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**DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION**

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### **African Youth Forum: “Accelerate Youth Employment in Africa”**

The Department of the Human Resource Science and Technology in collaboration with the Olusegun Obasanjo Foundation (OOF) organized a Youth Forum on accelerating Youth Employment in Africa on the sidelines of the 22<sup>nd</sup> African Union Summit on 29 and 30 January in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



After debating on the theme during the meeting held in United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014, the invited African youth and the former Nigerian President Mr.

Olusegun Obasanjo, discussed and presented the recommendations to the Heads of States during a luncheon held at the African Union Commission today, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

The lunch was hosted by Dr. NkosazanaDlaminiZuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Mr. Obasanjowho is the founder and chairman of the OOF. Heads of States of African member states of the AU; among them were the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; the President of Burkina Faso (Host country of the AU special Summit on Employment in 2004), President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and Chairperson of the African Union and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

The event was moderated and led by Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo and Dr. Martial De-Paul Ikounga, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST). The participants discussed the recommendations made by the youths and on the way forward.

“The Heads of States have heard you and I am sure that they will dialogue with you”, said Dr. NkosazanaDlaminiZuma. She added, “We want you to be the masters of the

digital age, the masters of the space age, the masters of the knowledge age, and the masters of the economy age”. She encouraged the youth to input their ideas into what should Africa look like in 2063 before April 2014, through the Agenda 2063 framework.



Although African countries have seen tremendous economic growth over the recent years, youth unemployment and education are still pressing issues that need to be addressed by policy makers and African leaders. As President Obasanjo said “Education is the basis for the empowerment of the youth.”

The President of Haiti, Mr. Michel Martelly, shared the Haitian experience regarding alternative funding for education with his peers and the invited guests. He explained the ways in which the Haitian government raised funds from its Diaspora to fund the construction of schools. “131 Million Dollars were raised and the entire fund was used to build schools” he said.

Mr. Dessalegne Hailemariam, strongly commended the youth not to wait for governments to help them. “You must struggle for your rights and you should have a strong African organization to engage with politicians”. He then added “as leaders we have to lead the process and engage the youth in the building of a prosperous Africa”.



The event concluded with a message that will be disseminated by the youth. The message included the will to participate actively in reduction of poverty, creating a strong pan African organization and reinforcing leadership of the youth with the assistance of governments at a national and continental level.

**HM/wzm**

#### **For further information contact**

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