AFRICA ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICY FORUM

Entrepreneurship Policies for Regional Inclusive and Sustainable Development

Policy makers and representatives responsible for entrepreneurship and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) met in Kigali, on 13 and 14 December 2017 under the cooperation framework of United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and Convention Bureau (RCB) and the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN).

The forum attracted over 120 delegates (31% were women) comprised of government officials, industry and finance executives, entrepreneurs, sector associations, business development service providers and members of the development community. It comprised of sessions categorized under six areas of Entrepreneurship Policy Framework: Formulating National Strategy, Optimizing the Regulatory Environment, Enhancing Entrepreneurship Education and Development, Facilitating Technology Exchange and Innovation, Improving Access to Finance and Promoting Awareness and Networking, with a focus on Regional Value Chains. The Forum was opened by the Resident Coordinator, Mr. Fodé Njyae and Ms. Parminder Vir the CEO of the Tony Elumelu Foundation. As guest of honor H.E. Clare Akamanzi, Chief Executive Officer, Rwanda Development Board addressed the audience. The Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry from Ghana Hon. Carlos Kingsley Ahenkorah gave a keynote speech in the first session. High level representation from the Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda and South Africa as well country Representatives from United Nations Development Programme, and the Organization for Migration (IOM), were among the audience.
There were twenty countries represented in the Forum, including delegates from Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, France, Gambia, Ghana, Italy, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Spain, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Zambia. Participants appreciated the active participation of entrepreneurs, private sector foundations such as the Tony Elumelu and youth networks from across the African Region. This event shared good practices and lesson learnt in developing national strategies and action plans and mobilize the contributions of a wide range of stakeholders in forging a common global agenda for enhancement of entrepreneurship to sustainable development in Africa, within the framework of the sustainable development goals.

Participants also welcomed the video message sent by the Secretary General of UNCTAD – Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi - which in the concluding session provided support to the way forward in Africa for sustainable entrepreneur development. The Secretary General stated: “We can say the ingredients for a good entrepreneurship policy are known, but each country must choose its own recipe, and add the local flavours”.


The Director of UNCTAD’s Division on Investment and Enterprise stressed the importance of entrepreneurship development and business facilitation to advance sustainable development and highlighted the recent developments on UNCTAD’s work on these areas. More specifically, he emphasized UNCTAD’s assistance on formulating entrepreneurship policies in six developing countries and continued support to forty developing countries and economies in transition through the Empretec network. He also underlined the activities carried out under UNCTAD’s business facilitation, which have helped many countries simplifying regulations and administrative procedures for enterprises ‘establishment. Targeted policies for vulnerable groups, such as migrants and women have been highlighted for consideration and development in collaboration with relevant UN agencies. The keynote speaker – Dr. Alex Osterwalder - described the most common issues entrepreneurs face in the start-up phase, drawing the attention to the idea-testing stage where risk and uncertainty are particularly high and where policy support is particularly important to help reducing the risks. He also discussed a key role of entrepreneurs’ access to knowledge and new innovative tools, such as the Business Model Canvas or the Value Proposition that can help designing and shaping ideas rapidly compare to traditional tools such as business plan; and that policy makers can play a critical role on improving and broadening such access. He also mentioned the essential role played by “productive failures” as learning experiences for entrepreneurs when they are validating their ideas and refining them further and emphasized importance of policy measures to facilitate sharing such experiences. During the discussion, delegates stressed the importance of linking entrepreneurship policy with sustainability and reconfirmed the importance of the holistic approach adopted by UNCTAD in engaging private and public sectors stakeholders in policy design and implementation.

**Launch of the National Entrepreneurship Policy of The Gambia**

High-level representatives of the Government of The Gambia, Ambassadors of UNCTAD member States, development partners, private sector participated to the launch of the Investment Policy Review (IPR) and the National Entrepreneurship Policy (NEP) of the Gambia held in Geneva on 20 November 2017. H.E. Dr. Isatou Touray, Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE), endorsed the IPR and NEP recommendations and recognized their role in assisting the country in achieving its SDG commitments. Action plans have been shared with the member States of UNCTAD, investors with operations in the region, development partners and civil society. The Government of The Gambia endorsed the two reports’ recommendations and committed to their effective implementation.

