



Virtual Consultative Meeting with Youth Ministers on COVID-19

Concept Note

Background

As the world tackles the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its attendant impact on lives and livelihood of Africans. The impact of the virus is visible in all spheres of life. The continent has witnessed increasing mortality rates, rise in unemployment and underemployment, strain on health institutions, lockdowns, school closures, increase in Gender Based Violence (GBV), travel bans, economic recession etc.

Africa's youth population who represent the most vulnerable population have not been spared the challenges caused by the virus. As a result, efforts to minimize and mitigate the impact of the virus and on the young people is a priority. Furthermore, as the most vulnerable population, young people also have the responsibility of ensuring their safety and that of others by reducing the spread of the virus.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to fore the ever-increasing need for youth engagement in mobilization and sensitization as a response to community needs and challenges. These engagements, mobilization and sensitization both online and offline through campaigns on social media and in communities, development of Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials, and other innovative ideas have played key roles in ensuring that communities are not left behind in the campaign to stay safe

The African Union Commission (AUC) has taken the lead to support African Member States in tackling the of the virus on the continent by:

- Establishing a COVID19 Response Fund with the aim of raising \$420 million to meet economic, humanitarian and health challenges on the continent; and
- Developing an Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Outbreak which aims to Prevent severe illness and death from COVID-19 infection and Minimize social disruption and economic consequences of COVID-19 outbreaks. These will be achieved through coordinated efforts between the AUC, Member States and partners and the promotion of evidence-based public health practice for surveillance, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and control of COVID-19

In support of the existing strategies, the Human Resources, Science, and Technology (HRST) Department of the AUC, has developed practical responses to support young Africans in taking responsibility for personal and communal safety. This response through engagement, communications campaigns, innovation and partnerships ensures the following:

- Reducing the health risk on young Africans;
- Minimizing the impact of Covid-19 on their lives; and
- Mobilizing youth to be responders to Covid-19

This 3x4 model is a practical response young Africans can leverage on in their response to COVID-19 pandemic.

Rationale

COVID-19 presents an opportunity for African governments to develop frameworks and strategies that seek to cushion the impact on the lives and livelihood of the young Africans. These strategies would engage young people in reducing the spread of the virus, mobilizing their communities and supporting the continental strategy on COVID-19. This will not be done in isolation but would be concretized by the 3 x 4 response model developed by the HRST department.

Objective of the consultation

The objective of the consultative meeting with Youth Ministers is to:

- Discuss urgent actions to support the continental strategy on the COVID-19 pandemic
- Share best practice to mitigate the spread of the virus;
- Identify areas of support of Country Acceleration Strategies in relation to COVID-19 recovery

Expected Outcomes

At the end of the consultation, the following outcomes are expected:

- Support structures for youth identified and prioritized
- Best practices shared and conceptualized
- Framework for Country Acceleration Strategy adopted