



Africa Youth Report | 2011

| Addressing the youth education and
employment nexus in the new global economy |



Economic Commission for Africa

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AUC	African Union Commission
ICT	Information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Foreword

The majority of Africa's population is below the age of 30 years. This poses peculiar challenges, including the nature and level of education provision for young people and their quality employment within an increasingly complex and rapidly changing global environment. As we revitalize and promote regional integration, we need to ensure that young people are equipped with social and market-related skills which will enable them to be well integrated young adults as well as being competitive at the national, subregional and global levels.

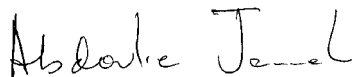
Current efforts have gone into building young Africans' knowledge and skills through the provision of basic levels of education and vocational training. However, in the new global economy, young people need to acquire more than just basic education, and curricula should be influenced by the current rate of globalization and regional integration. Investing in education and skills development for young people should therefore go beyond increasing basic literacy rates to assure dynamic, multifaceted knowledge-building at higher and tertiary levels. This will go a long way in preparing young people for the evolving labour market.

Although there has been a considerable increase in primary school enrolment, with the majority of African countries on course to achieving the targets of universal primary education and gender parity in education, access to post-primary schooling is still a challenge for most young people in Africa. Overall participation in tertiary education is low, and very few young people from vulnerable groups such as girls, persons with disabilities, young persons living in rural, remote and marginalized areas, young people caught up in conflict situations and orphans have the opportunity to access higher education because of limited resources to meet education costs, amongst other challenges. Cultural beliefs and practices in many instances still have an impact on female participation in education, and many national policies, plans and programmes do not address the multidimensional nature of gender inequalities in education and their implications for girls' right to education.

The need to invest in human capital through education and skills development for young people remains of paramount importance to Africa because of the return on education and the contribution to poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals on the continent. Returns on education are all-encompassing and have implications for peace and security if support for effective social integration, as well as training and meaningful employment, are not provided for young Africans.

As argued in this report, young people need an enabling environment politically, economically and socially to thrive in our countries. They need to be empowered so that they can be represented and participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Though Africa has made progress in providing education and skills for more young people than ever before, youth unemployment and underemployment remain a major challenge. Innovative approaches and in-depth analysis of youth issues at both the design and implementation phases of policies and programmes are needed to ensure effective delivery and better outcomes towards a great future for the young women and men of Africa.

We hope that this second edition of the Africa Youth Report will help all stakeholders to identify strategies that can be used to ensure that the education and skills provided for young Africans at all levels is not only responsive and innovative, but positions them well as key players and assets in the development of their countries and the globe.



Abdoulie Janneh

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Executive summary

Young Africans are the key to an African renaissance and will remain players in and advocates of social transformation and development in many spheres. The enormous benefits young people can contribute are realized when investment is made in young people's education, employment, health care, empowerment and effective civil participation. Several initiatives on youth education and employment have been undertaken in Africa, but these need to be deepened in order to exploit the full potential of young people in contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

This report seeks to promote new and deeper knowledge of the potential of African young people and the broad conditions that have an influence on this potential. It acknowledges the predicament of African young people today, noting that they share visions and aspirations that are seemingly beyond their reach, yet are essential elements of today's societies and the future which awaits coming generations. Accordingly, the report focuses on the youth-education-employment nexus in a global economy, because having access to education and later to employment is a precondition for poverty reduction, political stability, peace and security, and sustainable development. Well-educated young people are a source of efficient and productive labour, and a highly skilled and motivated workforce is essential to remaining globally competitive. The report analyses the interdependent relationship between education and employment and the challenges and opportunities facing African young people in these two realms within the context of regional integration and globalization. It provides information, describes best practices and poses questions that policymakers should take into consideration when working on issues that affect young people.

So far, significant emphasis has been placed on prioritizing education and employment in youth development at the global, regional, subregional and national levels. However, tackling the education and employment challenges faced by African young people continues to be a problem requiring more concerted and innovative efforts. Policies on youth education and employment that aim at improving the quality of education, promoting social cohesion and enhancing innovation have been developed in almost all African countries, but the

degree to which they have been mainstreamed into macroeconomic plans and activities remains minimal.

The report asks and examines whether African young people are getting relevant education and skills training; whether education and employment policies are sufficient and effective in securing the future of Africa's next generation; whether there are enabling policy environments for labour markets; and to what extent African young persons are competitive locally, subregionally, regionally and globally.

Despite the progress made in ensuring the provision of universal primary education, it is imperative to ensure the continuation of education to secondary and tertiary levels to prepare youth for an ever-changing globalized labour market and to ensure that high-quality education throughout is backed up by concerted efforts in the first three grades of schooling.

The report acknowledges that rates of education returns, although higher in African countries than in other regions, do not automatically guarantee employment opportunities as there is a mismatch between training and skills development and available opportunities. Tertiary institutions are producing more graduates in social sciences than in engineering or those oriented towards the biological sciences, implying that the current education curricula in many countries do not match the demands of local and international labour markets.

Young Africans need to be competitive in international labour markets. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) should be utilized to improve education and employment opportunities. ICTs can make education and skills development accessible to many young people, for example by extending opportunities for business process outsourcing in many sectors where workers do not need to leave their home countries to seek employment opportunities.

Furthermore, opportunities presented by the creative economy, where young people are developing careers through arts, media and design, green jobs, value addition for natural resources and ecotourism, are potential contributors to African economies and a conduit that could ensure the inclusion of youth in various sectors.

As African governments strategize on ways to reduce youth unemployment and underemployment and address challenges relating to the working poor, the report puts forward the following key messages:

- A change of attitude towards young people and by young people in Africa is essential. Many initiatives have been put in place, but much remains to be done. Clearly, as with the lessons learned from gender and development, stereotypes and the attitudes of both young people and the general population slow progress towards youth development in Africa. Analysing youth education and employment issues should therefore take into consideration historical, psychological and political dimensions. Understanding the context in which programmes and policies are set, and whether the beneficiaries will appreciate them, is crucial. This requires the proactive involvement of all stakeholders, including civil-society organizations, faith-based organizations, the private sector and government.
- An integrated approach to solving youth development issues and addressing education and employment should be employed. Currently many interventions related to youth development are fragmented, including skills development. A new school of thought and a great deal of innovation in addressing education systems, school-to-work transitions, hard and soft skills development and youth employment are required to change the status quo significantly. As a framework for youth development in Africa the continued implementation of the African Youth Charter and the prioritization of youth development during the Youth Decade (2009-2018) is imperative in order to achieve positive outcomes and a better life for young people in Africa.
- In an era of the promotion of regional integration and rapid globalization, African governments should take proactive measures that harness the potential and competitiveness of their young people in the global economy. These measures will vary from one subregion to another and will include, but will not be limited to: enhancing infrastructure; training and retraining to address skill shortages in the region; reforming immigration policies; promoting policies of inclusion and the right to education and work; and strengthening social protection systems, which would increase demand, protect people and support change in society.



**INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF PEACE**
21 September 2008

& Human Rights

I. Introduction

Today, African young people have visions and aspirations that may seem unattainable, yet they make an essential contribution to today's societies and the future that awaits coming generations. In all parts of the world, young people live in countries at various stages of development and within differing socio-economic situations, where they generally aspire to live full lives as members of the societies to which they belong. Today's young people are also considerably more educated and much more aware of global opportunities than was the case a decade or so ago, giving them high expectations of a better life.

Certain factors which are of vital importance in realizing these expectations are very limited in their availability, such as: access to education and employment opportunities; adequate food and nutrition; a politically stable environment that promotes good ethics, integrity and health; enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms; participation in decision-making processes; and access to cultural and recreational activities. African young people have limited opportunities when it comes to maximizing their social welfare, and have often become victims of social and economic regression from previous decades.

The evolving global situation is creating conditions that could either create more opportunities or make youth aspirations even more difficult to achieve, depending on the ways in which governments react to the situation.

In order to conceptualize the youth education and employment nexus in the global context, there is a need to understand the definitions and perceptions of "youth" (in this report, used to mean those aged 15-24). To some, young people are a burden on the status quo, while to others they are an asset for the future, both scenarios having political, socio-economic and socio-cultural implications for policy formulation and programme planning and implementation.

In several African countries, young people can be as young as 12 years of age and as old as 35, with the African Youth Charter definition covering the range between 15 and 35 years.

Among scholars and policymakers, there is increasing recognition that young Africans are the key to realizing an African renaissance. Therefore, more information and analyses are needed of the potential of African young people and the conditions they face. These conditions include national, subregional and global forces which either intensify the level of social exclusion of many young people or provide opportunities for transforming their situation. As governments devise policies and strategies to address the development issues facing young people, they should take into consideration the bigger picture and the effects of globalization. This report analyses, provides information and identifies best practices, as well as posing questions that policymakers and development stakeholders should take into consideration when addressing youth development issues.

Having understood the unavoidable influences of globalization, the report addresses the education-employment nexus of African youth in the global economy. The education-employment nexus was chosen for deeper analysis because investing in youth education as part of an investment in human capital is an opportunity that no country should squander.

Furthermore, helping them to realize their full potential by gaining access to employment is a precondition for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Education and employment are interlinked and mutually influence social dimensions that are essential for translating economic growth into human development. Young persons' employment prospects are closely related to the education received. Well-educated young people provide efficient and effective productive labour, producing a highly skilled and motivated workforce essential to being globally competitive. Therefore, well-educated youths form the core of a productive labour market upon which an economy depends.

However, youth education and employment linkages do not just constitute a casual link where education enhances opportunities in the labour market. In a number of countries, many highly educated young people are unemployed or underemployed. This phenomenon appears due to inappropriate matching of qualifications with occupations and the lack of demand for jobs in the formal economy that can accommodate the large number of young people joining the labour market.

Discussion of the youth education/employment nexus should go beyond the question of ensuring that young people find ways to earn their livelihoods and

be part of the productive machinery in their countries. The discussion should also extend to the issue of social inclusion of youth. Engagement in the labour market and paid work has traditionally been viewed as being core to the process of social integration in many societies, yet education and skills development generate important economic as well as social benefits.

Unskilled young people, including socially excluded young people, such as the disabled young, and young people in conflict and post-conflict areas, are more vulnerable to economic shocks, less likely to find work and more likely to be stuck with underemployment with few opportunities to develop their potential, and are more vulnerable to demographic changes.

Efforts that have been made to address the youth development agenda in general, and education and employment issues in particular, include the adoption of policies and strategies in recent decades in response to various global and regional commitments and instruments. Despite these efforts, African youth education and employment challenges remain. ECA therefore, in partnership with other United Nations organizations and the African Union Commission (AUC), will continue monitoring progress made in the implementation of youth development programmes and plans and follow-up on youth-related commitments, as well as conducting research in order to provide member States with information for appropriate decision-making.

B. Implications of the demographic profile

In the past, the push to invest in youth education and employment in Africa relied on the theory of the demographic transition, which anticipates that Africa will soon reap a demographic dividend resulting from declining mortality and fertility rates. As the population becomes older and people begin having fewer children, the population of working age (15 to 64) will grow relative to the number of children and the elderly. This implies that the working population will have fewer people to support with the same income and assets, significantly lowering their dependency burden, and that in the coming decades the dependency ratio¹ will be lower in Africa than in other world regions. This will create a window of opportunity for better productivity, economic growth and investment in social services.

Since Africa is not homogeneous, and has subregional and country variations, the demographic transition is likely to be realized at different times in each African subregion. When ECA carried out population projections by subre-

¹ The dependency ratio is the ratio of the sum of the population aged 0-14 and 65+ to the population aged 15-64.

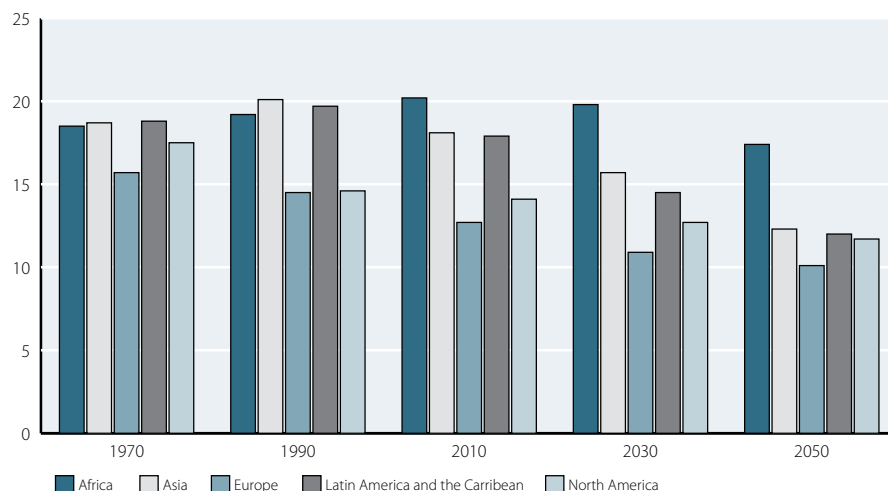
gion to determine whether there will be a demographic dividend by 2050, there was an indication that Southern Africa, followed by North Africa, would be experiencing the demographic transition sooner than Western, Central and Eastern Africa, which will experience the transition later because they still have relatively high levels of fertility, despite high mortality rates.

Although the projections indicate that a majority of African subregions will not have reached the transition, the importance of investing in youth education and employment remains critical for effective planning and adequate utilization of human capital.

Trends in the African youth population will generally remain higher than in other world regions by 2050, as indicated in figure 1, despite subregional variations: 18.3 per cent in Eastern Africa, 18.5 per cent in Central Africa, 17.8 per cent in West Africa, 16.4 per cent in Southern Africa and 13.9 per cent in North Africa (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospects, 2008 revision; ECA, 2011).

The large youth population in Africa can be seen as an asset for the continent's development if appropriate human capital investment measures are taken. Decisions to invest in African youth should be based on the type of skills that young people are attaining in preparation for the labour market; the presence of an enabling policy environment for the labour market which will allow for job creation and employment; the social and political implications of uneducated and unemployed youth; and the competitiveness of African youth in local, subregional, regional and global jurisdictions.

