

Youth are Africa's future 'agripreneurs'

KIGALI, Rwanda - More than 300 global and African thought leaders and youth agripreneurs will come together for The MasterCard Foundation's second Young Africa Works Summit on February 16-17, 2017, in Kigali, Rwanda. The event will spark new thinking on how Africa's growing youth population can transform the agricultural sector.



Image by 123RF

Fifty young people will also attend to share their perspectives on employment and self-employment in this sector.

"Africa is home to the world's youngest population with enormous potential to improve agricultural productivity and make the sector a viable source of employment for youth across the continent," says Ann Miles, director of Financial Inclusion and Youth Livelihoods, The MasterCard Foundation. "The 2017 Summit will highlight the contributions being made by young people to transform the agricultural sector from subsistence farming to a modern, competitive, sustainable, and equitable business."

With 11 million young Africans entering the job market annually and the rapid expansion of the continent's agricultural sector, young people are driving the modernisation of agriculture through the use of innovative technologies and production systems.

The need for agricultural transformation on the continent, however, has never been more pressing. The increasing severity of climate change is already amplifying existing stress on water availability and food security in many African countries.

And a growing youth population means this group will be particularly vulnerable.

Despite economic growth over the last 10 years, the continent has yet to experience the levels of agricultural productivity that historically paved the way to modernisation and industrialisation of middle and high-income countries.

The agricultural sector, already the largest sector for employment in Africa, is expected to create eight million stable jobs by 2020 and offers tremendous promise for catalysing prosperity and creating sustainable livelihoods for young people.

"Agricultural transformation is a clarion call for us, the youth of Africa," says Pilirani Khoza, founder of Bunda Female Students Organisation at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources. "For decades, agriculture has continued to operate using the same static methods and technologies adopted by our forefathers. We must adopt the new technologies that are available to us. Youth are technological doers and thinkers, they are energetic and hungry for knowledge and they should be actively involved in transforming Africa."

Source: Africa Media Agency

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