



Draft Concept Note for Intergenerational Dialogue

*THEME: “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Africa towards
the realization of Sustainable Development Goals and AU Agenda
2063”*

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Background

According to Africa Economic Outlook 2012, young people represent more than 60 per cent of the continent's total population and account for 40 per cent of the total labour force. It is expected that Africa's increase in the number of young people will continue in the next 20 years. It is also projected that within the next decade an estimated 40 million more youth in Africa will face an uncertain future without work and life skills. This will impair their ability to get good jobs in desirable occupations, resulting in low and unstable incomes while exposing them to potentially long periods of unemployment. This leads to a vicious cycle of poverty, poor health and disempowerment among others.

Unemployment within the present youth generation will also be felt by the next generation, since these youths' poor economic outcomes will hurt their ability to provide favourable opportunities for their own children. Societies at large will feel the impact: economic growth will be constrained, limiting the revenue-raising capacity of governments, while the need for public expenditures to support these youth, will expand. Young people, being most demonstrative about their economic and social situation and problems such as inequality, high joblessness and lack of opportunities may resort to criminal activities resulting in social unrest.

This calls for governments to tackle youth unemployment with a combined set of policies through review of all options that policymakers, employers, trade unions, youth organisations and young people themselves can pursue. It is imperative that efforts are undertaken from all dimensions: from education to apprenticeships and internships; from job-search counselling to first-time jobs; from youth entrepreneurship to reforms in social, employment, education and other policies. Young women are particularly constrained and face a myriad of challenges from gender based violence to biased laws and norms that prevent them from owning property, working and even making decisions about their own lives. All relevant measures must therefore be pursued as a package and not in isolation to ensure inclusivity.

It is within this context that the voices of the youth and particularly young women need to be heard and their views incorporated in policy priorities. Harnessing the demographic dividend will require investments in job creation, health including sexual and reproductive health and family planning, education and skill development, which will ultimately increase per capita income, good governance and assurance for a peaceful and secure Africa. The intergenerational dialogue with Heads of State and Government and key continental and global institutional Leaders is one of the ways envisaged of improving the contact between youth and key policy makers, in order to achieve understanding and solidarity between them. This will provide a platform for the voices of young people to be heard by decision-makers at the highest level. Facilitating dialogue between the two generations will in the long run promote an attitude where challenges are seen as opportunities, instead of focusing on the negative consequences that might appear.

Policy Context and Justification

The youth development policy at the continental level has rapidly evolved and is articulated through, among others, the African Youth Charter, Youth Decade Plan of Action, Malabo decision on Youth Empowerment and Agenda 2063. The 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments adopted the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development. The Declaration and Plan of Action are built on Six Key Priority Areas (KPA), of which KPA 2 is on youth and women employment. Policies developed in the area of Education, Science and Technology, include the “Africa’s Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) which was published in 2005, the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA-2024), the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 and the Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). They define the continental strategic framework for accelerating Africa’s development and growth through an innovation-led, knowledge-based economy.

As for Governance, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which entered into force in February 2012 demonstrates African countries’ determination to promote and strengthen good governance through institutionalizing transparency, accountability and democracy. The African Governance Architecture was established to provide a mandate for putting in place a Pan African Architecture on Governance, as a platform for dialogue between various stakeholders. The scope and structure of AGA are inspired by the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) that expresses the AU’s determination to ‘promote and protect human and people’s rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture and ensure good governance and the rule of law’. These are critical policy frameworks that provide a ground for youth development and empowerment across the board.

Agenda 2063 recognises that the future of the continent, in part, rests on the skills, knowledge, talents and commitment of its young people. The aspirations therein “reflect our desire for shared prosperity and well-being, for unity and integration, for a continent of free citizens and expanded horizons, where the full potential of women and youth are realized, and with freedom from fear, disease and want.” **Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 specifically talks of an Africa where Development is People-Driven, Unleashing the Potential of its Women and Youth.** Agenda 2063 also recognises that “Africa women and youth shall play an important role as drivers of change”.

Therefore, it is important to give the young women and young men, this unique opportunity to reiterate and recreate the narrative of their expectations to the African leaders while engaging in dialogue and exchange on the respective commitments. The enthusiasm and energy of the African young population should be kept in perspective while capitalizing on its constructive potential for realizing development outcomes.

Overall Purpose

The intergenerational dialogue aims at creating the space for dialogue that is necessary to develop transformative strategies and perspectives on maximizing the development potentials of youth. This will be under the theme ***“Harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Africa towards the realization of Sustainable Development Goals and AU Agenda 2063”*** The dialogue will be through engagement of Heads of States and Governments, continental and global leaders of key institutions with key youth constituencies including university students, National Youth Councils, social justice actors, African diaspora and media among others. The event is expected to galvanize these youth as they engage with the leaders thus making it a truly intergenerational dialogue. The dialogue will build upon achievements from the Intergenerational dialogue with the Pan African Parliament, (PAP) whose key recommendations were centred on implementation of existing policies and strategies that hinge on education, governance, peace and security, health and economic empowerment.

Objectives

1. Creating spaces for reflection, listening and exchange of ideas between young people, Heads of State and Government, business leaders and other policy makers and stakeholders on issues that concern the youth, including how to achieve the demographic dividend and realize Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.
2. Discuss how to ensure the relevance and greater implementation of the African Youth Charter within countries
3. Encourage young people to analyze matters of local policy, guaranteeing their participation at the decision processes with a creative attitude.

Discussion points

Discussions will be guided under the following themes and sub-themes;

- Economic empowerment
 - Legislation (business development support, entrepreneurship, preferential procurement)
 - Employment opportunities
- Health
 - SRHR, drugs and non-communicable diseases
 - Child marriage
 - Support structures
- Education
 - Compulsory and free primary and secondary education for all (particularly for girls)
 - Skills development and innovation
- Governance
 - Promotion of diversity in governance
 - National consciousness, civic education and participation
 - E-governance

- Peace and security
 - Free movement of all African people especially refugees and migrants
 - Silencing the guns

Participants

The event will bring together the following participants;

1. Heads of States and Governments
2. Heads of key continental and global institutions
3. Pan African Youth Union (PYU) & National Youth Councils
4. Continental Youth Organizations
5. Foundations and Private Sector Partners
6. Selected Youth from Partner Institutions
7. Two representatives from African students in Cuba
8. African Union Youth Volunteers
9. Self-sponsored youth representing specific thematic areas

Format

The dialogue will be undertaken over a period of two days. On the first day, the youth will engage in a structured conversation amongst themselves on the theme and agree on key priorities that will then inform the dialogue with African leaders.

The format for the intergenerational dialogue with the leaders on the second day will be a moderated round-table discussion between youth delegates, the AUC and;

1. Heads of States from; Ethiopia, Rwanda, Gabon, Togo, Nigeria, Malawi.
2. H.E. President Karl Auguste Offmann, former Head of State for Mauritius,
3. H.E. Alpha Oumar Konaré former Commission Chairperson
4. Business persons namely; Mr. Strive Masiyiwa (ECONET), Ms. Savannah Maziya, (Bunengi Foundation)
5. Heads of Global and continental institutions including UNFPA, ILO, UNIDO, UNECA

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced interaction and communication between young people and decision-makers including the opportunity to share key messages with Heads of State and Government
- Endorsed set of actions, including clear commitments, to be taken throughout 2016 by Heads of States and Governments, heads of continental and global institutions and young people.
- Communication opportunities are offered, linkages are strengthened and gaps reduced between generations;
- Areas of priority towards the realization of the objectives set in theme of the year 2016 are agreed upon.