



DEVELOPING THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND TALENT OF YOUTH TO FURTHER FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

The following case study was received as a result of a call issued by the Committee on World Food Security for case studies highlighting examples of initiatives aimed at 'Developing the knowledge, skills and talent of youth to further food security and nutrition'. The cases received provide the background for a discussion of lessons learned and potential policy implications at a special event on October 15th, 2015 during CFS 42. Find out more at www.fao.org/cfs/youth.

THE FRENCH-AFRICAN FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH The social network of African and French economic stakeholders to foster mutual growth

The catalyst for renewed economic relations between France and Africa

The idea of this Foundation was suggested in the **report** "A partnership for the future: 15 proposals for building a new economic relationship between Africa and France" which was drafted by Hubert Védrine, Tidjane Thiam, Lionel Zinsou, Jean-Michel Severino and Hakim El Karoui. The suggestion received support from the French and African Heads of State and Government when they met at the Elysée Summit for Peace and Security in Africa on **6 and 7 December 2013**. One of the report's authors, Lionel Zinsou, a Franco-Beninese economist and Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the PAI Partners investment fund, was asked to set up this Foundation. Its launch took place in front of 130 prominent French and African figures on **15 July 2014** with the participation of the Minister of Finance of Nigeria and the French Ministers for the Economy, Finance, Foreign Affairs and International Development. It is scheduled to be fully operational on **6 February 2015**.

The coordinator of the French and African economic ecosystem

As the bedrock for French/African economic relations, the Foundation is the social network between businesses and their public sector and non-profit counterparts. It rallies stakeholders around topics of general interest and takes a long-term view. It is a forum for sharing information and forging strategies and partnerships that match businesses' requirements to give new impetus to economic exchanges. It provides the public authorities with unique insight into issues of concern to businesses (visas, financing, technical expertise, etc.). The Foundation aims to help double economic exchanges in the next five years and to refocus economic relations on business relationships with an eye to ensuring sustainable, inclusive and shared development.

Local businesses have set up mirror associations in a number of countries (Nigeria, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Angola, etc.). Local clusters, which are offshoots of the Foundation, were launched in Nantes on 6 October 2014 and in Bordeaux on 17 November 2014.

Four priority areas: programmes being initiated

1°) Communicate on economic reality in Africa and France: better inform the French public about economic and social reality in Africa to ensure that investors and French businesses make informed decisions; in return, better inform African citizens of France's economic potential; improve the visibility of economic partnerships between France and Africa and of those involved, with the support of the respective diasporas. The Foundation is setting up an **annual economic relations index** that will be compiled by an academic institution from key economic indicators.

2°) Act as a policy advocate: in France, market Africa's economic potential, promote opportunities and improve France's perception of the continent; argue in favour of a fairer risk assessment of Africa's economy, particularly in relation to rating agencies and risk insurance companies; in Africa, market the opportunities offered by French businesses and encourage African investment in France.



3°) Foster and support human capital initiatives, a key business requirement currently not being met, by improving and expanding the commercial and non-commercial training courses on offer via e-learning or traditional classroom methods. These courses should cover the most basic technical qualifications through to the top academic pathways. Three programmes are currently underway thanks to the €3 million provided by the French Ministry for Finance and Public Accounts:

- The **RH-Africa Excellence** programme jointly run by the Foundation and the French Council of Investors in Africa (CIAN). The aim of this programme is to modernise and provide certification for African training centres to ensure that the training on offer meets business requirements; these improvements will feed through to the job market in 2017/2018.
- The **Lead Campus** programme initiated by Danone and several other French businesses. This programme, with the support of the CEFEB (Financial, Economic and Banking Studies Centre) and French and African higher education establishments, will provide young, high-potential Africans working in the private sector, government departments or African campus associations with management training. The programme's first students will graduate in September 2015.
- The Foundation's **Young Leaders** programme brings together some 30 African and French leaders to forge closer personal ties between them and provide a forum for discussion on the challenges they face. The first group will start the programme in February 2015.

4°) Promote economic exchanges and investment through the creation of sectoral, cross-cutting clusters. Driven by French and African businesses, these clusters will provide a forum for players from a particular economic sector or value chain to discuss best practices and exchange information, encourage partnerships and act as an incubator for projects. The first clusters are taking shape in the creative and cultural sector, digital and e-learning, finance, the food sector, infrastructure, shipping industries, sustainable cities, SMEs, business law, female entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship.

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