

2019 Ibrahim Forum  
Africa's youth:  
jobs or migration?

SATURDAY, 6 APRIL 2019  
ABIDJAN, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

*Summary*

—

MO IBRAHIM FOUNDATION





2019 Ibrahim Forum  
Africa's youth:  
jobs or migration?

*Summary*

—



## Keynote

*The 2019 Ibrahim Forum focused on African migrations. The issue of migration, whether voluntary or forced, is currently provoking political and emotional reactions, especially outside the continent. These are often based on one-sided views and partial knowledge of this key dynamic that has always been part of human history. Hence the desire to hold this African-led, fact-based, frank and open discussion, free from any partisan agenda.*

*The debate was organised around three sessions. Each session was joined by a representative of the Now Generation Forum (NGF), held the day before – Friday, 5 April – on the same topic, to ensure that the discussion reflected the expectations and proposals of the continent's majority, its young people.*

In his opening speech **Mo Ibrahim, Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation**, stressed the fact that migration is a key issue for Africa, and its links with youth and jobs on the continent are very clear. He invited Africans to have a discussion about economic growth that is not coping with the population bulge. He said that the added value of this Forum debate is that it is grounded in data and facts, to counter the current narrative and misperceptions around African migrations, and emphasised that bad data leads to bad decisions and bad policies.



## SESSION 1

# Setting the picture straight on African migrations

*In many developed countries, public opinion, the media and policymakers perceive or present migration as a “crisis” threatening their security and stability. In fact, migration is not a new 21<sup>st</sup> century challenge. Human mobility is, and has been for centuries, part of many lives and a key dynamic contributing to human progress and to building and sustaining wealth in most countries.*

*The first session, chaired by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Chairperson of the High-Level Panel on International Migration in Africa and former President of Liberia, aimed at presenting the African perspective on this key topic, and highlighting the reality of African migrations. That is, they mainly take place within the African continent, and are mainly driven by the lack of local prospects. The debate also addressed the specific issues of refugees and the growing criminalisation brought about by unmanaged and illegal migrations.*

Opening the session, **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf** stated that migration is the historical endeavour of moving across borders for safety or for opportunity, but these movements have created a fear that the culture and way of life in host countries could be undermined. The data shows a different reality however: sub-Saharan migrations are mainly intra-African, with Africans and migrants sharing their knowledge and contributing to the development of host countries. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf highlighted that the goal of the session was for attendees to leave with a clearer understanding of migration, the contribution it makes to world development and the recognition that there may be additional efforts needed to make sure migration is safe, orderly and lawful.

**Vera Songwe**, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), pointed to the links between migration and the lack of economic opportunities for the continent’s youth. She argued that migration is a governance issue in the first place, and the discussion on African migrations should be about the policies needed on the continent to enable the creation of business opportunities, employment and to strengthen participation.

**Stefano Manservigi**, European Commission (EC) Director-General for International Cooperation and Development, highlighted that macro figures are not yet making the shift in how migrations are perceived, and micro figures about management of integration and the success of integration should be translated into more tangible findings to be widely understood. He also argued that the approach towards migrations should be more comprehensive, to include both short- and long-term objectives, and a dialogue that encompasses mobility and integrates actors such as civil society at grassroots level or the private sector. According to Stefano Manservigi, concrete action should include efforts towards good governance at institutional level, to increase key capacities e.g. civil registry or border control. On the other hand, job creation should be high on the continent’s agenda on issues such as easing access to credit.

**Alex Soros**, Deputy Chair of the Open Society Foundations (OSF), agreed that there is no migration crisis in Africa nor globally but rather a political crisis in Europe, where migration plays a role. According to Alex Soros, the opening of borders by some European leaders was down to political



*Ellen Johnson Sirleaf*

Against the misperception that migration is harmful to destination countries, we want to show that the contributions of migrants have always been a win-win situation for both migrants and host countries.

Our governments and our leaders must do more to create the conditions to keep our people at home, to give them jobs and opportunities.



