

# African Youth Declaration on Post-2015 Agenda.



## Preamble

We, the representatives of regional, sub regional and national youth organizations, participating in the African Youth Conference on Post-2015 Development Agenda at the UN Gigiri, from 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> November 2012 organized by Organization of African Youth-Kenya in partnership with UNDP, UN-Habitat, PACJA, FEMNET, VSO Jitolee and Faces of Peace Kenya.

Assembled with an aim of accessing the progress made in achieving the MDGs, challenges faced and come-up with concrete actions towards acceleration of progress made and planning for the Post-2015 Agenda. And taking into account the submissions and input made through the online African Youth Survey on Post-2015 Development Agenda and social media.

We realize that Africa was not meaning fully represented and their issues not considered when the MDGS was adopted in 2000.

We note that the grass root issues were not taken into consideration in the current framework which remains a major challenge.

We acknowledge also the lack of political will from our Governments, economic dependency as well as external interventions which continue to pose a challenge to the MDGS and possibly the post 2015 agenda.

We affirm that significant development issues like human rights, peace and security, good governance, tackling of corruption was not adequately addressed in the current frame work.

But we recognize that the continent has made significant progress towards the achievements of the MDGs with specific areas in gender equality and women's empowerment, education, tackling child mortality and improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and promoting global partnerships

We note that Africa is a continent, rich in natural wealth that when used properly is capable of growth and development and lifting citizens from the shackles of poverty.

We want to reaffirm the importance of Africa's youthful population and as such note that, if the youth are regarded as partners and are included in decision making processes we can accelerate the MDGs as well as the post-2015 development agenda.

We also note that access to information is important in accelerating the MDGS and the post 2015 development agenda

Again we acknowledge that youth right issues should and must be considered in the post 2015 framework that considers economic, political and social justice for all

We recognize that African government with African youth consultants should be the key actors and forerunners in determining the future of their own countries in line with economic growth and development.

We acknowledge that we as young people has failed to take on responsible roles and have allowed ourselves to be used as agents of destruction

We, the young people of Africa affirm our commitment to accelerating the MDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda

## **Actions for Accelerating Progress in Achieving the MDGs.**

We realize that there have been a lot of challenges facing the current framework and we recognize the need to accelerate the current framework. So, we call on our Governments, international stakeholders, youth networks and NGOs, private sector to accelerate the progress toward the achievement of MDGs by:

1. More commitment to achieve the goals by the government and to honor its pledges.
2. The government should strengthen institutions to fight against corruption and empowering the youth by mobilizing and sensitizing them about corruption through events like anti-corruption debates, essay competitions and concerts.
3. Plan and implement sustainable and impactful poverty eradication program that will reach the high segment of the youth. This can be done funding or generating a high impact entrepreneurship program that could reach tens of millions of the people.
4. Provide enough resources to children, youth and women related ministries. Young people should be empowered with loans to start small scale business as well as providing high positions of offices in the government.
5. Make MDGS known to the local youth and mobilize them to actively participate.
6. Increase equitable access to environmentally friendly and sustainable water and sanitation services to young people and promote hygiene behavior change at scale
7. Establish information management systems and strengthen monitoring, data collection, communication and sector engagement
8. Transformative youth leadership and new policy governance.
9. Include local in a bottom up approach in policy formulation with regard to gender, youths and minority groups inclusion to exhaust ideas that are essential in eradicating poverty and for development plans.

10. The United Nations and development partners to support projects that are geared towards mitigating the impacts of climate change and encouraging sustainable consumption.
11. Empowerment the youth so that they can speak with a collective voice and demand their rights and hold the government accountable for the provision of these rights.
12. The youths must have a critical role to play in the realization of country's vision as majority of them have embraced ICT and sustainability issues and success stories of can be shared through social media both print and electronic.
13. The Civil Society Organizations must engage communities to understand the causes of poverty and help them understand the problem. After which they come up with suggestions on how to address the challenges.

## **Our Recommendations for the Post-2015 Agenda:**

### **1. Health: Improved health service delivery and sexual reproductive health**

- **Health service delivery**

Government should enact and implement policies that cover health issues which includes free/affordable and quality health care for youth especially young women and the tackling of common diseases including communicable and non communicable diseases

Government and stakeholders should increase access to information on health issues for young people especially reproductive health information like contraception and abortion for young women in both urban and rural

Hospital insurance fund should be extended and affordable to young people for easier access to quality health delivery.

- **Drug and substance abuse**

Government and relevant stakeholders in consultations with youths should implement existing laws criminalizing drugs and substance abuse by ensuring zero tolerance. Also increase access to information surrounding the effects of drugs and substance abuse and build accessible rehabilitation centers for victims.

- **Legislation and ratification of policies and laws**

Governments must ratify, enact/or implement Global Health Declarations like the Alma Ata Declaration 1978; the People's Health charter; African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women, Maputo plan of Action that calls for urgent action by all governments, all health and development workers, and the world community to protect and promote the health of all people and also policies that promotes budgetary allocations for citizens especially the youth.

