9 November 2016

Jobs for Africa Foundation launched in Geneva with tripartite support

Representatives of African employers’ organisations, trade unions, African governments and international organisations launched the Jobs for Africa Foundation at the Intercontinental Hotel in Geneva on 9 November 2016.

An initiative of African employers’ organisations, the key objective of the Foundation is to sustain growth through enterprise creation and development and to accelerate the pace of job creation in the African continent with sights firmly set on absorbing the millions of young people who enter the job market every year.

Mr Jamal Belahrach, the founding President of the Jobs for Africa Foundation and chair of the Taskforce on Employment and Employability that developed the Blueprint for Jobs in Africa, recalled in his opening remarks that Africa had opportunities in abundance and that it was important to exploit this potential to create decent job opportunities, particularly for young people.

Welcoming the initiative on behalf of the global employer community, IOE Secretary-General Ms Linda Kromjong underscored the importance of a multi-sectoral approach in the roll out of the work of the Foundation. The Secretary-General of Business Africa, Ms Jacqueline Mugo emphasised the critical role of employers’ organisations in achieving the Foundation’s objectives.

Presenting the McKinsey Global Institute’s publication Lions on the Move II: Realizing the Potential of Africa’s Economies, the Institute’s Director Mr Amine Tazi Riffi informed participants that African economies that depended on commodity exports and those that had been affected by the Arab Spring had seen their growth decline while non-commodity exporters such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda had recorded stable rates of growth.

The panellist from the European Commission, Mr Zissimos Vergos, called for investments that made a real difference, particularly in job-rich sectors.
such as agriculture, echoing the principal objectives of the EU’s external investment plan. The representative of the African Development Bank Leila Mokadem highlighted the Bank’s priority of a strong emphasis on job creation.

In his remarks during the closing session, ILO Director-General Mr Guy Ryder reaffirmed the ILO’s commitment to support the initiative. He went on to welcome the Jobs for Africa Foundation as a key means to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 of promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, whilst UNCTAD Secretary-General, Mr Mukhisa Kituyi focused on the importance of building productive capacity in Africa and the need to promote intra-African trade.

There was shared recognition that the launch marked a pivotal moment, one where the tripartite support and engagement that had characterised the initiative to date would now be the catalyst for real action on the ground, with the implementation of the Blueprint for Jobs in Africa providing the point of departure.

Please refer to the side panel for the programme, speaker bios, background and contact information and other resources, and visit the Jobs for Africa website and Twitter feed @africajobsforce

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