*Stefano Manservigi*

No figures suggest a ‘migration crisis’: we have to distinguish between the perception and the reality.

Our governments and our leaders must do more to create the conditions to keep our people at home, to give them jobs and opportunities.

“

*Alex Soros*

What happens to Africa's young people will decide the trajectory of the continent.

“

*Mamadou Toure*

The right ecosystem is critical: ease to do business, entrepreneurship early in the curriculum, role models who can inspire and make young people believe in themselves.

“

*Ellen Johnson Sirleaf*

Governance, governance, governance!

opportunism and tested the very structures of the European Union but this has little to do with Africa. African migrations are mostly internal within the continent, and understanding the data is key to counter current misperceptions that exist in Europe.

**Mamadou Toure, Founder of Africa 2.0, Chairman and CEO of Ubuntu Capital**, reinforced the idea that facts and figures should be put into perspective when it comes to African migrations: migration is part of human history. He also added that migration has many positive elements, for example the first investors in Africa were from the diaspora. In his opinion, young people leave the continent because they lack opportunities and it is the responsibility of their leaders and governments to create the right opportunities, such as introducing entrepreneurial skills into curricula.

**Ellen Johnson Sirleaf** agreed on the need to change the mindset of young Africans and strengthen their entrepreneurial skills. She highlighted a related issue that many well-trained Africans are being recruited by Europe or the United States and asked how to keep them at home.

**Carl Manlan, Chief Operating Officer, The Ecobank Foundation**, representing the voice of the NGF, reinforced key points that came out of the conversation held the day before: perceptions about migrations are fuelled by politics that push a narrative of fear, boosting economic growth on the continent would increase the number of young Africans staying, and supporting education programmes, especially in ICT, would increase employment opportunities. An additional step forward would be the creation of platforms where the youth can have a dialogue with its leaders and a space to shape policies regarding its future.

Questions from the audience included whether migration should then be treated as an economic problem and how to address corruption as an issue of governance and accountability. In addition, the issue of bringing the needs of youth into the mainstream in political and decision-making processes was raised, to integrate young people at grassroots level and encourage them to contribute to local development and community building. It was noted that while youth in Africa is driving innovation, access to capital and access to markets still remain limited, and often foreigners can get funding more easily than Africans.

**Vera Songwe** replied that to fight corruption it is important to identify who is doing well and who is not, and innovative systems such as digitalisation can help. In terms of access to financing, governance is the first step as it can influence market perceptions. She emphasised the danger of talking about migration rather than governance. She warned that this can lead to closing borders, as in the European narrative, whereas the way forward should be about openness and trade as per the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), that reflects the more progressive position of Africa.

**Stefano Manservigi** agreed on the need to start with governance, as through this the continent will be able to create an area where people can move freely, and diplomas and skills are mutually recognised. In terms of Europe-Africa relations, he encouraged the two parties to work together.

**Mamadou Toure** added that fighting corruption is also fundamental to the creation of conducive economic opportunities. Efforts against corruption should include Africa's youth and people to change mindsets and expose bad practices, setting up organised processes where technology can play a role, rather than expecting everything from governments. According to Toure, access to finance remains a challenge. Because of the structure of the economy, banks tend not to lend to early investors. However innovative approaches such as crowdfunding, based on technology, a self-sufficiency mindset and interconnectivity can help.

**Alex Soros** concluded the discussion by adding that investing in higher education institutions is fundamental, and that migrations cannot be treated just as a purely economic dynamic: Africa's youth deserves much more than just jobs.

“

*Mamadou Toure*

Efforts against corruption should include Africa's youth and people to change mindsets and expose bad practices, setting up organised processes where technology can play a role, rather than expecting everything from governments.

“

*Alex Soros*

Africa's youth deserves much more than just jobs.

## SESSION 2

# The African youth bulge confronted by jobless growth



*Hailemariam Desalegn*

Policy and action are not matching in Africa. We don't want to see next year that nothing has changed and we talk about the same issues again. The most important thing for us is the takeaway from this conference.