Figure 1. African youth population (age 15 to 24) in comparison to other regions (percentage of total population)



Source: United Nations Secretariat, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>.

Investing in African youth not only has implications for social and economic development, but also puts into focus the urgent need for a critical understanding of evolving opportunities and challenges that young people face in the world today. Understanding the demographic profile of the continent at the localized and regional level is important because there is ample evidence to support the notion that youth education and employment makes an important contribution to national and regional economic progress. High-quality and demand-driven education that enhances innovation and the employability of young people, together with a labour market that is receptive to large numbers of young people, are imperative for many African countries.

Africa's youngest are the driving force behind positive outcomes in future decades. If policies in place are implemented and strategies developed to enhance an enabling policy environment for full participation by young people in the global economy, then Africa will derive great benefit from the investment. Positive outcomes would result from the increasing number of highly educated people in the workforce who can harness domestic resources and effectively strengthen the capacity of public and private institutions in the region.

C. Youth education and employment

In order to be competitive and have a chance of finding gainful employment at a national, regional or global level, African young people need to acquire knowledge and skills through basic and higher education, including technical and vocational training. Many education and employment policies and programmes are already in place. Reports on progress being made towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) indicate that youth literacy has increased in the region and that gender disparities in educational attainment are narrowing. Ghana and Uganda are examples of countries that have prioritized education, achieved universal primary enrolment targets and have now moved on to universal secondary education.

A critical analysis of the current education situation in the region has led stakeholders to believe that there seems to be an overemphasis on enrolment numbers rather than attendance and the relevance of education. Understandably, the rigorous emphasis on raising universal primary education targets was based on a desire to increase literacy. However, there seems to be a lag in the revision of strategies once goals have been attained. Many African countries continue to over emphasize the provision of basic education in order to achieve the goal of universal primary education, forgetting that nurturing young people who will participate in the constantly evolving labour environment requires skills that can be acquired only at higher levels of learning. African governments should therefore begin investing more in post-primary education in order to sustain the gains made over the last decade with high enrolment in primary education.

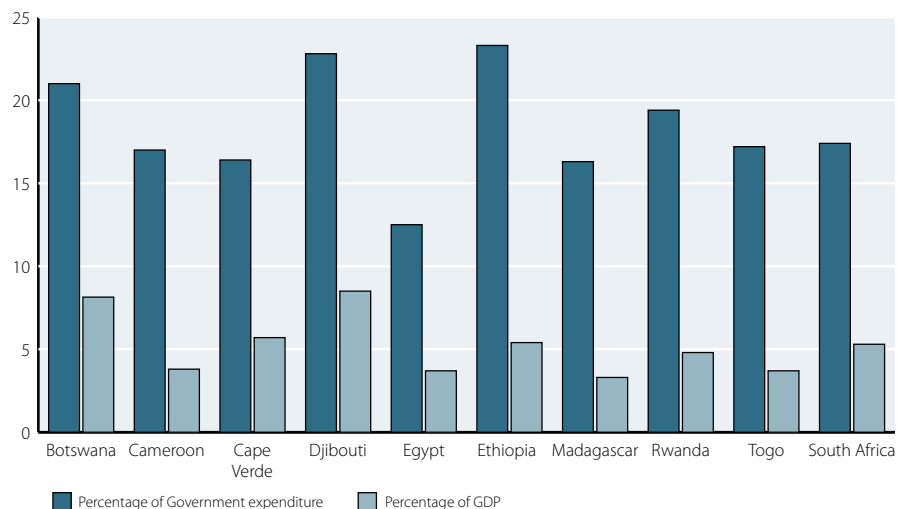
When the UNESCO Institute for Statistics conducted research on gross enrolment ratios in tertiary education for selected countries in the region, Algeria and Mauritius were among the countries with the highest enrolment of the official school-age population in tertiary institutions, at 31 and 26 per cent respectively in 2009. Interestingly, both countries had more young females (36 and 29 per cent) enrolled in tertiary institutions than young males (25 and 23 per cent). On the other hand, countries that recorded tremendous successes in universal primary education, like Uganda, had very low tertiary enrolments, at 4 per cent (4 per cent male and 3 per cent female). Zimbabwe, with high literacy rates, also reported 3 per cent total tertiary enrolment (4 per cent male and 3 per cent female). Generally, the disparities between female and male enrolment are narrowing even at tertiary levels, despite the lower enrolments.

Countries would argue that they are spending more on education than before. However, although government expenditure on education seems relatively

high, as indicated in figure 2 below, closer examination reveals that a significant proportion of these public resources comes from external sources. In Ethiopia, for example, external resources are financing approximately a third of the national budget (Development Assistance Group, 2010). Public expenditure on primary education is also higher in most African countries than expenditure on secondary and tertiary education.

Strategies therefore need to be revised to ensure that equilibrium is achieved between universal primary education and higher levels of learning, notwithstanding improving instructional quality and good educational infrastructure to enhance ICTs and student proficiency levels. With rapid globalization, it is especially important to ensure that secondary education becomes the new minimum level of attainment,, with an emphasis on tertiary education. Periodic reviews and revision of educational curricula are other steps that some countries have taken to ensure that young people are equipped with learning opportunities through apprenticeship and professional and creative skills required for the evolving labour market. The labour market should be closely monitored and adequate labour information should be generated to allow for effective national and subregional planning.

Figure 2. Public spending on education as a percentage of public expenditure and a percentage of GDP, 2007



Source: World Bank, African Development Indicators. Retrieved on 26 November 2010. Calculations based on data from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of tertiary education graduates in specific fields. The data, which were collected by UNESCO, indicate that most countries in Africa have a significant number of graduates in the social sciences, business and law, while engineering, manufacturing and construction as well as health recorded the lowest percentage of tertiary graduates. In 2009, 43 per cent of the students who graduated from tertiary education in Ethiopia had studied social science, business and law, while only 6 per cent graduated in engineering, manufacturing and construction. Health and welfare accounted for 7 per cent.

Table 1. Enrolment in tertiary education by broad subject area

Country	Enrolment in all programmes	Education	Humanities and arts	Social sciences, business and law	Sciences	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	Agriculture	Health and welfare	Services	General programmes	Unspecified
Algeria (2009)	1,149,666	18,614	238,696	414,854	105,825	9,874	20,998	58,260	8,032	-	109,513
Burkina Faso (2009)	47,587	2,040	9,383	24,919	6,624	654	512	2,943	512	-	-
Cameroon (2009)	174,144	10,159	11,963	108,480	31,406	6,601	779	4,027	728	-	-
Central African Republic (2009)	10,424	349	2,726	3,089	957	332	213	1,141	...	...	1630
Ethiopia (2008)	264,822	71,310	7,672	98,005	18,450	19,578	26,863	22,384	-	-	560
Morocco (2009)	418,833	5,205	78,401	174,091	90,025	35,968	3,504	21,433	9,172	-	1,819
Zimbabwe (2009)	49,645	4,872	5,642	26,158	1,948	2,561	2,478	1,859	873	-	579
Namibia (2008)	11,376	4,350	2,651	8,171	1,948	527	647	1,089	244	.	343

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

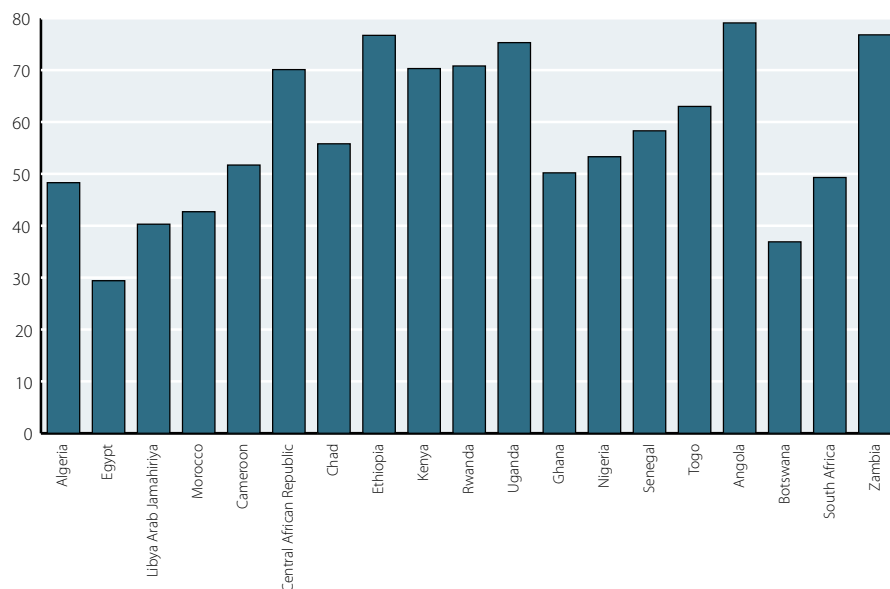
This information is essential given the current scenario, where potentially 200 million young Africans could effectively participate in the labour market. This large entrant cohort presents either an opportunity or a challenge. The opportunity lies in using the large cohort in a variety of sectoral industries which are essential for development in the region. However, the main lesson learnt from different countries shows that ensuring decent employment for a large number of young Africans remains a huge challenge. While in some countries demographic change, i.e. a large number of young people joining the labour force within a short period of time, is the main factor behind high youth unemployment and underemployment rates, many of the youth employment challenges can also be related to overall labour market dynamics and market opportunities. In a nutshell, the ease with which jobs can be found for young

people is dependent on how well the labour market is prepared to receive them, and on how well they are prepared for the labour market.

The youth labour force participation rate in Africa remains relatively high in comparison to other regions of the world. Africa's average rate of 57.8 per cent was the second highest after East Asia, which was 59 per cent in 2009. Angola, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia all had a rate which was even higher than the African average of 70 per cent [World Bank, African Development Indicators, 2006] (see figure 3 for youth labour participation rates in selected countries).

Such high labour force participation rates call for an understanding of the labour force for this demographic cohort in order to take the appropriate decisions to invest in youth education and welcome opportunities that will address employment challenges faced by young people.

Figure 3. Youth labour force participation (percentage of total labour force), 2006



Source: World Bank, African Development Indicators. Retrieved on 26 November 2010.

In 2009, the International Labour Organization (ILO) reported that the youth unemployment rate in Africa was approximately 20 per cent. While unemployment is relatively high in the region, the degree of underemployment among

the working poor is even greater. Many young people do not desire unemployment and so they engage in any form of economic activity, no matter how insignificant or inadequate and irrespective of the working conditions and income. Increasingly, many of them, especially the educated, are settling for survival jobs in order to sustain themselves.

Considering that young people are not homogeneous, it is clear that the dimensions of youth unemployment and underemployment vary. In a number of countries, young women have a different transition to working life from that of young men – in particular, it is more protracted. Employers in many countries, irrespective of gender, display a striking preference towards hiring young men over young women, for a variety of reasons. Many young women are not able to enter the labour market easily or to leave earlier because of such prejudices and limitations, reducing the labour force participation rates for young women. This gap is largest in North Africa, where the participation rate for young men is higher than that for young women by 28 per cent (ILO, 2010). African governments should take corrective measures to address the gender gap in labour force participation because of the benefits of engaging more women in the labour market. Research studies have shown that women engaged in the labour market have lower fertility and higher bargaining power and benefit from an improved allocation of resources at the household level. Therefore, targeted job opportunity programmes for girls and young women may in the long run have many beneficial consequences.

Exclusion of young women in the labour market starts right from the education and preparatory levels, where girls are encouraged to pursue more of the social science and arts courses over the life sciences and engineering subjects, resulting in their marginalization from labour-absorbing sectors.

In addition to young women, young persons with disabilities, young people in camps for the internally displaced, young refugees and young migrant workers are also often excluded from obtaining an education and from being employed. While other world regions have taken it upon themselves to invest in early childhood education, special education and educational infrastructure for purposes of inclusivity, many countries in the Africa have yet to take such initiatives.

A number of countries have many private educational institutions, but although they reduce the burden on the public sector, they are mainly profit-driven and are not accessible or affordable to students from poor backgrounds. Clearly, social inclusion policies will reduce unemployment and poverty rates.

In the quest for greener pastures, many youths migrate from rural to urban areas or within urban areas, creating more competition for the limited number of jobs in the urban areas without necessarily improving the job prospects of those left in rural areas. In addition, the provision of public services, education, utilities, housing and infrastructure is affected by the demographic and skills composition in both urban and rural areas.

Efforts to address employment issues and challenges faced by young people are of crucial importance, and should be linked with general labour market measures and strategies. Aggregate economic conditions are among the major causes of youth unemployment, and therefore governments need to adopt macroeconomic policies which encourage overall economic and employment growth with prudent social development considerations. In addition, stakeholders including young people themselves must work to understand the education-employment nexus so that they can devise strategies, policies and programmes that enable African youth to be a productive and competitive force for economic development in the continent.

II. Analysis of initiatives on youth education and employment



Over the past three decades, much attention and emphasis have been devoted to youth education and employment. International, regional and subregional commitments, instruments, protocols, declarations and plans of action on youth have been adopted, and African education and employment policies have been developed from these initiatives (*see list of instruments and commitments in annex II*). Significant resources have been allocated to address youth education and unemployment in the formal and informal sectors, including vocational training. In addition, there has been tremendous advocacy surrounding achieving universal primary and secondary

education, but the quest for desired outputs and outcomes from the implementation of these policies and programmes continues.

This chapter analyses the competitiveness of African young people in the light of existing education and employment commitments, initiatives and strategies and the relevance of such commitments, initiatives and strategies in the new global economy, which affect the demand for labour and the supply dynamics of youth employment.

A. Global level

Various global commitments and initiatives in the field of youth were adopted as early as 1965, when a Declaration on the Promotion of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples was adopted in line with the United Nations Charter. Later, instruments like the World Programme of Action for Youth were adopted with priority action in the fields of education and employment for the years beyond 2000. The Programme of Action, which drew on the proceedings of such conferences as the World Summit for Social Development, was updated in 2007 to include a component relating to youth in the global context.

In 2000, more than 200 political leaders from all over the world, including African leaders, endorsed a declaration that ushered in the Millennium Development Goals. Although only Goal 8 of the MDGs specifically mentions young persons, the remaining goals also directly or indirectly relate to youth.

