

Creating decent jobs for youth through digital transformation

AU-EU Summit and Africa-Europe Week of Partnerships 2022

Wednesday, 16 February 2022

09:00 – 10:00 GMT+0 | 10:00 – 11:00 CET | 12:00 – 13:00 EAT

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Background

The African Union estimates that there are over 400 million people between the ages of 15 and 35 living in Africa. At the current rate of growth, projections show that by 2030, the number of young people in Africa will have increased by up to 42 percent. This youth population has the potential to accelerate the demographic dividend if effectively harnessed, however the multidimensional challenges they face continue to persist.

For example, in 2019, 21.9 percent of young Africans were not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), with the female and male rates standing at 27.4 percent and 16.6 percent, respectively. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increases in NEET rates in 2020 to 22.9 per cent (and to 27.8 and 18.2 per cent for young women and young men, respectively). Yet NEET statistics as well as high youth unemployment rates capture only a fraction of youth employment challenges in Africa. The working realities of an increasing number and share of African youth are dominated by low pay, temporary and precarious employment, informality, no social protection, insecure and unsafe work, and many other challenges. The youth employment challenge in many African countries was gravely aggravated by the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic.

Accelerated investment in employment creation for Africa's youth remains therefore crucially important, particularly in a context where economic growth alone cannot be relied for sufficient job creation in the region. Digital transformations offer opportunities not only for economic diversification but can also lead to the creation of decent jobs, especially for young women and men. Government, social partners and the broader development community need to nurture and cultivate this potential for transformational change, including through effective and high-impact partnerships.

The Call to Action for Human centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, recently adopted by ILO's constituents, highlighted the importance of focusing on decent jobs for young women and men to ensure an inclusive recovery. Investments in the green and digital economies were identified as priority action areas in the 2019 Global Youth Employment Forum, in Abuja, Nigeria and reconfirmed in Abidjan Declaration - Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa (2019).

Objective

Participants will discuss solutions to create decent jobs for Africa's growing youth population. The event will centre on how to harness digital transformation and development recommendations to scale up successful interventions by AU member states, in collaboration with development partners and youth representatives.

The webinar will present examples of partnerships between AU members states and development partners, such as the ILO/ITU/AU Joint Programme on Boosting Decent Jobs and Enhancing Skills for Youth in Africa's Digital Economy. Panellists, including youth representatives, will present and discuss examples of impactful investments in the digital economy that have led to job creation for youth.

The event will also allow to build on and further advance the discussions held during the Global Youth Employment Forum in Abuja in 2019 which brought together a wide range of constituents, stakeholders, and youth representatives.

Participants and audience

The meeting will be held as a side event during the AU-EU Week of Partnerships 2022 as an online webinar. The core group of participants will include youth representatives, policy makers and experts from government, workers' and employers' organisations, development partners, academia, and other youth employment stakeholders.

Format

The event will feature an interactive panel discussion between the following youth representatives and leaders:

- **Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon**, *Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa*, International Labour Organization
- **Anne-Rachel Inné**, *Regional Director for Africa*, International Telecommunication Union
- **Sabelo Mbokazi**, *Head of Division*, Labour Employment and Migration, Health, Humanitarian Affairs & Social Development (HHS) African Union Commission
- **Dennis Horch**, *Cluster Coordinator for TVET, Skills Development and Employment*, GIZ, South Africa
- **Joshua Alade**, *Executive Director*, Nigerian Youth SDG Network
- **Abdul Gafaru Dasan Amin**, *Generation Connect – Africa Youth Group*

Moderator: Lieve Verboven, *Director*, ILO Brussels

Key questions:

- How can policy makers and development partners stimulate employment-intensive growth and job creation for youth in Africa's digital economy?
- Why do digital transformation matter in Africa and how can youth actively engage in, contribute to, and shape partnerships that support such efforts?
- How can existing and emerging partnerships best be leveraged to scale up best practices?