimum of 10 states needed for it to enter into force.



8

PLENARY SESSION IV: “TACKLING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA: ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES”

Key Messages

Pointing out that in 2012, 5 of 10 people of the growing youth population was in Africa, it was noted that 65% of the African population was below 35%, making it the fastest growing youthful population. However, the population dynamics follow no specific trajectory and differed from one country to the other. In other words, while the youthful population is increasing, other age groups were decreasing, due to a number of factors, including improved medicare.

Panelists reiterated the point that the youth bulge presents some demographic dividends, which shows that youth unemployment rate is 3 to 5 times higher than the adult unemployment rate in Africa. Furthermore, more than 70% of the unemployed live in rural areas, and females are more affected. Also, the unemployed may go into the informal sector, which is characterized by low production, low wages, low skills and hence a lot being underemployed.

On whether promoting entrepreneurship gives a ray of hope for solving unemployment, a comment was made that about 22% of African working age population are starting new businesses and, significantly, SMEs constitute the largest providers of female sector jobs, because African women are much more likely to start their own businesses. While agricultural enterprises are said to account for 10% of the agricultural sector economic activities, there exist employment opportunities in agri-business such as transport and storage.

As an example of young entrepreneurial initiatives, a case study of innovative business ventures whose idea was conceived 5 years ago to actualize the essence of education in Africa. The venture sought to tackle two problems simultaneously: a) waste management; and b) creating sustainable jobs, which led to the manufacture of solar-powered backpacks, as a product.

Entrepreneurs were encouraged to visualize the future, look for access to markets and promote female-led youth businesses. From this perspective, the quality of the capital becomes key for buying and procuring the services for business. The panelist advocated strongly for businesses to build for scale and for export, which requires a shift from simply creating manufacturing models to delivering the product.

On the question of skills requirements of the youth and their career plans, the focus was on how organizations can harness the capacity of young people to go into agriculture. Supporting entrepreneurship through partnerships to deliver SME training programs is an effective way to generate employment in Africa. However, after a review of an experimental module, he found that the training alone was insufficient to create employment. This led to designing an incubation hub to train the youth and SME owners through more business-related courses and internships. He cited the example of the Somali government, through the Ministry of Labour and Youth, in partnership with the private sector. The outcome has been the training of more than 500 SMEs and youth enterprises, in eight months and the establishment of 280 new businesses, while 285 new jobs were created for new trainees. He revealed that this success story attracted other international organizations to support the scheme.

Still responding to the question on why Africa is lagging behind, yet another panelist explained that policymaking processes are often not inclusive of multi-stakeholder conversations and partnerships. Africa does not address its own market needs, because “Africa produces what it does not consume and consumes what it does not produce.” He reasoned that the continent had become “intellectually lazy” by continuing to function in a post-colonial market, which is not African-driven. He called on the continent to modernize, through innovative processes of adding-value, with an African essence to products that will appeal to both internal and external markets. He concluded that we must address “our mindset problem” and be-

gin to ask the right questions to get the right development answers for meeting the interests and wellbeing of Africans.

Open Discussion & Recommendations

Responding to questions posed by participants, the panelists noted that:

- Unemployment cannot be resolved overnight, since it needs the collective efforts of all stakeholders and improved competitiveness of SMEs to leverage employment;
- Since economies evolve and grow out of basic sectors like agriculture, there is need to exploit this and, also look at countries that are successful and why the success, which is believed to be through a matrix of education-artisanal and technical training;
- Countries should establish private equity funds and create within them competition for solution to common problems;
- Reforms on the correct market create employment opportunities. For instance, the movement of the administrative capital of Egypt from Cairo is creating a lot of jobs for artisans;
- In order to get policy makers to listen to think tanks, the recommendations of this Summit should be sent to the African Union; and
- Raise the appetite for the youth by securing access to land and make it accessible to them.

9

SIDE EVENTS

Side Event 1: “Export Diversification and Employment in Africa”

Key Messages

The discussion brought out the fact that over the past few decades, Africa has experienced relatively strong output and trade growth. However, this growth has not transformed into significant employment opportunities, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women and the youth. This phenomenon of jobless growth was attributed to lack of diversification, which is reflected in the fact that African countries produce and export mostly primary commodities and so have not been able to build a robust foundation for sustained growth and employment creation. The session also underscored the fact that the realization of any potential benefits of trade diversification is not automatic but depends on domestic policies and specific macroeconomic conditions. Against this backdrop, panelists and participants at the side event discussed the diversification-employment nexus and identified strategies and policies to enhance the contribution of export diversification to employment creation and make the growth process inclusive. The challenges of export diversification, as identified in the panel discussion, were due to:

- Poor infrastructure;
- Lack of finance, especially for small and medium-sized exporters;
- Low human and physical capital;
- High cost of doing business;
- Limited market access; and
- Weak export competitiveness.

It was pointed out that many policies have been put in place to tackle unemployment in African countries, such as the youth employment schemes introduced recently by the Nigerian government. However, these initiatives have not had the desired impact due to poor policy implementation and inadequate financing. It was also stated that there is potential for diversification on the continent that is currently not being exploited. For example, Ghana has the potential to produce

salt and this has not been fully exploited to foster diversification. In this regard, the panelists underscored the need for African governments to fully seize existing opportunities for diversification to enhance the likelihood of achieving the African transformation agenda.