During the United Nations General Assembly meeting in November 2009, the year 2010-2011 was declared International Year of Youth, with the theme of "Dialogue and mutual understanding". The Assembly called upon all Member States, specialized agencies and funds and programmes of the United Nations system to take advantage of the Year and advocate youth development at the national, regional and international levels.

B. Regional level

At the regional or continental level, initiatives and frameworks such as the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All and the African Union's Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) were adopted to provide key guiding frameworks for African countries

and promote the right to education and the development of relevant skills as important instruments for access to decent work.

The African Youth Charter, which comprehensively takes into account education, employment and issues affecting African youth in the diaspora, as well as youth quotas in regional, subregional and national institutions, is a demonstration of political will to support youth policies and programmes at the highest level. Adopted in Banjul in July 2006 by heads of State and government, the Charter is a political and legal framework for action that takes stock of the current situation of youth in Africa. Of paramount importance are articles 13, 14, 15 and 16, which deal with the issues of education, skills development, poverty eradication, socio-economic integration of youth, sustainable livelihoods, employment and health. The Charter is a unique and important instrument that safeguards the interests of African youth by taking into account African world views with respect to youth development. It stipulates that the goals of development are attainable only where youths are aware of their responsibilities, as well as the complementary role of the family and government. In addition, the goals of youth can be attained if national governments implement the Charter and prioritize youth issues, taking into consideration the fact that young people are of current importance besides being potential future leaders.

The Fifth African Development Forum, held in 2006, was dedicated to youth development because many African development stakeholders acknowledge that the key to political stability, social development and economic prosperity lies in harnessing the potential of youth. The ultimate objective of the Forum was to deepen understanding of strategies at the regional and national levels for translating the potential of youth into practical benefits. Following the youth forum, the African Union declared an African Youth Decade from 2009 to 2019 to ensure that youth issues continue to be prioritized.

During the Seventh African Development Forum, held in 2010, young people called for efforts to “promote youth-led solution-oriented adaptation and mitigation in climate change issues and processes and accelerate the implementation of existing legal instruments and policies, such as the African Youth Charter ... and the Convention on the Rights of the Child”.

Recent reviews of commitments with youth components such as the outcome document from the Ministerial Conference held in 2009 to conduct an African regional review of the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development led to an increased commitment from policymakers to intensify the country-level implementation of youth-related policies and allocate adequate budgets for the purpose.

C. Subregional level

At the subregional level, several regional economic communities have developed youth strategic plans, established umbrella youth organizations and discussed youth issues extensively in their legislatures. With the advance of regional integration and the promotion of common markets as well as trade areas, the Economic Community of West African States and the East African Community have opened up borders to facilitate employment and education opportunities. Universities in East Africa including Dar es-Salaam, Makerere and Nairobi and universities in the Southern African Development Community such as the University of South Africa and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University have created consortiums with other universities in their subregions as well as relationships with universities in Europe and North America.

The East African Community recognizes that young people in East Africa are important stakeholders in the Community's implementation processes since they form a substantial cohort of the population and can influence policy formulation and participate in community mobilization/sensitization and policy implementation thanks to their creativity and energy. The Community therefore encourages governments and organizations, including youth organizations, to implement civic education initiatives that include making citizens aware of opportunities, rights and responsibilities within the Community, while urging individual governments, young people and other development partners to promote growth and youth employment as key priorities of the Community's agenda.

The area of the Middle East and North Africa has also recently witnessed a positive change as a result of prioritizing youth issues, which has resulted in the expansion of educational attainment and a reduction in gender disparities in educational attainment. However, education and skills training have generally been of limited quality and relevance and have remained mismatched with the needs of the economy and society. These circumstances have hampered young people's access to employment opportunities in several countries in the area. The countries of the area also assist in the school-to-work transition through formal education, attachment to the labour force, vocational training for young people and skills training and development. They also regard young people as a productive labour force and a driver of future growth, and accordingly active labour market initiatives for youth, retraining and skill development opportunities are vigorously pursued.

The Economic Community of West African States has mobilized efforts to develop a strategy that will address the challenges faced by young people. Acknowledging that young people are often victims of a vicious cycle of poverty,

inadequate education and employment, the Community's youth policy centres on mobilizing young people to get them involved in regional integration and subregional development processes. It recognizes that well-equipped, knowledgeable, disciplined and sophisticated young people in the subregion will not only guarantee sustained economic and socio-economic development, but will contribute to achieving the ideals of subregional integration.

The Southern African Development Community has a youth platform that brings together young people from different countries of the community to advocate sustainable youth development strategies and initiatives and is driven by youth organizations and individuals from the member States which coordinate efforts through advocacy for youth participation in policymaking at various levels, funded research for youth development strategies and work with stakeholders on a consultative basis to improve youth initiatives across the region.

D. National level

Initiatives have been undertaken by individual African governments to address both youth education and employment, including the formulation of youth policies and the mainstreaming of youth issues into national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. Many countries have put in place a framework to address youth issues, in the shape of a national action plan on youth employment, a national youth policy or a National Youth Council, or have allocated a budget line for a Youth Ministry or Council. Some countries, as mentioned in later chapters, are raising skills and promoting employability in post-conflict situations by encouraging and instating vocational training and adult learning. These efforts have fallen under article 12 of the African Youth Charter, which focuses on national youth policy and advises national policymakers to create and develop comprehensive and coherent national youth policies.

Evidently, Africa is not lacking in youth employment and education policies geared towards improving the quality of education, promoting social cohesion or enhancing innovation. However, despite national, regional and international efforts and commitments, the region continues to make slow and uneven progress in youth education and employment in the context of an increasingly globalized world.

This has been attributed in part to the lack of youth-related policies in countries that have still not adopted commitments like the Africa Youth Charter or other programmes related to youth and development. However, some countries with national policies have not effectively mainstreamed them into eco-

conomic activities, while in others, though the mainstreaming has taken place, the outcomes and impact of the policies have been minimal.

Disparities in definitions of youth in global and regional commitments also make it challenging to execute, coordinate and harmonize youth-related programmes. As a result, the gap between the situations facing young people and the application of policies warrants deeper analysis, which could lead to better-concerted efforts in developing the potential of the continent's young people at all levels.

Given the current scenario in the field of youth education and employment, would it be fair to assume that a lot of emphasis has been placed on the formulation of youth policies based on past experience to determine present and future outcomes? Or have countries continuously stated and reiterated the same basic and traditional policies without critically analysing whether they are implementable or not?

Policymakers should explore why rapid economic growth has not translated into the creation of sufficient youth employment opportunities, and whether African young people are sufficiently well equipped to participate and compete in the evolving global economy. More advocacy and research is needed for policy formulation on the key linkages between youth education and employment and how the education-employment nexus can be harnessed to make African youth competitive globally.

1. An enabling policy environment

At all levels, countries seem to be making strides in creating an enabling policy environment for youth participation in development. However, there is more to achieving desired outcomes of the policies in place than simply creating an enabling policy environment.

If they wish to maximize education gains and minimize underemployment and unemployment, African countries may have to consider embedding aspects of education and employment policies at the time of designing macroeconomic frameworks to ensure that these issues are sufficiently addressed, in addition to stabilizing their economies. Countries could then evaluate their macroeconomic frameworks, and suggest how they could incorporate education and employment policies.

Credible macroeconomic frameworks that take into consideration the future and minimal politicization of monetary policy decisions would lead to economic stability, thus increasing productivity in the region. Again, since member States

are promoting regional integration, it is important that the macroeconomic frameworks take into consideration the precise national circumstances as well as the subregional dimension.

Multiple approaches have to be used, as there is no single way to create positive labour markets. Some would argue that a universal approach in some countries would be ideal because of the large numbers of vulnerable people. Whereas others would advocate for targeted interventions through active labour market policies that specifically target disadvantaged youth. In any event, a healthy macroeconomic framework should be stimulated with high private-sector-led growth, investment and job creation.

The lack of demand for labour stemming from insufficient growth has a significant impact on unemployment and underemployment, particularly among young people. It remains the toughest barrier to tackle in emerging economies. While there are other macroeconomic and investment climate aspects that play a role in addressing employment growth, active labour market measures such as wage and training subsidies can motivate employers to recruit young people.

2. Active labour market policies

In order to formulate initiatives and strategies that properly address youth employment challenges, policymakers must understand labour market barriers that hinder youth from securing full and decent employment. For this purpose, labour market information systems, as well as supply and demand analyses, can provide a comprehensive picture of the labour market barriers affecting young people. Some of the most salient labour market barriers facing young people are: job skills mismatch (both technical and non-technical); labour demand barriers, such as observed discrimination by employers towards young people on grounds of lack of job experience, insufficient exposure to a working environment and bad stereotypes; and information gaps between job seekers and potential employers and barriers to the creation and development of businesses, particularly in gaining access to financial, physical and social capital.

Since some experts have heavily criticized fragmented approaches, skills development programmes must be linked to the labour market to improve the employability of young people. Effective youth employability strategies must combine skills development, employment services and entrepreneurship-related interventions. Counteracting the mismatch of technical skills among young people entails facilitating access to vocational training, creating an enabling environment for the development and expansion of a competitive job training

sector and providing effective active labour market programmes to unemployed young people and those living in isolated areas where the market does not reach or working in the informal economy. Additional measures include workplace training and retraining schemes, the promotion and improvement of apprenticeship schemes and subsidized training programmes that offer employers financial incentives to provide on-the-job training, and the delivery of entrepreneurship skills training for young people seeking self-employment opportunities.

Against a background of globalization, instead of formulating more policies, countries could perhaps think of introducing educational and employment reforms to enable African citizens to work in different jurisdictions without necessarily having to physically relocate from their countries. **Other employment reforms could include aligning** remuneration to productivity, and making employment a part of career development in the context of global and regional integration. Employers could also provide their workers with relocation grants.

Subsequently, in order to bring about such reforms, the capacity of public institutions has to be strengthened so that they can collate labour market information in order to anticipate future skills needs and priorities and appropriately align primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational curricula.

African countries could also learn from best practices in countries with flexible labour markets, such as the United Kingdom, which have been applauded for lowering unemployment during the global recession that mainly affected young people. In October 2010 the level of employment in the United Kingdom was reported by the Office of National Statistics to have risen to 70.7 per cent. However, while adopting a flexible labour market might be ideal for some African countries, especially in a context of regional integration, some experts have criticized flexible labour markets for increasing wage inequalities, while others have acknowledged their role in lowering levels of unemployment and inflation.

The importance of integrated approaches in tackling youth employment issues in a sustainable manner should be stressed. In African countries with large informal sectors and rural populations, limiting efforts to reforming labour market institutions and implementing active labour market policies is not likely to have a large impact on the status quo. Governments should also take a well-rounded approach that aims to expand job and education alternatives in rural areas, promote mobility, encourage the private sector and create an environment that is conducive for business and self-employment.

In order to shape policies on youth, education and employment in the global economy, it is helpful to consider a range of scenarios that may describe pos-

sible future realities. Here we present three such scenarios to illustrate how decisions taken today may play out in the future.

E. Possible scenarios in the year 2040²

Scenario 1

By 2040 many of the positive expectations of the previous decades have been met, following full integration among regional economic communities in Africa and wider integration of African economies into the global economy. After years of promoting appropriate school curricula and developing youth skills to a very high (and relevant) standard, investment in infrastructure has also paid off and entrepreneurship has resulted in real opportunity. Employers are now spoilt for choice as graduates and other young people supply experience, education and applicable skills. Similarly, job seekers now feel that the time they have spent studying and accruing skills is translated into tangible job opportunities. A range of African cities have become global and regional hubs for creative and green industries. All of this has been enabled by leaders who have emphasized the need to match national economic planning with education and training, as well as relevant global partnerships with a world that shows a desire to engage fully with Africa. There are obvious economic gains as African countries take advantage of the demographic dividend: the power of African youth will be central to navigating the close of the twenty-first century, when the dividend may become a liability as the youthful continent follows in the ageing footsteps of other world regions.

Scenario 2

The years preceding 2040 have placed focus and emphasis on internal and regional markets. Labour-intensive investments employing low-skilled labour are the order of the day, and training priorities are concentrated around construction, manual labour and servicing of investments. Most highly skilled labour is still “imported” from other regions. National plans do not include the development of a “world class” working class that can compete with others on the global labour market: the prevalent view is one of internal markets, in which Africa consumes what it produces. Though this has meant an inability

² Scenarios are not predictions, but simply plausible future environments that may result from a set of decisions taken today. Short illustrations and examples of such outcomes are provided here. Other scenarios are possible and indeed likely. There is value in mentioning these three outcomes for 2040: it is to highlight that the future is not predetermined and that the environment may change over time to reflect the policy (and other) choices and the different priorities and objectives of the different stakeholders. A more in-depth exercise would increase the value of testing policy decisions over the long term.

to shine internationally, the move of many young people in Africa towards sustainable farming and catering to local and regional markets has resulted in African economies becoming environmentally sustainable and climate-aware. However, this comes at a price: the proliferation of “organic” farms catering to the wealthy and choosy across Africa has been insufficient to lift the (growing) millions out of poverty. Although this dimension has been debated and analysed for decades, progress has taken place, but the realization that Africa is too small a market has once again been blamed for creating insufficient economic growth and employment. Africa is once again reviewing its youth employment strategies.

Scenario 3

Very early on, at the time of the Youth Decade, some African leaders have come to terms with their shortage of skilled (and unskilled) labour; this was highlighted in their inability to provide enough local workers to complete major construction projects, like roads and railways, which were paid for by international investors and donors. This unique situation prompted a two-pronged strategy under which Africa would emerge as a winning and renewed continent in 2040. But since there was no Africa-wide consensus, each country went its own way - perhaps one catalyst for this mosaic of approaches was the continually failing (and eventually declared defunct) Doha round of trade negotiations. The strategy thus became to enter into as many bilateral investment treaties and regional agreements as possible and generate the labour to service specific investments as they were formalized. This “sing and match” strategy worked for a while, early on, and worked best for countries that proved to be the most flexible in agreeing to such treaties and in their labour force. However, over time, it became apparent that generations of workers, though skilled, became obsolete because their skill found no application in the local market once international investments had reached completion or had moved to other countries. So, after an initial frenzy of activity, many countries have come full circle: a small internal market and no jobs for their young people. The old spectre of exporting labour to countries in the growing global economy has once again become, in 2040, an outcome of misguided and short-term strategies.

