



African Agribusiness
Incubators Network

Declaration by the Youth on Agribusiness Incubation for Job and Wealth Creation for Africa's Transformation



We, the participants of the African Agribusiness Incubators Network (AAIN) conference held on 4th - 6th October 2016 on the theme **“Rebranding Agribusiness to Unlock Youth potential”** anchored to the conference theme of Turning Science into Business: Inclusive Agribusiness Incubation for Vibrant Economies in Africa.

CONVINCED that:

- Expanding opportunities and unlocking potentials - for countries, women, the youth, the private sector, and the continent to unleash a new wave of growth and inclusive development is key for Africa's transformation;
- Africa must feed Africa, grow agriculture as a business to become a wealth-creating sector, not one for managing poverty; and,
- We must excite the youths to see agriculture as a viable business; Africa must add value to all its staple foods, move up the value chain of wealth, diversify its economies, expand foreign exchange earnings and reduce food import bills thereby boosting fiscal and macroeconomic stability of countries;
- Agribusiness incubation for job and wealth creation is a tested and proven model for: Strengthening the acquisition and application of science, technology and innovation; Improving youth skills in entrepreneurship; Developing partnerships to access new technology and to find new markets and financing; Attracting the youth into agribusiness; and, Sharing lessons and experiences;

NOTING that youth account for 60% of unemployed in Africa, 10-12 million young people enter the job market every year, rural youth working in agriculture are the poorest group of working youth;

NOTING FURTHER that almost 90% of start-ups initiated in Africa fail largely due to poor business planning, limited capacity to manage the business, financing hurdles, and products failing to get traction in the market;

COGNISANT that Africa's prosperity largely depends on its ability to sustainably develop its agriculture and agribusiness landscape using proven and innovative approaches that ensure productivity, competitiveness and inclusive growth;

CONSCIOUS of the need to create and sustain youth owned competitive agribusiness enterprises in Africa by developing, commercializing and supporting adoption of agricultural technologies through agribusiness incubation, research and innovation;

NOTING that agribusiness start-ups in Africa do not get the required technical, technological, financial and mentorship support required to initiate and sustain thriving enterprises;

CONCERNED about the inadequate training, unsupportive operating incubation ecosystem and lack of effective guidance and mentorship for agribusiness start-ups in Africa that prevent the youth and women from establishing viable and sustainable enterprises capable of creating jobs and raising incomes;

CONVINCED that agribusiness incubation is a critical tool in creating competitive agribusinesses with the potential to accelerate development of Africa's agricultural sector;

REALISING the low number of existing incubators with adequate technological infrastructure and capacity to incubate agribusiness start-ups;

Therefore:

COMMEND the African Agribusiness Incubators Network (AAIN) for its role in incubating ideas and ensuring that once they are proven to work, facilitating their up scaling. We in particular commend AAIN for the development of the incubator model for incubating agribusinesses within Africa's unique context and its leadership as private sector company as a mechanism for up-scaling this model;



CONGRATULATE the organisers of the African Agribusiness Incubation conference & Expo 2016 and;

CALL for gazettelement on 5th October of every year as the Africa Youth in Agribusiness Day.

LAUD the concept of its regular occurrence to address important and urgent topics that are vital to sustenance of the current African transformation agenda;

AFFIRM our commitment to tap into different capacities of key stakeholders -universities, research organizations, the private sector and development organizations - to effectively coordinate their efforts to support agribusiness incubation through AAIN in Africa;

DECLARE that we shall, singly and severally; individually and collectively implement and/or cause to implement the recommendations of this forum and any other initiatives that will stimulate and facilitate accelerated expansion of agribusiness activities in our countries and institutions through incubating incubators;

CALL for and **COMMIT**, within the context of the ENABLE youth programme, CAADP, Malabo Declaration, Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A), AU Agenda 2063, Africa Youth Charter and the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) and in view of the above observations, to:

1. Pursuing a renewed and vigorous emphasis to institutionalize youth engagement in agribusiness incubation as a policy in Africa to attract investment, intensify production and value addition;
2. Urging African Governments to recognize the Youth as a de Nuevo public resource, human capital, and force for change that will drive agripreneurship and innovations in the agribusiness value chain;
3. Pursuing strategies that encourage and support public investment, private investment, and use of public-private partnerships to finance youth agribusiness and facilitate capacity building through technical and agripreneurial skills training;
4. Positioning the knowledge-based and innovation-led economy, guided by structured foresighting, to drive agribusiness development in Africa;
5. Developing, adopting and implementing the Africa-wide strategy, action and investment plan for youth agribusiness incubation;
6. Advocating for increased support and engagement of the youth in policy making and programme implementation for agribusiness incubation in Africa;
7. Supporting, under the aegis of strategic collaborators, mentors, local and international alliances, develop win-win mutually beneficial partnerships which address critical capacity needs for sustainable agribusiness development. This includes networking amongst universities-research-businesses and engagement with communities and financial institutions to: provide opportunities for youth to establish innovative agriculture and agribusinesses, raise agribusiness skills and economic opportunities, advance youth-led agribusiness networks and provide interactive agri cultural information services, raise awareness of gender issues among youth and provide opportunity for agribusiness advancement to women, improve agribusiness skills among graduates from vocational, tertiary and higher education;
8. Creating funds and funding/support mechanisms for youth in agribusiness incubation and commercializing innovative technologies for value addition, productivity and competitiveness.



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