The whole issue is about how we can deal with our youth who are deeply dissatisfied, economically, socially and politically marginalised. We need to answer the quest of our young people as quickly as possible, with a sense of urgency.

Africa can leapfrog, for instance by modernising agriculture both in terms of technology as well as to reverse climate change.



*Abdourahmane Cissé*

We need to make sure that the skills that youth get during their schooling lead to employment.

Young people need to be accountable as well. We need to see a lot more young people in politics.

*Youth already forms the majority of Africa's population and is expected to continue growing, making Africa the youngest continent. This growing youthful population should be a key resource but mainly due to the lack of economic opportunities, the majority of young Africans feel trapped in "waithood", with little chance to progress.*

*This second session, chaired by Valerie Amos, Director of SOAS (University of London), and former UK Secretary of State for International Development, considered how the lack of prospects triggers the search for opportunities elsewhere. It also looked at the current and future challenges and opportunities of the African job market, among which are the unexploited potential of agriculture and the changes expected from the Fourth Industrial Revolution.*

**Valerie Amos** introduced the focus of the second session - the future challenges and opportunities of the African job market. The youth bulge on the continent offers significant opportunities but it also poses challenges in terms of education and skills development.

According to **Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of Ethiopia**, the main focus of this discussion should be what we take away from it and how in practice to address the challenges facing Africa's youth. He suggested starting with the basics and to look into education and the skills that are necessary to succeed in the labour market. He claimed that Africans are latecomers at the bottom of the economic ladder. However, they do have a number of advantages, so they need to focus on developing their skills to move forward.

According to Hailemariam Desalegn, primary and secondary education are important but for young people it is more important to strengthen technical and vocational skills. Moreover, in most countries in Africa the agricultural sector is neglected, skills are lacking, and it is not attractive to young people as an employment opportunity, despite being a key resource. There are best practices elsewhere, and Africa needs to adopt these. Ethiopia is learning from India, China and Israel those technologies that can help move from subsistence to producing surplus. The infrastructure deficit is also critical. That is where partnerships come in, e.g. public-private partnerships, donor committees and financial institutions.

To continue the discussion, **Abdourahmane Cissé, Minister of Oil, Energy, and Renewable Energies, Côte d'Ivoire**, asserted that the problem is not just unemployment, but also the poor quality of jobs for young people. In his view, the starting point should be a good education, especially for women. He explained that Côte d'Ivoire has created new schools and new universities focusing on technical skills and he believed that it is key to focus on employment in sectors that can bring jobs, such as petroleum, mining and electricity. He suggested providing tax incentives for companies to hire students straight from university or for internships, in order for Africa's youth to start gaining professional experience.

In Abdourahmane Cissé's opinion, firstly innovation is key but if Africa wants to innovate, it needs to provide access to different tools such as optical fibre and computers. In 2015, Côte d'Ivoire



reduced import costs of laptops and other devices from 35% of tax to 6% of tax. The second key consideration is governance. It is fundamental to have a good business environment and good governance to achieve growth and to make it inclusive. Côte d'Ivoire has a plan over the next two years to invest in electricity infrastructure that is expected to have a positive effect on productivity and also have a social impact. Drawing from his experience of being appointed minister by President Ouattara at age 32, Abdourahmane Cissé suggested that more young people should get involved in politics, to become active stakeholders in discussions about the future of Africa.

**Roberta Gatti, Chief Economist, Human Development Practice Group, The World Bank,** introduced the World Bank's Human Capital Index, that captures in one metric the trajectory of human capital from birth to age 18, and translates this number into productivity – measuring the potential income that is lost because of shortfalls in health and education.

According to Roberta Gatti, Africa's young people are a blessing. Countries in the rest of the world are following different trajectories, as their working age populations have already peaked. They are struggling to maintain productivity growth and to cope with higher health spending because of their ageing populations. This is an opportunity for Africa to seize, and the Index highlights the importance of investing in human capital data. A key function of data is to help focus on what is really required, and for Africa it is spending on human capital.