In conclusion, while stakeholders have their own aims and strategies in youth education and employment initiatives in Africa, African young people should be made accountable for and owners of the commitments made, rather than leaving them to governments as sole owners. Governments should play their role in translating the commitments made into programmes, as well as ensuring adequate youth participation at all levels, including in organizations such as the African Union and other continental and subregional organizations.

III. Strengthening youth education to harness the employment benefits of globalization

Globalization has contributed to the creation of millions of new jobs, most of them in Asia (ECA, 2005). Africa has the lowest share of the jobs created from globalization. Governments in Africa therefore need to deliberate on approaches that will help African young people to experience the opportunities and challenges of national and regional development in a globalized world system.

In order to benefit from globalization in the long run, African countries need to diversify their economies. This requires investment in human capital and the reduction of obstacles to exports and foreign direct investment, especially in infrastructure. Only then will African young people have a chance to participate fully in global markets.

Foreign direct investment is on the rise in Africa. Several countries are seeing the proliferation of foreign firms, entrepreneurs and investors in different sectors. For local firms and local people this can be seen as both a threat and an opportunity. Some governments have expressed concern about the numbers of foreign workers employed in these foreign companies at the expense of local labour. The Government of Angola, for instance, has tightened its immigration policies and raised the cost of securing long-term working visas for foreign workers as a way of encouraging foreign companies to utilize local labour.

Foreign direct investment, which is rising as result of globalization, has the potential to create jobs for African young people. However, besides putting in place policies, laws and strategies that limit the number of foreign workers, African governments should also make local labour competent and relevant for the kind of investment needed in the country. The counterpart to the potential of foreign direct investment to create jobs for young people must be a youth sector having the skills demanded by foreign companies and investment ventures. The existence of an increasingly skilled young labour force will help countries to reap the potential offered by economic liberalization.

In addition to specific skills in fields such as IT that are often demanded by foreign companies, the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and other basic technical skills such as the ability to drive and operate machinery will lead to a fall in the number of foreign workers brought in to perform basic tasks.

One lesson that can be learnt from experience in Asia is the importance of emphasizing the quality of education as well as enrolment numbers, including attention to the vocational skills essential for technological change and growth (Asian Development Bank, 2004). East Asia's experience shows that sustained export-led growth requires investment in secondary and tertiary education. In 1960, workers in East Asia and the Pacific had less than three years of schooling, which was less than in Latin America and the Caribbean. By 1990, countries in the region had the highest average number of years of educational attainment in the developing world, with a marked improvement in the educational attainment of girls, and consistently improved teacher-pupil ratios (International Labour Organization 1999). Asia gave attention to the quality of education, expanded girls' education and improved vocational skills essential for technological change and growth. All these factors are essential in improving productivity and competitiveness. In Africa, lower enrolment rates, coupled with low completion rates, low quality of education and a failure to align curricula with the needs of the private sector have contributed to the mismatch of young people's skills with the demands of labour markets. Limited work experience and a lack of general hard and soft skills also put young Africans at the end of the hiring list.

Several African countries, including Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, have introduced apprenticeship programmes that integrate theoretical learning with working experience. They involve partnerships between governments, service providers and the private sector and are a good example of the kind of feedback mechanisms needed to address the skills mismatch in Africa. A similar system where the skills profile needed by the private sector was integrated into educational curricula contributed to the economic success of the East Asian countries.

Further, new ICT systems are dramatically changing the tradability of information-related services. Large companies are increasingly outsourcing ICT functions. The global market for such outsourcing is estimated in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Africa's share in this market, though meagre, is rising. Ghana, Mauritius and Senegal have received investment linked to offshore services that require semi-skilled workers. These workers must display proficiency in written and spoken English, familiarity with the culture of the client countries and social skills. Overall, the skills for these jobs, though low in Eu-

rope and North America, are above African national averages, and the entry into information processing could be a building block for future upgrading.

In addition, East Asia's experience shows that investment in public health systems to improve child survival and health in general, the widespread availability and social acceptability of family planning; rapid and steady declines in childbearing, improvements in educational enrolments and quality and stable economic conditions conducive to growth and job creation have paid off. A strong educational system and sound economic management in Asia made it possible to absorb a large generation of young adults into the workforce. From 1965 to 1990, growth in gross domestic product per capita averaged more than 6 per cent per year.

African countries must therefore strategize to find ways in which they can harness their resources, including young people in ways which create specific production capacities that are globally competitive. This implies, *inter alia*, improving access to and the quality and relevance of secondary and post-secondary education and continuing to work towards universal primary education.

A. Harmonizing education and employment

Education investments have been said to bring about returns in employment in Africa. However, increasingly experience from other regions like the Caribbean and now Africa have shown that a good or high level of educational attainment does not guarantee increased employment opportunities. Young people today have to do more than just have an education in order to succeed in life.

Among the MDGs, education is a key priority for many African countries, and there has been a growing tendency for African governments to liberalize education by encouraging both local and foreign private higher education to grow rapidly. However, there has been a gap in quality control by private providers [Naidoo, 2004].

Investment in education must be geared towards providing students with the knowledge needed to compete in the job market, whether locally or globally. In particular, there is a need to ensure that educational provision is aligned with and tailored to the needs of both the local and global economy. Providing specific technical skills in high demand in the private and urban setting as well as in rural areas is also an important consideration for successful youth employment policies.

Education systems are providing basic literacy and numeracy, overlooking the skill sets needed for value addition of natural resources, among other skills required for the labour market. It is for this reason that youth unemployment in Africa is higher amongst those who have actually acquired some form of education, but do not have the skills most sought after in the labour market, making them unattractive to employers.

A recent study conducted by the Youth Employment Network and the International Youth Foundation showed that a lack of life skills and initiative and insufficient literacy skills were seen as the primary obstacles to recruiting young workers in Ghana and Senegal. Those who were able to access education did not get the relevant career guidance to make adequate career choices. Very few institutions provide career guidance to enable students to make informed decisions about the various career options and paths.

High returns on private investment in education in Africa reflect the acute scarcity of educated workers at various skill levels to satisfy the demand for labour in economies that are continuously growing. Rather than privatizing educational institutions, governments should conclude public-private partnerships with a view to expanding investment in education. The financing of secondary education in private schools in areas where there is insufficient capacity in government schools is an efficient approach to expansion. It would make use of existing infrastructure and systems with qualified teachers already in place. Experience so far indicates that public funding for such schools provides a predictable positive revenue stream, allowing for expansion and improved quality. Increased inspection of private schools will assist in ensuring that quality norms are met. In addition to encouraging private investment in education, it is necessary to expand public training opportunities to provide better access to marginalized urban and rural youth, the less educated and girls.

The need to link secondary and post-secondary education to the demands of the labour market is increasing. This does not imply that governments should focus more on secondary education at the expense of primary education. Illiteracy remains a significant obstacle to livelihood expansion in many African countries, and addressing it through expanded primary education and literacy training is an important part of the development equation.

The youth employment challenge confronts all countries in Africa, regardless of their stage of socio-economic development, but the socio-economic context has a significant impact on the nature and extent of the problem. As they consider measures to help young people make the transition into the labour market and obtain work, policymakers are hampered by limited information on the status quo and scenarios and options available. Consequently, there is

a need to collect data on education, employment and other factors affecting young people in the region within short periods of time. Often, the data used for policymaking are for the most part outdated and do not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the present or future.

Another intricacy is the high demand for child labour, which reduces employment opportunities for young people. Child labour, also an illegal phenomenon, has forced many children out of school. Entering the workforce too soon prevents children from gaining an education, leaving them ill equipped to succeed in the workforce in later life. Child labourers often become young people with poor employment prospects, and therefore achieving “decent work” is part of the eradication of child labour and the promotion of decent work opportunities for youth by means of a variety of approaches. Here we see the education and employment dimensions increasingly linked and intertwined. A wide range of learning options, including formal and non-formal education, literacy instruction, job skills training and lifelong education, should be made available to meet the learning needs of young people in different situations.

B. Addressing the education and employment needs of vulnerable young people

In harmonizing education and employment to improve access to and the affordability, relevance and quality of education, the education and employment needs of vulnerable groups of young people should be addressed.

Some young people are excluded from fully taking advantage of educational opportunities as a result of physical and non-physical barriers, and are consequently also excluded from employment opportunities and social and community networks.

1. Young people with disabilities

While discussing the youth education/employment nexus in Africa, it is important to discuss the situation of young people living with disabilities and the challenges and opportunities they face. One of the essential routes out of poverty is formal education, especially where it improves the quality of employment. However, in a number of African countries the chances that a young person with a disability will access education and employment are restricted.

According to the UNESCO 2010 *Education for All* report, disability is recognized as one of the least visible yet most pertinent factors in the educational

marginalization of children and young people. In Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania, disability doubles the probability of children never having attended school. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, children with disabilities are 2.5 times as likely to be out of school as children without disabilities. In Uganda in 2002, 39 per cent of disabled young people aged 17 to 22 had fewer than four years of education, against a country average of 26 per cent. (UNESCO, 2010b) Children and young people with disabilities have lower educational attainments, as they are more likely to leave school earlier and with fewer qualifications (DFID, 2010).

The 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities should enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others, and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made to enable persons with disabilities to exercise their rights effectively. The Convention places emphasis on both education and employment. Article 27 stipulates that access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services, vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes for persons with disabilities must be ensured. In the field of education, article 24 calls upon States parties to ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that reasonable accommodation of individual's requirements is provided in order to maximize academic and social development with the goal of full inclusion (Schulze, 2010).

Ensuring that children and young people with disabilities go to school and receive high-quality education benefits not only the recipients, but the whole of society and the economy. Educating persons living with disabilities reduces their dependence and frees other household members from caring responsibilities. It also increases the potential for productivity and wealth creation.

Improvement of the educational sector as a whole is crucial to the improvement of education for children and young people with disabilities. In areas where teachers are not well trained, the teacher-pupil ratio is too high and educational materials are not available, it is even more difficult to address the learning needs of young people with disabilities. Vocational education and training is a crucial path for further educating people with disabilities, since it is a highly flexible and accessible means of education. However, care should be taken when devising policies and strategies to address the educational needs of disabled young people so as not to push them systematically into a certain educational field and thus limit them to specific employment sectors. Instead, strategies should be put in place to ensure that young people with disabilities can achieve their aspirations and become successful in the fields

of their choice. Putting children and young people in special needs schools or institutions can reinforce stigmatization and segregation that is likely to continue even when they join the labour market.

In a number of countries the level of unemployment among people with disabilities is two or three times higher than that of people without disabilities. If not unemployed, persons with disabilities are often involved in low-paying jobs with minimum social and legal security, usually segregated from the mainstream labour market. Among persons with disabilities, ILO reports that men are almost twice as likely to be employed as women, indicating that there is a gender dimension that puts disabled females at an increased disadvantage (ILO, 2007b). A study conducted by ILO in 2009 shows that the economic losses related to the exclusion of people with disabilities from the workplace amounted to 4.35 per cent of GDP in Namibia and 7 per cent of GDP in South Africa for the year 2006, corresponding to US\$ 99 million and US\$ 17.8 billion respectively (Buckup, 2009). The exclusion of people with disabilities from the workplace results in an annual loss in GDP worldwide of an estimated US\$ 1.37 trillion to US\$ 1.94 trillion (ILO, 2007b).

In many instances persons with certain categories of disability are confined to particular occupations or the production of certain goods, hindering them from realizing their full potential and from engaging in decent, productive and fulfilling work. To enable young people with disabilities to engage in productive work and gainful employment, barriers to employment must be removed. This includes physical barriers such as transport, housing and facilities at the workplace, for which policies and laws exist, but with little enforcement. Governments should enforce and promote flexible and alternative work arrangements that accommodate the needs of disabled workers. Other ways through which governments can actively support the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market are incentive-oriented quota schemes, facilitated training and technical or financial assistance to enterprises employing workers with disabilities. The use of new technology and the development and production of assistive devices should also be supported.

Furthermore, in their capacity as employers, governments should create favourable conditions for the employment of young people with disabilities in the public sector.

It is imperative that disability-disaggregated data should be continuously collected and used in the planning of education and employment reforms. Some countries in Africa have already integrated the issue of disability in their national development and poverty reduction plans. The United Republic of Tanzania's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) states that "The proportion

of children with disabilities that are enrolled in and attending and completing school should increase from 0.1 per cent in 2000 to 20 per cent in 2010". Ghana's PRSP emphasizes access by requiring that buildings and other physical infrastructure in schools should be made accessible to people with disabilities.

2. Displaced young people and young people living in conflict-affected areas

Displaced young people are a vulnerable part of the population, as they are obliged to adapt to a new way of life while also undergoing crucial developmental changes. Results of research conducted by the Women's Refugee Commission between 1999 and 2005 show that displaced young people have fewer opportunities for secondary schooling or for developing skills that enable them to be employed. In Africa, conflicts and disruption in various countries across the continent have caused a large number of people, many of whom are young, to be displaced internally and across borders.

Young people who are displaced or live in conflict-affected areas have few opportunities to realize their aspirations. They often fall victim to sexual and economic exploitation and become vulnerable to recruitment into armies and militias, or into prostitution. The majority of refugees and internally displaced people stay in a state of limbo for many years, with an average of 17 years of displacement because of conflict (UNHCR, 2005). Consequently, many young people never go to school. They have scant opportunities to acquire skills that could help them make a living, and therefore risk spending their entire childhood and youth in these settings.

When addressing the education-employment nexus, governments and development stakeholders must take into consideration young people in conflict-affected areas, refugee camps and camps and settlements for internally displaced persons and find ways to meet their needs. It is imperative to identify key gaps in their basic education and livelihood development skills. Interventions should go beyond ensuring survival needs and handling emergencies; rather, they should aim at improving outcomes for a better future.

