



SIDE EVENT

Sunday, 21 March 2021 - 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Unleashing the Potential of Women & Youth Entrepreneurship in the Digital Age

1. Objectives of the side event

The side event will provide an opportunity for policy makers, digital entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to engage with women and youth entrepreneurs to discuss how technology and digitalization can be used to boost and support women and youth entrepreneurship in Africa, taking note of the health inequality that has been both revealed and heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the side event will:

- build an informed understanding of the challenges faced by women and youth entrepreneurs in Africa and how they can benefit from increasing digitalization, including health technology;
- showcase good practices and the potential and value of women and youth in the digital age as well highlight challenges faced in productive entrepreneurship post COVID-19 and;
- build consensus on the next steps needed for launching an international multi stakeholder coalition to support women and youth entrepreneurship in Africa.

2. Expected outcomes

The side event will focus on achieving five main outcomes:

- Increased recognition of challenges and opportunities for promoting women and youth entrepreneurship priorities in the context of digitalization including in the health sector;
- Enhanced understanding of the investment case through the demonstration of the high returns that can be achieved by strengthening investments in the delivery of high-impact digital interventions to catalyse transformative change;

- Propose practical policy options and inputs to foster youth and women entrepreneurship in Africa; cognizant of the opportunities and advantages presented by digitalization including in the health sector;

3. Organizational arrangements and participation

The side event will be organized by ECA, UNFPA in partnership with BADEA during the Conference of Ministers in March 2021 in Addis Ababa. The side event will bring together high-level policy makers including ministers to engage with women and youth entrepreneurs, digital experts, development partners, specialized agencies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academia, practitioners, civil society organizations, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

4. Format

Discussions in the side-event will be organised in two high-level panels. The first panel will deliberate upon the challenges faced by youth and women entrepreneurs in accessing digital technologies across various sectors in Africa. The second panel will build upon the issues emerging from the discussions in the first panel to reflect upon what can be done by different stakeholders. Discussions and interactive dialogue in the two panels will be designed to ensure engagement of policy makers with women, youth entrepreneurs and digitalization experts on harnessing digitalization for job creation and economic empowerment.

5. Focal Person: Keiso Matashane-Marite Matashane-Marite@un.org