

African officials commit to unleash skills revolution for youth

Tunis, April 18, 2018 – African high-level officials and other stakeholders are meeting in Tunisia's capital, Tunis to discuss ways of upscaling skills development and decent job opportunities for the youth on the continent.

The Digital Skills Forum for African Youth, from April 18 to 19, opened on a high note. "It is time to improve the future of Africa's youth by closing the skills gap between supply and demand, and ensuring that young people, women and people with disability, receive equal and specialised 21st Century skills training needed for employment and entrepreneurship. We need to respond to this challenge by professionalising technical and vocational education and training (TVET), adopting promising solutions, and replicating best practices across the continent," said Deputy Minister for TVET of Egypt, H.E. Dr Ahmed Elgeushey.

"The African Union has developed the [Continental Education Strategy for Africa \(CESA 16-25\)](#) and [TVET Strategy to foster Youth Employment](#) which provide concrete recommendations to address policy issues, challenges and gaps that can be aligned to national needs and priorities," said African Union Commissioner (AUC) representative, Mr Nicholas Ouma.

Africa has the youngest population in the world and is the second largest populated continent on earth. It is estimated that 60 per cent of Africans under the age of 25 do not have jobs. Accordingly, youth unemployment is a development challenge the continent should address in a systematic and coordinated manner.

The two-day forum focuses on ways of equipping young Africans with the necessary skills to make use of new and emerging technologies in order to have access to jobs or become self-employed. In attendance are African ministers of education and vocational training, youth organisations, research institutions and development partners.

"As the continent grows, it is an opportunity to invest in Africa's current and future workforce, and to prepare young people with market orientated practical skills and know-how needed to drive growth of African economies", Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency highlighted in a message sent to the participants.

In support of this pledge, the AUC, NEPAD Agency, KfW and GIZ financed through the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) developed the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA). The Initiative aims to promote and replicate successful practices and African solutions that contribute to decent employment, skills development and youth participation in entrepreneurship. It does this by providing financial and technical support to skills development initiatives in African countries.

"Africa is by far the youngest continent on the globe. Having a young population can be challenging but also offers a huge opportunity to the African nations. If a young workforce - young men and young women - can be offered a good education as well as productive jobs, both the people and the state will have a prosperous future. Worldwide innovation and productivity in the economies are directly linked to skilled and creative people, and opportunities to do business. Therefore, it makes a lot of

sense to invest in young people, their education, skills and employment, as we do with our programmes, to create better future prospects for Africa’s youth,” in a message read on behalf of Dr Inge Baumgarten, Director GIZ Office to the African Union, said.

The forum saw the launch of an online platform, the [African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship \(ASPYEE\)](#) which is part of the SIFA Initiative. ASPYEE serves as a knowledge repository to share and replicate nationally-tried and -tested approaches throughout the continent. A group of African experts has been mobilised to help support knowledge generation and dissemination on the portal.

For more information, please visit ASPYEE at: www.nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth

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