

Creating a shared vision for Africa

Global business and research pioneer, Dalberg, has partnered with The Africa Center and the African Leadership Institute to Launch (AFLI) the "Future Forum" initiative in New York City. This future-forward project brings together leaders and innovators from across Africa, and the world, to create a shared vision around today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities - especially those related to African youth and employment.



Image source: Gallo/Getty.

The event, structured around Africa@Work, created a platform promoting curated conversations between Africans and Diaspora. "Africa@Work is a conversation between Africans and the Diaspora that aims deepen our shared understanding of African labour market complexities, highlight and accelerate innovative ideas and channel investments towards solutions that positively impact the future of work on the continent," explains Dalberg partner and event co-host, Robin Miller.

Africa's fast expanding youth population presents a unique opportunity to prepare an emerging workforce for the jobs of tomorrow. This generation is projected to reach 40% of the world's total youth population by 2030, which could have incredible economic implications.

As emphasised by the African Development Bank (AfDB): "Youth are Africa's greatest asset. Africa's youth population is rapidly growing and expected to double to over 830 million by 2050. If properly harnessed, this increase in the working age population could support increased productivity and stronger, more inclusive economic growth across the continent".

However, given high unemployment, there is a significant risk that if labour market challenges are not fully understood, the potential of this influx can be lost. At the same time, digital technologies are rapidly shifting the nature of work around the world. This is an opportunity to think strategically and plan interventions that not only address yesterday's problems, but also tomorrow's global opportunities.

Uzodinma Iweala, CEO of the Africa Center notes, "We're delighted to partner with Dalberg and the AFLI Tutu fellows to curate frank discussions about the future of our continent. It's through these dialogues that we open up understandings for not just why we need to but how we need to focus on developing creative solutions for the present and the world to come."

Participating in the event's talks were James Mwangi (executive director of the Dalberg Group), Bright Simons (Founder and President of mPedigree), Akintunde Oyebo (special advisor: Trade, Investment and Innovation of Nigeria's Ekiti State Government) and Charlotte Ashamu (the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art's Associate Director of Advancement and External Affairs).

All contributing speakers had insightful information to share, each from their own perspectives yet supporting a common focus, namely the African employment landscape and African youth in particular. Dr Jackie Chimhanzi, CEO of AFLI, said, "It was heart-warming and gratifying to witness Archbishop Tutu Fellows collaborating on such a critical issue. This is in keeping with the vision of AFLI to curate a network of young leaders who will transform Africa together."

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