- **Program development**

Governments should develop programmes that cater for and take into consideration the mental, physical and social needs of young people.

Government and stakeholders to put in place measures to ensure young mothers access necessary knowledge and skills for their continued development

Governments should set up HIV/AIDs youth centers to cater and address issues on HIV/Aids among the youth by providing free HIV testing and treatment, counseling services among others

- **Advocacy**

The youth and Civil Society organizations must encourage and support advocacy campaigns on healthy living for youth.

- **Maternal health**

Government and stakeholders should design interventions targeting the prevention of unplanned motherhood among young people.

- **Sanitation**

Government and stakeholders should enact/implement policies to support community's access clean and safe water; sustainable hygiene and sanitation.

## **2. Youth empowerment and employment**

**Acknowledging the efforts that African Governments have made in addressing issues affecting the youth,**

**Noting the milestones made in reducing youth unemployment and fostering youth empowerment,**

**We recommend:**

- **Youth Participation in policy and decision making**

Governments, civil society and the United Nations must ensure and support participation and representation of young people in decision making processes including meetings and in developing policies and endeavor to partner with the youth as a prerequisite for sustainable development.

African Governments must adopt and ratify the African Youth Charter strengthen and support youth centered National youth councils that are not politically in and must give space for the involvement of young people in formulation and implementation of employment policies.

- **Entrepreneurship**

We demand accountability from governments in terms of how money set aside for young people is distributed and used. We recommend that this money should be handled by an independent body free of government interference.

Governments must provide transparent financial support to young people by enacting youth friendly policies that allow them to access loans and grants to establish businesses and self employment initiatives.

The African Union and African Development Bank, in consultations with youth organizations, governments and stakeholders, should set up a Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Fund to support the development of young innovative entrepreneurs.

The African union should put in place regional-regional intra African government policies to open up African countries to young people for trade and labor mobility.

Governments should introduce compulsory basic entrepreneurial courses to be offered in schools and provide mentorship towards the same.

- **Promote innovation, creativity and foster skill and experience development among young people.**

We want governments to open up government agencies, Ministries, the public service organizations and develop intra-African exchange programs for young people to gain work experience through facilitated internships and attachment.

Governments should subsidize modern agricultural equipment and other farming machinery, fertilizers and other farming essentials as well as focus on technology transfer to encourage young people to take up agriculture.

Governments in collaboration with the private sector should ensure that technical subjects and vocational skills that are offered in and out of school trainings are understood and relevant to the African context and the job market.

Governments should establish and upgrade talent academies for youth and promote and encourage young people's innovation and creativity to bring ideas and progress empowerment and employment.

Governments, youth to youth networks, civil society groups and learning institutions should empower young people through targeted skill development, ICT training and certification, entrepreneurial development, vocational skills together with other life skills which can make impact on their livelihood.

Governments must avail information on and promote implementation of copyright, patent and information laws to ensure that innovation and creativity is protected.

- **Creation of Employment**

The governments should ensure that at least 1/3 of jobs in the public service are opened up to the youth.

We ask the government to put in place cross border lending systems for citizens living in the Diasporas to allow them to set up businesses and invest at home.

We strongly recommend that the African Union should develop an African Agenda for Youth Employment.

African Governments must demonstrate political goodwill to implement the recommendations in this declaration.

### **3. Equitable access to quality education and enhance appropriate technology.**

- There should be improvement in the education system that should be accessible and affordable to all and especially the vulnerable youth by having universal primary and secondary education and provision of scholarship for students in colleges and universities at local and international level.
- The government should upgrade academic facilities and strengthen capacity and provision of better incentives to academic staff.
- The Government should allocate sufficient funds mobilized from external and internal sources to address education concerns/challenges and for better implementation of educational strategies/policies.
- Emphasize on investment and promotion of education curriculum that is ICT-incorporated, action-oriented, technical, vocational and entrepreneurship based with the aim of preparing youth for self-employment and cope with the actual environment/working conditions.

- Streamlining and secure of intellectual and property rights with the aim of supporting local innovations.
- Support of efficient, customized and sustainable local innovation and research to solve societal problems.
- The development, promotion, and implementation of policies that enable internal mobilization of resources towards friendly business environment for local technological organizations/institutions.

#### **4. Climate Change, Environmental Sustainability and Food Security**

**We the African youth declare climate emergency for Africa requiring urgent and tangible sustainable interventions.** Africa is the worst hit by climate change in terms of social, economic, political and environmental sustainability. Mitigation is not enough and there is need for concrete adaptation measures for Africa.

- **Climate change responsive policies:**

Climate research by governments and civil societies should be enhanced to develop adaptation capacity. There is need for sufficiently ambitious strategies by the UNFCCC that compels developed countries to ratify the demands of the developing countries particularly in regard to emission targets and climate finance.

We demand for restructuring and reframing of the regulation layed towards carbon offset and clear MRVs in developing countries by developed countries.