Open Discussion & Recommendations

Participants offered the following recommendations:

- African governments should find proactive means and strategies to promote diversification. This requires an understanding of the key drivers of diversification and creating enabling environment for export diversification;
- Promoting investment in human capital and skill development should be the priority of African governments, as a strategy for promoting competitiveness and improving labor mobility;
- African countries should choose an export diversification strategy that would enhance the prospects for sustainable job creation. To do this, diversification strategy should be affixed on the adoption of labor intensive processes, creating linkages between activities and sectors and making sure labor receives a fair share of productivity gains from diversification;
- Government should provide a conducive environment for private sector participation in the economy;
- Foreign Direct Investment must not be favored against indigenous industries, which need production and upgrading of new primary commodities and activities to encourage quality of existing export products; and
- Africa can learn from the Asian experience, but countries need to select those experiences that suit their unique economic and demographic circumstances.

Side Event 2: “The Role of African Policy Think-Tanks in Expanding Future Youth Employment Opportunities in Support of Agricultural Transformation”

Key Messages

Africa is a huge net importer of agricultural products, with 355+ million people either severely or moderately food insecure, despite the reality that Africa has 60% of the world’s unused arable land. This unused land can potentially feed 9 billion people by 2025. Manufacturing accounted for less than 20% of exports in 2015 and provided ample opportunities for growth and development. An accelerated focus on agricultural and industrial development would: a) transform raw materials to eliminate poverty; b) create jobs for 12 million young people; c) develop rural entrepreneurship; and d) increase productivity.

Concerted effort on the part of think tanks, key stakeholders and pan African institutions could best address issues related to needed skills to effectively and successfully tackle youth unemployment challenges. The *Decade for Industrial Development in Africa*, *African Industrial Action Plan for Accelerated Industrial Development in Africa*, the *Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Plan*, the *African Economic Platform* of Agenda

2063, and other AU initiatives were highlighted as policies for promoting structural transformation of African economies and for expanding future youth employment opportunities, in support of agricultural transformation.

It would be problematic to begin addressing youth unemployment by targeting the population of young people between 15 and 35 years of age. There is need to begin asking questions like: a) what happens between birth and 15 years of age? and b) is it only a question of nutrition, or should we also consider the importance of inculcating certain values and building needed skills in a person’s formative years? Such questions would facilitate the formulation of policies and strategies that may arrest risks of unemployment, before young people reach the critical age.

An example provided was an ongoing program in Senegal, which provides 2 to 20-year-old young people with training in STEM and business skills. Out of every 100 students, only 36 will get into the secondary level, with only 6 receiving admission into tertiary institutions. Therefore, there is

need to prepare children, before they reach the “youth” category, by providing agricultural values and skills in the primary and secondary schools, so as to make them targets of employment by agrobusinesses. Such an approach would require a *change in mindset*.

Attention was also drawn to the importance and problem of mentoring youth in the “agricultural space.” The approach of academicians was interrogated and their process of “over intellectualizing” questioned, taking the youth as a lab experiment. When analyses of “the youth” are being conducted, young people are dying, engaging in terrorism, and so forth.

It was suggested to think “outside the box” and developing approaches that individual-centered and can be tailored to 1 youth at a time. Such an orientation would entail holistic processes of psychological, intellectual and social inputs both in- and out-side the home, in order to effect change in mind sets and for the youth to see agriculture as a viable opportunity.

In reflecting on the slowed growth rate of jobs and problems of job readiness, the question of where may opportunities be found and what do we do was posed? Because youth livelihoods depend on agricultural transformation, agricultural job opportunities may be expanded by reversing the trend from food imports to diversified agro-industrial economies with expanded food services, distribution, etc. that lead to increased youth employment opportunities. If 65% of African economies are driven by agriculture, with more investment there would be a demand for services (e.g. hairdressers, seamstresses/tailors, mechanics, carpenters, etc.) and jobs. The panel also argued that think tanks should play a role in providing evidence-based research to generate the required data to enable effective policy formulation and implementation.

Speaking about the importance of collaboration and partnerships to promote youth employment, the horizon scan conducted is necessary to understand the youth bulge in Africa. The collaborative research project determined the potential of positioning food (e.g. maize, sugar, etc.) as exports. Think tank research should be linked to universities to develop critical skills for youth employment in agri-business. Caution is needed against over intellectualizing and over reliance on

development models. There is need for increased collaboration between cities for information sharing with private businesses and other stakeholders to examine the potential for trade, sustainability and youth employment creation.

It was noted that hostile contexts (e.g. conflict, environmental degradation and resistance to education for girls) make for an incredibly difficult challenge to find effective solutions to economic underdevelopment and youth unemployment. However, there are institutions that are translating policy in user-friendly formats for ordinary people (e.g. children, parents, teachers) to understand and to engage in development processes. She stressed the importance of collaboration with universities, so that theory can meet practice, through development training and by engaging families and communities. Indeed, when children receive early training in the sciences and peace-building, for instance, it empowers them to go to the field, solve issues, create policies and promote cultural practices that value others for an inclusive development agenda.

A unique perspective was also offered, which combines sport and skills development. In fact, youth development should be nurtured through holistic approaches. Too often, the youth are seen by society and framed, by academicians and policymakers, as “a problem.” It was highlighted the need for positive youth development approaches that require training children to see themselves as “part of the solution.” Sport can play a role in developing life skills to bring about change in mind set and behavior, as well as promote proactive-minded, problem-solving young people. While enhancing social relations, teambuilding through sport is an effective skill required in many areas of business. Toward this end, three concurrent research projects, which use holistic development approaches that link youth, sport and entrepreneurship are being conducted in Botswana, Ghana and Tanzania.

