

CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUÉ

30TH – 31ST OCTOBER 2018 | ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Continental Expert
and Practitioner Dialogue on

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROMOTION





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The African Union Commission (AUC), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Business Africa organised an expert and practitioner dialogue on youth entrepreneurship promotion from 30–31 October 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The dialogue convened within the framework of the Africa Talks Jobs Dialogue Platform that launched in October 2017 at the inaugural conference that sought to equip youth with adaptive education and skills for future employment and entrepreneurship.

More than 80 representatives from the public and private sectors convened at the AUC headquarters for the dialogue. The youth were joined by members of the business, investment, education, entrepreneurship and policy-making communities from across Africa. European partners were also in attendance. The diverse group of participants discussed how to best

equip Africa's youth with relevant professional skills to promote youth entrepreneurship and youth-lead start-ups to ultimately increase private sector productivity.

The principal objective of the dialogue was to define best practices on how to best promote youth entrepreneurship with actionable steps to create quality jobs and sustainable enterprises in Africa, thereby moving beyond mere discussion.

To achieve the principal objective, the experts and practitioners consolidated and identified strategies and achievable actions concerning youth entrepreneurship promotion in Africa. The deliberations focussed on specific entrepreneurship promotion themes such as education and skills development, the entrepreneurship ecosystem and how start-ups scale and grow, and the key role of the private sector.

The dialogue

- Recalling Agenda 2063's aspiration for young men and women to be the path-breakers of Africa's knowledge society and contribute significantly to innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship;
- Reaffirming Agenda 2063's aspiration for the elimination of youth unemployment in Africa and a guarantee of full access to education, training, skills and technology, health services, jobs and economic opportunities, and recreational and cultural activities;
- Recalling the SDG's declaration to promote policies that encourage entrepreneurship and job creation that serve to achieve the goal of decent work for all women and men by 2030;
- Appreciating that 70 percent of Africa's population is under the age of 35 and the trend will continue to grow in the short term;
- Tapping into the knowledge gained in 2017, the year of Harnessing the Democratic Dividend through Investing in Youth, which focused on key thematic areas including education and skills development, employment and entrepreneurship, and youth empowerment, health and wellbeing;
- Urging African governments to strengthen education systems and programmes aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning at all levels;
- Recalling that all African governments committed to investing at least 4–6% of GDP to education and/or to allocate at least 15–20% of public expenditure to education and optimising return from these investments per the Education 2030 Framework for Action;
- Reaffirming the commitment to implement the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016–2025) which seeks to reorient Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity standards required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the continental, national, sub-regional levels;

- Reaffirming the commitment of African Heads of State and Government to support the implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) based on adoption of its priorities in the context of national, regional and continental development policies, programmes and frameworks;
- Recalling the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) as a critical catalyst and enabler for mobilising the business community to contribute to sustainable economic development, regional integration, creating decent jobs and entrepreneurship promotion in Africa;
- Recalling the interest by the AU, its Member States and the private sector in deepening collaboration between researchers and innovators within Africa and between Europe and Africa within the Africa-EU partnership schemes;
- Recalling the recommendation that each Member State commit 1 % of GDP to research and development to maximise ownership and responsibility for their own developmental paths, to accelerate implementation and reduce over-reliance on external resources through the mobilization of domestic and alternative financial resources and to commercialise the research outcomes where feasible;
- Acknowledging the initiative led by the AUC, NEPAD and Business Africa within the Africa Talks Jobs framework to support the commitment of over 120 individual companies and associations from across the continent to invest in youth and to initiate partnerships with the education sector in skills development for employability and entrepreneurship promotion;
- Acknowledging the commitment by the AU and its Member States to regional integration through the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) and the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (2018) as critical enablers of labour mobility, skills and technology transfer, and youth entrepreneurship in Africa;
- Acknowledging the importance of regular dialogue and consultation between and amongst the youth, the AU, private sector, and Member States within the framework of the Africa Creates Jobs and Entrepreneurs Platform (ACJEP);
- Recognising the achievements made by the Pan African University in equipping young, highly-talented and engaged students from across the continent with knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial mindset, as well as its ambition to serve as a model for excellence in the African higher education sector for transformative education, innovation and entrepreneurship promotion

