With 440 million young people entering the labour force by 2030, youth employment is one of the major challenges for African economies and societies. 240 million of these young people are likely to live in rural areas, albeit with significant differences between countries (Fig.1).

Solving a major challenge for Africa

The challenge for Africa is to provide job opportunities while most of the labour force is still engaged in family farming and other informal activities (Fig. 3). If not, social and political tensions are expected to grow and migrations to escalate. The possible solutions include education and skill improvement and a more conducive environment for economic diversification. However, agriculture will still play a major role for employment.

Governments must discuss with investors and favour projects that:
- are compatible with regional specificities (population density, social acceptability, land availability, farm structures)
- tally with local stakeholders’ needs (revenues, jobs and jobs for young people in particular, equipment and infrastructures)
- are compatible with regional specificities (population density, social acceptability, land availability, farm structures)
- are compatible with regional specificities (population density, social acceptability, land availability, farm structures)
- benefit the country (added value, tax revenue, regional development, employment)

Governments must support family farming because:
- it represents the overwhelming majority of agriculture
- it is more labour-inclusive
- it has historically shown its ability to innovate, develop and modernize.

To make agriculture more attractive, public policies must:
- reduce risks and ensure a better market environment
- support farmers’ organizations
- foster the adoption of environmentally friendly practices
- promote decent working conditions and a legal framework (with rights and status for young women and men)
- improve access to services in rural areas.

A vibrant agricultural sector is key for increasing farm incomes and rural demand and is a driver for rural diversification resulting in new upstream and downstream job opportunities and regional development.