Making African cities better places to work, to live in and to do business.

15 April 2007, United Nations, Nairobi, Kenya

Background:
Part of the Millennium Development Goal 8 is to ‘develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth’. Finding the means, political will and the know-how to create a billion jobs over the next ten years that not only deliver economic benefits to young people, but also maintain and build the environmental and social wealth, is perhaps one of the most important targets of the MDGs. Further, fostering entrepreneurship is vital in every part of the world, especially in urban areas, and should be considered a key mechanism for development. Supporting young entrepreneurs in the developing world with education, financing, mentorship and encouragement is a critical pathway to foster the creation of sustainable livelihoods.

Action on youth employment needs to be integrated as a central platform for achieving MDG 1 on poverty reduction. Youth employment poverty reduction strategies should especially focus on young women, indigenous populations, and rural youth as those most marginalized within the current economic system. Addressing the needs of young women and rural youth will also help to achieve MDG 3 and address pressures and problems arising from mass rural to urban migration. Many microfinance programs for instance have targeted investment to young women with great success.

UN-HABITAT, the agency for cities, is well aware that the private sector is not only part of the solution, but a vital partner that must be engaged if the world’s cities are to achieve sustainability and address the youth. The private sector and the UN share common objectives of more efficient, productive and inclusive cities. While the corporate sector needs the best conditions to run its business, the UN is engaged in improving the living conditions of young people who will later work and buy products and services from the private sector. In the overall developmental approach for sustainable cities, together with the private sector, youth should play a critical role and constitute a key target and source of entrepreneurship.

Objectives of the Young Entrepreneurs Day:
Bringing together youth groups, city level decision-makers and private sector stakeholders in order to:
- discuss the market opportunities, best practices and business models to strengthen youth entrepreneurship in urban areas;
- identify potential partnerships and projects involving the youth and addressing sustainable housing and services, especially in the most deprived urban areas.

Event setting
Held in the conducive environment of the UN compound, the event will be held one day prior to the 21st Governing Council of UN-HABITAT (16 to 20 April 2007). Participants are invited to attend the opening ceremony of the event and the evening reception organized by UN-HABITAT.
A HABITAT BUSINESS EXPO will also be organised from 13 to 20 April 2007. The Expo will provide the opportunity for business to demonstrate products, services and technologies to a wide range of partners: national government representatives, mayors and city decision-makers, non-governmental organizations, operators of development agencies in the field of human settlements.
Message from Dr. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

It gives me great pleasure to welcome young entrepreneurs and partners to these deliberations on youth employment through entrepreneurship that are being hosted by UN-HABITAT here in Nairobi. I warmly acknowledge those young people who will drive the agenda at this conference. It is indeed, truly a great honour for UN-HABITAT, the UN Agency for the sustainable development of Cities and other Human Settlements, to work with you.

The concept of entrepreneurship can stimulate both personal initiative as well as initiatives in a broad variety of organizations which include, but reach beyond, the private sector. The range includes small and large enterprises, social entrepreneurs, cooperatives, the public sector, the trade union movement and youth organizations. For young people, self-employment can increase their confidence, help them achieve economic independence and create employment not only for themselves but for others as well. Investing in young people is to invest in the future.

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, Governments agreed on a set of goals and targets that have now come to be called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Goal 8, Target 16 of these MDGs urges governments to “develop decent and productive work for youth”. UN-HABITAT believes that fostering entrepreneurship is a key mechanism to meeting this target and to sustainable development. UN-HABITAT also recognizes that poverty, which has for long been associated with rural areas, has increasingly become urbanized and feminized. Looking at the challenges that young people face today, UN-HABITAT can also attest to the fact that poverty has gradually become juvenilized. For us all to make any meaningful change, more attention needs to be given to the urban poor, with specific emphasis to the situation of young men and women.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the world’s largest proportion of urban residents living in slums. These slums are home to more than 72 percent of urban Africa’s citizens. Young people make up a large share of this population. The review of global and regional trends in youth employment highlights the fact that these young people are mostly employed in the informal sector. Urgent action is required to effectively address this situation to ensure that they are afforded access to decent work.

