

Action plan that recognizes the youth

By Elizabeth Mwai



Daniel Huba (left) Director, Youth Empowerment Strategic Scheme, addresses the Press during the Youth Employment Summit (YES) Kenya 2006 at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre.

When the curtain fell on the third Global Youth Employment Summit, it opened a new chapter for job creation.

There were numerous recommendations but perhaps the level of seriousness of African leaders to eradicate unemployment was shown by the formation of the first ever 'YES African Network' to be coordinated by Kenya.

Kenya has also been nominated to host the East African region's secretariat.

"The problem of youth unemployment has weighed heavily on Africa and as African ministers, we have drafted a charter to double our commitment in resolving this issue,"

Youth Affairs minister Mohammed Kuti says.

Thirteen recommendations

African ministers held a parallel meeting to respond to the demands made by the youth in their 2007 Nairobi Charter.

The youth came up with the Nairobi Declaration, which challenged their respective Governments to speed up the processes to help them secure jobs.

Thirteen recommendations, which could see the level of unemployment in their respective countries reduced, were made.

The youth called for the creation of markets for goods and services and the unleashing of widespread entrepreneurship opportunities for the realisation of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

At the same time, they pledged to promote and support advocacy programmes and initiatives to influence the change of policies and legislations that would create favourable conditions for the actualisation of YES campaign objectives.

Gender inequality

Enhancement of youth enterprise development and promotion of sustainable livelihoods for the reduction of poverty was also top on the agenda.

Skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) also featured prominently and the youth urged leaders to assist them by equipping them with knowledge and skills that would increase their chances of employment.

Quality education was also emphasised so as to adequately prepare the youth for the labour market. There was a pledge to promote an entrepreneurial culture in youth through business development services and mentoring.

Gender inequality was tabled as an obstacle, which prevented women from actualising their potential in business and they called on the Government to ensure fairness.

Action plan that recognises the youth

In a swift response to the appeals, African ministers drafted their own charter.

The charter, read by Kuti, said the newly formed YES African Network would hold interval meetings ahead of the biannual meeting to assess progress.



Labour Minister Dr Newton Kulundu addresses the summit



Youth Affairs Minister Dr Mohammed Kuti shows the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Salam Al Zobe, Maasai artefacts on display.

Cameroon will host the secretariat for Central Africa, Nigeria for the West African region and in the Southern region, South Africa would play host.

The first African summit is set to take place next year at a date to be announced later. Kuti urged countries to come up with better means of tackling corruption.

Governments were also advised to develop an action plan that recognises the youth to resolve the issue of unemployment.

"Your focus should not only be on the Government or corporates; do not look up but around... at the environment and identify business opportunities available," Kuti said.