

young  
africa  
works  
summit 2017



REPORT



Watch an introduction to some of the topics discussed at the Young Africa Works Summit.



# WELCOME



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am pleased to share the 2017 Young Africa Works Summit report.

The Summit, held in Kigali, Rwanda on February 16 and 17, brought together more than 300 experts from across Africa and the world to discuss how the continent's youth are driving agricultural transformation, as well as the barriers that still exist.

Those of us who attended can attest to the dynamism and ingenuity demonstrated by the Summit's almost 50 youth delegates. Their contributions allow us to remain optimistic about innovations across the agricultural value chain and the future of the sector. As one youth delegate, Rita Kimani, said, "Young minds and big ideas are what Africa needs to make agricultural transformation a reality."

We look forward to the next Young Africa Works Summit in 2018. In the meantime, I encourage you to read this report, share it with your colleagues, and help us to keep the conversation going. I hope this report will serve as a resource for further thinking and discussion. Together, we can ensure the transformation of the agricultural sector and the critical role that we can each play in advancing Africa's growth and prosperity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Materu', written in a cursive style.

**Peter Materu**

Director, Education and Learning and Youth Livelihoods  
The MasterCard Foundation

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To: Young Africa Works Summit Delegates

It was an honour and a privilege to participate in and speak at The MasterCard Foundation's Young Africa Works Summit in Kigali. It is very rare to have discussions with youth at the centre. Even those conferences that do talk about youth rarely invite them to express themselves. During this spectacular Summit, we shook up the status quo with many youth taking the stage to inspire the audience.

Young people warned that being left out during policy formulation is one of the factors that slows down agricultural progress. We want to turn this model upside down and make the policy-making process more inclusive by enabling young people to participate. Formulating policies that work for youth is a major step toward transforming agriculture.

The Summit highlighted some astounding innovations from youth agripreneurs. Young people are leading the race to make their farms more resilient to climate change by adopting climate-smart agriculture. Many are using technology, such as mobile applications, to make the agricultural supply chain more efficient and effective, while others are bridging the gender gap by formulating models that enable girls and women to venture into farming and make it a viable business.

Synergies were formed during and after the Summit, and delegates recognized a huge potential for partnership and sharing best practices with one another. The opportunity for collaboration is a significant outcome of the Summit, and I cannot wait to see the lucrative farming businesses that will emerge from it.

For young people out there, my message to you is that farming embodies everything we need to solve our challenges and those of our society. Taking on a leadership role in farming is not only our responsibility—it is also a must.



**Jean Bosco Nzeyimana**  
Founder & CEO, Habona Ltd.  
Rwanda

# AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA

## AFRICA'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGE

### African Youth

Home to the youngest population in the world

**600**  
MILLION  
under  
age **25**



72%  
of youth in Africa  
are unemployed or  
vulnerably employed



11  
million  
youth expected to  
enter Africa's labour  
market every year for  
the next decade

### Opportunities in Agriculture



Africa has the largest  
amount of arable land



63%  
of the total population in  
Sub-Saharan Africa live in  
rural areas where agriculture  
is the largest source of  
employment and income



2  
Agricultural  
growth can be  
times more effective in  
reducing poverty than  
growth in any other  
sector of the economy

### Our Commitment to Africa

**\$430**  
MILLION

The Foundation has committed more than \$430 million to projects that are improving agricultural productivity, connecting rural youth to employment, entrepreneurship and education, and increasing access to financial services for smallholder farmers. This represents nearly 25 percent of the Foundation's commitments to date.



The 2017 Young Africa Works Summit brought together more than 300 influencers in Kigali, Rwanda to share insights on how youth are driving the modernization of the agricultural sector, as well as challenges to achieving transformation of the sector.

The MasterCard Foundation Director, Financial Inclusion, Ann Miles, opened the Summit by reminding the audience that, with the right conditions, no other sector will be better positioned to deliver employment opportunities and economic growth than agriculture.