Open Discussion & Recommendations

The floor was opened to participants who offered the following additional action points:

- Conduct more research and gather data on disparities between the youth, due to social engineering (e.g. social cleavages, corruption,

etc.) to promote inclusive and equitable development planning and implementation;

- Generate more knowledge on corruption—a “victimless crime,” which remains undressed, because there is generally no equivalent word in many African languages;
- Document and share more amazing stories of the many youth who are taking initiatives in the agricultural sector;
- Combine both skills building with financial knowledge in youth development training programs. Often, the youth are provided piecemeal opportunities where they can only find one or the other form of training; and
- Put pressure on the AU to promote the development of policy briefs about, for and by the youth, as a form of outreach to policy makers.

Side Event 3: “Creating a Healthy Youthful Workforce: Evidence from Tobacco-Control Interventions”

The Side Event focused on the fact that most African countries had signed and ratified the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC), but the domestication of this treaty and its implementation remain at a very slow pace. As an explanation, some pointed to the lack of local evidence and weak commitment of governments. This led to the question of how to empower CSOs to carry out better advocacy and research institutions to conduct evidence-based research on tobacco control, to enable strong and well-implemented Tobacco Control policies in Africa. Panelists were then asked to address the following questions:

- What is the experience of tobacco control research and implication in your country?
- What is the effect of tobacco on youth employment?
- What can government and key stakeholders do to enhance youth employment?
- What roles can think tanks play in tobacco control in relation to youth workforce?
- How has taxation curbed tobacco consumption?

It was noted that in some countries tobacco use had increased more among the youth than adults, especially in lower HDI countries. More than 90% of those using tobacco initially tried it before age 18, mainly because of peer pressure, relative affordability and direct targeting of the youth by tobacco companies. On the effects of tobacco

use, it was explained that first-hand smokers stand high risks of cancer, tuberculosis, and heart and lung diseases among other health challenges. Other effects include a threat to economic productivity, due to morbidity and mortality, skewed household allocation to tobacco-related expenses and out-of-pocket expenses, used in treating tobacco-related illnesses. In the case of Nigeria, tobacco use was said to account for 17,500 deaths annually.

It was reported that the results of the TETSIM (Tobacco Excise Simulation Model) model used in a study showed decreases in consumption in all scenarios with higher taxes and a corresponding increase in government revenue.

Using Togo as an example, it was reported a drop-in tobacco consumption in between 2010 and 2013, based on a survey conducted. Due to measures taken, prevalence decreased from 14.16% in men in 2010 to 10% in 2013 and likewise decreased from 3.1% in women to 1%, during the same period; while on average, it decreased from 20% to 5% in youth usage. However, it was pointed out that smuggling and tax fraud had promoted the sale of tobacco products at cheaper prices.

On strategies to curb tobacco use, Togo is implementing the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) strategy by monitoring the system and providing support to smokers to help them quit. Also, a law on tobacco use was enacted in 2010 and in 2012, a national committee was established to monitor and implement all recommended

policies to fight tobacco use. In the same year, a ban was placed on smoking in public places, while a law on packaging was passed that warned potential users of the dangers of smoking. A five-year development plan (2016 – 2020) was developed with the objective of implementing the legal framework, sensitizing and supporting users of tobacco as well as finding mechanisms to fight the illicit sale of the drug.

Despite the legal instruments put in place, the prevalence of tobacco use in Togo is still high. Currently, the new tax system combines ad valorem and a specific tax on tobacco, leading to an increase in tobacco tax revenue by 11% and a drop-in consumption. While the most recent data was not available, it seems that the youth who withdrew from tobacco consumption due to its high cost have resorted to using shisha, whose use is on the rise. CSOs, as well as national bodies, have inadequate capacity to fight the drug menace and hence the call on think tanks to assist in data collection and in monitoring the implementation of policies. It was further recommended that revenue derived from the taxation should be used to take care of health-related issues associated with tobacco consumption, including prevention of its use.

Using Kenya as an example, data shows 8.2% of the population smoke tobacco, though there is a difference in prevalence among the regions in the country. In 2012, a mechanism was put in place to regulate drugs, alcohol and tobacco use, and in 2013, Kenya put in place other control systems such as scanners at port entry points to curb smuggling. By December 2014, a new tobacco regulation was published, which included designating smoke-free areas. A five-year study on the

tobacco trade (2008 – 2013) revealed that a total of 47.7 million sticks of cigarettes were seized by the Kenya Revenue Authority and its allied partners. Under the performance contracts in Kenya, each firm must report on abuse of drugs, but the firms usually focus more on alcohol and other drugs than tobacco.

Despite legislation and other measures put in place in Kenya, tobacco consumption has increased which may be partially due to the breakdown of scanners. Also problematic is the centralization of tobacco stamp collection in Nairobi, thereby creating travel inconvenience to firms and individuals. Furthermore, some producers use expired stamps, while tobacco-related apps are uploaded on smartphones which cuts off those without such phone devices. Also, industry players stick with cheaper brands even with the illicit drugs.

It was reported that in 2017, a week's survey in 9 districts of Benin, which shares borders with Togo and Nigeria, showed that trafficking of tobacco products was conducted at 25 illegal entry points, and 889 illegal transactions were noticed mostly undertaken by nationals of the West African sub-region. Of the smuggled items were 33.8 tons of cigarette whose value, in terms of financial loss to the country, was 321 million CFA franc per month. Taxation has worked to curtail the use of tobacco by the youth, and the government has enacted a policy to regulate the sale of tobacco and alcohol near schools. However, much support is needed from institutions like CSOs and think tanks to sustain the fight against tobacco consumption. Likewise, tobacco control should be part of the educational curricula just like HIV had been mainstreamed into curricula.

