

Yaoundé Declaration and Plan of Action

2nd Africa Rural Development Forum



Yaoundé, Cameroon, from the 8 – 10 September, 2016



*Transforming Africa's Rural Areas through Skills Development,
Job Creation and Youth Economic Empowerment*

Rural Futures Programme

YAOUNDE DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION

8 to 10 September 2016

1. The 2nd **Africa Rural Development Forum (ARDF)**, organised from 8-10 September 2016 under the theme *Transforming Africa's Rural Area through Skills Development, Job Creation and Youth Economic Empowerment for Africa* by the NEPAD Agency and hosted by the the Government of Cameroon sought to build on the outcomes of the 1st ARDF.
2. The main outcome of the 1st ARDF was the adoption of the “*Cotonou Declaration on Rural Futures*” to support the structural transformation of the continent in order to promote inclusive growth and empowerment of rural areas through people-centered development.
3. Within the context of the Cotonou Declaration action points **A Blueprint To Implement Rural Development Policies In Africa** was developed and subsequently Endorsed at the 2nd Africa Rural Development Forum as a vehicle for advancing rural transformation across Africa and accelerating pace towards the visions of the African Union's Agenda 2063.
4. The Blueprint will support member states and regional players towards an integrated, cross-sectorial, and coherent set of actions based on local realities, priorities and a shared African vision and narrative.
5. The Second Edition of the Atlas was launched under the theme “*A new Emerging Rural World: An Overview of rural Change in Africa*” providing information and analysis on cross-sectorial factors and dynamics to inform public policy debates and decisions on rural transformation.
6. Among the key thematic issues the Forum highlighted:
 - a. Youth Economic Empowerment and skills Development
 - b. Rural Development – Policies and Institutions
 - c. Rural Infrastructure and ICT
 - d. Green Economy and job creation in advancing Rural Development in Africa
7. The Forum adopted the overarching strategy for rural transformation to include:
 - a. Rural transformation has to be driven by the whole economy as overarching approach to graduating from the structural limits of dualism
 - b. Growing the domestic market base through land and agrarian reforms and agriculture-led rural industrialization
 - c. The role of the State is crucial especially in policy reforms and legislation that reforms the public expenditure architecture towards rural transformation investment priorities.

PLAN OF ACTION

- Operationalise the Blueprint including adoption by Heads of State and implementation by member states
- Establish a support network for expanded use of the Atlas across all regions
- Examine and consider support to strengthen local capacity for generating quality data on rural development
- Consolidate the following recommendations:
 - Support member states to internalise territorial planning, multi-sectoralism and placed-based policies in national development strategies
 - Recognising that public finance and support is critical for handholding of young entrepreneurs including smart subsidies, government should promulgate policy interventions that leverage private investment into youth's businesses

- Promote youth empowerment (education, skills and knowledge and access to land and other factors of production) as critical ingredients of success by youth as entrepreneurs
- The green economy presents an enormous potential and opportunity 'pgo for accelerated job creation and skills development. Therefore research and development aimed at connecting the youth to job creation opportunities on the green economy should be accelerated;
- African Governments should make a conscious effort to provide public sector financing support to green economy initiatives whilst at the same time building internal capacity to access global financial resources dedicated to environment, climate change and related areas including the Green Climate Fund.
- Equal emphasis must be put on Formal and Non-Formal skills development (vocational and technical education), to create opportunity in the informal sectors of the economy.
- Build on the comparative advantage of youth by investing in hard and soft rural infrastructure, including ICT to build the capacity of youth to leverage on the rural-urban nexus
- Support the integration of decent work indicators on youth employment programmes across Africa
- Develop an Implementation and Performance Management Framework for the Yaounde Declaration and Plan of Action, and generate evidence-based indicators of the envisioned rural transformation based on mapping and scenario planning based on of Agenda 2063.