Young people living in conflict-affected areas and those who are displaced should be provided with a holistic service including formal and/or non-formal education as well as skills and vocational training based on identified labour market needs. The types of skills training and educational opportunities available must be diverse and demand-driven to avoid saturating communities with too many young people trained in the same skill. Certificates that are awarded upon completion of training for young people in conflict areas should be stan-

standardized, aligned and recognized by educational and hiring institutions. Accelerated learning programmes are another option in addressing the educational needs of young people who have dropped out of schools or have missed parts of their schooling as a result of displacement. Such programmes should be instituted to condense the years of traditional primary schooling into shorter components, enabling older students to complete their education in a timely manner. Examples are those being provided by the Ministry of Education of the Sudan to assist students to catch up with their schooling in Darfur.

While addressing the education and employment needs of young people affected by conflict, the gender dimensions should be considered. Experience shows that gender dynamics play an integral role in war and post-war educational and training programmes, as young men and women have different social roles [Sommers, 2006]. Therefore, when the education and employment needs of young people affected by conflict are addressed, the gender dimension should be considered, as girls and young women experience even greater difficulties in accessing both primary and secondary schooling and training in conflict-affected areas than their male counterparts.

Young people are important actors in the rebuilding of tolerance and peace in communities after conflicts. They show incredible resilience in such situations, and during resettlement they often serve as the link between the new host community and their families. Hence nurturing their potential is of the utmost importance.

C. Cultivating entrepreneurship and self-employment in formal and non-formal education

Even if the skills mismatch is ameliorated by better-oriented and demand-driven education that responds to the needs and absorption capacity of the labour market, the size and growth of the young population of Africa makes it very difficult to provide decent work for every young person who joins the workforce. This means that entrepreneurship and self-employment are further areas which governments need to prioritize when addressing youth employment challenges. Especially in countries where there is a large gap between demand and supply in the labour market, it has become important to prepare youth for self-employment and enterprise development.

The introduction of youth enterprise policies, strategies and programmes has in some instances helped to reduce the level of youth unemployment in Africa. Youth enterprises have several aspects: They can move young entrepreneurs

into self-employment, promote the development of enterprising skills and attitudes and create linkages between young entrepreneurs and other economic actors, for example through subcontracting and franchising. By engaging young women and men in productive economic activities, a new resource for innovation and change can be accessed. Young people can present alternatives to organizational change through the transfer and use of technology and offer a new perspective on the market.

Various advantages can be gained from developing enterprise-based youth employment policies, including:

- Developing new skills and experiences that could be applied to many other challenges in life.
- Creating employment, both for the young person who owns the enterprise and for those employed in it.
- Providing valuable products and services for the country and promoting innovation and development – this encourages young people to find new solutions, ideas and ways of doing things.
- Promoting social change and cultural identity through youth enterprises and engendering a stronger sense of community, where young women and men are valued and better connected to society.
- Shaping a person's identity and encouraging others to treat him or her with respect.

The promotion of youth enterprises cannot alone provide the solution for youth unemployment. They must be complemented with a broader youth employment policy, one that places enterprises within the context of education and training, industrial relations, skill development, apprenticeships, traineeships and other vocational opportunities.

D. Utilizing ICTs to improve education and employment opportunities for African youth in the global economy

ICTs can be harnessed in cultivating and utilizing the productive potential of young people. New technologies can be used to unleash creativity, better education, entrepreneurship and decent employment among young people. Young people worldwide have shown that they are reliable and effective agents of

technological change and forerunners of the information age. They can play an important role in bringing technologies into their communities or into sectors that lack access to information and technology. African governments and development stakeholders must acknowledge that equipping young people with ICT skills and creating enabling environments for ICT-related innovations, as well as promoting the utilization of technology in policy formulation, production and consumption, greatly contributes to efforts to push Africa into the global information society and make its young people more competitive in the global market. In addition, ICT-based education systems and facilities will revolutionize the education and training sectors by narrowing the digital divide and increasing cooperation among learning institutions within and outside the continent.

In addition, advances in ICT infrastructure have made it possible for young people to be employed in global markets without leaving their home countries. ICT has facilitated linkages between international labour markets, reducing the need for migration by creating jobs in source countries. This creates new opportunities for developing countries in export services, and thus it is important that African countries should seize their chances. A study published in April 2010 by A.T. Kearney, a United States consultancy in the field of strategic and international studies, shows that in 2009, seven African countries were among the world's top 50 destinations in the offshore business. Although Asian countries still dominate the outsourcing industry, the report shows that the African continent is rising in the rankings as Egypt, Ghana, Mauritius, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia are among the preferred destinations (Gerard, 2010). Now that a new fibre-optic cable has been laid across the Indian Ocean to East Africa, making broadband internet more available and affordable, this subregion has the potential to be a hub for outsourcing, helping to create jobs for many young people.

To be successful in outsourcing and reap the benefits it brings, African countries need an effective regulatory framework, a skilled workforce and the necessary technological infrastructure, such as broadband Internet access.

While progress in ICTs and new technologies is imperative, it should go hand in hand with enhanced human capital and movement towards a more educated workforce. Capital investment and the introduction of new technologies without having a skilled and educated workforce and infrastructure in place to support ICT means that local young people will be ill equipped to take up emerging jobs. By restructuring secondary schools and universities to equip graduates with the skills demanded by multinational corporations, African

countries can create more competitive workforces and reap the opportunities that globalization presents.

Another benefit of ICT which African governments can utilize in cooperation with the private sector is flexible working arrangements, including working from home. In the last decade, working from home has become a common and acceptable way to work around the world. Because of the progress and expansion of technology, more people can link to their employers from their home computers and telephones. Several big multinational companies and organizations have been offering such flexible working arrangements to their employees. General Electric, which employs 300,000 people in more than 100 countries, is noteworthy for encouraging its employees to fulfil their work commitments while balancing their own personal responsibilities through flexible work arrangements. World Vision, an international non-governmental organization, is also known for its work-from-home opportunities.

For African countries, such arrangements offer bright potential. In today's globalized world, flexible work arrangements are fast becoming part of the working landscape. Such arrangements can create jobs for young people in small towns and cities where few companies and organizations are located and employment opportunities are scarce. These young people can be employed through flexible work arrangements without having to relocate to capital cities, as is often necessary in many African countries. To make this a reality, improved and affordable technological infrastructure is needed, as it is the biggest driver of such opportunities. In addition, governments should encourage and provide incentives for the private sector to incorporate such arrangements increasingly in their organizational landscape, since remote work and part-time and customized schedules constitute an inexpensive way of creating more jobs for more young people.

E. The creative economy

In the creative economy it is possible to consider activities such as the arts, the media or design as the driving force of an economy, which has far-reaching effects in providing new avenues of employment, as well as leading to rapid economic growth. This has great potential to act as a development strategy in Africa, to drive forward a new kind of development that would entail the inclusion of all the population to the fullest, especially young people, who are bursting with various talents, creating a new generation of youth employment.

Five countries in Central and West Africa - Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Congo and the Gambia - have incorporated culture in their poverty reduc-

tion strategies, to strengthen other development sectors, such as the promotion of cultural tourism or traditional health care.

Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal have integrated culture in their PRSPs as strategic pillars or major axes. This gives culture the opportunity to stand out as a major contributor in its own right to poverty reduction. In the case of Ghana, emphasis is placed on the development and promotion of the music and film industries as potential sources of employment generation, wealth creation and human skill development. Mali's PRSP links culture with religion, social harmony and security as a major axis in the country's poverty reduction strategies, in recognition of the potential of Malian culture in promoting traditional and religious values with a view to creating a climate of social harmony and security. In Nigeria, in recognition of the tremendous potential of Nollywood, the country's home video industry and traditional health care for the national economy, the Nigerian PRSP programmes included culture as a major axis. Senegal too has recognized the potential value of crafts to the national economy and programmes.

F. Green jobs

Green jobs span a wide array of skills, educational backgrounds and occupational profiles. They occur in research and development; professional fields such as engineering and architecture, project planning and management, auditing, administration, marketing, the retail sector and customer services, as well as in many traditional blue-collar areas such as plumbing or electrical wiring. This shows the great potential of job creation through the expanding green economy. As African governments strategize and plan on ways to reduce youth unemployment and underemployment, they should give significant focus to the creation and expansion of green economies and green jobs.

There are a range of options available for governments to finance or invest in the creation of green jobs. Among them is the phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies, taxing "windfall" oil profits, adopting carbon taxes and auctioning pollution allowances

Even though the Kyoto Protocol created a platform for the creation of a carbon market to monetize carbon credits, the bulk of documented growth in the green economy has so far occurred mostly in Europe and Asia and some Latin American countries like Brazil. Currently, some African and Asian countries that have participated in the Kyoto process have done so through the Clean Development Mechanism, where countries have implemented projects in dif-

ferent sectors designed to reduce or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions within their territories.

To date, Africa's participation in the Clean Development Mechanism has been quite limited. In fact, according to documented sources, only 32 out of approximately 2,200 project activities registered since 2005 have occurred in Africa, primarily because of limited awareness of such opportunities and a substantial lack of skills to operate such complex projects.

Green jobs are now perceived as offering an opportunity to address unemployment and underemployment. For example, in India, an initiative to replace inefficient biomass cooking stoves in 9 million households with more advanced ones could create 150,000 jobs (Green Jobs Initiative, 2008). Viable options for Africa currently include forestry and renewable energy, because of the assumption that forestry projects will continue to attract investment despite the limited spread of training in tree-planting techniques.

Very few stakeholders in Africa are aware of the outcomes of the fifteenth and sixteenth conferences of the parties to the United Nations Climate Change Convention - for example, the decision to disburse US\$ 10 billion per annum from the Adaptation Fund to developing countries, with an allocation of 40 per cent to Africa during the period 2010-2012. This will call for a trained workforce to engage in projects that will make use of the funds, and hence countries will need to train personnel in areas of sustainable development to equip them with the skills required for the green economy.

Additionally, because of the quest for more green energy globally, Africa needs to focus on producing skilled manpower which can boost the green economy within the region, between the regions and between continents. This will require expertise in hydroelectric, solar and wind platforms, among other disciplines, and in the establishment of interconnection links and grid systems. Activities on this scale could potentially garner the amounts needed to raise Africa's energy profile, while reducing unemployment and producing skilled people who could be competitive globally.

According to Greenpeace Africa's 2010 report on an energy revolution scenario for South Africa, not only will energy evolution and revolution mitigate climate change, but will also create 78,000 new jobs by 2030. Policymakers should therefore remember that initiatives that are aimed at making the environment green and mitigating the causes and consequences of climate change are major sources of job creation. For example, items of energy-efficient equipment often require more skilled labour than their inefficient counterparts, thus leading not only to more jobs, but to higher-skilled, higher-paying

ones. Improvements in natural resource management also have green employment potential.

Progress towards creating green jobs should be complemented by equal efforts in making training and education available and accessible. The transition to a green economy will create demand for workers who are skilled in specific areas, and filling these positions will require adequate training programmes. Governments need not only to train new workers, but also to retrain those workers who are moving from older industries to new ones.

Jobs created by the new economy should not replicate the discriminatory procedures present in "regular" labour markets. Access to the new green economy should be available in particular to those who have had difficulty finding decent employment, including the disabled and other socially excluded young persons.

G. Brain gain and utilizing the potential of young people in the diaspora

African countries educate students through an elite system, only to lose them to other regions once they have completed their education. A case in point is the number of African doctors and engineers residing in Europe, Australia and North America. Irrespective of the reasons for human capital flight, whether conflicts, limited opportunities or health hazards, countries should harness the potential contributions of international migration for sustainable development. Currently, there is huge acknowledgement of the contribution of remittances to countries' GDPs. However, other investments, skill transfers and diaspora networks can help in expanding employment by engaging all sectors. This can serve as a good basis for enhancing intellectual capital, promoting transnational networks and increasing the financial resources and business acumen of the African countries.

In addition, knowledge networks and centres of excellence should be developed to make use of the intellectual capital existing in the African diaspora. For this purpose, governments need to create an enabling environment, including political stability, that will attract the diaspora to participate in the overall development of the continent.

In the past two decades, Africa has increasingly become a breeding ground for human capital for Europe and North America. This can be seen in the negotiations that have taken place between a number of African countries

and the European Union with the aim of offsetting labour deficits in the latter. In response to the sharp increase in the migration of skilled personnel and serious domestic human resource constraints, the governments of Mali and Senegal have created Ministries of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, which focus on managing and facilitating relations with nationals living abroad. Furthermore, a number of other countries in the region such as Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone have already held several diaspora conferences to explore ways in which the diaspora can contribute meaningfully to development at home.

H. Volunteering

Even with the varied opportunities which arise through creative economies and green jobs and enterprises, there will still be more young people in need of some form of employment. Young Africans should also be given an opportunity to develop their life skills through volunteering. Given the numerous emergencies, disasters and conflicts on the continent, volunteering is a way in which skills can be obtained and shared at minimal cost.

In addition, volunteering can improve youth participation and harness the energy and vigour of young people so as to contribute to the realization of national, regional and global development plans while enhancing their life and work-related skills. Among the benefits of volunteering are increased chances of employability and the "feel-good" factor that comes with assisting others and helps to develop well-founded social capital. Volunteering increases young people's awareness of the needs of different groups in society while enhancing their personal and political efficacy.

At a time when university leavers face the toughest job market for more than a decade, graduates need more than their academic degree to stand out from the competition. Volunteering can help young people in this regard by giving them work experience that can assist them on the journey towards employment.

Through volunteering, many young people gain career benefits. Firstly, volunteering can help them to identify a career they have a passion for and would like to pursue. Secondly, through volunteering they can acquire essential technical and non-technical skills. Besides skills and work experience, it gives young people an indication of the expectations of future employers. Thirdly, volunteering serves as a way to network with people in the industry in which they want to gain employment, and at times, volunteer positions lead directly to paid ones.

Understanding the benefits of volunteering for future employment prospects as well as its value as a means of equipping young people with social skills to help them engage in the development process, African governments must take initiatives that support and encourage volunteering. Young people should be provided with easy access to volunteering opportunities. If they can identify such opportunities easily in their local communities, they are more likely to volunteer. Accordingly, with assistance from civil-society organizations, small and medium-sized enterprises and other stakeholders, African governments should facilitate volunteering opportunities that are visible and attractive for young people. ICTs could be used to connect youth with organizations locally, nationally and regionally. Furthermore and most importantly, a culture of volunteering and service culture (service above self) should be instilled in young people starting at an early age. Schools and training facilities should motivate and encourage them to volunteer in their communities.

