Launch event for the Jobs for Africa Foundation concludes that investment and partnerships are key to successful outcomes

A message from Jobs for Africa Foundation President, Mr Jamal Belahrach

It gives me great pleasure to share with you, via the link in the side panel, our comprehensive report of the launch of the Jobs for Africa Foundation on 3 November. The report conveys the clear message that our goal of sustaining growth and accelerating the pace of job creation on our continent, especially for our young people, will not be realized without targeted investment and strategic partnerships.

The many of you who were present - more than one hundred participants - appreciated that we took advantage of the launch to organize a three-panel discussion moderated by renowned Kenyan broadcast journalist John Sibi-Okumu.

We were proud to welcome distinguished leaders of international organizations and institutions, employers’ organizations, trade unions, think tanks and private enterprises, who shared their perspectives, experiences, knowledge and expertise in what one interlocutor described as a “marketplace of ideas” for addressing the ongoing problem of youth unemployment.
As succinctly put by ILO Director-General Guy Ryder in his intervention, youth unemployment on our continent is “the priority of priorities”. Our panels and audience explored three important factors impacting on how we are to tackle it: the current economic context and outlook - the backdrop to our work; the role of investment – where it should come from and the sectors to which it should be directed; and the pivotal role of partnerships and skills development.

There was consensus that the close, inclusive and determined multi-stakeholder engagement that had brought us thus far - from the Casablanca Declaration, to the Blueprint for Jobs in Africa, to this launch of the Foundation - must characterize our onward journey to concrete action.

Now we must realize our shared vision, particularly for the 70 per cent of the African population that is under the age of 30. Together, employers, workers and governments must create an environment where young people are empowered and supported to secure the dream of decent employment and a bright future in Africa.

Ms Leila Mokadem, our speaker from the African Development Bank, captured the sense of urgency when she said that “time is not on our side”. When the African social partners come together mid-December in Tunis, we will be rolling up our sleeves to map out steps for national action plans to implement, together, the ten recommendations of the Blueprint to achieve the much-needed jobs for our youth as a social, economic, moral and security imperative.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Jobs for Africa Foundation Secretary, Mr Frederick Muia at muia(at)ioe-emp.org.