



# Close Skills Gaps to Prepare Africa's Workforce for Tomorrow's Jobs

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- Every year for the next three decades, 15-20 million increasingly well-educated young people are expected to join the African workforce
- Employers across the region identify skills gaps as a major constraint to their ability to compete in the global economy
- In South Africa alone, 39% of core skills required across all jobs will be wholly different by 2020, while 41% of jobs in South Africa are susceptible to automation
- Read the full report [here](#). For more information about the World Economic Forum on Africa, please visit [wef.ch/af17](http://wef.ch/af17)

**Durban, South Africa, 3 May 2017** – With more than 60% of its population under the age of 25, sub-Saharan Africa is already the world's youngest region and, by 2030, it will be home to more than one-quarter of the world's under-25 population. As this young population – the best-educated and globally connected the continent has ever had – enters the world of work, the region has a demographic opportunity. But the region can only leverage this opportunity by unlocking latent talent and preparing its people for the future of work.

A new report, *[The Future of Jobs and Skills in Africa: Preparing the Region for the Fourth Industrial Revolution](#)*, launched by the World Economic Forum aims to serve as a practical guide for leaders from business, government, civil society and the education sector, and finds that the region's capacity to adapt to the requirements of future jobs leaves little space for complacency. While a number of African economies are relatively underexposed to labour market disruptions at present, this picture is changing rapidly. This window of opportunity must be used by the region's leaders to prepare for tomorrow.

Key findings from the report, which includes new data from LinkedIn, are:

- While it is predicted that 41% of all work activities in South Africa are susceptible to automation – as are 44% in Ethiopia, 46% in Nigeria and 52% in Kenya – it is likely moderated

by comparatively low labour costs and offset by job creation. Despite this window of opportunity, the region's capacity to adapt to further job disruption is a concern.

- Employers across the region identify inadequately skilled workforces as a major constraint to their businesses, including 41% of firms in Tanzania and 30% in Kenya, while others say they feel less pressure (9% in South Africa and 6% in Nigeria). However, this pattern may worsen across the region in the future. In South Africa alone, 39% of core skills required across occupations will be wholly different by 2020.
- This skills instability often stems from the fact that many jobs in the region are becoming more intense in their use of digital technologies. Average ICT intensity of jobs in South Africa increased by 26% over the last decade, while 6.7% of all formal-sector employment in Ghana and 18.4% of all formal-sector employment in Kenya occurs in occupations with high ICT intensity.
- Some of the most common types of higher-skilled employment on the continent include business analysts, school teachers and academics, commercial bankers, accountants, human resources, marketing and operations specialists, customer service specialists, advertising professionals, information technology workers and software and app developers, according to LinkedIn's data.

"Across the continent, substantial potential exists for creating high-value-adding, formal-sector jobs in a number of areas. However, to realize this potential, closer dialogue between education providers and industry is needed to align and optimize the region's demand and supply of skills," said Nicolaas Kruger, Chief Executive Officer of MMI Holdings and Chair of the Africa Skills Initiative.

The initiative, part of the broader efforts of the Forum's System Initiative on Shaping the Future of Education, Gender and Work, serves as a platform to help change this. It provides new insight, brings together business efforts to address future-oriented skills development and supports constructive public-private dialogue for urgent and fundamental reform of education systems and labour policies to prepare workforces for the future of jobs. The Africa Skills Initiative is inviting businesses in partnership with government, civil society, and the education and training sectors to make quantifiable commitments to skill, upskill or reskill 1 million people by 2018 and 5 million people by 2020 in Africa, the Middle East and other regions.

"The data show that, to prepare for the future of work, the region must expand its high-skilled talent pool by developing future-ready curricula, with a particular emphasis on STEM education; increase digital fluency and ICT literacy across the population; provide robust and respected technical and vocational education; and create a culture of life-long learning, including the provision of adult training and upskilling infrastructure," said Saadia Zahidi, Head

of Education, Gender and Work and Member of the Executive Committee at the World Economic Forum.

“One thing we know about the future of work is that we can’t predict all the changes that lay ahead,” said Allen Blue, Co-Founder and VP of Product at LinkedIn. “So it’s critical Africa take advantage of new insights that help provide a more comprehensive view of trends within its workforce, and develop a network of workers, employers, educators, policymakers and trainers that is responsive and can adapt quickly to change.”

More than 1,000 participants are taking part in the 27th World Economic Forum on Africa in Durban, South Africa from 3 to 5 May 2017. The theme of the meeting is “Achieving Inclusive Growth through Responsive and Responsible Leadership”.

### Notes to Editors

Read the report [here](#)

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