Youth entrepreneurship is a useful way to promote self employment among the young. However, they need to be supported with access to infrastructure, seed money, mentoring and other services that can enable them to set up their own micro enterprises. Although starting a business is not the only solution for all the youth, it is a viable way of creating employment and providing livelihoods.

Between now and 2010, 700 million young people aged 15-25 will enter the labour force in developing countries. According to the ILO, more than 1 billion new jobs must be created to reduce unemployment. Without a concerted effort, a new generation will grow up feeling it has no stake in society. Conversely, we in the UN system passionately believe that by harnessing the potential of the young, the world can benefit enormously from a new wave of participation and intellectual creativity and help achieve the MDGs by the 2015 target date.

Young Entrepreneurs Day is a small step to reduce youth alienation and unemployment, and alleviate poverty in an effective and sustainable way. It is indeed, truly a great honour for me, and UN-HABITAT, to gather an assembly of young entrepreneurs in Africa to see each and everyone contributing to making African cities better places to live in, work in, and to do business.

Thank You.
Programme

Venue: Conference Room 3, UN compound, Gigiri, Nairobi

Sunday 15 April 2007: Young Entrepreneurs in Africa

8h30 Registration and morning coffee/tea

9h00 Official Opening

Presentation of urbanization challenges ahead and youth entrepreneurship as a solution (EDs Speech)

09h15 Introduction to the day

09h30 Making connections and market opportunities (Group work - Asset mapping)

10h30 Refreshments

11h00 Review of the asset mapping (Dotmocracy)

12h00 Employment/entrepreneurship as a reintegration strategy for Urban Youth (Presentations of Best Practices)

12h45 Question and Answer session

13h00 Networking lunch

14h00 Employment/entrepreneurship as a reintegration strategy for Urban Youth (Presentation of Best Practices)

15h30 Question and Answer session

16h00 Afternoon coffee/tea

16h30 Conclusion and recommendations

The final word
Remarks from the Business World

17h30 Documentary and Cocktail at the UN Recreation Centre

Monday 16 April 2007: 21st Governing Council of UN-HABITAT

Morning: Opening ceremony, 21st Governing Council, UN-HABITAT Headquarters, Gigiri, Nairobi

Evening: Reception at UN-HABITAT Headquarters, Gigiri, Nairobi

13 to 20 April 2007: HABITAT BUSINESS EXPO
General meeting information

Meeting location

UN-HABITAT Headquarters is located in Gigiri in the North of Nairobi, about 45 min from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. The UN Gigiri compound occupies a total of 56 hectares. It houses some 2,000 staff members from UNON, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNDCP, WFP, UNOPS, ICAO, UNSO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNV, UNIFEM, IMO, UNCAS, UNIASC, UNIC, UNCRD, UNOIOS and UNPOS.

VISA

All travellers arriving in Kenya should have a valid passport. In countries where there is no Kenyan Embassy or High Commission, the British Embassy will generally represent Kenya, and be in a position to issue visas. The visa fee is US$50. Kenya entry visas for nationals from Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Georgia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Jordan, Mali, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestine, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan and Yemen require special advance clearance by the Kenyan authorities. The yellow fever certificate is mandatory for all visitors in Kenya and vaccination should be given 10 days prior to departure.

HOTELS

Central Area:
Boulevard Hotel *** 227567/9 - 337221
Fairview Hotel **** 2723211
Grand Regency Hotel ***** 211199
Hilton Hotel ***** 250 000
Inter-Continental Hotel ***** 320 0000
Lenana Mount Hotel *** 717044/48
Nairobi Safari Club ***** 251333
Norfolk Hotel **** 250900
Panafric Hotel *** 2720822
Serena Hotel ***** 272 5111 - 313 800
Silver Springs Hotel*** 2722451/7
Stanley Hotel **** 228830
Panari Hotel **** 6946000

Westlands:
Jacaranda Hotel **** 4448714/7
Holiday Inn Nairobi **** 3740920

Kiambu/Ruaraka:
Safari Park Hotel ***** 8562207/26
Utali Hotel *** 85635401 - 8561985/6
Windsor Hotel ***** 8562300

For more information, please contact:

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