Side Event 4: “Building the Relevant Hard and Soft Infrastructure to Support Youth Employment in Africa”

Key Messages

Various dimensions of youth employment had been discussed at the Summit, but the focus of this session was on infrastructural development to support youth employment. The underlining question was how infrastructural development could promote youth employment in Africa, given the absence or unreliability of transport, electricity or

telecommunication services. The underlying reality imposes significant additional costs on companies, which hampers their investment capacity and job creation. It was noted that usually, in all policy proposals addressing joblessness, there is virtually no mention of infrastructure, even though infrastructure is generally recognized as the motherboard of job creation.

On the relationship between infrastructure and youth employment, it was indicated that there are both direct and indirect relationships. There is a higher youth unemployment in remote areas, due to low infrastructure development which thereby hinders agricultural development. In moving forward, Africa must modernize agriculture. The most direct way to create jobs in infrastructural projects is in public work. Citing South Africa as an example, it was noted that the design of infrastructural projects should provide technical training opportunities for the youth who should also be helped to become managers and owners of this infrastructure as they progress along.

In this vein, cross-border infrastructure was considered as a means of enhancing trade among African countries, as well as promote regional and economic integration. In fact, the level of trade in the SADC region, for example, is only about 10 percent, which can grow in percentile terms with adequate infrastructure such as transport (e.g. road, rail and port). There was call for a harmonization of trade regulation to guide freight transport within the region.

It was further noted that infrastructure projects around Africa are categorized into energy, water, ICT and transport. The direct employment from investing in these types of infrastructure is the engagement of the youth as employees, while the indirect includes the externalities that the infrastructural projects generate, such as food vending and other supply chains that spring up around project sites. Governments therefore need to invest in skills development to serve as manpower for infrastructural projects.

High-quality infrastructure is the bedrock of social economic development. There is need for proper diagnoses of where and what are the nature of the infrastructural problems. It is important for the facilitation of cross border trade and businesses. Due to the heterogeneity of the informal economy, there is need to understand the infrastructure challenges there, be it a combination of access to electricity, sanitation, water; ICT technology; or transport logistic to the market. Other countries were invited to emulate Zimbabwe and Kenya, which are addressing intergeneration infrastructure issues through well-established youth development funds.

Appeals were made to African countries to create capacity in vocational training, in order to directly employ greater numbers of the youth. The example of the Zimbabwe's mining sector was used to illustrate the need for the development of soft skills, noting that the skills existing in Zimbabwe were like those in other mining jurisdictions; however, the Zimbabwean trainees were lacking innovation, interpersonal, management and problem-solving skills. The panel advised that when decision makers look at infrastructure needs, they should also focus on take into consideration the soft skills, which are vitally important.

Open Discussion & Recommendations

Participants offered the following additional recommendations:

- Africa needs to generate demographic data to identify the skills needs and strategies to meet them. Lack of credible data dissuades investor collaboration;
- Political will is important to ginger the infrastructural development and promote protocol and policies relating to regional trade and integration;
- There is a need to create favorable business climates for both rural and urban sectors;
- There should be integration of financial markets in Africa;
- Think tanks should be assigned to the AU policy discourses and deliberative platforms;
- Trade barriers should be removed to facilitate cross-border trade;
- There should be an effective design of public work programs;
- There is critical need to mobilize energies to create good, decent jobs through industrialization; and
- All documents emanating from this Summit should be channeled to the policy makers and governments.

Box 4 Cocktail Keynote Speech on “Tackling Youth Unemployment in Africa: Some Proposed Solutions to Help Policy-Makers and Governments Win the Battle?”

The Speaker classified youth unemployment as a subset of a bigger problem—leadership—and lamented why leaders subvert national institutions and make them kowtow to political parties. He said that poor leadership has led some countries to export its talents and experts to neighboring countries, while the country cannot manage itself. Thus, instead of complaining, African countries must tackle the problem from its roots, by giving the youth the choice to exercise their rights in the quality and choice of their leaders.

He said the continent continues to mimic other continents and has mistaken development for modernization. As a result, research in Africa has little relevance to the needs of African society and continues to be tailored to the dictates of donors.

On the youth unemployment challenge, the speaker called on decision makers to tackle the problem from the root cause(s) and proposed the following subjects for the core curricula of the formative years: (1) Mathematics and Business Studies; (2) English; (3) History; and (4) Crafts.

He however noted that not everybody can be an entrepreneur, as some people are simply good employees. Entrepreneurship is not limited to the educated and so, for the non-academics who aspire to be entrepreneurs, he suggested developing programs to incentivize them. This would include the establishment of private equity funds and mentorship programs for good employees.



10

“KNOWLEDGE MELA”

This session was an opportunity for think tank to showcase their innovative solutions to fundamental development problems facing the continent.

The Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG)

The presenter observed that political parties in Africa have become electoral machines and exist merely to contest elections instead of thinking about the development challenges of the society. IDEG focuses on the capacity development of people to engage in policymaking and seeks to transform political parties into being more development-oriented.

Proposals and Recommendations

The main proposal was to focus on the developmental concept of political parties by reforming parties, creating a good regulatory framework for them, and encouraging them to undertake reforms within their ranks. This calls for political parties to have research units that would research on the developmental needs of the people and make suggestions to their leaders.

The Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR)-Rwanda

The topic for discussion was IPAR’s experience in evaluating performance contracts for government institutions. Each year, state institutions in Rwanda sign performance contracts with the President of Rwanda and IPAR evaluates and ranks these ministries matching their performances against planned activities.

Key Observations Arising from Discussions

- The activities of IPAR have become beyond Rwanda and this will promote its sustainability;
- The activities of IPAR will encourage performance at all levels of engagement and drive accountability; and
- The activities of IPAR can be benchmarked and good practices adopted in many countries.

The Zambia Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR)

The group discussed the issue of the independence of a think tanks, in terms of the question: “who sets the research agenda for a state-supported think tank like ZIPAR?” Relative independence is realized by ZIPAR, particularly since it operates by identifying gaps on issues raised by the government and proffering solutions. The question of independence was assuaged by the fact that ZIPAR, as a think tank, reports on outcome of research, based on evidence.

The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FARNPAN)

FARNPAN identifies a disconnect between agriculture and nutrition based on evidence of increasing food production and a concomitant increase in increases malnutrition. Responding to the disconnect, FARNPAN is running a project on what agriculture can do to come up with positive nutrition outcomes. The session introduced participants to some of the key innovations developed by FARNPAN to deal with the issue of malnutrition and how to improve agricultural productivity. Arising out of the discussion was how to empower women in agriculture since the trickledown effect of empowering a single woman is far reaching than a man.

The OCP Policy Centre-Morocco

The OCP Policy Centre based in Morocco organizes yearly conferences called the *Atlantic Dialogue* which attracts about 350 participants from around the Atlantic Basin to talk and address issues of concern in the Atlantic region. From discussions at the Summit, OCP has picked on board the advice to track the impact of their conferences. As a policy center, OCP offered an

invitation to the think tanks present at the Summit and others on the continent for collaboration.

The Economic Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) of the ECOWAS Commission

EPAU brings together think tanks to dialogue on emerging issues and make recommendations to the ECOWAS Commission. Also, EPAU places a continental call for proposals on emerging issues which are screened and funded. Key research outcomes are submitted to the ECOWAS Commission for further action. The EPAU is currently pursuing a single currency for the ECOWAS sub-region and needs think tanks to submit solutions to obstacles facing monetary integration of West Africa.

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)

In supporting the implementation of Agenda 2063, an innovative approach adopted by the ACBF, now a technical agency of the African Union, is to enhance capacity development and knowledge through the ACBF virtual library. The Library hosts key publications and capacity building publications. The ACBF calls on the general public to submit their works for publication on their virtual library and assured authors that their copyrights would not be compromised.

The Cameroon Policy Analysis and Research Center (CAMERCAP-PARC)

Along the theme of the Summit, CAMERCAP-PARC discussed how the Centre promotes youth employment through entrepreneurship. One of the let initiative put in place is “Coaching CAMERCAP-PARC’s ICT start-up initiative for young entrepreneurs” which has helped to support many young people in securing and/or creating jobs.

Box 5. Keynote Speech on “Tackling Youth Unemployment in Africa through Human Resources Development: Some Proposed Solutions?”

The speech centered on youth unemployment, as being due to a mismatch in training and job market demands. The speaker held that the policy response to this is AU Agenda 2063, which he believed would catalyze education and skills revolution and promote science, technology, innovation and research.

He noted that the Aspirations of Agenda 2063 are broken down into goals and priority areas (i.e. Goals 2, 3, 4, 5), which focus on education and STI, health, transformed economy, and modernizing agriculture for increased production and productivity, respectively. He also explained that SDGs (e.g. SDG 4) are similarly focused, which enables the alignment of continental and international aspirations to ensure inclusiveness and quality education.

On the decadal continental initiatives, he explained that the AU's TVET Strategy provides the framework for the development of national policies to address challenges in skills development and employment. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016 – 2025) is more of a strategy rather than a plan requiring strategic multinational partnerships for implementation while the 7 pillars and 12 strategic objectives of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2015 – 2025) are built on a strong vision of an Africa developed on the anchors of science and technology and championed by Heads of States on the continent.

With specific emphasis on STISA, the speaker stated that science, technology and innovation (STI) have been placed at the epicenter of Africa's development but had it not been for Southern Africa, the innovation map of Africa would have been blank - researchers on the continent are lagging behind and budget allocation for R & D by most countries are around 0.3% instead of the 1% agreed under the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980.

Building on the four key pillars of the demographic dividends, namely: education and skills development; employment and entrepreneurship; empowerment; and health, he mentioned that an Africa Youth Fund was set up in July 2017 to ensure that 1% of all budgets are committed to youth activities. To implement this, he disclosed that some roadmaps had been developed with specific activities. A meeting of African Heads of State in 2017 declared the period 2018 to 2027 as Decade of TVET and Youth Employment. He announced that think tanks would be consulted in the development of the action plan for the Decade.

The 5th Africa ThinkTank Summit

5 - 7 April / avril 2018
Accra, Ghana

5^{ème} SOMMET DES THINK TANKS D'AFRIQUE

Tackling Africa's Unemployment Challenge:
Innovative Solutions from the Think Tanks

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CLOSING CEREMONY

The Closing Ceremony commenced with the reading of the draft Summit Communique (see Annex 3), after which a series of final remarks were shared.

