

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to chair new panel driving transformation of Africa's economies

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former president of Liberia, was named chair of a new panel set to drive the transformation of Africa's economies. The news was announced at the African Transformation Forum (ATF) in Accra.

“ So excited! President of [@AcetforAfrica](#) [@kyamoako](#) just announced new African Transformation Leadership Panel chaired by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia to influence at highest global levels for the transformation of Africa [#ATF2018](#). This is big! pic.twitter.com/Ev4j6LxTsk— Caroline Kende-Robb (@CarolineKende) [June 21, 2018](#) ”

The African Transformation Leadership Panel will focus particularly on opportunities for women and young people in its efforts to reform Africa's economies, said Dr K.Y. Amoako of the African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET), who will also join the board.

The African Transformation Forum is an event where many of the continent's leading thinkers gathered to discuss the policies and partnerships needed to drive sustainable growth and regional integration. Key attendees included Africa's richest person and owner of the Dangote Group Aliko Dangote, Rwandan president Paul Kagame, Ghanaian president Nana Akufo-Addo, Cote d'Ivoire Vice president Daniel Kablango, and executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA) Dr Vera Songwe.

Developing a shared vision

“We need leadership that promotes growth for the many, not the few. As this continent's first female president and the former leader of a very young population, I am passionate about getting our economies firing for everybody. We must learn from and with each other to develop a shared vision. That's what this panel is all about - it's very exciting,” said Johnson Sirleaf.

“Our biggest economic opportunities are social ones too. By 2035, 450 million Africans will have joined the working age population, more than the rest of the world combined in that time. Our economies will leap forward if we create jobs these young people know how to do. Achieving this will require leaders committed to sustained investment and intelligent policymaking. That work starts now,” said Dr K.Y. Amoako of ACET.

Regional collaboration

Heads of state, senior government officials and business leaders were among approximately 300 delegates from the public and private sector at the ATF. Discussions focused on themes including improving regional integration, energy efficiency and technological innovation, and tackling youth unemployment and gender inequality.

The inaugural Forum in 2016 saw President Kagame launch the Pan-African Coalition for Transformation (Pact), a new platform for regional collaboration and sharing of knowledge on economic policy. Pact has delivered seminal research and convened policy debates focused on how Africa's farms can power its future and industry can collaborate with government in increasing manufacturing.

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