RECOMMENDS

Recommends to the African Union:

1. **Policy Frameworks and Initiatives on Entrepreneurship**
 - a. Map, review, analyse, and evaluate gaps and opportunities of existing AU policies, frameworks, and programmes on youth entrepreneurship promotion.
 - b. Develop and adopt a continental policy-guiding framework and strategy to promote youth

entrepreneurship in Africa supported across all relevant departments of AU organs. The policies should include education and skills development at every point in the start-up lifecycle—from incubation, acceleration to scale-up—and should touch upon themes of financing, conducive policy frameworks, continental cooperation and entrepreneur mobility (free movement for youth entrepreneurs to work in the country and economic system of their choice). The AUC should continually provide opportunities for youth inclusion and participation during the development of the framework and strategy.

- c. Support AU Member States to adopt and implement appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks to promote youth entrepreneurship.

2. Partnership, Collaboration and Networks of Entrepreneurs, Private Sector and Investors

- a. Institutionalise a framework and platform within the Africa Creates Jobs platform for regular dialogue, sustained engagement, and collaboration and partnership among entrepreneurs, the private sector, civil society, academia and educational institutions on the topics of skills development and youth entrepreneurship promotion.
- b. Engage the private sector and industry including the financial sector (national and international Development Finance Institutions (DFIs)) and venture funds to inform continental policy-making and provide mentoring, technical and financial resources to entrepreneurship, innovation and incubation centres at universities and TVET colleges.
- c. Support and promote the Pan African University Entrepreneurship Hub as a continental hub for training and linking young entrepreneurs across the continent and as a key agent in fostering collaboration with existing entrepreneurship hubs and business networks.

- d. Create a framework for improving the entrepreneurship ecosystem through access to mentorship and finance for the diaspora.

3. Promote a Paradigm Shift Regarding the Role the Education Sector Needs to Take to Foster Entrepreneurship Across All Levels of Education

- a. Support Member States to adopt and implement the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25) which identifies early childhood education and development as the pillar for future learning and also establishes the foundation for entrepreneurship.
- b. Encourage and support member states to recognise and foster the new role the education sector needs to take in promoting youth entrepreneurship, namely, through skills training and integrating youth entrepreneurship across all education levels starting with early childhood development through basic, secondary and tertiary education, which includes TVETs and higher education institutions.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

- a. Establish a framework to track the implementation progress of relevant AU policies that promote youth entrepreneurship in Africa.

5. Stakeholders and Initiatives Mapping

- a. Undertake national, regional and continental mapping of relevant stakeholders, initiatives and resources related to the promotion of youth entrepreneurship in Africa across the public and private sectors, including development partners and civil society actors. This mapping should also include the necessary roles each actor should take in promoting youth entrepreneurship and should link to comparable continental maps and adhere to global best practice.

6. Knowledge Generation and Sharing of Lessons Learnt

- a. Generate, curate and consolidate data, knowledge, comparable lessons and best

practices on youth entrepreneurship promotion in Africa.

- b. Develop a communications strategy on how the AU and Member States should promote youth entrepreneurship in Africa.
- c. Within the framework of the Africa Creates Jobs and Entrepreneurs Platform, convene a regular dialogue to track the progress and implementation of commitments by the AU,

RECs, Member States and relevant stakeholders on jobs creation and youth entrepreneurship promotion.

- d. Facilitate a community of practice and repository to document and share comparable lessons on how to promote youth entrepreneurship in Africa.
- e. Share lessons and successes from the commercialisation of tertiary research.

Recommends to AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities

1. A Paradigm Shift in Education and Skills Development

- a. Promote a new role that education institutions need to take in entrepreneurship promotion.
- b. Review and adapt the existing pedagogy, curricula and modalities for teaching entrepreneurship by placing emphasis on developing an entrepreneurial mindset by teaching the requisite interpersonal and risk-taking skills. An emphasis should also be placed on experiential learning including the development of hard skills related to sustainable business management and planning. The creation of hubs and incubation centres tied to educational institutions should also be promoted.
- c. Create synergy and collaboration between and among schools, universities, TVET colleges with business, industry and entrepreneurship hubs and networks through public-private partnerships and impact-based recognition of multi-disciplinary collaboration.
- d. Provide incentives for the private sector to invest and participate in relevant education, skills development, mentorship, training programmes and to engage in curriculum review and adapt to needs.