There are several organizations and initiatives in Africa that are run using the contributions of young volunteers. The Young Men's Christian Association is one of the oldest and largest movements for youth in the world, with chapters in 17 African countries. The Association empowers citizens, especially young people and women, to take increased responsibilities, assume leadership at all levels and work towards an equitable society.

I. Service corps

Besides volunteering, momentum is growing internationally for the establishment of National Youth Services, as more countries around the world are developing or expanding civic engagement programmes and policies for young people. There is growing recognition that the solidarity and creativity of young people can be harnessed to address critical social, political and economic issues. Among the success stories of such national service arrangements is the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps.

Governments have used service corps to provide young people with skills and instil in them a sense of service for their nation. The Nigerian Corps was established in 1973 to engage Nigerian youths in the development process and foster integration among the estimated 250 ethnic groups in the country through the cross-posting of university and polytechnic graduates for national service away from their home States and regions. The programme is compulsory for all citizens aged 30 and under on completion of their first degree. Recruitment usually takes place three times a year, and Corps participants earn a monthly allowance slightly above the national minimum wage while in the programme.

Following registration, the year-long programme begins with a three-week orientation period where Corps members are mobilized in a camp, where they participate in various activities including an endurance trek and attend daily lectures from guest speakers on topics ranging from HIV/AIDS to entrepreneurship and the environment. "Corpers", as they are usually called, are then given a posting to a place of primary assignment that is typically relevant to their discipline and placed within the public or private sector. Each one is also assigned to a Community Development Service project, giving them an opportunity to participate in the development of their host communities.

These projects, which include mass literacy, public health education, sanitation, road safety, horticulture and tree planting, have contributed to many areas of human and social development in Nigeria, including the pursuit of the MDGs. Participants engaged in mass literacy projects may serve as volunteers teaching basic functional literacy skills in primary and secondary schools within their localities. The programme also collaborates with some international, national, regional, non-governmental and local agencies, including Legal Aid and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Through Legal Aid and other human rights groups, Corps members from relevant disciplines provide legal aid services to widows, children and other vulnerable persons who fall victim to denial and violation of rights. In the area of reproductive health, UNICEF collaborates with the programme by using Corps members as peer educators in secondary schools.

Many positive socio-economic developments have been attributed to the Service Corps programme. Aside from providing entry-level jobs and work experience for recent graduates who might not otherwise have access to them, it fills gaps in under-resourced sectors such as health and education through postings in government-owned hospitals and schools, particularly in rural and remote areas.

The structure of the service also encourages interaction between ethnic groups, as members acquire new language skills from interacting with other ethnic groups and also gain an understanding of the host community's culture.

Outstanding Corps members who distinguish themselves in community development activities and perform excellently in their primary assignment are usually given recognition at an honours award ceremony chaired by the Nigerian President. In December 2010, President Goodluck Jonathan granted Masters and PhD scholarships to 51 outstanding Corps members and offered them automatic employment in the Nigerian Federal Civil Service.

While there is room for improvement in its implementation, the programme is laudable for its attempt to create a culture of service, social maturity, career exploration, patriotism and cultural integration among Nigerian young people.

At the continental level, the AUC launched the Youth Volunteer Corps in 2010 as a way of harnessing the skills of young people for development purposes. The project will facilitate the deployment of African young people between the ages of 21 and 35 living in Africa and elsewhere to serve as volunteers, interns or junior professional officers.

IV. Best practices in linking education to employment in Africa



This chapter highlights policies and strategies adopted to link education to employment in Africa. Case studies and best practices from some African countries selected from the subregions are cited to demonstrate how policies and strategies on youth, employment and education are implemented. The objective is to show how challenges and opportunities have been dealt with under a variety of scenarios in these selected countries, to enable stakeholders to emulate best practices as much as possible.

Several programmes and initiatives on youth education and employment are being or have been implemented by various stakeholders in Africa. Countries must naturally find their own paths for building and reforming their education and training systems or promoting youth employment. Yet the experience of other countries which have achieved some measure of success in this regard yields some useful lessons for consideration.

The best practices presented below represent interventions from different subregions of the continent and are grouped under four broad thematic areas: education systems, youth employment policies, youth entrepreneurship and ICT-based education and training. The majority of these interventions focused on promoting youth participation in the workforce, innovation, capacity enhancement, knowledge and human rights, community engagement and commitment, and strategic partnership as critical elements in addressing the challenges of youth underemployment and unemployment in Africa. Knowledge-based youth development programmes are also included among the best practices presented below.

A. Best practices in education systems

In ensuring that the potential of young people is cultivated and nurtured, education is a clear priority for African policymakers. Not only does investment in relevant and high-quality education have long-term implications for human capital accumulation and hence economic growth, but formal education also occurs in the key phase of the lives of young people when they are most receptive to developing their intellect and skills. For young Africans, however, the issue is not only that of employment per se, or even the purely economic benefits that come with it for that matter, but importantly also the type of employment, and how far it can support social mobility and raise social status. In a continent where rigid and inflexible social hierarchies make it difficult for marginalized and underprivileged young people and others to achieve social mobility, education is traditionally seen as the most important means of overcoming these limitations of class and achieving upward mobility.

As discussed in the previous chapters, African countries are making commendable progress towards achieving universal primary education and raising their youth and adult literacy rates. However, there is still much to be done in improving the quality of education as well as facilitating the transition from the primary to the secondary and tertiary levels and later to productive and decent employment. Even though primary education is an essential starting point, young people in Africa need more advanced and specific skills to provide them with the capacity to work in an increasingly globalized world. In almost all

African countries, wide gender gaps exist in secondary schools and in formal labour markets, and therefore the need for gender-sensitive education and employment policies, strategies and programmes for young persons cannot be overemphasized.

The best practices presented below cover both the education and employment components of the education-employment nexus.

Case 1. Education and training policy in the United Republic of Tanzania

In 1989, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the United Republic of Tanzania established a task force to map out an education strategy for the twenty-first century. The task force presented its report in November 1992, upon which the Ministry embarked on the formulation of a national education policy, which was eventually issued in February 1995. Falling within the broad macroeconomic policy environment, the policy was initiated with liberalization, privatization and facilitation in mind, and puts emphasis on:

- The creation of a true partnership between the State and other providers, including private persons, encouraging them to establish and manage schools and other institutions.
- Cooperation with the private sector in the provision of education, including such proactive initiatives as the training of more and better-qualified teachers, tax rebates, priority land allocation and duty-free import of school materials.
- Widening of financial support for education to include the efficient utilization of resources, cost-sharing and liberalization of the system.
- Streamlining of the management of education and decentralization to schools, districts, regions and communities.
- Quality control and assurance measures, including curriculum review, examination reforms, teacher management and inspection.
- A holistic and integrative approach to facilitate mobility between formal and non-formal education.
- Broadening access and ensuring equity in terms of gender, disability, geographical location and class.
- Improving the relevance of education so that it is effective in self-employment and vocational training.

During the implementation of this policy, there were gaps and the Ministry realized that it had to:

- Improve gender parity in schools
- Involve the private sector in providing educational services
- Promote the importance and relevance of education and how it will translate to increased effective employment.

Case 2. The Universal Post-Primary Education and Training programme in Uganda

The Government of Uganda articulated its strategy in the comprehensive Education Sector Strategic Plan for 2004-2015, revised for 2008-2018. The plan aims to improve access to education and the quality, equity and efficiency of education. In line with these objectives, the Government launched the Universal Post-Primary Education and Training programme in 2007.³ It provides eligible primary school leavers with an opportunity to enrol in secondary and vocational training institutions where tuition is free of charge. Tuition fees for secondary schools are waived thanks to capitation grants. The Government also sponsors students in private schools located in areas where there are no government-aided secondary schools. These measures are targeted at disadvantaged students who do not have the opportunity to enrol or who drop out of school owing to their inability to pay school fees. Implementation of the programme started in 2007 with an initial cohort of first-year students and with the expectation that, by 2010, it would cover all four lower secondary grades and two vocational training grades. It led to a 33 per cent increase in enrolment in post-primary education in 2007

Following the implementation of the programme, more students from poor families are able to advance their education, and literacy rates rose.

Case 3. Narrowing the skills gap by reforming higher education policy in Ethiopia

In 2008, the Ethiopian Government issued a policy designed to shift the balance of subjects in all public universities away from the humanities and towards the sciences. Following a study of education systems that have promot-

³ Post-primary education is used to describe four years of secondary education or two years of technical education/vocational training following primary education.

ed economic development, as well as the current needs of the Ethiopian labour market, the curriculum was split 70:30 in favour of science and technology. The policy reform is expected not only to produce professionals in industry and technology who will be able to help create a transformational emerging economy, but also to narrow the current skills gaps between graduates of higher education and labour market demand nationally and globally.

The 70:30 strategy is based on an assessment that graduates of medicine, engineering and technology have generally better employment opportunities within and outside the country, while graduates in the social sciences and to some extent the natural sciences have limited employment opportunities in Ethiopia and abroad. Besides the labour demand argument, the strategy is also based on the belief that there is a current drive towards knowledge-based economies. Specifically, the policy reform introduces six bands in the higher education system: engineering and technology (40 per cent of the total annual intake of 110,000 students), business and economics (20 per cent), medicine and health sciences (20 per cent), natural and computational sciences (20 per cent), social sciences and humanities (10 per cent) and agriculture and natural resources (5 per cent).

Case 4. Ghana Industrial Skills Development Centre - a public-private initiative

In the light of fiscal constraints hampering the ability of African governments to invest in relevant and high-quality education, public-private partnerships offer a viable approach to overcoming shortfalls in the education sector. In addition, they enhance the linkages between the formal education sector and the private sector. This can in turn ensure that curricula are demand-driven, helping to improve the skill match between school leavers and the demands of employers.

The Ghana Industrial Skills Development Centre is a public-private initiative aimed at supplying demand-driven, industry-responsive training to employees of sponsoring companies and disadvantaged young people. Visco Helmond B.V., a large Dutch textile manufacturer with 500 Ghana-based employees, and its Ghanaian subsidiary, TexStyles Ghana Ltd., were the initiators of the project, which was established in 2005 under a memorandum of understanding signed by Visco and the Netherlands and Ghanaian Governments.

Visco felt that an industry-responsive training mechanism would provide skills which would not only benefit the participating company and current employees but would also serve the greater public good by preparing unemployed and disadvantaged young people for careers in industry. Located on the prem-

ises of Tema Technical Institute (an existing government facility), the Centre is now operational with a governance arrangement that includes industry representatives on its decision-making board and an impressive list of firms among its partners.

Experience with this initiative shows that training institutions which develop close ties with prospective employers and regularly seek employers' input to develop the curriculum enjoy the best results. In addition, systematic evaluation, monitoring and coordination are required to ensure that the output of the educational system corresponds to the demands of industry

Case 5. Learnerships - Integrating theoretical learning with workplace experience in South Africa

Since 1994, the South African Government has embarked on several large-scale initiatives aimed at increasing the economy's labour absorption capacity for young people. One such initiative is a nationwide programme known as Learnership. Learnerships are structured programmes integrating theoretical learning with workplace experience. The Skills Development Act, aimed at developing the overall skills base in the country, guides the implementation of the programme, targeting young people as key beneficiaries. They receive theoretical training in an identified area through an accredited training service provider. In addition, they are placed in a structured workplace in order to experience what it really means, and what is required, to work in a company or organization. A crucial element of Learnerships is the partnership between government, training service providers and the private sector. Completion of a Learnership leads to a qualification registered by the South African Qualifications Authority related to an occupation.

Case 6. Accelerated learning programmes in post-conflict areas: the Complementary Rapid Education Programme for Primary Schools in Sierra Leone

As a result of 11 years of civil war that ended in 2002, a high number of Sierra Leonean adolescents lag behind educationally, as the war denied them access to any educational opportunities. It is estimated that more than 400,000 children aged 10-15 have missed part of their schooling or have never been to school. The current youth unemployment rate stands at 70 per cent.

One impressive programme that works to remedy this lag is the Ibis Complementary Rapid Education Programme for Primary Schools, which was developed by UNICEF and the Sierra Leonean Ministry of Education. The pro-

gramme offers six years of primary education in three years to children and adolescents who missed their education due to the war. More than 3,000 young people have benefited from this programme. It also works rigorously to enhance the professional development of teachers and stakeholders in education at both central and district levels to improve governance and accountability in education delivery in Sierra Leone. The programme trains teachers while at the same time putting them to work in classrooms.

B. Best practices in youth employment policies and strategies

Case 7. Public works programmes to generate youth employment in Senegal

One active labour market policy that has been implemented in a number of African countries to generate employment for youth is the introduction of public works programmes. Although the main objective of these programmes is usually to provide some sort of safety net, they can also assist unemployed young people to gain experience and help them remain attached to the labour market. They usually involve labour-intensive projects such as road construction, maintenance, irrigation infrastructure, reforestation and soil conservation.

In Senegal, with the assistance of the World Bank and the African Development Bank, the Government set up a US\$ 33 million public works programme in 1989 which targeted the growing number of unemployed young people. The main objectives of the programme were to provide short-term employment to these young people through labour-intensive public works projects such as construction, the rehabilitation and maintenance of public services and the provision of essential services. The work was subcontracted to small and medium-sized enterprises. During the first phase of the programme, around 80,000 jobs were created for young people in 416 projects in small-scale enterprises. Overall, 3,226 projects have been implemented, resulting in the creation of 350,000 temporary jobs annually. More importantly, the projects also led to the establishment of 6,000 permanent jobs, an outcome that is not usually the overriding aim of a public works programme.

Case 8. Job search assistance: effective school-to-work transitions through career information and guidance for young people in Egypt

As a consequence of unmet aspirations, skill mismatch and the barriers in the labour market, many young people stop actively searching for a job. In this situation, job search assistance can help encourage them by raising their motivation and improving the match between the skills of young unemployed people and the vacancies available. Job search assistance is the least costly of all active labour market policies, and evaluations of this programme suggest that it generates consistently positive results (Martin 2000).

