

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Enabling the Future - Developing the Space Workforce (5)

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BUILDING THE AFRICA WE WANT: THE ROLE OF SPACE GENERATION WORKSHOPS &
YOUTH IN DEVELOPING THE SPACE SECTOR IN AFRICA

Abstract

Space technologies with their vast applications have greatly benefited humankind over the last decades and continue to directly influence life on earth. As rightly stated in the African Union Agenda 2063: “space is of critical importance to the development of Africa in all fields” and there is no doubt that the new generation has a major role to play.

Recent progress in the African space sector has been accompanied by a growing and active youth community led by the Space Generation Advisory Council in support of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications (SGAC). In the pursuit of building capacity in the space sector on the continent, SGAC organized its first ever regional gathering of African youth in 2017—the African Space Generation Workshop (AF-SGW) in Nigeria with the theme “Space: The Driver of the Desired Future in Africa”. The success of this event and its potential for vitalizing the African space sector led to a second workshop in Mauritius in December 2018 on “Launching Africa: Space Exploration, Innovation and Business.”

These events in each subsequent year brought together about 100 of the best and most actively involved students and young professionals from all around Africa. This initiated a platform to meet and interact with experts from academia, industry, space agencies, and government and non-governmental representatives to discuss the way forward. In addition to plenary, panel and keynote sessions, the AF-

SGWs focused on interdisciplinary group discussions around topics pertinent to the African space sector; thus providing valuable knowledge and experience on fundamental and actual issues.

This paper will discuss the key roles of these workshops in preparing Africa for the future, what has been achieved so far as well as the challenges and propose possible future actions based on our learnings. It also highlights the place of African youth in the space sector in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).