



## Terms of Reference for the African Union Youth Envoy Position

### Introduction

During the 30th Session of AU Heads of State and Government Assembly, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission, in his speech at the opening session announced the upcoming appointment of an AU Envoy on Youth. This information was well received by the Assembly.

The creation of the position of the AU Youth Envoy derives from the report of Ministers during the meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Youth Culture and Sports (STC-YCS 2) and specifically decision 25 thereof which

*“CALLS for the appointment of an AU Youth Envoy to assist in championing youth development issues in Africa and REQUESTS the AUC to develop terms of reference for the same.”*

According to the United Nations statistics, the African population is estimated to be more than a billion people of whom over 60% are young men and women under the age of 35. It is projected that, by 2020, 3 out of 4 people on the continent will have an average age of 20 years old.

With the highest youth unemployment rate of any region in the world, the World Bank estimates that 11 million youth will enter Africa’s labour market every year for the next decade.

Agenda 2063 recognizes 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 calls for an Africa where Development is People-Driven, Unleashing the Potential of its Women and Youth.

At national levels, it is well noted that most AU Member States have youth related policies and programs. There is full recognition of the challenges and great opportunities the youth presents and most African countries are making efforts to involve young people in political and decision making processes, as reflected in the establishment of national youth councils, appointment of youth in executive positions.

At regional and continental levels, Youth networks have been established including the Pan African Youth Union to serve as a channel for youth engagement and for conveying youth perspectives for integration into national, regional and continental policies strategies and programs.

Against this backdrop and in light of, the great potential, dynamism, resourcefulness, resiliency, and aspirations of African youth, the AU has dedicated 2017 theme of the year to *“Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investments in the youth”*.

It is within this context that the African Union Commission is appointing the AU Youth Envoy to help mobilize sustained political commitment towards making youth issues a priority.

## **The Mission of the Envoy on Youth**

- The AU Youth Envoy is the spokesperson of the African youth before decision-making bodies on the continent.
- He/she will advocate and raise awareness about the implementation of the African Youth Charter among other AU strategies and policies; to share established good practices.
- He/she will generate adequate funding for advocacy efforts through strategic partnerships between the public, private and non-governmental sectors. In carrying out these activities, the Youth Envoy will work in close collaboration with the relevant AUC departments, entities and organizations.
- He/she will encourage AU Member States to define and implement national, regional and continental policies on the youth.
- He/she will also advocate for better youth mainstreaming in decision-making and will promote African values across the continent and beyond. In addition, he/she shall coordinate AU efforts for the youth and will try to reconcile the various AU initiatives of the African Union to the expectations and needs of the youth.

The mission of the AU Youth Envoy shall focus on 4 priority areas:

### **1. Inclusive Participation**

To increase youth accessibility (including marginalized youth, and young women and girls) to the African Union through promoting structured mechanisms for youth participation at national, regional and international levels thereby, increasing of youth accessibility to decision making bodies and processes.

To play a central role in the organization of youth events comprising among others; Africa Youth Day, International Youth Day, Intergenerational Dialogues including coordination functions with co-conveners and Member States. The AU Youth Envoy is also expected to promote stronger youth participation in setting, implementing and evaluating the various development frameworks and increase regional, continental and global awareness and attention to youth issues.

### **2. Advocacy**

The AU Youth Envoy shall promote an increased participation of youths in the implementation and assessment of various development frameworks and strengthen awareness on youth challenges and concerns all over the continent. Furthermore, he or she, will coordinate closely with Member States to further support youth issues and to reinforce a youth perspective in relevant resolutions, support evidence-based research on youth issues, work with national, regional and international youth councils and networks.

### **3. Partnerships**

Partnership aims at involving Member States, private sector, university institutions, media, diaspora and civil society, including youth-led organizations in various initiatives and promising projects for the African youth.

The AU Youth Envoy is expected to develop a regional, continental and global partnership with a particular emphasis on raising levels of political commitment. The Youth Envoy will work with key partners – including governments, academic institutions, media and civil society, financial institutions

and the private and non-governmental sectors to facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships in the implementation of the African Youth Charter.

#### **4. Harmonization.**

The AU Youth Envoy will support the implementation of the African Youth Charter by leveraging his or her professional expertise, experience and the good will of Member States in facilitating youth development in Africa. The AU Youth Envoy shall then work as a catalyst in order to improve the coordination and harmonization of the African Youth Charter in all the African States.