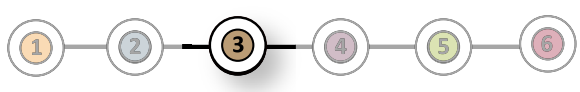


REGIONAL  
**ACJ**  
AFRICA CREATES JOBS  
**2021**  
VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS  
**2-3 SEP**  
CENTRAL AFRICA



**Central Africa Regional ACJ**  
*“Skills and Jobs for Central Africa’s Economic Growth”.*

September 2nd & 3rd 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 13:00 p.m. (WAT)

**Full report**

This programme is co-funded by the European Union and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development



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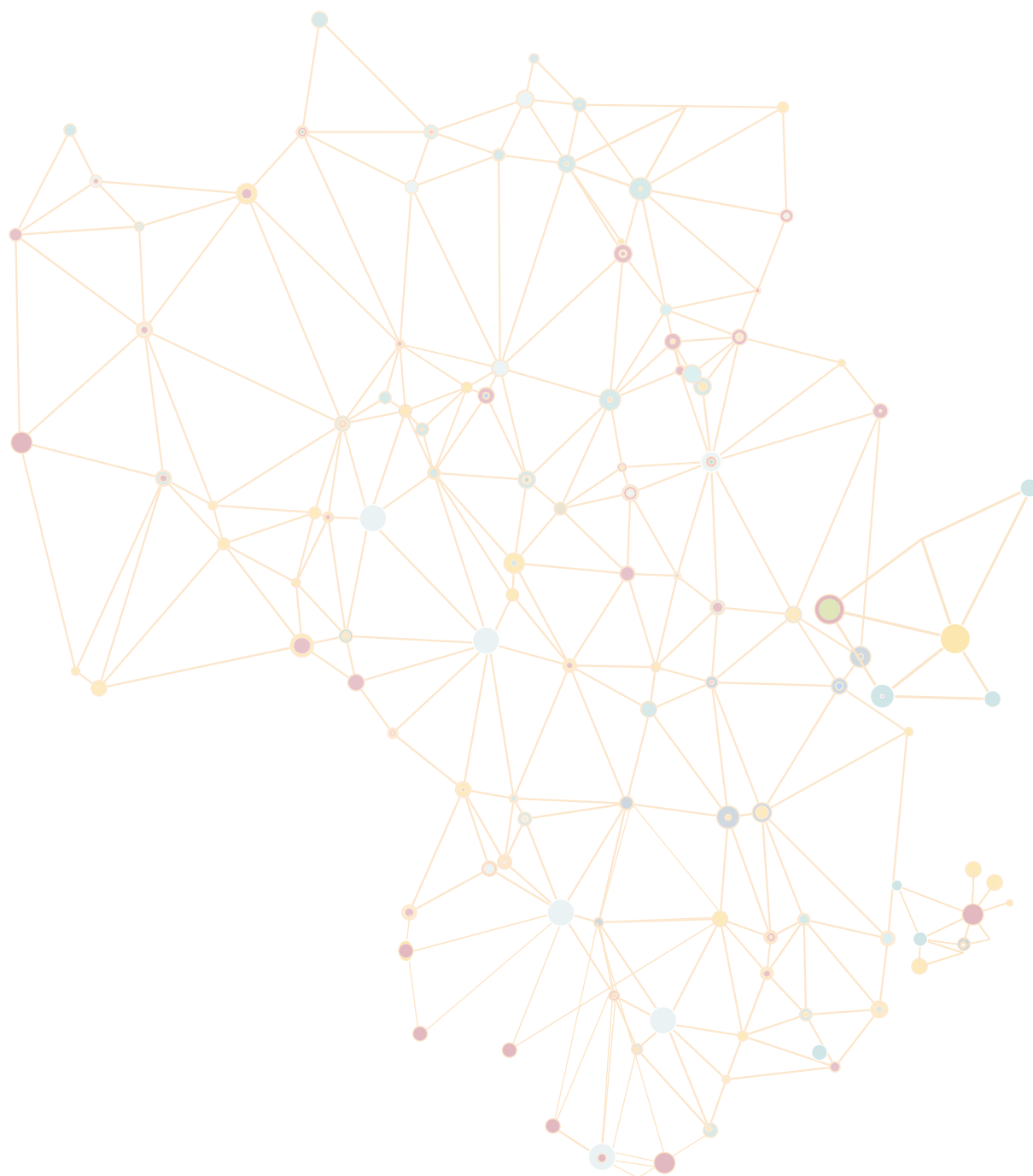


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# 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA), together with its partners the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), held the Central African Regional Africa Creates Jobs (R-ACJ) on the 2nd & 3rd of September 2021. Other key partners included Business Africa (BA) and the Association of Employers from Cameroon (GICAM)<sup>1</sup>.

