



Harnessing the Africa Youth Bulge: Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Agribusiness incubation

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Date and time: Tue, 2018-10-30 13:07

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Agribusiness is key to Africa's future.

One of the topics discussed intensely during the 2018 RUFORUM Conference is Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship and how the youth can tap into this gap.

The lead speaker Dr. Kiran Shirma, CEO Agribusiness and Information Platform, ICRISAT noted the future of African youth lies in agriculture; likewise the future of agriculture lies in the youth. In Africa the budget for agribusiness is not enough. He also noted Research and government fund is not easy thereby posing a challenge in agribusiness.

How can governments support agribusiness: Mr. Samuel Rigu a young entrepreneur from Safi Organics highlighted the challenges young people encounter in starting agribusinesses in Kenya. The government need come up with ways on how young people can start businesses without a lot of hustle. There should also be ease to access to finances. The youth also need mentorship; money is not the only solution to business but mentorship is also very important.

Prof. Patience Mshenga from Egerton University noted Universities are trying to do their best to create linkages between private sector and governments. The private sectors are willing to work with universities e.g. giving students skills to students, curriculum change; the challenge however is universities do not have enough funds to reach many of the private sectors. 'We need to get out of the book and go into hard and practical curriculum' she said. E.g. in Egerton University any student undertaking an agriculture based course has to go to the farm. Students are given a piece of land to farm from year 1 to 4. They are also offered mentorship on farming. She however noted that funding is not enough.

The closing sentiments were ;Universities in Africa are not ready for agribusiness. There's need for more innovation hubs and need for more curriculum based in agribusiness.

The RUFORUM conference was held from 22nd-26 October 2018 was attended by more than 1200 delegates.

Expiry Date: Thu, 2019-10-31 13:07

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