- e. Generate incentives and mechanisms to allow for skills development and collaboration for youths at the grassroots level with a focus on those who use local and native mother tongues.

2. Role of Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Incubation Hubs in Fostering Start Ups and Accelerating Their Growth

- a. Recognise and promote the essential role of entrepreneurship, innovation and incubation hubs for fostering entrepreneurship and promoting thriving entrepreneurship ecosystems. Promote the collaboration and institutional links with universities and TVET colleges with business associations and sector networks.
- b. Incentivise the creation of integration and interaction platforms of entrepreneurship, innovation and incubation hubs to boost skills development, networking, linkages within the ecosystem and with investors; provide acceleration opportunities, competitions, awards, recognitions and lessons sharing and engaging them in a dialogue on conducive policy frameworks and incentives.
- c. Consolidate national-level databases of entrepreneurship, innovation hubs and develop innovation index/scorecards to measure

their impact and contribution to sustainable economic development.

- d. Institutionalise regional and national platforms for collaboration and mentorship, with regular lessons-sharing and documentation of knowledge and experiences on the challenges and opportunities to promote youth entrepreneurship.

3. Entrepreneurship Ecosystem and Start-up Promotion

- a. Provide incentives and investment to start-ups to enhance their capacity to thrive, scale and become sustainable including affirmative measures in procurement, markets and supply chain processes.
- b. Review existing policies, programmes, institutions and frameworks, and where necessary, adopt and implement appropriate legal, policy, fiscal, regulatory frameworks, technology and innovation to improve ease of doing business – all of which are key to youth entrepreneurship promotion.
- c. Adopt and implement affirmative action measures and policies to encourage, support, protect and promote youth entrepreneurship that include timely payment of invoices, access to credit and finances, procurement, markets, tax incentives and tax breaks.
- d. In partnership with the private sector and relevant stakeholders, review and assess the entrepreneurship ecosystem to identify and address specific challenges, gaps and accelerate opportunities to ensure that it is conducive for youth entrepreneurship promotion.

4. Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas

- a. Recognise and support the informal sector (agriculture, small-scale mining, food industry, service industry) by, amongst others, bridging the gap between non-formal and

formal skills and increasing capacities to access formal opportunities.

- b. Leverage requisite infrastructure such as technology, innovation, transport, communication, and devolution of the value chain to facilitate easier access to production, labor, capital and markets.
- c. Encourage youth to create start-ups in rural areas, particularly with regard to agribusiness and agri-innovation.

5. Enhancing Female Entrepreneurship

- a. Ensure progressive growth of female representation in all areas of entrepreneurship promotion from education and skills training, to funding, research, and private sector collaboration.
- b. Map and identify key areas of support needed by female founders and add needs to action lists and policy frameworks. Agree on collaborative goals regarding female participation with the private sector and entrepreneurship ecosystem actors.
- c. Support and engage African women entrepreneurship and business initiatives and thought leaders. Highlight economic and social advantages of inclusive and supportive ecosystems. Showcase successful female entrepreneurs.
- d. Actively promote gender parity in business. Promote concerted approach towards achieving equal pay and closing the gender pay gap.
- e. Facilitate access to training and skills for females and provide extra support mechanisms and alternative models to ensure favourable conditions for female participation. Upskill women along the value chains.
- f. Provide appropriate financing schemes and other support infrastructure, such as child care facilities.

Recommends to the Private Sector

1. Education and Skills Development

- a. Invest in skills-building, research and development and partner with the education sector to make education and training truly demand and practice-oriented, and geared towards decent jobs creation and youth entrepreneurship promotion.
- b. In partnership with African governments, the education sector and relevant stakeholders should engage and support curriculum review and pedagogy of teaching and imparting skills in entrepreneurship to ensure they are practical.
- c. Provide internships and in-company learning and training opportunities for students. Actively encourage and support female participation.