Five R-ACJ online workshops will be conducted and serve as a prelude to the Continental Africa Creates Jobs (ACJ) conference to be held in November 2021. The Central Africa Regional ACJ was the third of the 5 regional workshops, the first and second being respectively held in East Africa on the 16th & 17th August 2021 and in West Africa on the 26th & 27th August 2021.

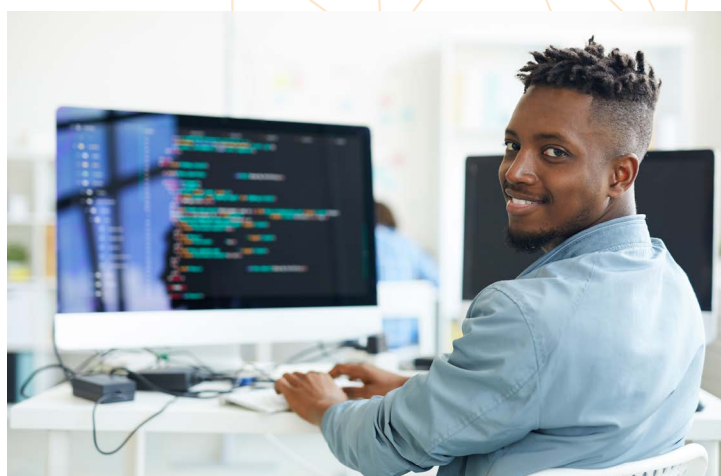
## 1.1. Workshop purpose

The five R-ACJs aimed to bring together key stakeholders from government, the private and public sectors and other social partners to contemplate data and information gathered through a series of studies. These included SIFA conducted Macro-Economic Studies done in five countries and Rapid Skills Assessments in eight countries. The workshop sessions furthermore aimed to create a dialogue platform at regional level where diverse stakeholders could engage on possible solutions and recommendations. The engagements spotlighted strengthening the skills development system and increasing prospects of (self) employment of young people for the region, within the context of the findings.

## 1.2. Continental ACJ

The Continental ACJ will be held in November 2021. The theme of this year's continental dialogue platform is ***“Driving a responsive and agile skills and jobs agenda for economic growth for African Youth”***. This theme will enable key stakeholders to explore how Africa's envisaged growth, as articulated in the African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), in a COVID-19 environment, can meet the skills demand for the over 20 million jobs that the continent needs every year.

Information from the regional workshops is meant to guide investment decisions by Member States as they identify sub-sectors prone to boost employment. The regional lessons learned are in the process of being aggregated to feed into the continental ACJ in November 2021.



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<sup>1</sup> GICAM: Groupe Inter-patronal du Cameroun (in English: Cameroon Employer Group).

## 2. WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

More than 100 stakeholders attended the Central Africa online discussion from the business community, higher education, TVET and secondary schools, civil society, youth organizations and policy makers.

## 3. OVERVIEW OF THE CENTRAL AFRICA R-ACJ ONLINE WORKSHOP

The workshop was scheduled in two three-hour sessions over a two-day period.

### 3.1. Day 1 Proceedings

#### Opening session

The first day started with welcome remarks from officials and the description of the framework of the workshop. Below are a few quotes from their inputs:

- **Ms. Aline Valerie MBONO**, Executive Director of the Employers' Association of Cameroon, GICAM: *"During the next 2 days, it is a question of rethinking the adequacy of training-employment and what are the key sectors to explore in an environment weakened by conflicts and COVID in order to create more and better jobs in Central Africa."*
- **Mr. Maxime AKE**, Expert in charge of Youth, Sport and Employment, ECCAS: *"Despite Central Africa's many resources, the unemployment rate is around 10% and is even higher among youth. Despite the COVID pandemic which has had a great impact on the economies of Central Africa, there are job opportunities for young people in promising sectors such as digital, transformation and the green economy. .... It is time to act and change the paradigm."*
- **Mr. Hambani Masheleni**, Head of Education Division, African Union Commission, Head of Education Division, African Union Commission: *"We need to develop strategies taking into account Africa's greatest asset that are youth to build a powerful continent with attractive growth in this fast-changing environment and to set the path for our future."*

