



# THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER ON **JOBS IN AfRiCa**

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# What is the People's Charter on Jobs in Africa?



Africa needs about 15 million new decent jobs every year to harness its demographic dividend, reflected by a booming young population. But the potential benefits of Africa's youthful population are unrealised. Before the Covid-19 crisis, more than two-thirds of non-student youths were unemployed, discouraged, or only vulnerably employed. Today, the pandemic has worsened the situation. Africans rank the need for quality jobs above other issues. Over 70% say their government is handling job creation poorly, far above the percentage of citizens that think their government is poorly handling other issues such as healthcare and education. The continent faces significant structural barriers to creating decent work opportunities. These include employment demand factors (economic constraints; poor governance and corruption; access to finance; infrastructural development) and labour supply-side factors (educational and skills mismatch; lack of social capital). This charter focuses on rigorous ideas and solutions that address the employment demand side from the perspectives of young people aspiring to increase the supply of jobs.

The People's Charter on Jobs Creation in Africa is a synthesis of policy ideas and solutions that emerged from a range of consultations held by the **"Jobs Now Africa Coalition"** in collaboration with youth networks, think tanks, CSOs, businesses, and industry experts to address employment problems in Africa. The Charter is a reflection of African youth's desire to thrive and realise their full potential. It represents our views and aspirations for decent employment creation, focused mainly on dismantling structural barriers on the continent with the cooperation of national and subnational governments.

## Why the People's Charter on Jobs?



## How was the Charter prepared?

The Charter results from a six-month-long, multi-stage consultation held by the **"Jobs Now Africa Coalition"** with youth networks, think-tanks, CSOs, businesses, and industry experts in seven African countries that account for almost one-third of total employment in Africa - Nigeria, Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Africa, Tunisia, Kenya, and Togo. After initial offline consultations between September and November 2021, rounds of virtual validation of emerging solutions between November 2021 and February 2022 were held. Overall, the consultation process aggregated inputs from more than 70 organisations and more than 200 people, most of whom are below 35 years old. **A jobs creation observatory across the key countries where these consultations were held is to be established to track the policy commitments and implementation of the ideas and solutions as advocacy commences.**



# YOUTH ASPIRATIONS

We, representing citizens group across Africa, aspire for **financial freedom** and **jobs with dignity** without discrimination, harassment, abuse, or exploitation. We want financial, technical, and knowledge support to engage in sustainable income-generating opportunities and successfully create and grow new enterprises. These opportunities include access to credit, guidance and mentorship, and skills enhancement through apprenticeships and internships. We seek to be empowered to make informed decisions, to be involved in making decisions that affect us, and for our voices to be heard.

**BEYOND THESE, WE CALL ON OUR GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:**

## 1. CREATE DECENT JOBS

### Develop and implement national policies and programs to support decent employment for all

- ▶ Consult with the youth and private sector when introducing new policies instead of reactionary policies that negatively affect the business environment (e.g. border closures, the sudden announcement of import bans and imposition of arbitrary taxes).

### Focus support on job-rich sectors with the potential to employ the workforce, including agriculture, trade and manufacturing, ICT, mining, tourism and creative industries

- ▶ Invest in the prerequisites for labour-intensive sectors, such as digital infrastructure, power and green technology. Governments should leverage domestic and international sources of finance for these riskier/unproven investments.

- ▶ Deploy a mix of well-targeted tax incentives to attract private investors into job-rich and labour-intensive sectors. These incentives must be openly reviewed periodically to assess their impact and effectiveness on job creation.
- ▶ Reduce tariffs on the importation of machinery and equipment that are essential but not locally fabricated.

### Facilitate access to credit, subsidized loans, grants and financial services

- ▶ Mobilise partnerships to establish large-scale equity and guarantee funds to de-risk investment in start-ups.

