



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Opportunities for youth in Africa

Accelerating job creation and entrepreneurship in agriculture and agribusiness

The issue

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Africa has the world's youngest population, with more than 600 million people under the age of 24 and more than 750 million under the age of 35. Given the right opportunities, youth could drive inclusive economic growth across the continent. Young people account for around 35 percent of the workforce in sub-Saharan Africa and 40 percent in northern Africa, of which about 40 percent are women. The growing youth population is challenging Africa's ability to meet the demand for jobs, which has pushed many to migrate out of rural areas and across borders. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), therefore, have forged an initiative to facilitate and accelerate efforts to create jobs for young Africans, in particular, by supporting the development of agribusinesses and fostering agricultural entrepreneurship including through leveraging public and private investment in agriculture.

The action

The 2018 Conference on Youth Employment in Agriculture called for greater efforts to create jobs for African youth. This initiative adopts an integrated and multi-faceted approach to generating quality on- and off-farm work for young people in agriculture and agribusiness. It leverages the central role of agriculture in Africa's development alongside the need to empower African youth to drive growth across the continent. It engages with the public and private sectors at continental, sub-regional and national level to provide young people opportunities for capacity development and access to resources, to improve stakeholder coordination and to facilitate the generation, dissemination and exchange of knowledge and expertise. Opportunities for Youth in Africa (OYA) will:

- strengthen regulatory systems to enhance the entrepreneurship, improve competitiveness and foster innovation;
- build institutional capacity to evaluate, design and implement policy, strategies and investment programmes;
- establish platforms to foster public-private dialogue and synergies and create opportunities for knowledge exchange;
- deliver demand-oriented technical and vocational training in entrepreneurship, business and digital skills to target groups;
- strengthen agricultural value chains and agri-food systems with the potential for job creation;
- facilitate access to public and private financial and non-financial resources and services; and
- facilitate access to markets for youth-led businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) at the national, regional and international level.

The issue in numbers



15–20 million
young people will join the African workforce annually through 2050



1.7 million
new jobs will be needed every month in Africa



Over **50%**
of young Africans aged 15–35 years working in agriculture

Programme targets



30 000
youths enrolled in training courses



600
youth-led SMEs created and/or supported



60
public-private development (and B2B) partnerships established

The budget



USD 50 million



5 years



6 initial countries

Expected results

- Creation of decent job opportunities accelerated, including through entrepreneurship and self-employment in agribusiness and agro-industries.
- Inclusive agricultural value chains and food systems developed.
- Social protection measures enhanced to increase resilience of communities to shocks and crises.
- Economic competitiveness and market integration at national and regional levels of youth-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in agriculture improved.
- Sustainable private investment leveraged for agri-food systems and specific value chains.

Geographic focus

Across the African continent and at sub-regional level, with an initial focus in six countries: Cabo Verde, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Tunisia and Zambia.

In partnership with

The African Union and regional economic communities; pan-African and intergovernmental organizations; national governments through relevant ministries; youth organizations and networks; public, private and civil-society institutions active in agriculture and youth employment, including, business associations, local authorities, producer, worker and migrant associations, business associations; international financial institutions and other financial and non-financial service providers; universities; technical and vocational education and training schools; private companies and sectoral associations; and development partners, including other UN Agencies and locally active NGOs.



SDG contribution



FAO and UNIDO continue job-creation success

Sierra Leone: Both agencies have supported the Sierra Leone Agri Business Initiative (SABI) centre and youth-dedicated agro-business and agro-mechanics training courses.

Tunisia: FAO and UNIDO have improved the skills of young people as potential entrepreneurs and job seekers through national agencies and institutions. They have also implemented youth-inclusion mechanisms in selected value chains.

The United Republic of Tanzania: Both FAO and UNIDO have addressed various challenges faced by young people in The United Republic of Tanzania's agricultural sector and worked to boost the number of young women and men in specific value chains, through both on- and off-farm opportunities (production, packaging and retailing of products).

Honduras: Rural youth enterprises have been supported through the enhancement of technical skills, access to microcredit, seed capital funds and access to markets.



Why invest?

This initiative will help to achieve the development objectives for Africa, as set out in the 2063 Agenda and corresponding action plans. Youth are the core of this agenda, notably through the African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment and the 1 Million by 2021 Initiative of the African Union Commission. FAO and UNIDO have joined forces to respond to the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agriculture Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, which targets the creation of job opportunities for youth in the agricultural sector. In line with these objectives and matched with strategic public-private partnerships, this initiative will catalyse the empowerment of youth in Africa through decent employment opportunities and entrepreneurship.

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