

Africa Region Commonwealth Youth Leaders' Forum

Final Statement

February 2015

We, the Youth Leaders of the Africa Region representing the 4 sub-regions of Africa met in the 1st session of the Youth Leaders Forum - Africa Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting under the theme: "Young people building a stable and sustainable future".

In recognition of the important role of young people in building a stable and sustainable future, we, therefore submit the following recommendations for action to the Ministers of Youth and youth stakeholders:

PEACE AND SECURITY

We believe that there can be no development without peace, security and stability, therefore, we have resolved to work with our Governments and the young people to promote peace and security. We call on Governments and youth stakeholders to:

- Support our call for Peace and Stability to be a goal on the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs);
- Support our call for a UN Security Council Resolution on Youth Peace and Security (similar to Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security), and to request the United Nations to appoint United Nations Youth Envoy on Peace and Security, or at least include Peace and Security into the mandate of the United Nations Secretary General's Envoy on Youth;
- Support the engagement and empowerment of youth to be actively involved in conflict prevention, resolution, and peace building processes and initiatives;

- Support young people through our National Youth Councils and youth-led organisations to promote peace-building programmes such as: sports for peace and development; and other youth-led initiatives on security, stability, nation building, patriotism, social cohesion and respect and understanding.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

We believe that our development lies in our good health, and that we should invest in the health and wellbeing for young people. Therefore, we have resolved to advance the agenda for health and wellbeing of young people and to help our Governments tackle the socio-economic consequences of disaster and health crisis, and call on Governments and other stakeholders to:

- Support our call to develop a Commonwealth roadmap for young people recovering from disaster and health crisis;
- Invest in programmes for young people that promote sexual health education and reproductive rights;
- Support youth friendly physical, mental and universal healthcare for young people;
- Allocate emergency resources towards combating emerging diseases in the region such as Ebola and other infectious illnesses, which have affected most parts of Africa.

YOUTH IN THE POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

We believe that the Post 2015 Development Agenda is about young people and the world we want. Therefore, we have resolved to move the Post 2015 Agenda forward, working with our Governments and other stakeholders to ensure the recognition, inclusion and development of young people in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We call on Governments and other stakeholders to:

- Support our call for a dedicated Sustainable Development Goal on Youth Development, with a special focus on vulnerable youth and marginalized groups
- Support our call for the mainstreaming of youth development interests across all the existing SDGs with dedicated youth related targets on each Goal
- Support our call for an agency that will implement the SDGs and monitor youth development through disaggregation of data and information on the SDGs

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

We believe that youth employment and entrepreneurship is crucial for our socio-economic development in Africa, therefore we have resolved to work with our Governments and stakeholders to promote employment and enterprise development for young people. We call on Governments and stakeholders to:

- Support our call to reduce youth unemployment by 10% annually by designing and implementing sustainable youth employment and empowerment strategies;
- Promote entrepreneurship and provide support to young entrepreneurs through replication of Commonwealth youth entrepreneurship initiatives, skills development; provide technical support and finance (grants) without collateral;
- Support our call to leverage the government procurement spending by introducing a quota of 30% procurement opportunities to be sourced from youth owned enterprises;
- Support our call for entrepreneurship education to be integrated to the curriculum at an early age.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC EDUCATION

We believe that youth participation and civic education is important for youth empowerment. Therefore, we have resolved to work with our Governments and stakeholders to promote youth participation and civic education for young people. We call on Governments and stakeholders to:

- Provide the necessary support mechanisms to enhance the capacity of National Youth Councils through legislation, operational and financial support;
- Governments should include legitimate youth delegates in all governance and decision making structures in multinational platforms including meetings of Ministers, Head of States, Regional Bodies, AU, Commonwealth, UN, etc;
- Support the hosting of parallel youth fora to influence governments;
- Provide space for youth participation in national platforms;
- National Youth Councils to be supported to implement youth programmes on Democracy and Civic Education;
- Include youth delegates in all AU and Commonwealth Elections Observer Missions;

- Reduce voting age to (16/18?) in all countries.

YOUTH POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND ACTION PLANS

We call on all countries to develop and/or review National Youth Policies and implementation Plans with the necessary financial/budget support

YOUTH WORK PROFESSIONALISATION

Promote and support Social Entrepreneurship and mentorship

Develop a programme that promotes Youth Leadership, mentorship, job placement, internships, and vocational training.

GENDER

- Promote gender mainstreaming;
- Promote women's representation at all levels;
- Promote education for girls with a special focus on teenage mothers and marginalised groups.

CONCLUSION

The design and implementation of all these recommendations should promote the mainstreaming of youth issues at all levels of development.

The African Youth Leaders and the youth institutions they lead pledge to partner with and provide support to Ministers and Governments in implementing the recommendations that are detailed herein.