

UN Chief joins world leaders in calling for greater investment in Africa's young people

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday joined world leaders in calling for greater investment in jobs for young people in Africa, calling them the continent's "greatest asset."

"Investment is crucial to harness Africa's youth dividend," Mr. Guterres [said](#) at an event organized by the United Kingdom, Canada, Ghana and Rwanda on the margins of the annual high-level General Assembly in New York.

He cited the need for investments in health and education, as well as in science, technology and industrialization.

Today, one-third of African youth are unemployed; another third are vulnerably employed or in low-value jobs in the informal sector. The Secretary-General said this reinforces poverty and inequality.

Young African women are even worse off, he pointed out, noting that it is estimated that gender gaps in the labour force cost Africa \$105 billion in 2014 alone.

At a time when the rest of the world will be ageing, Africa's youth – with their energy, innovation, ideas and solutions – are an asset for the global labour force, Mr. Guterres emphasized.

We want to make sure that all young people, in and beyond Africa, have decent work and can fulfil their potential – *Secretary-General Guterres*

British Prime Minister Theresa May said that Africa "stands on the cusp of playing a transformative role in the global economy," but the continent's potential will only be realized with greater investment in the next generation.

She noted that to keep pace with its growing population, Africa will need to create 18 million new jobs every year between now and 2035. And creating those jobs is not just important for Africa's future.

"In our interconnected world, where new jobs in Africa drive new markets, new trade and investment opportunities and greater global stability, these new jobs are important for everyone's future."

"Africa's youth bulge does not need to be a problem for our continent nor for our neighbours. On the contrary, our young people are an asset and a driver

of growth and innovation,” stated Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

“If we plan strategically and work together, we can instil a sense of hope in Africa’s youth about the vast opportunities to be found right at home.”

Around 60 per cent of Ghana’s population of 30 million people is under the age of 25, noted its President, Nana Akufo-Addo, adding that for most of the last decade, the growth of the country’s economy has barely kept pace with population growth.

“Basically, we have an economy that is not generating jobs and not expanding,” said the President. “Youth unemployment is the greatest threat to the stability of our country and to our democracy. So finding solutions as to how to grow the Ghanaian economy so that it can produce jobs – that is the biggest single issue confronting our country.”

Canada’s Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, added that educating young people and giving them opportunities in Africa is something that matters not just to the future of Africa but to the future of the world.

“The cost of missing out on our responsibility towards that will be astronomical if we do not give young people the tools, not just to shape their own future but to shape the future of their communities, their continent and of course the entire world.”