#### Context setting: Macroeconomic trends<sup>2</sup>

The remainder of the session focused on the presentation of macroeconomic trends at both the continental and regional levels. The main input document presented was a summary of the Macro-economic analysis and Rapid Skills Assessment Reports which were undertaken by SIFA in 8 African Union Member States, with possible scenarios of job growth potential along national productive sectors on one hand; and trends<sup>3</sup> compiled from international organizations and

<sup>2</sup> The studies are accessible in the following link: <https://www.nepad.org/publications>

<sup>3</sup> The compiled trends are from some reports accessible below:

- [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_775883.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_775883.pdf)

- [https://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Publications/AfCFTA-youth\\_FINAL\\_PRINT\\_3.pdf](https://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Publications/AfCFTA-youth_FINAL_PRINT_3.pdf)

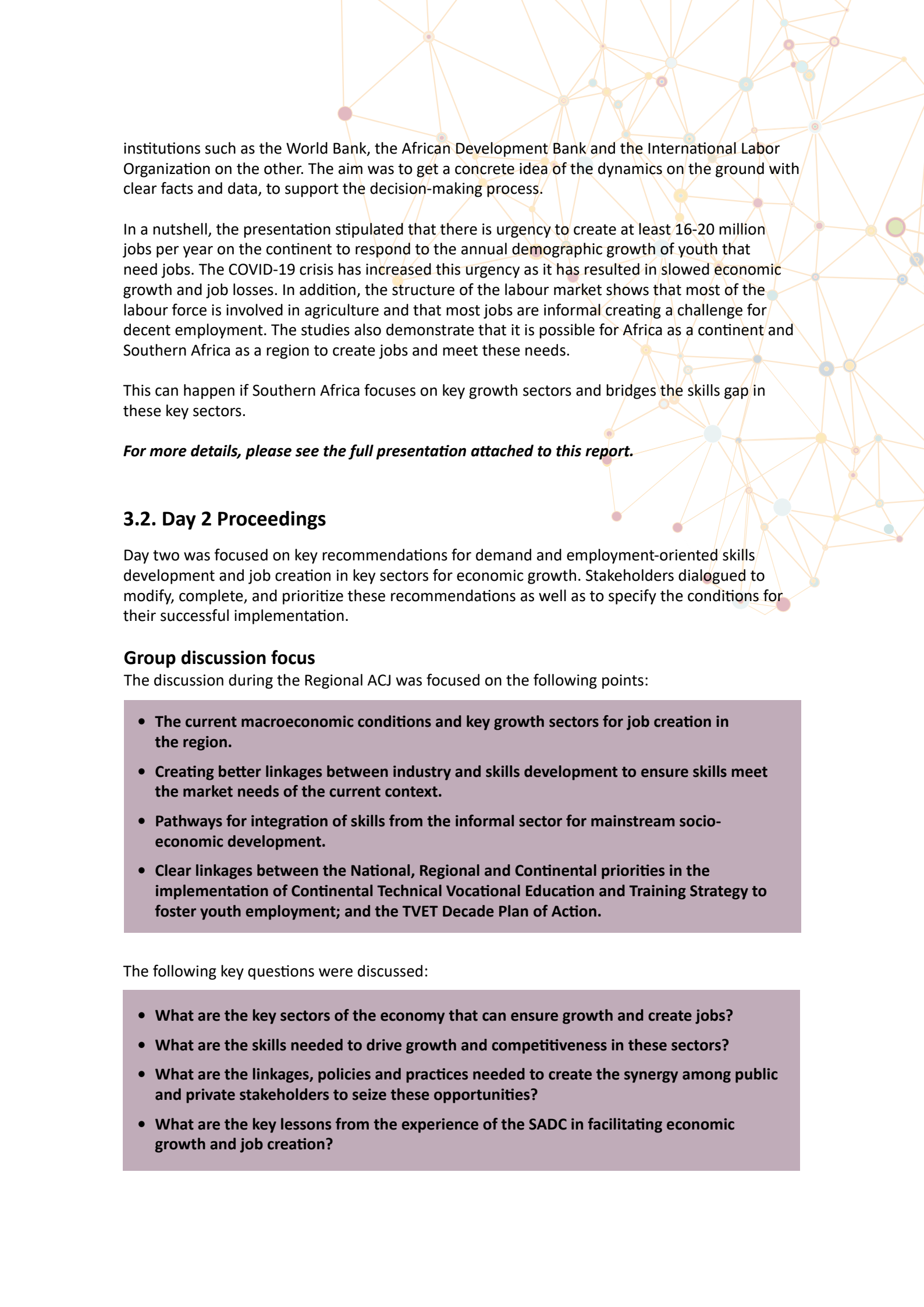
- [https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/SROs/North-Africa/best-practices-in-job-creation-in-africa\\_uneca\\_202105.pdf](https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/SROs/North-Africa/best-practices-in-job-creation-in-africa_uneca_202105.pdf)