“The potential of a demographic dividend in many countries on the continent means the opportunity has never been more pressing,” she said, “and agriculture is at the heart of the opportunity.”

The two-day Summit illustrated that young people have a vital role to play in modernizing and, ultimately, transforming the agricultural sector,

but it requires an enabling environment, increased productivity, and the recognition of agriculture as a source for a range of modern businesses that goes beyond farming the land.

During his welcome, Rwandan Minister for Youth and ICT, the Honourable Jean Philbert Nsengimana, called on the audience to use the Summit to find practical ways to engage youth and enhance productivity and commercialization.

“Everyone in this room is a leader. The role of leaders is to connect dots—find solutions to meet problems,” he said.

The Summit encouraged collaboration and thinking across various interdependent sectors, such as energy and infrastructure, to facilitate the growth of the agri-food system and inform employment programs and policies that better serve young people in Africa.

## Agricultural transformation in Africa means...

We asked the experts at the Summit to complete this sentence: agricultural transformation in Africa means...



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## 1. Young people can transform agriculture and the continent, but they need to be involved in programming and decision-making.

The Summit was opened by five young agricultural entrepreneurs: Africa Rabbit Centre Founder, Laetitia Mukungu; FarmDrive Co-Founder and CEO, Rita Kimani; Founder of UjuziKilimo, Brian Bosire; Founder of Habona Ltd., Jean Bosco Nzeyimana; and Founder and Coordinator of Bunda Female Students Organisation (BUFESO), Pilirani Khoza.

Session co-hosts Mukungu and Kimani opened the session by reminding the audience of the urgency of agricultural transformation on the continent.

“Sustainable agriculture is a necessity in Africa,” Mukungu said. “The young, energetic people and their entrepreneurial minds will make this a reality.”

The following youth keynotes illustrated Mukungu’s point. Jean Bosco Nzeyimana spoke about Habona, the business he founded to produce biofuel from waste. Pilirani Khoza also provides climate-smart agricultural training, extension services, and academic support for women and girls through her organization, BUFESO, in Malawi.

“The initiatives done by youth are not trusted,” she said. “Maybe because we are young. But if you can see the positive results that we are doing in our country, I would hope that together we can end extreme hunger. Otherwise, without the full engagement of women and youth, we won’t be able to reach such goals.”

As a computer engineer, Bosire illustrated how a number of young people are bringing their skills to the agricultural sector from diverse backgrounds, and spoke about how technology is disrupting the agricultural sector. His company, UjuziKilimo, uses sensors and data analytics to bring precision

technology to smallholder farmers, enabling them to practise knowledge-driven farming, which increases yields and limits risks.

All three keynotes encouraged Summit delegates to trust Africa’s youth and involve them in decision-making, a theme that continued on day one of the Summit during the panel on [Policy in Practice](#). This plenary session, moderated by Senior Lecturer in Economics at the University of Ghana, Dr. William Baah-Boateng, was made up of Parish Youth Chairperson from Mayuge District, Uganda, Francis Arinaitwe; Head of Human Resources and Youth Development Division, African Union Commission, Prudence Nonkululeko Ngwenya; and the Government of Tanzania’s Revelian Ngaiza.



“We are four billion strong and we are innovative, creative, and energetic. It is high time you stop thinking of us as beneficiaries. You should start thinking of us as participants.”

– Francis Arinaitwe

During the session, Arinaitwe encouraged policymakers to “leave your boardrooms and offices” to visit with youth and better understand their issues.

All respondents to the Summit assessment agreed that it is important for them and their organizations to engage youth to drive agricultural transformation.

## 2. Youth unemployment is a complex issue that requires multidimensional, multifaceted solutions.

On day one of the Summit, the plenary on [Setting the Stage for Agricultural Transformation](#) explored the opportunities and challenges for transformation of the sector.

