

RELEVANCE OF QUALITY APPRENTICESHIPS AND WORK-BASED LEARNING FOR AFRICA

**Mr. Ousman Sillah, Secretary General, Sub-Saharan Africa
Skills and Apprenticeship Stakeholders Network
(SASASNET)**

Quality Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning approach is a modern, timely and necessary response to address the challenges and needs of vocational education and training. It is relevant for Africa where you find multitudes of young people ‘consigned’ in the *Not in education, Employment and Training (NEET)* category without hope or opportunities of acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the workplace. Quality Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning guarantee hope for these young people, including adults, and equips them with the skills, knowledge and experience needed to secure decent employment.

It is a fact that skills development in today's rapidly evolving economy is not just a choice but an urgent necessity. The transitions towards scale, accelerated by technological and digital transformations, demography and the needs of industry, is rapidly increasing the demand for highly skilled workers in the global labour market. Hence, the challenge facing employers in finding skilled workers with the necessary skills and competencies.

Countries, with support of industry, need to develop and implement skills strategies that are anticipatory, demand and need-driven to build the workforce capacities to ensure their continued relevance to the labour market.

Sub-Saharan Africa Skills and Apprenticeship Stakeholders Network (SASASNET) engages in promoting, coordinating and supporting skills and apprenticeship development in Africa. The Mombasa Declaration for Action 2025, adopted at our 2nd Regional Conference on ‘Quality Skills and Apprenticeship Development’, held in May in Kenya, aligns with ILO Recommendations No. 204 and No. 208, which provides guidance on transitioning from informal to formal economies and on advancing quality apprenticeships, respectively.

It indicates our commitment in strengthening Active Labour Market policies and Work-based Learning to ease school-to-work transitions, including the following:

1. Upgrade informal apprenticeships to quality apprenticeships
2. Institutionalise Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
3. Promote strong Partnerships between Training Providers and Employers
4. Strengthen an African skills recognition and standardisation framework
5. Enhance the participation of African countries in the World Skills Competition
6. Enhance regional skills mobility
7. Establish centres of excellence
8. Promote global partnerships

CALL TO ACTION

1. Governments to prioritise funding and implementation of skills transformation strategies.
2. Development partners and donors to align their support with national and regional priorities.
3. Employers and worker organisations to actively co-design apprenticeship models and provide structured on-the-job learning.