In Egypt, ILO, the Ministry of Manpower and Migration and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, with financing from the Italian cooperation agency, have been running an effective school-to-work transition programme since 2008. The programme is designed to address the high youth unemployment rate in Egypt as well as the difficulty experienced by the private sector in recruiting workers with the right skills.

The programme is implemented by Youth Employment Units that work together with existing Public Employment Services offices. In close consultation and cooperation with employers and other key stakeholders, the offices provide a one-stop opportunity for young people to get information on skill requirements in particular occupations, career guidance and assistance in job search and job preparation techniques.

The programme, which is a component of the Egyptian National Action Plan for Youth Employment, aims to provide assistance to 2,500 young people annually. It aims to achieve a more effective and quicker school-to-work transition, leading to more and better jobs for young people through a package of integrated initiatives mobilizing employment offices, education institutions and the media.

Case 9. Internship programme to increase the employability of young graduates in Mali

One of the constraints young people face when looking or competing for jobs is lack of experience. Enhancing the hands-on experience of young people in their prospective employment sectors increases their employability. Internship and apprenticeship programmes provide such experience.

In 2004, the Government of Mali created the National Youth Employment Agency to develop and implement youth employment strategies. In 2005, the Agency's Youth Skills and Employability Department developed the Internship Programme to increase the employability of young graduates by partnering with Mali's private sector.

The Internship Programme places unemployed young people with university diplomas in a professional environment for 12 months. By co-financing the intern's salary and providing assistance and technical support for each internship, the Agency makes it possible for Malian firms to overcome their difficulties in recruiting young people with relevant skills, when they sometimes lack the necessary financial resources. Internships include placements in banks, travel companies, architecture firms, pharmacies, law firms, telecommunication enterprises and engineering companies. The participating businesses help the young people to develop practical skills related to their profession, while also exposing them to a professional environment and a network of contacts. It is hoped that the contacts and experience acquired during the internships will lead to permanent work within the host business or other businesses.

Between 2004 and 2008, over 3,000 young people participated in the internship programme, and around 50 per cent of interns found employment shortly after their internship.

C. Best practices in youth entrepreneurship

A number of young people are taking up the challenges of starting their own business, and much is being learned about how the odds for success can be improved through various types of assistance and the creation of a supportive environment. To succeed in self-employment and become productive entrepreneurs, young people require assistance with training, mentor support, access to credit and office facilities, as well as support when expanding a business and developing networks.

In this context, youth entrepreneurship programmes are being promoted in schools and communities across the world. Programmes have also evolved within the informal economy targeting potential young entrepreneurs, the unemployed and young people who are not in school or are at risk.

Case 10. Promoting youth entrepreneurship in Algeria

In 1996, the Government of Algeria created the National Agency for the Support of Youth Employment. The Agency provides counselling and other forms

of support for young entrepreneurs and assists them in project implementation. It mainly targets unemployed individuals between the ages of 19 and 35 who possess the necessary professional qualifications and/or practical experience and can contribute 5 to 10 per cent of the investment required. It helps young entrepreneurs financially by providing lines of credit at 0 per cent interest and interest subsidies on bank loans. Its decentralized network extends across the country. In 2007, around 750 agents arranged for young entrepreneurs to receive funding totalling 4.5 billion Algerian dinars (US\$ 64 million). The network has been electronically linked since 2002, and a database has been set up with information on young entrepreneurs and their businesses. The Agency published directories on microenterprises in 2002 and 2004 and organized three national exhibitions (in 1998, 2000 and 2003), as well as several regional salons. These events were intended to promote the products and services of microenterprises, to facilitate the establishment of direct links (and the creation of business networks) between them, and to encourage the development of a culture of entrepreneurship among unemployed young people by showing them what other young people had been able to achieve. By the middle of 2005, more than 65,000 microenterprises had been created, and by 2007, the investment total had reached around 114 billion dinars (US\$ 6 billion). These small businesses are believed to have generated more than 186,000 direct employment opportunities.

Case 11. Mentoring of young entrepreneurs by private firms in Senegal

Self-employment creates over 90 per cent of new jobs in Senegal; however, many young people face considerable barriers in starting their own businesses. The minimum cost of setting up a formalized business is 255 per cent of the annual average per capita income of US\$ 750. To overcome such barriers, a close partnership with the Senegalese business community has proved to be essential to providing young entrepreneurs with the experience, support and advice they need to establish and run successful businesses. The Synapse Centre, a Dakar-based non-governmental organization, started off in 2003 with this in mind.

Synapse was designed to allow young people with potential to use their energy and skills to create successful businesses that would not only contribute to overall economic growth and job creation, but also provide social benefits to their communities. The trademark initiative of the Synapse Centre is its 14-month Promise Programme – a highly intensive, hands-on youth entrepreneurship training programme that combines traditional entrepreneurship theory with interactive case-based studies, practical entrepreneurial experi-

ence, personal development retreats and professional business consulting and mentoring.

The objective of the Promise Programme is to ensure that each young person who participates in it establishes a successful, sustainable and growing business which in turn gives something back to society.

By 2008, 17 promising entrepreneurs had graduated from the first class; 9 young participants had become entrepreneurs themselves as founders and heads of new venture companies; and 35 business community leaders had been recruited to mentor young entrepreneurs. The nine successful entrepreneurs have also created 137 jobs within their businesses. Synapse's annual budget of US\$ 80,000 means that one job has been created for every US\$ 584 spent.

The experience of Synapse has shown that the increased self-confidence resulting from the mentoring initiative enables entrepreneurs to expand their personal vision as well as to explore a leadership experience that they otherwise might not have acquired.

Case 12. Kenya Youth Business Trust

The Kenya Youth Business Trust is the local chapter of Youth Business International, a programme set up by the International Business Leaders Forum. Youth Business International has adopted a model pioneered by the Prince's Trust in the United Kingdom, and is now active in 40 countries. The overall aim is to fight youth unemployment by supporting new business start-ups and providing young people with personal development opportunities.

The Kenya Youth Business Trust supports disadvantaged young people aged 18 to 30 who are unemployed or underemployed and who have a passionate idea for starting a business, but have no access to the seed funding required to fulfil their ambition. It provides simple start-up training to make possible the planning required to develop the idea into a business capable of succeeding. If the idea proves viable, the Trust provides a small loan and at the same time matches the young entrepreneur with a mentor who will be his or her guide, coach and friend for the first two or three years. It also provides ongoing business skill development training for young entrepreneurs.

One of the successful beneficiaries of this programme, who was also named Youth Business International Entrepreneur of the Year in 2006, is Zablon Karingi Muthaka. In response to Nairobi's desperate waste problem in its residential areas, 26-year-old Zablon Karingi Muthaka created Beta Bins Waste

Management and Environmental Conservation in 2004. Even though Zablon had a sound business idea that was demand-driven, he lacked the necessary start-up capital. Lacking collateral and in the face of the stiff lending conditions of local financial institutions, his request for a loan was turned down repeatedly. He then presented his business plan to the Trust, which granted him a loan. The loan has enabled Zablon's business to flourish, with annual turnover at roughly US\$ 4,700 per year. He now employs five young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and has immediate investment and expansion plans geared toward the purchase of a lorry.

D. Best practices in ICT

Case 13. Transforming higher education through ICT – the case of Adama University in Ethiopia

Adama University is a noteworthy case of a public institution of higher education that is buttressed by ICT infrastructure. Formerly a technical college and established in 1993, it has been making commendable efforts to help students reap the benefit of a twenty-first-century education through ICT use. In the University, ICT infrastructure is viewed as a core element in supporting mainstream education.

Currently, 1,407 PCs and laptops are networked and connected to the Internet with an aggregate speed of 16.5 megabits per second - a significant improvement from five connected PCs for 6,500 students and 1,500 staff in March 2008. The university has transformed its Internet service from virtually no-ICT to full-campus-network service with both wireless and wired network access.

Adama University's ICT Centre has demonstrated itself to be a pioneer by introducing ICT technologies that are new to Ethiopia, with fast and cheap data network deployment and least-cost workplace provision. This includes the setting up of an eOasis demo laboratory, where primary and secondary schools, technical and vocational colleges and other universities can learn how to provide cheap services, even in regions without fast Internet availability.

More than 20,000 free electronic books and journals are now accessible on the campus to the Adama University community from any networked PC through the Internet. Thanks to better ICT facilities, the eTeaching environment at Adama University has become fully established and is awaiting certification. The University also conducted its first online examinations in Decem-

ber 2009, becoming the first university to conduct such examinations in the history of higher education in the country.

Case 14. The National Open University of Nigeria

Established in 2002, the National Open University of Nigeria has created 27 study centres across the country. Operating from its administrative headquarters in Lagos, its vision is to make tertiary education available to all citizens through the establishment of study centres throughout Nigeria. It is the country's largest tertiary institution in terms of student enrolment. Each study centre consists of a computer laboratory/cybercafé equipped with a minimum of 25 computers in a local area network configuration. The university uses a wireless network to deliver distance learning courses to all the study centres. Each study centre has facilitators and student counsellors drawn from within the community or nearby communities, who are responsible for providing guidance and counselling services to the learners. ICT applications currently cover: management of student records (online applications, admissions, registration and exam procedures); the learner management system (e-learning and the virtual library); communication (e-mail, SMSes, videoconferencing and Internet); and delivery of human resources and finance courses.

E. Summary and lessons learnt

The cases presented above show that initiatives being undertaken by African governments and stakeholders in harnessing the education and employment potential of young people are diverse in their modes of implementation, scope and intended outcomes. An assessment of these best practices shows that they combine aspects of participation, innovation, capacity enhancement, strategic partnership and evidence-based planning in their work programmes. Such elements are deemed to be critical in addressing the challenges of underemployment and unemployment of young people in Africa in the twenty-first century.

The best practices reflect the fact that strategies and policies should be founded on the reality on ground. This naturally requires *improved knowledge and data collection* that leads to evidence-based and knowledge-based policies and strategies. The experiences selected for review underscore the need to invest time and resources to obtain relevant and accurate information about the primary beneficiaries, young people and their families and communities. Indeed, the effort has to go beyond conducting a baseline survey, but the information should be used to ensure that activities are in line with intended objectives, with sufficient flexibility built in to accommodate modifications in

the design of such programmes as necessary. Information-gathering on youth has to change radically if the knowledge base is to be of practical use in policy formulation and programming. In this respect, evidence-based policies such as the reform of higher education in Ethiopia, which was based on a careful assessment of the current and future requirements of the labour markets as well as lessons learnt from experiences of other countries, are exemplary.

Innovation is a key feature in the development, empowerment and leadership programmes that have responded effectively to youth concerns and needs. The accelerated learning programme in Sierra Leone, which condenses six years of primary education into three years for war-affected young people, is a prime example of using innovative ways to respond to the education and training needs of young people who have been out of school. In addition, some countries are tapping into the potential which progress in ICT offers to respond to the needs of young people in an innovative and effective manner.

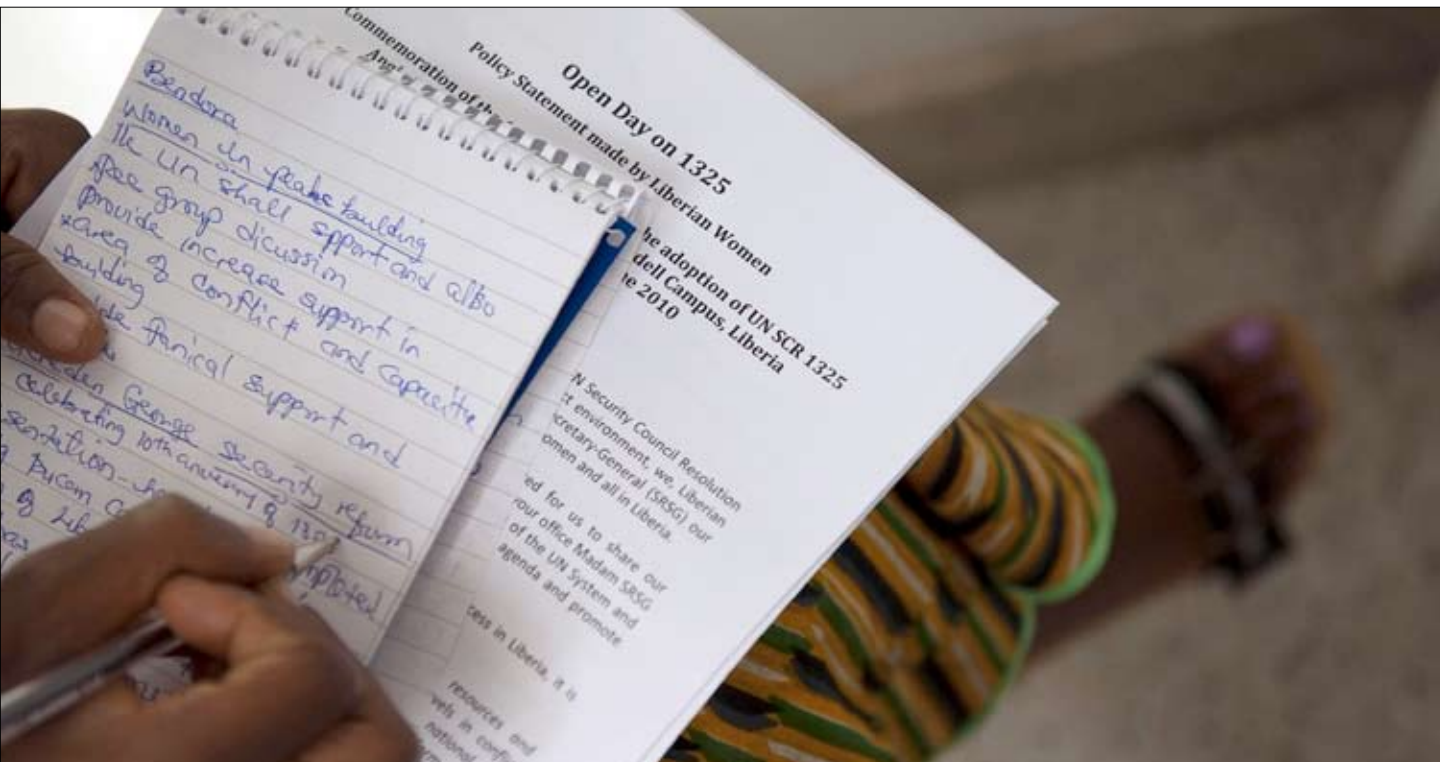
As different stakeholders and groups engage with youth development issues, *strategic partnerships and cooperation* are crucial in order to implement effective programmes, avoid duplication and utilize the comparative advantage of different stakeholders. In this aspect, public-private partnerships offer extensive opportunities to improve education and employment prospects for young people in Africa, either by involving the private sector in the development of training and education curricula, as in the Ghana Industrial Skills Training Centre, or through partnering with private companies to facilitate internships and work with training programmes, as in the national internship program in Mali. In addition, a strategic partnership can ease both the financial and absorptive burden on government institutions. Under the post-primary training programme in Uganda, the government works with private schools in sponsoring the education of students who live in areas where there are no public educational facilities.