The panel, which was broadcast on CNBC Africa, was moderated by network anchor Nozipho Mbanjwa and featured International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology's (icipe) Dr. Segenet Kelemu; Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network's (FANRPAN) Dr. Lindiwe Majele Sibanda; and African Women in Agricultural Research and Development's (AWARD) Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg.

The panel highlighted issues that need to be addressed, including:

- Education, which can play a significant role in meeting demand by changing the curriculum
- Investment in research, science, and innovation
- Environmental policy to address climate change and ensure biodiversity
- Gender barriers

It also highlighted that agriculture is a dynamic sector that doesn't simply mean farming the land.

"We need bankers to provide financing opportunities; marketers to help people sell their local produce and encourage consumers to move away from well-packaged imports," Kamau-Rutenberg said. "We can use agriculture to grow tech, marketing industries, and include everyone in that growth."

[The afternoon keynote](#) on day one from the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture at the African Union Commission, Her Excellency Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, further highlighted the potential for agricultural value chains for youth employment.

She said agricultural value chains are wide and present a great opportunity to absorb young people and empower them to make a difference.

"The overriding opportunity we have in Africa is the population of youth."

Her Excellency said that limited resources is a major issue for creating jobs for youth and called on the audience to work together to mobilize resources and better involve youth in environmental and green energy, climate-smart agricultural production, and the application of technology and science to modernize the sector.

[The Engaging the Private Sector plenary](#) on day two also highlighted the complexity of the youth unemployment issue. Moderated by blueMoon's Dr. Eleni Gabre-Madhin, the panel featured Olam International's Julie Green; KadAfrica's Eric Kaduru; and Farm Shop's Farouk Jiwa.



H.E. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime delivering her keynote address.

The plenary highlighted enabling policy environments, adequate skills training and education for both technical and soft skills, and financing for youth as critical issues that need to be addressed.

It also emphasized the need for access to finance for young people.

“There’s a lot of discussion of MFIs [microfinance institutions] providing loans and support to young people, but we have not seen this money on the ground,” said Jiwa. “Young people cannot find them and their requirements are so unrealistic. Young people who want to start a business are unable to.”

Via [video](#) during the opening of day two, President and CEO of The MasterCard Foundation Reeta Roy called on the audience to work together and make an investment in young people.

### **3. To ensure the agricultural sector reaches its full potential, cultural and legislative barriers must be addressed.**

The theme of complexity continued during the [Unlocking Agri-finance for Youth panel](#) on day two. Kola Masha from Doreo Partners moderated the session, which featured Frank Altman from Community Reinvestment Fund USA; Roy Parizat of the World Bank; and Andrew Youn from One Acre Fund.

Masha opened the panel by reminding the audience that because of hereditary practices—both through law and cultural practice—youth tend to have limited access to smaller plots of land. He also said they have less access to family labour and limited collateral, so accessing finance is both particularly important to and a hurdle for youth.

Youn noted that while young people are perceived as a risk for financing, that perception is largely a myth. He said that 99.5 percent of loans made to young people through One Acre Farm are repaid on time.

“Youth are some of our best customers,” he said. “They are more likely to adopt modern farming practices and more likely to see themselves as professional farmers.”

He also highlighted the opportunity to give agricultural loans in the form of training and

farming inputs, and provide targeted value-added services. Parizat highlighted the opportunity for climate financing for smallholder farmers.

“Climate finance funds haven’t found a way to reach smallholder farmers,” he said. “But there is an opportunity to work with financiers to link to smallholder farmers.”

The barriers for women to achieve productive work in agriculture were also highlighted throughout the Summit, particularly during [Ruth Oniang’o’s keynote address](#) in the afternoon of day two.

Oniang’o, who is the Board Chair of Sasakawa Africa Association and Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education, said that 70 percent of Africa’s agricultural yields are produced by women but highlighted that women face particular obstacles, such as cultural and financial barriers, when trying to reach their full potential.

“They tell you girls can’t do mathematics, but these women sell by the roadside, and they know their figures,” she said. “This idea that women can’t do mathematics is not real.”