Besides the Human Capital Index, Roberta Gatti also introduced the World Bank's Service Delivery Indicators, surveys (currently 15 African countries) capturing everyday experiences with public service delivery, in particular in education and health. The surveys found that one third of teachers globally are not teaching and that up to 50% of health diagnoses are routinely incorrect. She emphasised the importance of spending more and spending better in these sectors, and the role of data here as citizens surveys can help to make service delivery better.

**Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank Group (AfDB),** stressed that, besides potential, Africa should focus on actions, concentrating on entrepreneurship, skills and competitiveness in all sectors. He argued that high GDP does not translate into economic opportunities for young people, but the question should rather be about what contribution young people are bringing to GDP and how Africa can use human power and entrepreneurship capacity to create mega businesses on the continent.

In Akinwumi Adesina's view, Africa must invest in hope and the conversation about it must happen today, not tomorrow. If young people don't have jobs and don't pay taxes; life is going to worsen for older generations as well. Agriculture has an enormous potential - expected to be around 1 trillion dollars in Africa by 2030. Food business is the biggest business, but Africa needs to make it attractive, and young people have to perceive agriculture as a business. The AfDB has programmes to provide incentives to young entrepreneurs in agriculture.

Akinwumi Adesina suggested that Africa also needs to invest in the jobs and skills of the future, such



*Roberta Gatti*

Africa's young people are a blessing, but it takes a lot to translate this blessing into economic opportunity.

The Human Capital Index aims to capture attention and elevate conversation. If things continue as they are, Africa could lose 60% of its income potential and productivity because of shortfalls in learning, schooling and health.

The data not only shines light but keeps attention and bridges between political transitions.



*Akinwumi Adesina*

We always talk a lot about potential. No one eats that potential. One third of young people don't have jobs.

Take this demographic asset and take it into an economic powerhouse for ourselves and the world.

If you want to be a billionaire, get into agriculture.

“

*Akinwumi Adesina*

Youth is not the future, it is the present of this continent. The AfDB is going to do its best to unlock that potential to build the biggest businesses in the world.

“

*Natasha Kimani*

We need to change the narrative around young people and how we talk about and to them. They can speak for themselves. We cannot speak for them.

We idealise the word entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is not a magic pill, it cannot fix bad governance.

It is not up to the people but government must play their role first. As long as I'm paying taxes, I'm going to hold governments accountable.

“

*Akinwumi Adesina*

We have to think big as a continent.

Africa would have a lot of problems without the diaspora. Brain drain can also be an economic gain.

as tech businesses. As a bank, the AfDB is preparing itself for the future. Banks would normally see young people as a risk not as an opportunity, but the AfDB, in Akinwumi Adesina's words, is putting its capital at risk for young people, setting up funds to support tech entrepreneurs.

**Natasha Kimani, Head of Programmes, Well Told Story**, representing the voice of the NGF, suggested changing how young people are talked and thought about. For example, when young people reject unpaid internships, it is said that they are entitled, but actually they know their rights. She also added that entrepreneurship is not the only solution to the challenges facing Africa's youth. Young people might get into entrepreneurship, but there may still be obstacles such as heavy fiscal burdens or hurdles, and in these cases they may fail due to poor assistance from their governments. Strong institutions are therefore a key pillar.

According to Natasha Kimani, governments' budgets and spending should also reflect the increased importance of youth, but generally only small funds are allocated, accounting for just around 1% of government budgets. Particular attention should also be paid to making sure that women thrive. In the words of Natasha Kimani, accountability of governments is key for young people's optimal development. When talking about entrepreneurship, it has to be recognised that many young people end up in informal jobs that are highly vulnerable. When encouraging entrepreneurship, it should be a priority to create safe spaces for young businesses to thrive.

Questions from the audience raised the issue of poor energy provision despite this being a key driver in improving living standards and enhancing the economy of Africa. The audience also suggested that the conversation should be about creating more billions for the billions of people, ending corruption and resource appropriation. The issue of the quality and not just quantity of jobs was raised, including welfare facilities and fair salaries. They said that jobs are discussed but most of the time they are not well paid and there are no welfare facilities. Also, in order to strengthen governance more attention should be focused on bringing competent and capable youth into public sector jobs.