- **Capacity building**

Government should promote and eradicate economic dependence through capacity building especially of the African youth will greatly help Africa to adapt and combat climate change and ensure environmental sustainability. They should Institute national awards scheme to reward hardworking youth on environmental sustainability.

- **Integrating climate change issues into the development agenda**

Recognizing the failure of the MDGs due to lack of climate proofing we demand that the government should integrate climate change in all priority areas of the development agenda.

- **Inclusiveness in climate policy formulation and implementation**

We call for involvement and participation of youth organizations in policy making processes, and governments should be held accountable on matters of environmental, governance, and justice because these are very crucial for more climate responsive actions in addressing climate change vulnerabilities.

Young people and civil societies should be involved in environmental and climate change and food security advocacy and calling for accountability on what specific countries have done in regard to combating and cutting global warming.

- **Climate smart agriculture, as an adaptation issue and food security.**

Governments should avail drought resistant seeds to young farmers, issue fertilizers at subsidized costs, and encourage climate smart agriculture to ensure sustainable food production in Africa.

Governments and UN agencies must consider elimination of food insecurity a long term development goal that can best be achieved by progressing through a sequence of challenging, yet attainable targets.

Civic education and incentives that make agriculture more attractive to youths should be adopted and promoted in rural areas and institutions of learning and research by all governments. We recommend for planning and execution of a Regional Youth Award for Excellence in Agriculture focusing on innovation primary production (crops and livestock), value addition and biotechnological developments.

- **Sustainable water resources for urban and rural populations**

We demand that governments must ensure universal access to safe water for all people in rural and urban cities, especially slums and minorities, and each country should establish Sanitation and Waste management policy and strategy to be achieved by 2030. In addition youth organizations should be empowered and play a key role on monitoring of the established policy for sustainable water resources.

International NGOs should support national and regional policy for water resources management to ensure food security and agriculture development.

Protection and conservation of water and water resources and also making water access and availability to all a fundamental human right in Africa through research and development is key in attaining sustainable development.

- **Sustainable urban cities:**

We demand that governments must ensure universal access to safe water for all people in urban cities, and promote the sanitation of every household in the urban area by ensuring that more piped and clean water is reaching all people, and creating an efficient drainage system, garbage collection and waste management in cities.

## **5. Good Governance, Peace and Security**

- Government must respect and implement all international human right treaties as well as those enshrined in our constitutions.
- Government and Civil society organizations should educate the public with special emphasis on the youth and increase their awareness level on their roles, rights and responsibilities as citizens. There should be mentorship programs for young leaders to promote youth integrity, in the fight against corruption, as this instills strong values and honesty in them.

- Governments and relevant stakeholders Encourage, Empower and Create a Legal Platform that will allow young people participate in all levels of decision making irrespective of their gender, political, ethnic, financial and social background.
- International Partners and stakeholders in partnership with Government should constitute an independent body that will build the capacity of youth to demand their rights, monitor government budgets to ensure financial accountability and transparency in effort to tackle corruption as well as hold duty bearers accountable.
- Government ensure that citizens especially the youth have equal and unrestricted access to an effective justice system both in urban and rural areas that is not respective of status and financial background.
- Involve youths as partners intervening in resource, tribal and religious conflicts through reconciliation and general peace processes both at the community, national and international levels.
- The African Union and the International Community is to condemn armed conflicts and external support of unlawful armed groups by encouraging dialogue in resolving conflicts and ensuring that appropriate legal action is taken against the perpetrators of crimes against humanity.

## **6. (Access to) Social Justice, Protection of Minorities and Vulnerable Groups.**

- Young women, indigenous and disabled persons should be represented, as of right, in elective and appointive posts in the political, economical and social arenas.
- We call the government to build institutional capacities to respond to the crisis orphans and vulnerable children.
- Citizens should be effectively embraced by government schemes of social protection, a pension plans and personalized assistances.

- Governments should ensure that support is provided for rehabilitation of commercial sex workers into becoming productive and constructive citizens in their respective countries.
- We call for the government to take immediate action to address inequality and the marginalization of disabled people and indigenous communities as the best way to ensure that our respective countries remain free of major conflict. We call for disaggregated data and progressive sets of policies that devolve power away from the centre, and measures to ensure minorities and indigenous peoples benefit equitably from existing and future development program.
- The government should ratify, implement, monitor and evaluate conventions and policies that are in the interests of minorities and the vulnerable.
- Governments must increase funding to decentralize the implementation of policies related to gender equality and support of minority groups. They should further promote a participatory approach to addressing the issue of minority groups.
- The UN and development partners should make sure that these goals are met without a striking gap when addressing the minorities.
- Civil society organizations should lobby for gender equality should ensure and lobby for gender equality.
- The society Removal of attitudinal barriers, stigmatization, discrimination, stereotyping, and retrogressive cultural practices.
- Government should enact laws should which conform to gender equality penal codes should be amended to include laws against all kinds of discrimination and punishments for violation specified.

**END.**