- [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_795453.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_795453.pdf)

- [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms\\_771731.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_771731.pdf)

- <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/central-africa-population/>

- <https://www.oecd.org/publications/africa-s-development-dynamics-2018-9789264302501-en.htm>



institutions such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the International Labor Organization on the other. The aim was to get a concrete idea of the dynamics on the ground with clear facts and data, to support the decision-making process.

In a nutshell, the presentation stipulated that there is urgency to create at least 16-20 million jobs per year on the continent to respond to the annual demographic growth of youth that need jobs. The COVID-19 crisis has increased this urgency as it has resulted in slowed economic growth and job losses. In addition, the structure of the labour market shows that most of the labour force is involved in agriculture and that most jobs are informal creating a challenge for decent employment. The studies also demonstrate that it is possible for Africa as a continent and Central Africa as a region to create jobs and meet these needs.

This can happen if Central Africa focuses on key growth sectors and bridges the skills gap in these key sectors.

***For more details, please see the full presentation attached to this report.***

### **3.2. Day 2 Proceedings**

Day two was focused on key recommendations for demand and employment-oriented skills development and job creation in key sectors for economic growth. Stakeholders dialogued to modify, complete, and prioritize these recommendations as well as to specify the conditions for their successful implementation.

#### **Group discussion focus**

The discussion during the Regional ACJ was focused on the following points:

- **The current macroeconomic conditions and key growth sectors for job creation in the region.**
- **Creating better linkages between industry and skills development to ensure skills meet the market needs of the current context.**
- **Pathways for integration of skills from the informal sector for mainstream socio-economic development.**
- **Clear linkages between the National, Regional and Continental priorities in the implementation of Continental Technical Vocational Education and Training Strategy to foster youth employment; and the TVET Decade Plan of Action.**

The following key questions were discussed:

- **What are the key sectors of the economy that can ensure growth and create jobs?**
- **What are the skills needed to drive growth and competitiveness in these sectors?**
- **What are the linkages, policies and practices needed to create the synergy among public and private stakeholders to seize these opportunities?**
- **What are the key lessons from the experience of the SADC in facilitating economic growth and job creation?**

## Group discussion outputs:

In four different groups, participants discussed and came up with the final recommendations below to be sent as input to the Continental ACJ 2021 event. While the table below reflects actions/interventions appropriate to particular stakeholder groups, the workshop reiterated the need for consistent collaboration across and amongst the stakeholders to effectively take forward these recommendations.

	TVET Authorities, TVET & Other training institutions	Private sector	Government
<b>Enhance skills development</b>			
<b>National level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a knowledge base in collaboration with the private sector.</li> <li>• Have open space to practice skills learned – Government to support.</li> <li>• Improve quality of training               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Integrate soft skills in curricula – planning, entrepreneurship.</li> <li>» Update and harmonize curricula while integrating the practical aspect.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Have a paradigm shift.</li> <li>• Sensitization towards parents and other stakeholders on TVETs- change of mindset from diploma to building specific skills.</li> <li>• Promote entrepreneurial culture               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Encourage students to form teams to create their own companies</li> <li>» Get their students to engage and participate in national/ international innovation &amp; entrepreneurship competitions</li> <li>» Creation of incubators to support those who want to start their business</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Strengthen orientation and build partnerships               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Create departments focused on career development and counselling.</li> <li>» Match students and professionals for experience sharing and orientation on selected sectors</li> <li>» Partnership with companies for internships and with start-ups in selected sectors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop community-oriented solutions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Identify skills / competences to develop in priority sector in communities</li> <li>» Develop/ adapt curricula based on needs from the community where TVET institutions are located.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Strengthen skills of trainers.</li> <li>• Build a culture of apprenticeship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking TVET and private sector companies to adjust the training curriculum               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Recruiting TVET trainees into courses.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Governments must recognize work-linked programmes and TVET qualifications.</li> <li>• Major companies must create vocational training centres that are supported and recognized by governments.</li> <li>• Set up working groups bringing together the public, private and informal sectors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make recommendations to the youth to become aware of their role in the development of their country.</li> <li>• Focus on soft skills and integrate REAMORCE: Moral, civic and entrepreneurial rearmament.</li> <li>• Focus on infrastructure development through the provision of modern technical facilities to vocational and technical training institutions.</li> </ul>

