

Initiatives to Promote Skills and Education Launched at World Economic Forum on Africa

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- The World Economic Forum launches Africa Skills Initiative to foster greater public-private partnerships to improving skills training
- Nigerian business leaders join forces with UN Special Envoy on Global Education to launch \$20 million Safe Schools Initiative aimed at creating safer learning environments in the country
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Abuja, Nigeria, 9 May 2014 – The World Economic Forum today launched Africa Skills Initiative, a multistakeholder initiative that will bring together private and public sector leaders to shape national and regional skills and employment policies in an effort to increase competitiveness and labour productivity and promote inclusive economic growth.

The Africa Skills Initiative will use the [Forum 's Human Capital Index](#), which provides an overview on how well

countries are leveraging their human capital and establishing workforces that are prepared for the demands of

competitive economies. The Initiative was launched by the Regional Business Council, composed of leading

African companies engaged with the World Economic Forum. Although Africa has seen annual growth rates of 5%

in 2012-2013, the continent ' s positive outlook is threatened by a skills mismatch which is hampering business

investment, rising inequality and high youth unemployment. With 200 million people aged between 15 and 24,

Africa has the youngest population in the world, but according to the African Economic Outlook, the rate of youth unemployment for young people is double that of adult unemployment in most African countries.

“ Despite impressive achievements in education over the past decade, there remains an enormous mismatch between the work available and the skills provided by the education system, leaving employers unable to fill many roles, ” said Elsie Kanza, Head of Africa at the World Economic Forum. “ The Africa Skills Initiative will facilitate informed dialogue on skills gap issues cutting across sectors and geographies and provide opportunities to share solutions at regional and local levels. ”

The meeting saw leaders from Nigeria ’ s business community and government team with Gordon Brown, the UN Special Envoy on Education, to launch Safe Schools Initiative. The scheme, which has been led by the private sector and backed by the government, will invest an initial \$20 million to physically protect schools and promote community interventions that nurture safer environments for learning. The scheme will start with a pilot project of six schools in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states in the north of the country.

Nduka Obaigbena, Chairman of ThisDay Media Group, added: “ The Safe Schools Initiative is a public-private partnership that will help protect our greatest asset, our young people, by giving them a safe environment where they can acquire the skills they need to realize their potential. You cannot have inclusive growth if you do not build for the future. ”

The 24th World Economic Forum on Africa will be held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 7-9 May 2014. The theme of

the meeting is Forging Inclusive Growth, Creating Jobs.

The Co-Chairs of the meeting are Dominic Barton, Managing Director, McKinsey & Company, United

Kingdom; Jean-François van Boxmeer, Chairman of the Executive Board and Chief Executive Officer,

Heineken, Netherlands; Aliko Dangote, President and Chief Executive Officer, Dangote Group, Nigeria;

Bineta Diop, President, Femmes Africa Solidarité, Switzerland; Jabu A. Mabuza, Chairman, Telkom Group,

South Africa; Sunil Bharti Mittal, Chairman, Bharti Enterprises, India; John Rice, Vice-Chairman, GE, Hong Kong

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Notes to Editors

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