**Launch of the National Entrepreneurship Strategy in Tanzania**

The strategy launched on 12 December 2017 was developed through a participative process, including literature review, a survey and stakeholder consultative workshops under the leadership of the National Economic Empowerment Council, Prime Minister’s Office, with technical support from UNCTAD. With the adoption of a National Entrepreneurship strategy the Government aims to build the national entrepreneurship ecosystem in Tanzania, for enhanced entrepreneurial spirit and performance of economic activities, leading to the creation of new start-ups and the formalization and growth of domestic MSMEs, upgraded productive capacities as well as innovative and sustainable solutions to current environmental and social challenges. This is to be achieved through addressing the critical gaps and barriers in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.
Global Entrepreneurship Week: Start-up for SDGs

UNCTAD, in collaboration with WIPO, the Politecnico di Milano, Youth Business International and Impact Hub Geneva invited young entrepreneurs to pitch business ideas contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), during the Global Entrepreneurship Week on 13-19 November 2017. Impact investors and experts have provided feedback to young start-ups on how to promote sustainable and inclusive growth through entrepreneurship. Jennifer Shigoli won an equity fund of US$ 15,000. A grant of US$ 5,000 was awarded to Filipa Carreira from Mozambique. Jennifer is the founder of Elea Reusable Sanitary Pads, made in Tanzania from biodegradable cotton as an affordable alternative sanitary care product (www.malkiainvestments.com). Filipa is the founder of Wamina, a girl empowerment brand that promotes education and self-confidence among girls by providing them with fact based information about sexual and reproductive health as well as reusable pads (www.wamina.co.mz). The awards were sponsored by ONE CREATION, a Swiss investment cooperative. Together with UNCTAD, Ms. Elaine France from Flow in Action coached the ten pitchers and moderated the interactive session with 150 youth and delegates.

Empretec Directors Meeting

Sixteen representatives from twelve Empretec national centres attended the XXIV annual meeting of Empretec Directors in Geneva on 6-7 December 2017. The two-day meeting provided participants with an opportunity to share experiences and products, highlight the major achievements over the past twelve months, and to discuss strategic and operational issues related to the Empretec programme. During the first day, UNCTAD and participants provided an overview of the main achievements and reported on activities carried out during 2017. The afternoon session discussed innovative tools on entrepreneurship training and featured presentations by below distinguished professors:

Professor Raphael H. COHEN, Academic co-director of the Entrepreneurial Leadership specialization of the eMBA, University of Geneva
Prof. Bo JI, Chief Representative for Europe and Assistant Dean for Global Executive Education, Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business
Prof. Bingsheng TENG, Associate Dean, Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business

On the second day, management and installation issues, harmonization of procedures, partnerships and outreach were discussed. The following aspects were considered for further development in the upcoming year:

- Empretec centres to mobilize empretecos to attend the V Global Empretec Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, next April 2018 during the Global Entrepreneurship Congress (https://genglobal.org/gec);
- In collaboration with SEBRAE, UNCTAD to coordinate the roll out of pilot tests for the new 6-day ETW (modernization of the 6-day ETW, including design thinking and business canvas) in interested countries, with the possibility of organizing a training of trainers’ session to assess the applicability of the new approach and collect feedback;
- Empretec Uruguay is available to share and transfer the PROEX methodology to interested centres;
- UNCTAD to distribute the installation manual to all centres after it has been peer-reviewed and finalized;
- Empretec Argentina to share the visual identity guidelines and details about the proposed logo. UNCTAD to check with its legal office about the possible use of the UN logo in the Empretec logo;
- Empretec centres to provide inputs for the 2017 annual report (UNCTAD will circulate the forms) and ideas for an Empretec 30 years publication with 10 outstanding success stories from the network.
Zambia: The Green Jobs Programme held a conference in Livingstone, on 6-8 September 2017, to share good practices and enhance regional collaboration. 180 people attended from 20 African countries, representing the Green Jobs, PAGE and Switch Africa Green programmes. Networking session were designed by the ILO training centre around main themes, including, among others: foresight, business linkages, south-south and triangular cooperation. UNCTAD and ITC organized an exhibition space which brought a lot of spark to the event and resulted in business deals. About 25 companies exhibited and were able to generate interest for linkages or access to finance/technology.
- The Government of Finland delegation included the Minister of Employment and about 10 start-ups in the field of renewable energy, forestry and construction. Representatives of FINPRO and FINFUND also attended the sessions.
- Zambia Development Agency carried out additional workshops in collaboration with Barclays Bank and sealed a new agreement for 2018.