During the closing session, youth delegate Agnes Hagan reiterated that message. She said that despite the challenges that she sees facing women, they have a significant role to play in transforming agriculture.



Ruth Oniang’o delivering her keynote.

A woman with her hair styled in a bun, wearing a headband with colorful beads and a patterned sleeveless top, is speaking into a microphone. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The text is centered in the lower half of the image.

**“Sustainable agriculture is a necessity in Africa. The young, energetic people and their entrepreneurial minds will make this a reality.”**

— Laetitia Mukungu, Founder, Africa Rabbit Centre

# BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The Summit featured three key themes that informed all sessions. Breakout sessions were designed as a deep dive into each theme: Building Resilience to Climate Change; Breaking down Gender Barriers; and Mechanization or ICT? Agricultural Transformation through Technology

## Building Resilience to Climate Change

Agricultural transformation in Africa needs to employ climate-smart agricultural techniques to be sustainable, efficient, and profitable.

Moderated by Dr. Daniel Sherrard from EARTH University, the panel featured Dr. Simon Winter from TechnoServe and the Harvard Kennedy School; Samuel Muhirwa from BufCoffee Ltd.; and Janet Maro of Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania.

The discussion focused on strategies for those working in the agricultural sector to build resilience to the effects of a changing climate.

Key points were as follows:

- Effects of climate change are varied and wide ranging; there are different impacts in different areas even within the same country. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Climate-smart agricultural practices and policies must also vary.
- The extent of adoption of climate-smart policies and practices will depend on smallholder farmers. Young farmers, who are usually less wedded to traditional practices and more open to innovation, will be key changemakers.

- There is good—though anecdotal—evidence of successful climate-smart agricultural practices building resilience and helping farmers cope under extreme weather conditions. These examples, however, are small and need to consider scalable pathways for successful models.
- Academic research on modelling climate risks is abundant, but much of it isn't communicated outside of academic circles. Research findings and recommendations need to reach the district and community levels so farmers have the information they need to adjust their habits and adapt to a changing environment.
- The complexity of the issue can be overwhelming, but addressing climate issues in isolation won't be effective. Stakeholders need to be brought together around the future of the agri-food sector.

## Breaking down Gender Barriers

Despite the essential role and impact of women in agriculture, they face more constraints than men in accessing resources to increase productivity.

This breakout session was moderated by Dr. Jemimah Njuki from International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and featured Dr. Anna Mdee from Overseas Development Institute; Sithembile Ndema Mwamakamba from FANRPAN; and MasterCard Foundation Scholar Alesia Ofori.

The panel highlighted that gender barriers are a significant issue to achieving agricultural transformation and that if the gender labour gap closed, African economies would grow by 34 percent.

Key points were as follows:

- Policies that support inclusion are important, but policies alone are not enough. There is a need to ensure that policy is translated into action.
- Gender isn't just about women; it is about how society is organized and the relationships and power dynamics within that society.
- Successful gender programming doesn't simply count how many women are participating in the program; it looks at specific barriers women and men face within specific contexts.
- A gender lens cannot neglect boys and men. They must be engaged if gender equality is to be achieved.
- Elders, including parents, often impose gender-biased attitudes toward sons and daughters that encourage or discourage certain behaviour. This can be compounded by related pressure from relatives, communities, and society.

## Mechanization or ICT? Agricultural Transformation through Technology

A major constraint to agricultural transformation in Africa is the limited availability of and access to technology.

This session was moderated by Lucy Kioko from Mercy Corps and featured Alloysius Attah from Farmerline; Jonny Casey from Practical Action; and Carol Kakooza from the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA).

The session focused on ways technology could be leveraged to increase agricultural productivity, as well as strategies for increasing access to those technologies.



Alloysius Attah speaking on the panel, Mechanization or ICT?

