

**Human Resources****Engaging African Employers, Recruiters and the Diaspora*****Rev. Jesse Jackson addresses international conference on employment and skills for Africa***

A packed London conference centre provided an audience for the Reverend Jesse Jackson as he delivered the keynote speech at an event designed to bring African professionals living outside Africa together with African employers.

The March conference, organised by AfricaRecruit under the auspices of NEPAD and the CBC, was opened by Professor Wiseman Nkuhlu, Chairman of the NEPAD Steering Committee, at the British House of Commons. Intended to explore the role of the African Diaspora in promoting skills development in Africa and challenges and opportunities in the African employment market, the two-day conference provided a platform for a range of speakers from the public and private sectors as well as from institutions including ECOWAS and UNIDO.

In his opening remarks, Professor Nkuhlu stressed the need to ally skills with good policies in Africa. Pointing out that Africa needs teachers, doctors, scientists and professionals now to meet its MDGs, he urged the conference to use the occasion to create partnerships and collaboration and to identify strategies and processes for drawing Africans in the Diaspora into the African renaissance project of NEPAD. Professor Wiseman added that the continent must underpin all the moves towards good governance by bringing in skilled people to make it sustainable. He cited the lack of expertise and organisational capacity necessary for the major regional economic communities to play their rightful role and urged the conference to identify flexible models that would enable Africa to tap into the skills of its citizens outside the continent.

Speaking on behalf of the private sector, Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, Chair of the Africa Business Roundtable, stressed that the private sector was not just the engine of growth in Africa but the saviour of Africa.

“Business has no boundaries,” he said. “It goes where it is welcome and where it can add value.”



Dr. Yves Amaizo of UNIDO highlighted the impact of the African Diaspora on local culture and cautioned that the Diaspora’s involvement in transferring capabilities and diffusing knowledge should be done in a manner acceptable to local people and should not jeopardise local culture.

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The charismatic American civil rights leader and campaigner, Reverend Jesse Jackson, launched the second day of the conference with an address to over 200 participants. Central to his keynote speech were the themes of unity and action.

Stressing that what binds us together is greater than what divides us, the former US Special Envoy for Africa urged the audience to develop new ways to leverage their franchise to open up public and private sector opportunities.

Reverend Jackson stressed that Africans in the Diaspora are now at the stage where access to capital and technology gives them a presence and influence far in excess of their physical numbers.



*Interims* CEO Frances Williams chairing keynote session of Human Resources forum with Rev. Jesse Jackson (left) and Lee Jasper, Senior Policy Advisor to Mayor of London.

Pointing to the fact that in big elections small numbers matter, he called upon his audience to reject what he termed “a grasshopper complex” and to build a national presence by focusing on shared needs, struggles, hopes and aspirations.



Touching on debt relief, the Reverend encouraged Africans in the UK to support the efforts of the UK Chancellor, Gordon Brown, to secure debt relief for the continent. “Debt relief is key to world growth,” he pointed out. “It helps Africa and provides the West with a bigger market.”

## South Africa targets Ghana as its Gateway to West Africa

Ghana has emerged as the hub for South African companies seeking to do business in West Africa. A recent SA Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) survey revealed that 40 South African companies, the majority of which are listed on the JSE, are in business in Ghana.

At the top of the list is AngloGold, whose recent US\$1.4 billion merger with Ghana’s Ashanti Goldfields corporation created the world’s second-largest gold mining company. Food retailer Shoprite and brewing company SABMiller have also established a significant presence.

Although, with a population of 20 million, Ghana represents a relatively small market; drawn by the country’s stable economy and continuing economic growth, South Africa is challenging the market share of Ghana’s traditional investors from Europe and the USA.

Source: Databank Securities Limited [www.databankgroup.com](http://www.databankgroup.com)