Gambia: Empretec Gambia hosts the Youth Empowerment Programme by the International Trade Centre.

Argentina: The President of Empretec Foundation Argentina, Mr. Jorge Lawson, was recognized with the Startup Nations Award for Local Policy Leadership at the Start Up Summit held in Estonia on 20 November 2017. Mr. Lawson implemented several programmes and policies during his time as Minister of the Province of Cordoba, all with a vision to build an ecosystem that can continue to develop once government support is over. Among his policy achievements are the creation of an SME and Entrepreneurial Development Secretariat in the Province and the "Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Cordoba", an entity with 65 different organizations that continues to strengthen the ecosystem in the Province. Empretec Argentina is now implementing the Communities with Value (Comunidades con Valor) programme, which aims at creating and developing linkages with SMEs to strengthen regional economies by identifying the companies’ demand for goods and services with a view to bring them closer to local entrepreneurs and SMEs with the capacity to meet it, thus promoting a local network of opportunities.

Brazil: SEBRAE (Empretec Brazil) introduced and explained the features of a new 6-day ETW for the modernization of the training workshop, based on the feedback received from thousands of empretecos and to meet the demands of young and digital-savvy entrepreneurs in Brazil. The new approach which - among other things - features the use of design thinking and business model canvas in opportunity seeking and information seeking modules, has been tested in two pilot workshops in two different cities during the month of November 2017 and an informative session has been organized with Brazilian trainers to explain the rationale of a revised training structure, why changes are required and to get their feedback.

Cameroun: hosted the first ETW in English in collaboration with Empretec centres in Ghana and The Gambia.

Viet Nam: Empretec Viet Nam celebrated on 12 December the Empretec Day in Viet Nam.

Uganda: Enterprise Uganda celebrated its 16th year of existence. Focusing on youth, the centre has been appreciated by development partners and received financial support to carry out training activities with young people. While its partnership with DFID is coming to an end, the centre is ready to start a new collaboration with the World Bank.

Malaysia: Two Empretec training workshops in collaboration with National Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Malaysia were organized in December 2017, one of which was for retrenched workers.

Indonesia: A first pilot collaboration with ASEAN-Japan centre took place in December 2017 to train and coach a selected group of women entrepreneurs from the region.

Russia: Five workshops were delivered in partnership with Russia Association on Entrepreneurship education in Monrovia and Arconic Foundation in Samara, including a workshop on impact assessment of the Empretec methodology on facilitation of small and medium business in Samara region. They were delivered by local trainers in Russian with the participation of UNCTAD.
Be in the Know:

**Tony Elumelu Foundation:**

Africa’s largest business incubator, The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF), is now accepting applications from African entrepreneurs, with business ideas that can transform Africa. The application portal is open and accepting submissions until Midnight WAT on March 1, 2017. To apply, complete the online application at: www.tonyelumelufoundation.org/programme.

CEO of the Foundation, Parminder Vir OBE said: “We encourage women, French, Arabic and Portuguese speakers and business ideas from every region across Africa, to apply. Our 2,000 alumni are already growing their businesses and improving lives. If you have a transformational business or an idea, we have an opportunity for you.”

**Call for the Empretec Women in Business Awards 2018**

The sixth edition of the Empretec Women in Business Awards is open for nominations. Grab this opportunity to participate in the celebration of the 30 years of Empretec. To learn more, visit www.empretec.net.

**To read:**


**Save the date:**


**To watch:**

Bridging entrepreneurial skills gap in Africa  

Overcoming small business challenges and failures  

Transforming Africa’s educational system to empower the youth  
https://www.cnbcfrica.com/videos/2017/12/14/transfoming-africas-educational-system-to-empower-the-youth/

Argon Asset Management Founder speaks on boosting cross-border trade in East Africa  