A key message was to advise policy makers against unnecessarily placing age limits on youth participation in governance, even to the highest political position of a country. To remain relevant, think tanks were advised not to work in silos, but to create and build networks among themselves, and build and maintain relationships with governments and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Attention was paid to a retreat of the AU Executive Council in May 2016, which discussed how to address Africa's paradox of a rich continent with poor citizens. The retreat concluded that unless education capacity building on S&T is emphasized, debilitating developmental challenges will remain.

Moreover, it was noted think tanks activism can help turn around the situation on the continent, particularly in creating youth employment. Think tanks were encouraged to step up monitoring and evaluation of all AU Commission's policies and strategies to ensure efficient and effective implementation. There was need for the AU Commission to look at the Summit's communique via-a-vis its contribution to the action plan on TVET for youth employment.

After expressions of gratitude to the organizers and everyone for making the 5th Africa Think Tank Summit as success, the summit was declared closed.

ANNEX I

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS & PLENARY SESSIONS

Key Recommendations Arising from Keynote Addresses

Think Tanks should develop partnerships and alliances to leverage on their collective efforts towards reducing youth unemployment;

- Encourage national dialogues around the problem of youth unemployment;
- Core curriculum in formative years should include courses that would build on the skills needed to tackle the problems of Africa;
- Youth representation in the development of policies that would solve the problem of youth unemployment is key;
- African countries should desist from blindly mimicking other continents and recognize that development does not mean westernization;
- Putting in place a merit-based system of reward and penalty (strictly performance-based evaluation system), which encourages institutions that discharge their responsibilities up to standard by producing highly qualified and skilled human resources;
- African countries should create room for innovation and scaling up of successful programs and initiatives such as university-industry linkage and internship programs;
- The youth employment agenda must be made part of the transformational agenda;
- Establishing private equity banks to support good business proposals developed by the youth. However, such proposals should be those that are transformational and would address unemployment in the country; and
- Policy makers and public authorities should move from doing the talking to doing more of listening.

Key Recommendations Arising from “Leadership and Africa’s Youth Unemployment Challenge”

- African leaders should be technological in this digital world and focus on youth entrepreneurship
- African governments should focus on the development of rural entrepreneurship to bridge the unemployment gap between rural and urban areas
- African leaders should move into industrializing their economies to create more sustainable jobs for the youth
- Leaders must have vision and long term comprehensive plan to develop holistic approach to tackling youth unemployment.
- Integrating the SDGs and Agenda 2063 into national development plans is key
- Modernizing agriculture to make it attractive to the youth
- Leaders need to be pragmatic and work out human resource requirements of their countries so that training is directed towards producing such skills
- Think Tanks should provide policy directions to deal with the challenge of youth unemployment.

Key Recommendations Arising from “Developing the Requisite Private Sector that Can Create Jobs for the Youth”

- African countries should strive to achieve double digit growth since this has a high chance of transforming to job creation

- Creating enabling environment for private sector to thrive through tax reforms - SMEs should have tax reliefs, so that they have room to grow
- Africa should leverage on its ongoing infrastructure development to create jobs for the youth
- African governments should create an African incubation hub that would bring together innovators and entrepreneurs
- The informal sector should be made more lucrative to attract the growing youth population
- Profiling skills needed by the private sector and providing training programs to supply those skills are required.

Key Recommendations Arising from “Building on the Critical Technical Skills for Sustainable Youth Employment Opportunities”

- There is the need for robust labor market information system to inform training
- Promoting coordination between different departments to address policy issues on creating employment.
- Policies addressing youth unemployment should be harmonized to address the bigger picture
- Africa needs to address the mindset challenges towards TVET

ANNEX II

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SIDE EVENTS & BREAKAWAY SESSIONS

Group Reports on Side Events

Group summary reports on the key issues discussed at each of the 4 Side Events, were presented in the final plenary session and are as follows:

Side Event 1: “Export Diversification and Employment in Africa”

- Export diversification is a necessary but not sufficient condition for employment creation. The binding constraints to export diversification in Africa are poor infrastructure, such as energy, lack of finance and high transport and trade costs
- Diversification can lead to meaningful employment creation if it is associated with:
 - Shifting resources into labor intensive sectors
 - Strengthening linkages with the productive sectors
- There are various pathways to diversification and what might be appropriate for one country might not be optimal for another (as no one size fits all)
- To foster diversification in Africa, there is the need to:
 - Build relevant hard and soft infrastructures.
 - Change mindset regarding agriculture
 - Provide cross-border infrastructure
 - Harmonize policies and regulation on free transport
 - Build human capital and capacities
 - Integrate financial markets issues into infrastructural development plans
 - Focus financing on bankable projects.

Side Event 2: “The Role of African Policy Think Tanks in Expanding Future Youth Employment Opportunities in Support of Agricultural Transformation”

- Conduct more research and gather data to promote inclusive and equitable development planning and implementation;
- Generate more knowledge on corruption—a “victimless crime,” which remains undressed
- Document and share more amazing stories of the many youth taking wonderful initiatives in the agricultural sector;
- Combine both skills building with financial knowledge in youth development training programs; and
- Get the AU to promote the production of policy briefs about, for and by the youth, as outreach to policy makers.