	TVET Authorities, TVET & Other training institutions	Private sector	Government
<b>Enhance skills development</b>			
<b>Regional level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the quality improvement in training institutes in line with needs from private sector.</li> <li>• Harmonize qualification frameworks in facilitate skills mobility in the region.</li> <li>• Organize business ideas/ plan competitions at regional level.</li> <li>• Harmonize anticipation of skills based on opportunities per country to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Develop skills target priority sectors per country</li> <li>» Avoid having too many people with same competences in same sectors</li> <li>» Facilitate youth mobility</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Create mutual (agreements between sending and receiving countries) and multilateral (mostly between a regional grouping of countries) cross-border recognition of skills.</li> </ul>		
<b>Job creation</b>			
<b>National level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More entrepreneurial skills, incubators and accelerators               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Senior people with experience</li> <li>» People with professional exp</li> <li>» Students from TVET or universities who can enter incubators.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• TVET institutions should leverage on their Alumni-communities by creating a database where could share opportunities.</li> <li>• Partnership with companies for internships and with start-ups in selected sectors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate priority investment sectors and proposals for job creation.</li> <li>• Develop appropriate information systems for the labour market.</li> <li>• Improving the HR planning system.</li> <li>• Strengthen educational and vocational information and guidance services.</li> <li>• Create consultation frameworks to solve land problems and develop training programmes in rural areas, mobilize investment funds instead of giving cultivable land to multinationals that come to the country.</li> <li>• Create a reference framework for professions to better master activities.</li> <li>• Each country must have a national employment map.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting youth initiatives through various government and partner programmes.</li> <li>• Improving the professionalization system by encouraging the placement of students in companies to alternate theoretical/ practical training.</li> <li>• Accelerate the Decentralisation Process: will capture job creation opportunities at the local level based on the comparative advantages of localities.</li> </ul>

	TVET Authorities, TVET & Other training institutions	Private sector	Government
<b>Job creation</b>			
<b>Regional level</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate private sector-led business incubators at regional and continental levels.</li> <li>• The private sector must be better involved at the regional level to get engaged in the AU and ECCAS projects.</li> <li>• The regional private sector should again work with ECCAS and the creative economy to see how they can have a market to sell these goods and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage states to accelerate the decentralisation process.</li> <li>• Facilitating skills mobility.</li> </ul>
<b>What the government could do regarding the informal sector</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for certification, qualification to enable informal sector actors to meet standards and make the transition to the formal sector.</li> <li>• Availability of commercial space at reduced prices.</li> <li>• Create an ecosystem (legal framework, policies) where informal sector businesses can feel safe to expand and transition to the formal sector - remove bottlenecks and corruption</li> <li>• Mobilising finance to enable informal sector enterprises to grow and have financial stability.</li> <li>• Improving the Business environment so that administrations are truly at the service of entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Creating digital platforms to promote transparency and limit corruption.</li> <li>• For the support of entrepreneurs, private organisations are needed, not public servants.</li> <li>• Put in place fiscal incentives that encourage migration to the formal sector.</li> <li>• Set up a pilot project for the transition to the formal sector that considers the different aspects: training, policies, financing, etc. The project should bring together key stakeholders, test ideas and draw lessons for replication and expansion.</li> </ul>			

