

'Africa Talks Jobs' conference

Youth entrepreneurship promotion was at the heart of the *Africa Talks Jobs* conference organised by the African Union Commission (AUC), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the continental umbrella organisation for the private sector, Business Africa.



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Due to Africa's growing population, every year a high number of young jobseekers enter a labour market which cannot provide a workplace for all. To create jobs for youth and foster a prosperous Africa, skills development and youth entrepreneurship are key.

In order to address youth unemployment, more than 160 representatives of youth, business, investment, education, policy-making and civil society from all African regions as well as European partners convened at the African Union Commission (AUC) in Addis Ababa from 30 to 31 October 2018 at [Africa Talks Jobs](#), which is also a continental multi-stakeholder platform on education and skills development for employment and entrepreneurship.

The participants discussed how to provide Africa's next generation with relevant skills that increase businesses' productivity – including ways to engage the private sector in skills development – and how to promote entrepreneurship and youth-led start-ups. The AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, emphasised that, "strategic partnerships and collaboration with the private sector is the key to optimally harness the youth demographic, create employment and promote youth entrepreneurship".

The stakeholders outlined the following key policy recommendations to promote skills development and entrepreneurship:

- Given the imperative of a conducive entrepreneurship ecosystem, the African Union and member states should enhance policy frameworks and implement appropriate policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks to promote youth entrepreneurship.
- A paradigm shift regarding the role of the education sector in preparing young people for entrepreneurship has to take place. Emphasise entrepreneurship education throughout the entire learning system from early childhood to TVET and higher education. Adapt the curricula and pedagogy so as to underscore hands-on learning experiences and the acquisition of practical skills.
- Strengthen partnerships between the private sector and education providers to leverage technical and financial resources for the support of youth-led start-ups through establishing national and regional incubation hubs and entrepreneurship centres.
- Implement the TVET Policy Framework to address the need for both the formally and informally educated.
- Strengthen data gathering and access to the use of accurate, relevant and reliable labour market information (LMI) for decision making and job matching.
- Involve more youth in the dialogue and formulation of development pathways for career orientation and employment.

The recommendations were handed over to Agbor, who thanked all participants, “for marking our one-year *Africa Talks Jobs* anniversary with concrete steps on how to translate talk into action”. To follow up on the policy recommendations, the African Union will continue exchanging good practices and driving action as part of the *Africa Creates Jobs* platform.

The conference was organised by the AUC, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the continental umbrella organisation for the private sector – Business Africa. It was supported by the European Union (EU) as well as the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the Pan African University Programme (PAU), the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) and the Continental Africa Agriculture Programme (CAADP).

Anja Pauls, BMZ country desk officer for the cooperation with pan-African institutions, welcomed the lively discussions, the joint learning process and the invaluable dedication by the private sector. “The BMZ is delighted to be able to support the African Union in promoting its convening power through the Africa Talks Jobs conference and is looking forward to continuing its friendship as well as partnership with the AUC, Business Africa and NEPAD.”

The *Africa Talks Jobs* conference was followed by the Africa Youth Day on 1 November, when the AU launched a month-long celebration, including workshops, panel discussions and policy roundtables, around the theme of *Raising Youth Voices Against Corruption in Africa*.

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