



Development of the African private sector **Three actions to stimulate an African ecosystem enabling** **rapid 'Innovation and Internationalisation'**

Massive partnerships of enlightened mutual interest across 'all' economic sectors

In a globalised society Africa urgently has to diversify and augment its exports, even beyond the transformation and the enrichment of its natural resources. Africa also has to enter the knowledge economy. Time to international markets is crucial. Key elements to achieve these goals are 'Innovation', 'Creativity' and 'International entrepreneurship'. Not hindered by - soon obsolete - 'best practices' of Western big companies African economies, dominated by SMEs, could emerge sooner than the West out of the actual financial and economic crisis. Innovation directed at the bottom of the pyramid (frugal innovation) often can be accomplished through architectural innovation, using existing technologies.

Many African countries suffer from a severe imbalance in graduates '**Science & Technology**' and 'Human sciences'. If Africa ever wants to transform and enrich itself its natural resources it needs many more specialists in S&T and in International entrepreneurship. Hence it is indicated that awareness campaigns are initiated to passionate young pupils – and their parents - in the first years of their secondary education (12-13 yrs) for S&T. It is recommended that 'all' teachers of all disciplines should be trained in the competencies Africa needs in a globalised society.

Several African countries can be proud of a high number of local college graduates: a new and broad African intellectual middle class. Unfortunately too few of them find a job in the 'productive' economy. Belgium is actually testing a program of '**Circular migration**': offering a one year temporary work experience in Belgian enterprises for 100 Senegalese young professionals and university/college graduates. It is a pilot project initiated by alumni of UCAD University Dakar (Senegal), executed by the Belgian private sector and facilitated by the Belgian Government.

Through 'Circular migration' young African graduates gain entrepreneurial 'attitudes' and 'skills', augmenting their academic 'knowledge'. This can be achieved in many European private companies, in a 'tough' global economic environment and in a completely different cultural environment. After a one to two years work-experience in Europe, they return to Africa with creative ideas and contacts on how to develop and market new innovative African products and services designated for world markets. Implemented massively 'Circular migration' (1) massively ties new and friendly links with the European business and academic community; (2) expects to make an end to the dramatic unemployment rate of highly qualified graduates in Sub-Sahara Africa; (3) creates buying power for the masses; (4) reduces governance issues and (5) reduces illegal immigration.

Massive partnerships of enlightened mutual interest 'across all economic sectors'. Further on it is recommended that **broad awareness creation campaigns** are organised for the existing African entrepreneurs. So far innovation was reserved for the technocratic elites. To-day, thanks to 'open innovation' (the massive cooperation between international SMEs and between SMEs and research institutions as well in Africa as in Europe) 'innovation' becomes available for 'all'. However a change of attitude is needed at the level of African entrepreneurs. African entrepreneurs should learn why and how to share innovative ideas and competences with others, they should "**dare to share their dreams with partners**". A massive creation of pan-African and international SME alliance-networks will allow African SMEs to introduce innovative African products and services on world markets.

Summary. Three actions **to create an African ecosystem enabling rapid 'Innovation and Internationalisation'**

- (1) To passionate youngsters for **studies in S&T** at the early age of 12 yrs.
- (2) **Circular migration**: to make sure that young African graduates, after graduating from African high-schools and colleges, massively get practical work experience during one year in highly competitive European enterprises.
- (3) To massively organise **open business forums** for existing African entrepreneurs: "**Entrepreneur, dare to share your dreams with partners**"