Side Event 3: “Creating a Healthy Youthful Workforce: Evidence from Tobacco-Control Interventions”

There is a high prevalence of tobacco use in Africa due to peer pressure, and aggressiveness of tobacco companies among other factors. These have negative implications. Taxation is an effective means of control in a number of countries. In the control of drugs, some governments place emphasis only on alcohol and drug use. However, there are some steps being taken in the ban on tobacco sales, particularly near schools. Specific recommendations from the group include:

- Taxation of tobacco products;
- Involve TTs in tobacco-use research to inform policy;

- Intensify education and sensitization on the harmful effects of tobacco; and
- Mainstreaming tobacco control in curriculum should be given the same degree of importance as alcohol and/or HIV.

Side Event 4: “Building the Relevant Hard and Soft Infrastructure to Support Youth Employment in Africa”

- Africa needs to generate demographic data to identify the skills needs and strategies to meet them. Lack of credible data dissuades investor collaboration;
- Political will is important to ginger the infrastructural development and promote protocol and policies relating to regional trade and integration;
- There is a need to create favorable business climates for both rural and urban sectors;
- There should be integration of financial markets in Africa;
- Think tanks should be assigned to the AU policy discourses and deliberative platforms;
- Trade barriers should be removed to facilitate cross-border trade;
- There should be an effective design of public work programs;
- There is critical need to mobilize energies to create good, decent jobs through industrialization; and
- All documents emanating from this Summit should be channeled to the policy makers and governments

Group Reports on Breakaway Sessions

Breakaway Session 1: “Setting the Research Agenda”

Recommendations and follow-ups include:

- Circumvent conditionalities of donor funding by conducting research to facilitate internally generated resources to support the work of African research institutions;
- Promote relevant research agenda
 - Discontinue making donor arguments when their objectives run counter to a research agenda for Africa’s structural transformation;
 - Separate issues based on internal failures from those opposed by external forces;
 - Ensure quality of research by examining policy process from design to finish and address fundamental challenges;
- Avoid one-size fits all prescriptions, by
 - Developing statistical data bases at national levels and
 - Looking for ways and means to generate independent, “home-grown” policies;
- Conduct research to realize expansion in youth opportunities through intra-African trade; and
- Intensify collaborative research to promote pan-African comparative analyses of youth employment and in so doing,
 - Consider constraints to and drivers of youth employment, specifically and employment, generally;
 - Assess skills needed by sector to improve and match capacity for the market
 - Discontinue treating labor force as a commodity and begin to treat it as a “social right”

- Examine the effect that changes in political administrations and turnover of governments have on youth employment policies, job creation and poverty
- Produce data on the informal sector and existing and potential skills sets to expand youth employment opportunities in agricultural sector.

Breakaway Session 2: “Sharing Innovation and Good Practices”

Recommendations include the following:

- Think tanks should lobby governments for equal infrastructural development in rural areas to curb migration and engage the youth in agriculture;
- Agricultural Science should be introduced right from the primary school to the tertiary level as done in Malawi;
- Entrepreneurship should be taught from the formative years to instill positive mindsets in people;
- Business incubation centers should be established for young people to grow their business ideas;
- Government to provide an enabling environment for SMEs to thrive; and
- Students in tertiary institutions should familiarize themselves with continental development agenda such as Agenda 2063.

Breakaway Session 3: “Future Plans of Think Tanks”

Recommendations to support think tanks include the following:

- Promote collaborative policy-based research on different themes within their networks to upscale and out-scale their contributions to mindset change on TVET and entrepreneurship;

- Conduct various studies on demand and supply of skills and competences on the labor market;
- Conduct specific studies on export diversification;
- Inform policy development in the next decadal Youth Agenda by drawing on past experiences;
- Conduct inter-country surveys on private-public partnerships;
- Bridge the weak linkages between the formal and informal sectors, as well as agriculture and home-grown industries; and
- Work with Regional Economic Communities (REC) on research agenda that produce home-grown solutions.

ANNEX III

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 5TH AFRICA THINK TANK SUMMIT

Preamble

1. We, the African think tanks and delegates to the Fifth Africa Think Tank Summit, have met in Accra, Ghana, on 5-7 April 2018. As we conclude our 2018 Summit on the theme “Tackling Africa’s Youth Unemployment Challenge: Innovative Solutions from Think Tanks”, we would like to express our deepest and sincere appreciation to the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) for organizing this Summit in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Ghana, the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ReNAPRI) and the Alliance for African Partnership (AAP).
2. We congratulate the African Capacity Building Foundation for being designated the African Union’s Specialized Agency for Capacity Development. This is clear recognition of the close to three decades of admirable work not just in creating and supporting think tanks on the continent but supporting the human and institutional capacity needs for implementing continental, regional and national development frameworks.
3. We commend the commitment of the African Union in supporting and recognizing efforts by Africa Think Tanks towards evidence-based policies and development programs on the continent and around job creation for the youth in particular. High-level representation of the African Union Commission at the Summit as evidenced by presence of the Commissioner for Economic Affairs and the Acting Director for Human Resources, Science and Technology is hence highly applauded.
4. We note the importance for African countries and their governments to trust, consult and utilize think tanks within the continent as they have the required expertise and experience to support the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of home-grown relevant policies for Africa’s socio-economic transformation – within Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national development plans.

5. We also note that African think tanks would play a critical role in supporting African countries tackle youth unemployment through their support to evidence-based policy design, implementation and monitoring, their capacity development activities for state and non-state actors, and their provision of platforms for stakeholder engagement and dialogue and advocacy.
6. We recognize the sustainability issues faced by African think tanks and welcome the expressed commitment of African governments, development partners, and key continental stakeholders to continue supporting the Africa Think Tank Summits and the work of think tanks generally through the Africa Think Tank Network (ATTN).

