

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 5, 2014

TO: Whom it may concern

FROM: World Bank Group-IMF Young African Society (YAS)

SUBJECT: **Pertinent Issues and Recommendations from Africa Youth Forum 2014 (July 31, 2014)**

Introduction

The World Bank Group-IMF Young African Society, with the support of the AFRVP, organized and hosted last week's inaugural Africa Youth Forum which was held at the World Bank on July 31, 2014. The Summit was attended by Jin Yong Cai, Vice president of The World Bank Group (WBG) and CEO of IFC; Makhtar Diop, Vice president of Africa Region, WBG; representatives of EDS13 and EDS25, Senior Staff at the World Bank Group (Claudia Maria Costin, Senior Director for Education, WBG; Robert Hunja, Director for Governance Practice, WBG; Anabel Gonzalez, Senior Director for Trade and Competitiveness, WBG; and Vera Songwe, Country Director for Senegal, WBG); Government officials such as his Excellency Mamadou Diarra, Minister of Youth and Civic Education of Mali; Mrs King-Akirele, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liberia; members of the State Department such as Ambassador Robert P. Jackson, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary For African Affairs; 70 YALI fellows (Young African Leaders Initiative); Mamadou Toure, President of Africa 2.0; and representatives of the Youth from the Washington Metropolitan Area. Comments were received live from online participants.

Based on the rich and fruitful discussions from the event, this memorandum seeks to: (i) memorialize and crystallize the most pertinent issues affecting African youth today in the areas of entrepreneurship and employment, education, health, and good governance; and (ii) recommend possible solutions and plans of action.

For the purpose of this forum, we considered youth to the age group ranging between 15 and 35 years old.

Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship

- Some data: According to a survey done by ILO in 2012 (see annexes for more details), young people were asked why they could not find jobs; 28% of them said they looked but couldn't find anything and 29% said they don't feel like they are

prepared/ have the work experience for the job they want. 8 in 10 jobs are in the informal sector.

- Governments across Africa need to recognize the fact that recent research findings (World Development Report) show that in the next 15 years, the global economy needs to create 600 million new jobs to keep up with the world's population growth. The failure to deal with the challenge of chronic unemployment and intense poverty can be the source of social and political instability.
- Strengthening domestic markets is key for job creation and to the development of a middle class in Africa. The private sector should be given the enabling environment to thrive and grow locally so as to take its place as the driver of employment creation and allow the youth in our countries to feel that their future is in Africa.
- There is a need to re-conceptualize the approach to entrepreneurship in Africa. Emphasis needs to be placed on innovation and the deployment of today's resources to creating businesses capable of solving developmental challenges in Africa.
- A balanced approach to youth employment requires the development of the formal and informal sector with emphasis on boosting the skill sets of the informal sector through the training and empowerment of youths that are involved in this sector. The promotion of entrepreneurship should form the agenda for the dialogue on youth employment and empowerment with all efforts geared towards creating cohesion between policy and practice. Entrepreneurship should not be seen as the solution to all problems in the region but any strategy should incorporate it. The challenge remains the adequacy between academic training and the market's demands.
- Local governments should create more accessible platforms to boost information flow and data and discussions between youth and government officials, development partners and the private sector.
- So far, social entrepreneurship is one of the most effective concept, where youths come together to address social issues or advocate for their peers (inmate empowerment, orphans, etc.). Youths' dynamism could help gear the government into developing this area of focus.
- Technology and innovation should be highly considered as important tools for market assessment and screening. Various examples in Asia demonstrate the ingenuity of young people in various fields. Using technology in the private sector can advance the development of African countries, by providing needed services

in innovative ways while making profit (please refer to the annexes on youth employment from ILO for more details).

Education

- There is a need for stakeholders (donors, governments, civil society organizations and the private sectors) to promote investment in education, in order to prevent the perpetuation of poverty. Investment in education here, involves not just formal education but also informal education with emphasis on vocational education, basing parameters of success on results and outcomes.
- In advancing the issue of educational empowerment, there is the need for a strategic approach to promote the acquisition of skills that equip African youths for effective leadership. The education of African youths must be approached from a holistic rather a narrow perspective of just academics.
- There should be a conscious effort to create a smooth transition from school to work. Efforts need to be focused on how to gear education towards empowering the youths with the relevant knowledge that they can apply in solving societal needs and challenges.
- Despite budgetary constraints, there should be a conscious effort on the part of government to invest wisely in education based on the peculiar needs and challenges of the community. Developmental expectations must be matched or anchored on adequate preparation and planning based on accurate and cogent data.

Health

- Access to adequate health services and facilities continues to be a major problem in Africa. High rates of HIV/AIDS, exposure to environmental hazards, and stigma of mental health need particular attention.
- Proactive and preventative approaches are needed towards disease, as opposed to emergency reactive approaches. For example, in the case of epidemic outbreaks such as Ebola.
- Mental health is an issue that should be taken more seriously by governments and it is also part of the issue of motivation in Africa. Social determinants of mental health are same of other issues: adequate housing, good quality of education, good wages (young people), and equitable access to health care. Mental health should be part of our educational programs.

- Governments need to re-prioritize health, as it is an investment into human capital. Infrastructure investment alone, without a healthy, educated workforce and populace, will not yield the desired development and modernity African countries are striving for.

Good Governance

- Youth engagement is crucial to good governance, as the youth will be the future leaders – they must take on challenges of corruption, job creation, and natural resource management. Need for more transparent and youth inclusive governance policies in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Technology could serve as a mean to strengthen governance on the continent. Integrating technology to provide accessible data is needed to measure impacts and progress and address the lack of accountability.
- Governments and political parties should encourage African youth to become stakeholders, take action, and participate in the decision making processes of their countries.

Next Steps

The World Bank Group-IMF Young African Society looks forward to working closely with the World Bank Group and IMF to use the preceding issues and recommendations as a starting point to develop a formal agenda and action plan,, geared towards the uplift of African youth. It is our hope that we can empower African youth by isolating the issues they face and formulating effective solutions by leveraging all of the available resources, networks, and expertise at our disposal. The WBG-IMF Young African Society proposes to organize its next Youth Forum during the annual meetings in order to discuss the conclusions that have been made both from the Africa Youth Forum on July 31st 2014 and the Africa Summit on August 5th and 6th 2014.

Attachments:

- Note from ILO on Youth employment in Africa
- Presentation from ILO on Youth employment in Africa
- Presentation from World Bank Group on Jobs in Africa
- YAS forum booklet
- YAS brochure
- Final Agenda of the Forum with the list of participants
- Some pictures from the Forum
- To replay to the forum you can use the following link:
<http://live.worldbank.org/african-youth-forum-2014>
- What the youth expect from the summit:
<http://youtu.be/iFqsNcjeEQs?list=PL59FB6C9C9D741D01>

Cleared and cc: Mmes/Messrs. Elikia Kanga Nenkam and Yvonne Kirabo (Co-Presidents and Founders of the YAS)