

COMMUNIQUE ON A THREE-DAY EKITI DIGITAL SUMMIT HELD VIRTUALLY BETWEEN 23RD AND 25TH OF JULY, 2021

Introduction

To explore various technology topics and possibilities, GoGlobal Solutions organised an Ekiti Digital Summit held virtually between 23rd to 25th of July, 2021.

According to a report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2020, about 13.1 million Nigerian youths are unemployed. A high youth unemployment rate is linked to increased insecurity and poverty, a situation that is also seen as a ticking time bomb. The Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the economic condition in the country making it harder for employers to create more jobs. The private sector has relied on cutting jobs in the guise of downsizing and rightsizing to remain in business. If this is not addressed, Nigeria will continue to suffer.

Coordinated under the leadership of the convener, Sola Mathew Akinluyi, the summit was chaired by Her Excellency, Erelu Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, the First Lady of Ekiti state and the Chair, Nigeria Governors' Wives Forum with the theme "Digital Economy for Sustainable Development." The summit considered sub-themes in education, agriculture, business, gender, tourism, investing in Ekiti and the digital economy in general. The three-day summit had close to 3000 registered participants from over 40 countries.

Objectives of the Summit are to:

1. enlighten the youths on the need to skill up,
2. build an engaging community of young people
3. share and connect young people with international opportunities
4. connect young people with mentors
5. build a workable roadmap to reduce unemployment rate through digital technology

A keynote address was given by HE Erelu Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi. Different speaking and panel sessions were held on the various sub-themes. After extensive deliberations on the various sub-themes, challenges and possible recommendations were made.

Relevant Societal Challenges Highlighted at the Summit

The following are some educational, tourism, gender equality, agricultural, investment and business limiting challenges in Ekiti that were identified at the summit.

1. The usage of systems and methods in education and learning that do not meet up with the standards of the digital economy.
2. There is vast under-exploration of the tourist centers in the state. It means that the state has been leaving a lot of money on the table.
3. Many people do not explore the untapped market of audience and customer base in the state.
4. There is still a wide gap in the gender equality spectrum in the state.
5. The agricultural landscape in the state is still widely untapped. There are still a lot of unused land resources that can be explored and used for agricultural purposes.
6. The state lacks major systems that support digital exploration for easier administration and more seamless operations.
7. Businesses and organizations have not been harnessing the various digital tools available.
8. Women and girls still get undervalued and rendered powerless by various social norms and cultural structures.
9. Education curriculum is old and not updated

Focal Points and Recommendations

Here are some specific recommendations that major stakeholders including the government and individuals can embark on to position the state for adaptation to the digital economy.

1. Setup awareness outreaches and educational platforms to inform more people about possibilities of the digital economy in every aspect of life, business and community.
2. Incorporate modern tools and methods into the running of local and state administrative activities.
3. Develop a market niche that is heavily branded for possible tourist locations across the state. This should follow the optimization of the aesthetics and systems of these locations for digital responsiveness.
4. Introducing schools (most especially secondary schools) to the possibilities of online learning and the importance of digital tools to the improvement of educational systems and possibly enforcing schools to go digital with various aspects of their operations so as to meet up with digital economy standards.

5. Setting up gender sensitive (female-focused) platforms and programmes to educate and empower young people on how to use several digital tools and harness the full potential of the digital economy. Such platforms can include ICT hubs in each local government that feature training and mentorships.
6. Government should provide a digital community for young technophiles where there's going to be uninterrupted electricity, high speed internet facilities and adequate security -- a safe space to think creatively, learn and innovate.
7. Digital education should be introduced in our education system by implementing a new curriculum that's workable for the students especially in our higher citadel of learning.
8. Professional bodies should be involved in curriculum design, course accreditation and students' assessment.
9. Engage the telecom company to stop selling data bundle but selling speed rate
10. Youth should be able to develop their talents in digital Education so that it will be an added advantage for them.
11. National and State policies on Media and ICTs should be as Gender Inclusive as possible in order to bridge knowledge and opportunity gaps.