**Abdourahmane Cissé** pointed out that the whole of sub-Saharan Africa produces the same amount of electricity as Spain. According to him the greatest effort should go into increasing country capacity building, and one of his current projects is working on a West African Power Pool whereby people can buy electricity and it can be moved from one country to another in the region. He said a second issue is the cost of connection, and Côte d'Ivoire is currently providing alternative ways to cut and delay these costs to improve coverage in the country.

**Akinwumi Adesina** stated that Africa has a lot of potential for renewable energy, which is a reliable resource and the AfDB is investing heavily into this sector. For instance, there is an initiative to transform the whole Sahel region into the largest solar power zone on the planet.

**Natasha Kimani** stressed that Africa should change the narrative on how money and social and economic development are talked about, to ensure that growth is inclusive, responsive and representative.

**Hailemariam Desalegn** acknowledged that energy production/generation in Africa is lagging behind, yet these are key to the creation of jobs and development. This needs investment and prioritisation, as took place in Ethiopia which substantially raised its megawatt capacity in a few years. Another key factor in his opinion is focusing on the involvement of youth in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

A second round of questions from the audience raised the issue of brain drain and what policies are being put in place to attract young people in the diaspora to come back and take part in Africa's development. Another question raised was what the AfDB can do to facilitate trade in industrial goods for agro-processing and encourage cross-fertilisation between African countries that suffer from outside competition or struggle to exploit the potential of their human resources.

**Akinwumi Adesina** encouraged investment in young people to build businesses. The AfDB supports SMEs and would like to do a lot more. The AfDB is also investing in special agro-industrial processing zones with fiscal incentives encouraging people to move into rural areas where they can be more competitive. The idea is to turn zones of economic deprivation into zones of economic prosperity by building industrial processes around value-added agriculture.

**Abdourahmane Cissé** shared his personal experience of being part of the diaspora and coming back to the continent because of good leadership. He then encouraged young people to join the public service, saying it is possible to have mobility within a career, transitioning from private to public sectors. He called for members of the diaspora to consider moving back as their skills would make the difference in the continent.

**Hailemariam Desalegn** stated that Ethiopia has one of the largest African diaspora communities and it plays a key role in technology transfer, research and development. He stressed the added value of people going abroad and then moving back to their country of origin, bringing their assets. In his opinion Africa should also focus on supporting SMEs and governments should be at the forefront, through investment but also in the creation of technology parks.

According to **Roberta Gatti**, human capital is the only capital that poor people have, and investment in human capital should be a joint effort by governments, the private sector and civil society. In her opinion a system should be created where public servants are selected for their motivation and supported throughout their careers, as teachers or doctors have the potential to change people's lives.

**Natasha Kimani** added that many young people think government is the best employer but in her opinion this should change. She believes that young people should be more critical about their governments and hold them accountable. Another issue is that start-ups in Africa often have an invisible foreign hand, and the key should be to encourage organic, African-led businesses.

“

*Abdourahmane Cissé*

It is important to have good people with strength in the public sector.

We need the diaspora to come back home and help our country.

“

*Hailemariam Desalegn*

We call it brain circulation. Our people need to go abroad, get exposure and come back and settle in their own country.

“

*Roberta Gatti*

Human capital is the only capital that poor people have. If we want to be serious about inclusive growth, investing in human capital and access to jobs particularly of the poor is fundamental.

Who made a greater difference in your life than a teacher (leaving your parents aside)?

“

*Natasha Kimani*

Young people dare to dream, dare to challenge. It is good to ask for what you think you deserve. Ask it and you'll get it.



## SESSION 3

# The way forward: bolstering mobility, updating skills, sharing responsibilities

*Acknowledging that migrations cannot be avoided but need to be better managed, this last session, chaired by Ngaire Woods, Dean of Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford University, considered avenues to strengthen the capacity of the continent to make the most of its greatest resource: human capital. Along with policies to update skills and equip youth for the expected job market changes, as well as to strengthen professional and geographical mobility within the continent, mitigation policies were also considered to be key, in order to make sure no one is left behind.*



*Albert Mudenda Muchanga*

There is a gap between leaders and the people, information does not flow smoothly, and this creates misperceptions, for instance about migration.