***You can find the full outcomes in the document attached.***



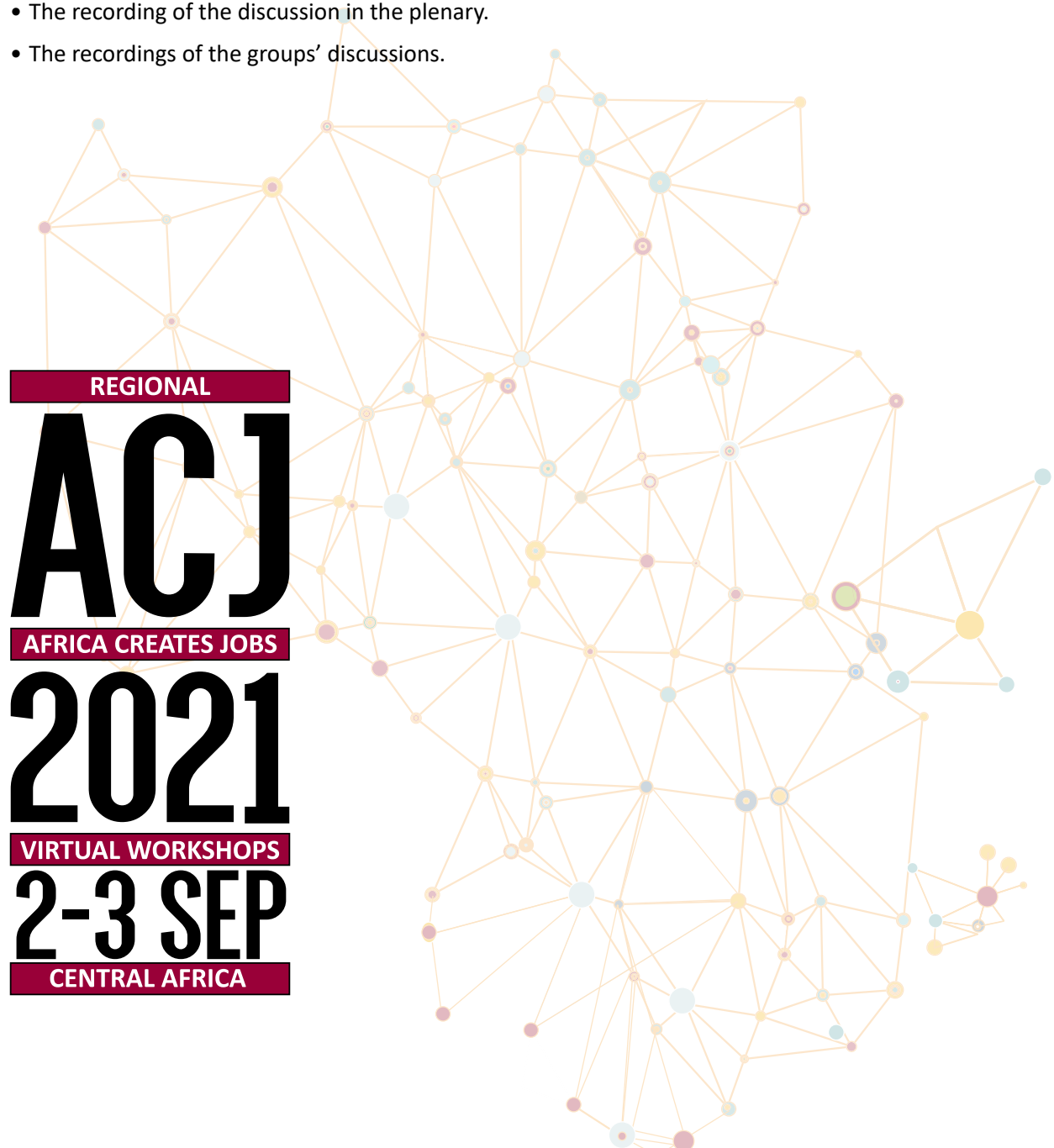
## 4. CONCLUSION

The Central Africa Regional ACJ enjoyed a high-level of engagement from the diverse participants.

Results of macroeconomic studies and COVID-19 rapid skills assessment were presented to participants. They discussed employment in the informal sector as well as the key recommendations that were formulated for jobs creation and skills development in the region. The output of that discussion has been captured to be merged with the outputs of the other Regional ACJs and feed into the continental ACJ.

## ANNEXURES

- Presentation on the Macro-economic and regional trends in the Central Africa Region.
- The recording of the discussion in the plenary.
- The recordings of the groups' discussions.



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<https://www.nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth>

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