

Action needed to tackle youth unemployment

The escalating youth unemployment crisis in Kenya requires urgent attention. Millions of young Kenyans are in poverty and frustrated.

Time is running out, and if there is no clear strategic plan, the country risks leaving an entire generation behind.

The lack of job opportunities has led to widespread frustration among Kenyan youth. For many, dreams of securing formal employment have been replaced by a daily struggle for survival. We are talking about hopelessness among youth. The government must wake up and do something about this.

According to the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (Kippira), the country has a large vibrant youth population, with about 75 percent of the population aged below 35 years. However, many young people face challenges in accessing decent and productive employment opportunities that match their skills and aspirations.

High youth unemployment means, the country is having a potential powder keg that can explode anytime. The government must take immediate action to address Kenya's high youth unemployment rate.

First, Kenya must align key economic policies to fight against unemployment among the youth. Make no mistake, high unemployment stifles economic growth and with limited economic activity, tax incomes decline, making it harder for the government to provide essential services such as healthcare and education.

If the economy is not growing and you are not collecting enough taxes to deliver services like education and health, definitely the economy and people are going to be miserable.

Education plays a critical role in addressing youth unemployment. Kenya's education should be updated to connect with the realities of the job market. There is a pressing need to revamp the curriculum with emphasis on skills like coding, data analysis and entrepreneurship. More efforts should be made to strengthen partnerships between educational institutions and industries to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Also, the country should tap the huge potential for innovation by addressing significant barriers facing Kenya's ecosystem, including in-

adequate infrastructure, limited access to capital and lack of government support.

More support should be accorded to Kenya's young people to continue leveraging technology and creativity to carve out new opportunities for themselves and their peers.

Kenya's tech sector, dubbed the Silicon Savannah, has made remarkable progress, making the country a hub of innovation, and creating hope among the youth.

The government should be at the forefront in supporting startups through the enactment of laws and regulations that create a favourable business environment that enable entrepreneurship to thrive—create an enabling environment for businesses thrive, including reducing bureaucratic red tape and improve access to funding, training and requisite help.

To tackle youth unemployment, it is equally important that government engage the private sector and harness diaspora's expertise and networks to create job opportunities.

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