The implementation of the AfCFTA will involve all layers of government, private sector, women, youth and interested groups – in line with the idea that improved communication will bring greater appreciation.



*Arancha Gonzalez*

We have to connect better the offer with the demand.

Mobility and migration need to be discussed and managed with the understanding that diversity, which is what mobility introduces, means strength.



*President Festus Mogae*

This perception about foreigners taking jobs is what African leaders should fight.

**Ngaire Woods** started by asking the audience how many people work in a country different from their country of birth. She believes there is a sense that migration is positive, and it is something that everybody on the continent wants. However, there are contrasting sources reporting contrasting perceptions.

According to **Albert Mudenda Muchanga, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Trade and Industry**, a key issue is the gap between leaders and the people. Within the African Union, leaders show great commitment towards creating one united Africa, based on common African values, and these commitments are signed. However, when these matters are taken to the individual level there is no understanding and no appreciation, and there is not much buy-in from society at grassroots level around AfCFTA. This, according to Albert Mudenda Muchanga, shows the need for regular contact between leaders and the population.

In his view, one possible solution would be to create mechanisms to bring the agreements from the continental level to a community level. For example, under the AfCFTA there will be national committees following the implementation at national level. Moreover, the implementation process will involve the executive, the legislative, academia, the private sector, women, youth and interested groups – in line with the idea that improved communication will bring greater appreciation.

The AfCFTA will bring greater demand for labour following increased economic activity, and to fill labour shortages at the domestic level, migration could be beneficial. Then perhaps people will start seeing the benefits of migration and this could shift mindsets because migration is more likely to be rejected when people are unemployed than in periods of economic growth. In fact, in his opinion, the issue is a lack of information flow, not just in Africa but also in other parts of the world.

**Arancha Gonzalez, Executive Secretary of the International Trade Centre (ITC)**, began by pointing out that the conversation about migration should be about mobility instead. She also noted that within this conversation there are many disconnects. First, a disconnect between politicians and citizens, but also a disconnect between how much migration and mobility are discussed and how little in practice we do about it. Arancha Gonzalez noted that the countries where mobility works are the ones who manage it in the first place, not leaving it to market forces or in the hands of the populist discourse. There are best practices in countries that work towards matching skills needs and skills availability. In these cases, a country with a high unemployment rate could still welcome migrants because they are not addressing the same segments of the labour market.

In her opinion there is a disconnect between the economic and the socio-cultural aspects of mobility. A lot is known about remittances but not as much about the hostility towards migrants relating to difference in terms of culture, religion, colour, or sexual orientation. This needs to be discussed and managed with the understanding that diversity, which is what mobility introduces, means strength.

**Ngairé Woods** then asked what the role of governments should be to make migration something that the people will themselves embrace.

**President Festus Mogae of Botswana** (from the audience) asserted that leaders should explain to their population that migrations often benefit destination countries. In his country, Botswana, five to ten years ago people appreciated that migrants came in from South Africa and Zimbabwe with better qualifications. But that situation has changed, with people now thinking that migrants are taking their jobs. This is the case because the domestic skills gap is filled with foreign workers.

**Nasi Rwigema, Mo Ibrahim Foundation Scholar and MBA candidate at London Business School**, representing the voice of the NGF, reported that the Forum discussed the reasons why people move around and then talked about making sure they stay on the continent.

In the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) there is a section on Sustainable Economic Opportunity that is a collective term for jobs. According to Nasi Rwigema, an important element that needs government intervention is providing an environment where business can thrive. There are several layers to this. First, there are people looking for educational opportunities. If we ask why they stay in Africa, it is most probably because African universities have world-class lectures and this attracts African youth.

