Since its beginning in 1985, Ecobank has been committed to the economic development across the African continent. The Bank's commitment to the continent is underpinned by a vision of creating a billion-dollar-Africa economy and a continent that generates 20 million jobs a year. The bank's investments in Africa have already funded over 350 universities across 50 countries, with the goal of catalyzing the development of four billion people. The goal of Ecobank Academy is to be an engine for innovation and change around the world. The rest of the world can learn from what Africa does.

Second, Africa plays a pivotal role in the future of the global society and the planet—economically and politically. Part of our shared vision for Africa to have the talent it needs to generate prosperity. Our aim is to work together over the long term to build a stronger connection between business and business schools—to develop the talent to lead the Africa we want.

The addition of Ecobank Academy to the Global Business School Network is a first step towards closing the gap. In addition to strengthening collaboration between business and business schools, this addition will result in more relevant and scalable educational programs for young people, innovative initiatives for upskilling and reskilling people, and collective efforts to build more inclusive and sustainable business across Africa. Our aim is to build solutions. After all, connecting globally to make a difference locally has been GBSN's role for nearly two decades. We are excited to announce that Ecobank Academy has joined the Global Business School Network (GBSN) to pursue our shared vision for Africa to have the talent it needs to generate prosperity. Our aim is to work together over the long term to build a stronger connection between business and business schools—to develop the talent to lead the Africa we want.

This volunteer act crystallized last November when Simon delivered a keynote at the GBSN Annual Conference in Lisbon. He pointed out that Africa has not yet realized its potential. It offers people and opportunities by way of comparisons that the United States has some 3,000 universities and colleges serving up to 220 million people. He likened the continent to the 170 participants from 44 institutions across 46 countries. The dialogue exposed many of the challenges and opportunities of educating and developing talent for Africa.

While specific topics vary across the sessions in the forum, there are several underlying themes. First is the importance of education and development capacity and aligning it with the needs of a rapidly changing continent. The conversations in the forum will reveal new opportunities for innovation and change around the world. The rest of the world can learn from what Africa does.

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The consensus was that it is not single sector—business, government, education, or nonprofit—we can make meaningful progress alone especially in such an inherently diverse, fast-growing, and dynamic environment as Africa. Africa is the largest gap between higher education and business in an attempt to build the future that Africa wants. And the pace of change has been accelerating. That space between education and practice holds the greatest potential for innovative solutions. After all, connecting globally to make a difference locally has been GBSN's role for nearly two decades. We are excited to announce that Ecobank Academy has joined the Global Business School Network (GBSN) to pursue our shared vision for Africa to have the talent it needs to generate prosperity. Our aim is to work together over the long term to build a stronger connection between business and business schools—to develop the talent to lead the Africa we want.

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