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## United Nations envoy in Africa calls for mobilization of youth for development



ECA Executive Secretary Abdoulie Janneh

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A top-ranking United Nations official in Africa has called for a mobilization of the continent's youth for sustainable development, suggesting that the recent turmoil in North Africa may be linked to high rates of unemployment among youth, their desire for freedom, and their demands for change.

Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), told the opening session of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the African Union that: "As they have the greatest stake in the future sustainability of our planet, Africa's youth should be mobilized to get out the message of sustainable development."

Citing high youth unemployment in Africa, he proposed a "strategy that combines public works programmes and enhanced investment in infrastructure and production ... to tap into the nexus between job creation, sustainable development and social stability."

"The revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia and changes elsewhere in North Africa [might be] evidence of the desire to upscale and improve governance," he told the conference, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

“While youth unemployment was a factor, the desire for greater freedom, demands for greater accountability and distaste with the scale of corruption also played a significant role in the demand for change,” he said.

His remarks echoed a statement he gave on Saturday to the African Union executive council, in which he said: “I see the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia and changes elsewhere in North Africa as evidence of the desire to upscale and improve governance. While youth unemployment was a factor, the desire for greater freedom, demands for greater accountability and distaste with the scale of corruption also played a significant role in the demand for change.”

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