Key points were as follows:

- Technology—both modern and appropriate agricultural technology and ICT—is critical to facilitate agricultural transformation.
- Human-centred design is crucial for the uptake of technology. Young people are more likely to use something they are familiar with, and will have fewer barriers if technologies are accessible and relevant.
- Because young farmers and agripreneurs are more likely to adopt new technologies, they are the ones who will transform the sector.
- The agricultural sector doesn't exist as a standalone entity. A systems lens is needed to identify broader opportunities and challenges. For example, many technologies can't be accessed without adequate electricity.
- It's important to look at technologies that reduce the amount of work on a farm, such as solar irrigation systems.
- Coordination is necessary to avoid duplicating efforts. Approaches that are consolidated can better reach communities.

# DEBATE

## Within agriculture, off-farm activities will yield the greatest opportunities for youth.

The debate on day two of the Young Africa Works Summit proposed that “within agriculture, off-farm activities will yield the greatest opportunities for youth.”

Moderated by Peter Bamkole from Pan-Atlantic University, the debate featured Michigan State University’s Dr. David Tschirley and CARL Group’s Clarisse Murekatete on the pro side of the argument, and Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa’s (AGRA) Dr. Agnes Kalibata and Youth Agro-Environmental Initiative’s Grace Wanene on the con side.

Before the debate, much of the audience supported the proposition, with just over 58 percent agreeing that off-farm activities will yield the greatest opportunities for youth, almost 30 percent disagreeing, and 12 percent remaining undecided.

In her opening statement for the con side, Wanene said that without on-farm activities, off-farm opportunities within agriculture simply don’t exist. She and Kalibata argued that there are not only more opportunities on the farm for young people, but those opportunities are also more accessible.

“There is a misconception that farming is tied to food security for young people,” Kalibata said. “The only reason young people go to farm is because it makes business sense.”

The pro side responded by stating that without off-farm opportunities linking production to markets, there will be little opportunity for youth on the farm. The pro side also highlighted the quality of off-farm employment as well as the fact that the earning potential for off-farm activities will be higher over the next 10-15 years.

The final vote showed that audience opinion had been swayed by the con side, with 41 percent disagreeing that off-farm activities will yield the greatest opportunities for youth, 51 percent agreeing, and almost eight percent remaining undecided.

Both sides of the debate, as well as the audience, seemed to agree that both on-farm and off-farm production and opportunities are interconnected and both will be crucial to transforming the agricultural sector.



The teams face off during the debate.



**“They are transforming agriculture  
from subsistence farming to  
a modern, competitive,  
and diverse sector.”**

— Ann Miles, Director, Financial Inclusion, The MasterCard Foundation

# YOUTH PROGRAM

The MasterCard Foundation and Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) collaborated to deliver a pre-, during-, and post-Summit youth program for the 47 youth delegates who attended the Summit. This program was developed to equip youth with the skills and confidence they needed to actively participate at the event, and to foster connections and networking opportunities to build relationships that will serve youth beyond the event itself.

Four online webinars were held in advance of the Summit, as well as a one-day workshop on-site to build the leadership and participation skills of the youth delegates. In addition, 28 youth delegates were paired with selected Summit delegates to participate in mentoring sessions and 15 pairs will continue in a long-term mentoring program for the next year.



All youth interviewed as part of the Summit assessment said the youth program gave them opportunities to learn and practise skills and techniques for engaging in conversations and promoting their work and projects.



# MEDIA

Through extensive media coverage, the message of the Young Africa Works Summit reached far beyond the audience in Kigali. See some select stories and interviews below.

[Africa's Youth Key Drivers for Agricultural Transformation - \*CNBC Africa\*](#)



[Helping Africa to Feed Itself - \*The Citizen, South Africa\*](#)

[The Invisible Working Lives of Africa's Youth - \*AllAfrica.com\*](#)

[Research Calls for New Youth Employment Strategies - \*Tanzania Citizen\*](#)

# CONCLUSION

We look forward to the next Young Africa Works Summit in 2018, where we will continue to discuss strategies and learning to further inform economic opportunities for young people in Africa.



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