African Think Tanks and Contribution to Tackling Youth Unemployment Challenges

7. We reiterate our deep concern about Africa's youth unemployment challenges and the resulting pressures on migration to other continents for economic opportunities along with the disastrous consequences including loss of lives of young Africans.
8. We recognize that think tanks have a key role to play to support the fight against youth unemployment, which can largely succeed if underpinned by, among other factors, a conducive policy environment and transformative leadership in both state and non-state sectors.
9. We commit to continue providing advice on the policy options and innovative solutions available to successfully tackle youth unemployment using knowledge and networking while expanding our outreach to policy actors and making our research in the area accessible.
10. We recognize that the limited impact of youth employment programs in many African countries, is explained in part by the lack of rigorous evidence-based design and implementation exacerbated by lack of accurate data and statistics and weak implementation capacity.

11. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to provide research-based evidence and data to governments, law-makers, the private sector, and civil society organizations for sound decision-making while supporting the production of adequate statistics on youth employment and related issues.
12. We do recommend that think tanks be supported in conducting strategic studies around the human and institutional capacity gaps facing the continent and share good practices on how to address them especially regarding the development and effective implementation of youth employment and youth entrepreneurship policies on the continent.
13. We encourage African governments and key stakeholders to work with African think tanks and capacity building institutions to support the expansion of Africa's critical skills in science, technology and innovation as well as develop home-grown youth policies and interventions for Africa's sustainable development.
14. Recognizing that the fight against youth unemployment in Africa requires transformative leadership and the provision of an African solution, we call upon all African governments to work with think tanks to design and support interventions aimed at developing the institutional and human capacities for a transformative leadership (including business, youth, women, civil society and traditional leadership).

Critical Technical Skills and Private Sector Development for Youth Employment Opportunities

15. Acknowledging that Africa is well-endowed with natural resources, we urge African countries to develop systematic programs of training that ensure skills development in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, contributing to more jobs for the youth while contributing to Africa's transformation agenda.
16. In that vein, we commit to work with Africa's continental bodies, regional economic communities, governments and all stakeholders to support technical skills development, especially for girls and women, and contribute in

ensuring that the education our young people receive equips them with the critical skills they need for employment and transformation of the continent.

17. Further, we also recommend African countries to specifically ensure that agriculture becomes an attractive venture for the youth, not only by addressing agriculture's not-so-attractive image to the youth and fostering its modernization but also tackling issues related to lack of access to land, capital, markets, information, technology, and farming inputs.
18. We are therefore committed to work with African governments, in close cooperation with the private sector, to identify possible entry-points and opportunities for self-employment and employment particularly for educated and non-educated youth, women and vulnerable segments of the population.
19. We propose documentation of the Africa-wide experiences, innovative solutions and lessons learned on youth unemployment challenges and strategies. As proposed in the research agenda, this needs to be undertaken by think tanks under the coordination of ACBF. Such study should subsequently inform development of capacity building interventions and policies aimed at sustainably tackling youth unemployment in Africa.

Moving Forward

20. We, think tanks and delegates, note that the 2018 Africa Think Tank Summit provided a unique opportunity for open and comprehensive discussions on a wide range of critical issues in Africa, key among them are youth unemployment challenges and the role of think tanks, which will facilitate the development of mutually agreed solutions.
21. We are committed to support and contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring

and evaluation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and mentorship/coaching programs targeted at solving Africa's problems – and thereafter, tackling youth unemployment.

22. We support the proposal of undertaking an Africa-wide study on the experience, innovative solutions and lessons learned on youth unemployment challenges, in specific sectors such as agriculture, to complement existing studies and to ensure coordinated and effective future capacity building efforts. The basis of which study should be a capacity development program on youth employment in Africa.
23. We call upon ACBF, as the specialized Agency of the African Union for capacity development, to coordinate documentation of the Africa-wide experiences, innovative solutions and lessons learned on youth unemployment challenges and to subsequently coordinate the development of a program on harnessing youth employment opportunities on the continent, building on the findings.
24. We further call for continued support to ACBF and other supporters of think tanks to enable them create new think tanks where needed, strengthen the capacities of existing ones and ensure that platforms such as the Africa Think Tank Summits are convened, and networks such as the Africa Think Tank Network are sustained while the recommendations of the Summits are brought to the attention of the African Union Head of State Meetings.
25. We, Summit participants, express our gratitude to the Government of Ghana and its leadership for the support provided to ACBF and its partners in successfully organizing the Summit.

Presented on 7 April 2018 in Accra, Ghana

ANNEX IV

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About the African Capacity Building Foundation

Established in 1991, ACBF builds human and institutional capacity for good governance and economic development in Africa. To date the Foundation has invested over USD700million that has empowered people in governments, parliaments, civil society, private sector and higher education institutions in more than 45 countries and 6 regional economic communities. ACBF supports capacity development across Africa through mobilization and leveraging of resources for capacity development; grants, investments and fund management; knowledge services; promoting innovation in capacity development and capacity development advisory services. The establishment of ACBF was in response to the severity of Africa's capacity needs, and the challenges of investing in indigenous human capital and institutions in Africa. ACBF interventions are premised on four principles: the centrality of capacity to the development process in Africa; the critical role of a partnership and demand-driven approach in tackling capacity challenges; African ownership and leadership in the capacity development process; and a systematic, sequenced and coordinated approach to the capacity development process that pays attention to capacity retention and utilization. For further information go to: www.acbf-pact.org

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