Secondly, if one cannot find professional or vocational opportunities in their sector of expertise or education, according to Nasi Rwigema, it is important not to encourage the mindset that this is a second-class outcome. He added that there is a lack of opportunities even for those with higher degrees, and the youth expectation that governments have created the right environment, the incentive for people to create businesses and job opportunities.

**Oumar Seydi, Africa Director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)**, claimed that the private sector opens channels that make it possible for jobs to be created. In his opinion, the private sector should also work with government to make sure skills creation matches market needs. The Doing Business Report provides an incentive to look into areas that need to be improved. In his view, governments should provide reasons to investors to do business in their own country.

**Oley Dibba-Wadda, Director, African Development Bank Group (AfDB)**, replied that policy makers should remember that one of the key qualities of a leader is empathy because an empathic leader can sense the problems of the people and listen to and understand what people are going through. If this essential quality is lacking, the focus will be on macro issues and policies will not be shaped on people's needs.



*Nasi Rwigema*

If we start by acknowledging that people will move, we can then focus on understanding why they move and what their experience will be and how to make them move within the continent.

Entrepreneurs are not only Mark Zuckerberg but are also the electrician, or the solar panel installer.

Issues like corruption shouldn't stand in the way of people who create business and who open up job opportunities in Africa.



*Oumar Seydi*

The conditions conducive to foreign direct investment should be seen as a package. At any given time if a piece is not working, nothing works.



*Oley Dibba-Wadda*

One of the key qualities of leaders is empathy.



*Arancha Gonzalez*

The job market is the toughest issue for policy makers to deal with, as there are too many moving pieces all coming at once – the 4IR, digitalisation or ecology transition.

We should celebrate local entrepreneurs that usually are SMEs, micro-entrepreneurs and start-ups, and businesswomen.



*Oumar Seydi*

We talked for the entire day about investing in human capital, focusing on education and skills, but we should also have in our minds investment in health.

To benefit from the demographic dividend, investing in family planning could be an effective tool to break the cycle of poverty.

**Arancha Gonzalez** added that the job market is the toughest issue for policy makers to deal with because there are too many simultaneously moving pieces – 4IR, digitalisation or ecology transition all coming at once.

On the other hand, governments trying to shape the job market have a difficult task. A significant factor is understanding where jobs come from. They can come from three different areas: the public sector, employing others (which is a part that is not growing) and self-employment (which is a part that is growing). She suggested celebrating local entrepreneurs that usually are SMEs, micro-entrepreneurs and start-ups, and businesswomen.

Questions from the audience raised the issue of African students overseas who, when they return to the continent, find an environment that does not meet their expectations and get stuck because of a lack of opportunities. It was also noted that the public sector must improve public financial management in terms of controlling corruption but also of its workers to scale up their efficiency and improve productivity to make the public sector attractive to young talents. It was noted that financial incentives are key to improving the efficiency of the public sector, and a sense of pride is essential. There is also a need to build bridges between the public and the private sector, so that in the course of a career people can move between both. There has to be this possibility so that the image of working in the public sector is not that it is a choice for life but that one can succeed in the private sector and combine the two careers.

Another issue raised was the lack of recruitment policies. There is a practice in the public sector of nominating people and this is detrimental to the motivation of those who are committed to using their skills and being recognised for their efforts. It was suggested that public sector budget cuts be stopped as countless people depend on public service and need access to essential services. If policies are changed to provide more resources to the public sector, and more space to young people to enter it and develop their skills then the current situation will change and people's lives improved.

To close the conversation, **Oumar Seydi** argued that investing in human capital, education and health was fundamental.

With a youth population expected to increase significantly to 1.2 billion by 2100, in his opinion Africa should expect to profit from a lower dependency ratio. However, countries that have the highest population growth tend to be the poorest ones. To benefit from the demographic dividend, investing in family planning could be an effective tool to break the cycle of poverty. This would empower women to plan for their future and achieve their fullest potential.











**mo.ibrahim.foundation**

 /MoIbrahimFoundation

 @Mo\_IbrahimFdn

 moibrahimfoundation