2. Research, Innovation and Intrapreneurship

- a. Partner with universities and research institutions on collaborative research projects addressing societal needs and responding to current market developments.

- b. Foster commercial research, innovation and intrapreneurship to promote the development of new technologies, products and services.

3. Starts-ups, Incubators, Accelerators and Scale Ups

- a. Provide financial and capacity development support to regional and national markets, youth-led incubators and incubation hubs that work in close partnership with public entities, universities, vocational institutions and private sector companies in Africa.
- b. Invest and provide capacity, mentorship and financial support to youth-led start-ups and young entrepreneurs, with particular support to female entrepreneurs.
- c. Generate meeting and debate platforms that allow the private sector for periodic round tables to identify skills, employment, and job creation gaps.
- d. Elaborate national studies to identify and understand the level of skills and TVET that are required to fill the gaps mentioned by the private sector.

Recommends to Schools, TVET Colleges and Universities

1. Education and Skills Development

- a. Introduce entrepreneurship promotion to the mission, institutional goal-setting and impact measuring.
- b. Strengthen the quality and access of early childhood education as well as basic and secondary education and the provision of STEM and life skills development at this level of education.
- c. Undertake a continental collaborative review of the curriculum and pedagogy of teaching

and imparting skills in entrepreneurship with a focus on, amongst others, practical skills, and soft skills such as interpersonal and relationship-building skills. Develop exemplary curricula and programmes that can be adapted and tailored to regional and sectoral contexts and needs.

- d. Capacitate teachers, lecturers and professors regarding learner-centered pedagogy that fosters problem solving and practical skills development based on case studies, experiential and participatory learning. Promote

internships and close collaboration of teachers with companies to enable them to teach both theoretical and practical skills.

- e. Promote continental and regional collaboration and comparable lessons and experience sharing among universities and TVET colleges on entrepreneurship skills development through joint research, teaching and exchanges among and between faculty and students.
 - f. Leverage the Pan African University (PAU) to promote a platform for exchange on the aforementioned new role and reform of the education sector that includes sharing of best practices.
2. **Start Ups, Incubators, Accelerators and Scale-ups**
- a. Collaborate and partner with existing innovation and incubation hubs, accelerators and entrepreneurship centres and establish University and TVET college-based hubs. This could include providing spaces, seed funding, mentorship programmes, inter-departmental collaboration and training. Support the pre-incubation and incubation as well as acceleration of business ideas.

3. Partner with the Private Sector

- a. Establish partnerships with the private sector for curricula and programme development. Involve private sector partners in the provision of training and teaching and exposure of students to the world of practice.
- b. Partner with the private sector on collaborative research and innovation projects to promote the transition from academic research to business practice.
- c. Jointly with the private sector, develop formats of dual learning as part of programmes and include internships and on-the-job training phases as well as field trips and practice projects into the curricula.

- d. Partner with the private sector and young entrepreneurs in promoting entrepreneurial mindset development of students.

- e. Set up and institutionalise career services ensuring the employment and entrepreneurship orientation of programmes and creating institutional links with the entrepreneurship ecosystem and future employers.

- f. Develop platforms for information-gathering on the conditions and requirements from the private sector to match with schools, higher education, and TVET institutions' human resource supply.

4. Research and Dissemination of Knowledge

- a. Undertake research and targeted policy engagement with the AU, RECs and Member States on trends, challenges and opportunities for youth entrepreneurship promotion.
- b. Upload all research proposal and outcomes to a central public domain, open resource portal.
- c. Make sure all research includes five recommended actions and that those actions are monitored.





“The thing that is really great is that the conference brings the practitioners and the experts together. Most people are policy-makers, so if you want to make a difference, to engage in education, really start from the roots. There is a high potential to create change.”

Saskia Reus-Makkink
CEO/Founder, Africa Funded, Netherlands

“As an entrepreneur, live your life in “permanent beta”. Be open-minded and be prepared to constantly learn because great ideas often emerge at the intersection of information that is usually unrelated.”

Takunda Chingonzoh
CEO/Founder, The Tech Village, Zimbabwe



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