# 2. EASE OF DOING BUSINESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## Operationalize the African Continental Free Trade Area to open up access to a larger continental market

- ▶ Stop the introduction of arbitrary border-closure and trade inhibitive policies.
- ▶ Make AfCFTA work by eliminating non-tariff barriers through the digitalization of cross-border administrative procedure.
- ▶ Create a continental exchange platform for youth on Pan-Africanism, economic and cultural opportunities.
- ▶ Raise public awareness about the potential benefit of AfCFTA and its supporting instruments, such as the Pan-African Payment and Settlement Systems (PAPSS), to facilitate trade.
- ▶ Establish the Integrated High-Speed Train Network and Single African Air-Transport Market.

## Open African borders for youth to access markets and compete freely for work and trade

- ▶ Adopt, ratify, and implement the AU protocol on the free movement of people across the continent, every young African deserves the African passport.

## Make it easy and affordable to do business, produce goods and services

- ▶ Reduce barriers to starting enterprises and doing business by simplifying and harmonising licensing requirements, automating administrative procedures, unifying tax administration, and making information readily available through one-stop shops.
- ▶ Establish an apex body for private-public dialogue to improve the investment climate and business operating environment for youth.
- ▶ Protect intellectual property rights to drive innovation and growth.
- ▶ Enable the creation of digital platforms for price discovery and exchange of market information.
- ▶ Incentivise the expansion of private sector-led out-grower schemes.
- ▶ Facilitate access of smallholder farmers to produce aggregation centres for grading, packing, storage, sales and processing of their goods to boost incomes and minimise wastage.
- ▶ Improve standardization and grading of products.

## Invest in infrastructure that supports jobs creation and income generation

- ▶ Complement grid expansion with renewable off-grid energy solutions to improve access to reliable and affordable power.
- ▶ Incentivise investment flows to close the digital divide by 2030 and increase internet penetration from 82.4% in 2021 to over 90% in 203.
- ▶ Develop and improve the functionality of special economic zones to boost productivity and lower costs of operations.
- ▶ Expand road & transport networks, ensuring rural and regional connectivity.

# 3. HARNESS YOUTH POTENTIAL AND SECURE JOBS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

**Support youth to build enterprises through training, business incubation and partnerships**

**Guide, mentor and enhance youth skills through work experience programs to overcome skills mismatch**

- ▶ Incentivise the formal apprenticeship and internship system to broaden the base of participating businesses with a view to increasing enrolment of young people.

**Integrate green economy programs into strategies for job creation and youth employment**

- ▶ Establish national youth employment hubs charged with research, experience sharing, innovation and facilitation of evidence-based future of jobs policies and solutions.

# 4. ENSURE SAFE AND DIGNIFIED EMPLOYMENT

**Enforce regulations to ensure safe workplaces with security, dignity and equality where youth can earn fair incomes**

**Develop programs and policies to ensure equal opportunities for decent employment for the disadvantaged youth, including the poor, uneducated, girls and youth with disabilities**

- ▶ Deliberately ensure the inclusion of those who are most likely to be discriminated against, especially women, youth, and people with disabilities in policymaking and impact assessment of job-creating initiatives.
- ▶ Completely stop the harassment and arbitrariness by public officials to young people engaged in the informal sector.

**Facilitate processes to reduce informality and give identity to informal businesses**

- ▶ Develop a robust database of informal businesses to better identify and target them in policy designs.
- ▶ Relax business registration and regulatory requirements when necessary to encourage formalisation.
- ▶ Provide innovative social protection measures, such as subsidized health insurance schemes and access to pension contribution, to young people employed in the informal sector.



# 5. OPENNESS, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

## Listen to youth concerns, empower and involve them in decisions and actions on jobs

- ▶ Engage young people, especially through Small Medium Enterprises in the design and implementation of national employment plans that meet both the current and future needs.

## Develop information systems to track labour market trends and opportunities

- ▶ Develop a centralised employment observatory and information system to help citizens track employment trends, emerging opportunities, and the progress and impact of supporting initiatives.

## Regularly monitor and tap lessons from youth employment programs

- ▶ Strengthen policy implementation processes to include results-based financing for social intervention programs.
- ▶ Regularly monitor and publish the impact of the intervention programs to clarify and compare the return on investments.

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PEOPLE'S  
CALL  
TO ACTION