Community engagement and youth ownership are crucial for all the youth development and empowerment programmes presented in this report. Where the involvement of key constituencies is lacking or inadequate, youth projects will inevitably fail. In Kenya, the Youth Business Trust engages with local business leaders and entrepreneurs to provide mentorship for young people who wish to start their own businesses. The same is being done in Senegal, where in addition to hands-on training in entrepreneurship and the provision of start-up capital, the Synapse programme arranges for business community leaders to mentor the young participants.

Strategic capacity-building is a component that should be integral to all youth development programmes. To date, youth development, empowerment and

leadership programmes in some African countries have fallen far short of their goals, because of weaknesses in the design and implementation of their capacity-building activities. The Job Search Assistance initiative in Egypt is implemented by enhancing existing employment services to make them more accessible and receptive to the employment needs of young people. Such capacity enhancement of existing institutions and facilities is deemed to have a longer and more sustainable impact.

V. Key messages and Conclusions



This report highlights both opportunities and challenges faced by African young people in the sphere of education and employment in the global economy. It also aims to give key messages to African governments and development stakeholders in further implementing global, regional and national youth policies and commitments. Member states should strengthen their efforts to facilitate a smooth transition for young people from education, inactivity or unemployment to gainful and decent employment, while dealing with the specific challenges posed in a variety of country-specific contexts.

A. Key messages

This report puts forward seven key messages:

1. There must be a change of attitude towards African youth

Often African young people are seen as a challenge and not an asset and are portrayed as dependent, whereas they should be seen as autonomous agents, responsible for their own acts. This is also to a certain extent reflected in policy agendas on youth, which tend to overemphasize the challenges, missing the opportunities that young people bring or can potentially bring to the continent.

The increased focus on evidence-based policy is welcomed, but at the same time raises the question of the kind of knowledge and data collected. The emphasis on evidence-based policy increases the will to measure, monitor, predict and control the ideal development of young peoples' lives. However, most of our policies rely on data based on information on pessimism rather than on their well-being. Hence the need for a more balanced combination of evidence, which requires identifying diverse indicators.

Additionally, young people should be actively involved in all phases of policy and programme development including design, management and decision-making, as well as monitoring and evaluation of activities.

2. There is a need for knowledge-sharing and cooperation

There are different priorities and means of implementation across the policy levels of the AUC and African States, across subregions and the region and in the United Nations. Therefore, there is a need for increased coordination across the different jurisdictions and organizations working on youth and development. Beyond that, there is also a need for more coherent policies in the different jurisdictions and intergovernmental organizations. Knowledge-sharing and cooperation on youth issues is essential to identify best practices and useful lessons from past experience that can be instrumental in improving the impacts of future interventions, in addition to avoiding duplication of effort and strengthening efficient resource mobilization.

3. Youth unemployment must be addressed as a way of fighting poverty

Many interventions aimed at poverty reduction have been based on targeting vulnerable groups, including young people. However, poverty is essentially a structural and economic problem which should be addressed through social change. Mainstreaming youth issues into PRSPs or national plans of action will not solve youth unemployment as long as the underlying causes of youth unemployment are not addressed. Youth mainstreaming should go beyond making the concerns and experiences of young people an integral dimension of the design of policies and programmes. Instead, it should be complemented by concrete actions that address young people's underlying current problems. Mainstreaming of youth issues into development plans should also take account of future challenges and opportunities.

4. An innovative culture must be fostered through creative education systems, entrepreneurship education and access to enterprise start-up

Fostering an innovative culture and entrepreneurship education should be started at an early age, and young entrepreneurs should be supported by their countries through the provision of access to effective entrepreneurship development tools to enable them to realize their full potential.

Several African countries have adopted youth entrepreneurship policies that encourage youth delineation from the economic mainstream. This has led to the fostering of job creation and contributed to economic development and growth, as well as addressing the socio-psychological problems and delinquency that arise from joblessness. Youth-run enterprises have been established in Eastern Africa in Kenya and Uganda; in Southern Africa in Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe; in West Africa in the Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria; and in North Africa in Egypt.

Through entrepreneurship education, business start-up training and support programmes, young women and men can acquire the necessary attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviours that increase their chances of obtaining decent work by becoming more employable or acquiring the assets needed to start their own businesses.

The creative economy offers a significant potential to promote socio-economic development and, more importantly, the creation of employment opportunities, particularly for young people. As the global economy continues to change,

Africa needs to change with the times, as opportunities are now packaged quite differently, and if they not embraced, missed opportunities will eventually affect Africa socially and economically.

5. Education is a prerequisite for gainful employment

For effective youth employment to take place, education and training is critical. Governments have particular responsibilities in the areas of education, training, certification and licensing. Significant strides have been made in Africa towards achieving universal literacy and ensuring access to educational opportunities that are both relevant and of high quality. But countries need to focus more on the quality of education, especially at the post-primary and secondary levels, while sustaining gains made in attaining universal primary education.

6. African economies are becoming more and more integrated in the global economy

Continuing globalization and the integration of African economies in the global economy constitute both an opportunity and a threat for the socio-economic development of the continent. African governments need to take measures that will harness the potential and competitiveness of their young people in the global economy, while at the same time minimizing and mitigating the negative effects of globalization on young people.

African countries must endeavour to do business globally through:

- Effective trade agreements that can have an overall positive impact, beyond the sectors traditionally associated with the region.
- An enabling environment to promote opportunities for global business partnerships.
- Structured policies that encourage and assist young people in the diaspora to return to and fully reintegrate into social and economic life in Africa, and promote and protect the rights of young people living in the diaspora.

7. Equity must be ensured in education and employment between men and women, and between rural and urban areas

In almost all African countries, equitable access to higher education and improved standards of living is inadequate. In order to ensure that education benefits everyone, the following must be addressed:

- Problems that reduce the participation and success rates of females and children from poor families, such as financial constraints, low enrolment rates at higher levels of education, high drop-out rates, high failure and repetition.
- Gender-sensitive challenges that discourage young girls from excelling at all levels of education, including training and recruitment of more female teachers and lecturers.
- Teacher-pupil ratios should be increased, especially in rural areas, by offering adequate incentives.

B. Conclusion

Although the population of most African countries will continue to be youthful for the next four decades, it will eventually peak, thereby realizing the demographic dividend. Therefore, investing in education and skills development for young people in Africa through the provision of basic education, higher levels of education and technical and vocational training is of paramount importance since education and training are prerequisites for the development of today's knowledge society and economy. Therefore, with increased investment in education and skill development, Africa will have built a competitive workforce to ensure increased productivity and overall economic and socio-economic development.

Countries should also share best practices within the region and foster South-South cooperation because in knowledge-sharing lies the ability to explore options, plan better and implement the priorities relevant to youth development issues on the continent.

Annex I: Definitions

1. **Youth.** The African Youth Charter defines young people as every person between the ages of 15 and 35. This definition views young people within the African context and is based on Africa's development realities. While the age bracket set in the Charter continues to prompt vigorous discussion, it is a position that was agreed upon by African young people, experts and ministers, endorsed by heads of State and agreed as a reflection of the challenges faced by African youth in effectively integrating into society, finishing school, getting married and gaining financial independence. This age definition also constitutes an acceptable compromise among African countries, most of which have defined young people as individuals aged between 29 and 40 in their national youth policies.

This report defines young people as persons between the ages of 15 and 24. This definition is based on the fact that below the age of 15, one is still a child, but that after 24 years of age one is expected to have finished acquiring a university degree and to be in position to acquire a job. Those in the 15-24 age bracket are still developing their careers and/or still studying, and this has been taken to be characteristic of youth.

2. **Education** is defined as the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgement, and generally preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life, or the act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills, as for a profession or a degree level, or a kind of schooling: a university education or the result produced by instruction, training, or study: to show one's education or the science or art of teaching. Personal development of young people, development of local communities and that of the country as a whole are inextricably linked to the provision of high-quality, relevant and well-managed education and training. Training of the teachers who will be able to train young people to effect their development is a prerequisite for increased productivity (United Nations National Youth Development Policy Framework, 2006)

4. **Employment** is defined as the act of engaging in a productive activity or occupation. It is work carried out in return for payment. Although a significant

number of young Africans have acquired some form of education, many are unable to find a job. **Unemployment** is a major problem among young people, as opportunities for securing decent work remain limited. Employers may discriminate against young workers for various reasons, the most obvious being that youths lack the experience and knowledge needed in the workplace. It should be noted that employment and unemployment figures mask problems of underemployment and poverty among working youth (World Youth Report – 2007). **Underemployment** is a situation in which a worker is employed, but not in the desired capacity, whether in terms of compensation, hours or level of skill and experience. While not technically unemployed, the underemployed are often competing for available jobs. It is a measure of employment and labour utilization in the economy that looks at how well the labour force is being utilized in terms of skills, experience and availability to work. **Full employment** is a condition of the national economy where all or nearly all persons willing and able to work at the prevailing wages and working conditions are able to do so. It is defined either as zero-per-cent or near-zero-per-cent unemployment, literally, no unemployment. Full employment means that all available labour resources are being used in the most economically efficient way.

5. The concept of **decent work or employment** refers to adequate opportunities for work, remuneration (in cash and in kind); safety at work and healthy working conditions; social security and income security; the observance of the fundamental rights of workers (freedom of association, non-discrimination at work and the absence of forced labour and child labour); and the use and availability of social dialogue, in which workers exercise their right to present their views, defend their interests and engage in discussions to negotiate work-related matters with employers and authorities.

6. **The education – employment nexus:** There is a strong linkage between the education of young people and their employment prospects. Well-educated youths provide an efficient and effective productive labour force. This implies that the productivity of a nation is dependent upon a well-educated labour force, most of whom are young. A highly skilled and motivated workforce is essential to remaining globally competitive. Therefore well-educated youths form the core of a productive labour market upon which an economy depends.

Education and employment are interlinked and mutually influencing social dimensions that are essential for translating economic growth into human development. Young people's employment prospects are closely related to the education received. Education and skills development generate important economic as well as social benefits. Unskilled youth workers are more vulnerable to economic shocks, less likely to find work and more likely to get stuck in

low-quality jobs with few opportunities to develop their human capital, and are also more vulnerable to demographic changes.

Decent work for youth is possible when young people are prepared with the skills needed to join the labour market and the labour market is also conducive and able to receive them. Thus, a big part of the decent work equation relies whether young people have the education and skills that are needed by the labour force. The new realities facing post-secondary education are about responsiveness in a rapidly changing world. Thus, the challenge on the side of education increasingly becomes that of transforming students by enhancing their knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities to empower them to achieve their social, economical and personal aspirations.

Annex II: Commitments and instruments related to youth education and employment

Global

Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965)

International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace (1985)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Cairo Youth Declaration (1994)

World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (1995)

Copenhagen Youth Declaration adopted at the World Summit on Social Development (1995)

Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes (1998)

Braga Youth Action Plan, adopted at the Third World Youth Forum of the United Nations (1998)

Millennium Development Goals (2000)

Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy, adopted at the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System (2001)

United Nations Expert Group Meeting on Global Priorities for Youth, Helsinki (2002)

International Labour Conference, resolution concerning youth employment (2005)

"Youth in the Global Economy", Supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth (2007)

Regional

African Peer Review Mechanism (2003)

Resolution to revitalize the Pan African Youth Union (2003)

Consensus statement adopted by the Fifth African Development Forum (2006)

African Youth Charter (2006)

Addis Ababa Declaration of Youth, adopted by the Pan African Youth Forum (2006)

Tripoli Declaration, adopted by the Africa-Europe Youth Summit (2007)

African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Youth

Subregional initiatives

East African Community

- Establishment of a Sectoral Council on Youth, Children, Gender and Community Development.
- Establishment of an East African Community Youth Council to mainstream youth issues in all development policies and programmes.
- Establishment of a department for youth and children in the Community's existing administrative structure.
- The Community's Gender and Community Development Department has requested funds for an annual youth exchange programme to share new opportunities and best practices in business and technology.
- Formulation of a harmonized comprehensive regional policy that provides for a binding framework for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes and projects.
- Establishment of a regional mechanism that will promote and sustain youth culture, values, morals and ethics.

Southern African Development Community

- Youth Council
- Youth Union

Economic Community of West African States

- Youth Employment Strategic Framework
- Youth Agenda

Global climate change agreements

COP 15 was the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 7 to 18 December 2009. The Conference is the highest body of the UNFCCC and consists of environment ministers who meet once a year to discuss Convention-related developments. The outcome of COP 15 is known as the *Copenhagen Accord*, which recognizes that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of the present day and that action should be taken to keep any temperature increases to below 2C. The document is not legally binding and does not contain any legally binding commitments for reducing CO₂.

COP 16 was the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties. It was held in Cancún, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010. The outcome of COP16 was an agreement - not a binding treaty - that calls on developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions as pledged in the Copenhagen Accord and calls on developing countries to plan to reduce their emissions so as to limit global warming to less than 2C above pre-industrial levels. The agreement includes a proposed \$100-billion-a-year fund to assist developing countries to finance emission reductions and adaptation.

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