

Towards solving youth unemployment in nigeria

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Towards solving youth unemployment in Nigeria The federal government recently inaugurated inter-ministerial committee on job fair to address all the identified barriers to job creation and sustainable livelihood in the country, OLUGBENGA SALAMI writes Tell those graduates to stop combing here and there for jobs. If there are no lucrative offers of employment, they should establish themselves by starting something. Unemployment is a pest that has and still eating deep into the fabric of Nigeria. Let them start something rather than continue waiting for jobs that not readily available. God bless Nigeria. This was the comment of a Nigerian youth, who simply identified himself as Emylexray on the increasing rate of unemployment in the country. The Statistician-General of the Federation, Dr. Temi Kale had recently revealed that about 20.3 million Nigerians are currently jobless and not employed in any form of job. " Nigeria's unemployment rate is spiraling upwards, growing at 16% per year. The youth of the nation are the most impacted, with a youth unemployment rate over 50%". There is no denying the fact that rising youth unemployment in Nigeria has been a significant contributor to the dramatic rise in social unrest and crime like Boko Haram and communal crises in many parts of the country. It is generally believed that if young people are provided with employment opportunities, they can become productive assets and take their part in mainstream society offering the best of their skills and talents. It is against this background that the federal government in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, UNIDO recently inaugurated Inter-Ministerial Committee on Job Fair to address all the identified barriers to job creation and sustainable livelihood in the country. The terms of reference for the

committee include producing an action plan for the job fair with cost and timelines and arranging venues, date, time, programme, invitees, training session, targets industries, companies, schools and youths. The committee is also expected to build and launch a web platform for entrepreneurship and job fair where employers can put online job openings and job seekers can directly register online. It is equally mandated to build a database for the teeming unemployed youths and showcase successful entrepreneurs.

Minister of State for Trade and Investment, Dr. Samuel Ortom, who inaugurated the committee through the Director of Industrial Development, Mr. Olakunle Sogbola in Abuja, the nation's capital, said the maiden fair was meant "to target widely unemployed youth as other programmes have divergent approach to solving unemployment in the country". "It will support industry by creating sustainable working and knowledge sharing platforms and networks which would link the job seekers for local businesses, companies, as well as the needs and options for job seekers. It will also highlight inherent benefits for young individuals who have decided to be entrepreneurs and equally showcase the successful ones with goods and services designed locally and competitive globally and not less than 1, 000 jobs will be created at the first instance from this exercise", he explained.

That the latest figure on the rate of unemployment in the country is disturbing is an understatement. But the most interesting thing is that the government realized this on time and now taking step towards tackling the danger it could portend for the country if not urgently addressed. According to figures from the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, the unemployment rate has increased to all-time high of 23.9 per cent for the year 2011 while

the figure for 2012 rose above 25 per cent. Ortom corroborated this during the committee inauguration when he said that country's present "employment stands roughly at 23 per cent with the tendencies to go up as a result of unstable economic situation". The minister stressed that the labour market information reveals the major barriers to youth employment as job skills mismatch that hinder the chances of finding employment due to lack of competence in both technical and non-technical skills. According to him, other barriers as low labour demand that leads to high turn-over and job instability; information gap between job seekers and potential employers due to lack of network; restricted access to credit, and mismatch between the requirements of the Nigerian labour market and the school curriculum. Amid this high rate of unemployment, the economic watchers have noticed that there is an increasing trend of disinterest by the emerging younger generation in highly labour-intensive works such as agriculture and factory work in preference for white collar jobs, resulting in many preferring to remain in the labour market rather than take up such jobs. According to a recent report by the NBS, "in computing the unemployment rate, the total population is divided into labour force (currently active) and non-labour force (not currently active). The labour force population covers persons aged 15 to 64 years. The definition of unemployment therefore covers persons (aged 15-64) who during the reference period were currently available for work, seeking for work but were without work". "A person is regarded as employed if he/she is engaged in the production of goods and services, thereby contributing to the gross domestic product, in a legitimate manner, which is a component of the national accounts. The category of persons considered

not-in-labour-force include those without work, who are not seeking for work and/or are not available for work as well as those below or above the working age, " the report stated. Analysis of employment data for the past five years shows that the rate of new entrants into the labour market has not been uniform. The rate was on the increase from 2007 to 2009, but declined significantly from 2009 to 2010, and increased again from 2010 to 2011. " Within the five-year period, there has been an average of about 1. 8 million new entrants into the active labour market per year. " Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, Malam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, lamented recently that while the Nigerian economy grew at the rate of seven per cent for the past five years, unemployment has actually doubled at same period. Sanusi also noted at the annual lecture/dinner and awards night organised by the Ahmadu Bello University Alumni Association, Abuja Branch that the current security upheaval and internal insurrection all over the country were as a result of severe poverty and rising unemployment, especially in the north. The CBN governor affirmed that the present development and economic reality in Nigeria, where unemployment is widening at a time of economic growth, is an aberration. " There is a serious problem when a country is growing at seven per cent and yet could not provide jobs for its citizens. It is like a broken record; a country that produces oil yet imports refined fuel, a country that is in the tomato belt and yet imports tomatoes", he said. He, therefore, said government needed to rethink and restructure the economic system of the country by creating the enabling environment that encourages industrialisation. Sanusi advised that jobs would only be created by establishing industries that rely on little technology but high in productivity

similar to the ones adopted by the Chinese and Asian Tigers. " The economic problem of Nigeria can only be reduced to one word-value chain. In every sector of the economy, the value chain is broken, " he said, adding: " I have never understood what the government meant when they talk about job creation as a policy. The only ways you (government) can create jobs is by removing all the impediments and just focus on building the enabling infrastructures like power" To reduce unemployment, crimes and social unrest in the country, government must fix the energy sector. Through this, the economy would be improved because more investors would be interested in investing their businesses and in turn create jobs and wealth for the populace in general. Posted by OLUGBENGA SALAMI on April 20, 2013. Filed under Features. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2. 0. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.