

# **CONTINENTAL YOUTH CONSULTATION**

**THEME:**

***YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOR A RENEWED AFRICAN RENAISSANCE: A LEVER FOR  
BUILDING THE AFRICA WE WANT***

## **DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE**

**2-3 DECEMBER 2021  
VIRTUAL**

## I. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The transition of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) which created relatively stable governance and socio-economic progress was inspired by an African Renaissance which is a new form of Pan Africanism that encouraged - African Solutions for African Problems. In spite of the fact that Africa is experiencing progress, it has been riddled with conflicts of varying scale and magnitude that had adverse effects on citizens of the continent, especially youth. COVID-19 also added fuel to an already raging fire by exasperating inequality, revealing glaring realities of a fractured democratic governance system to the limelight and exposing the inability of states to support their own citizens. The continent has seen an upsurge of coups, mass protests, uprisings and active conflicts in several countries even during the ongoing global pandemic. Youth were at the centre of these protests because of the growing dissatisfaction with a non-inclusive and non-transformative economic and political governance.

On the other hand, Africa's development Agenda – Agenda 2063 was enacted as a testament for the commitment of leaders to guarantee Africa's continued robust growth that takes full advantage of its youthful population. Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 underlines the crucial role African citizens play as the driving force for the growth of the continent, stating the Africa We want is *"an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth and caring for children"*. Undoubtedly, making Agenda 2063 a reality necessitates visionary leadership with the skills, temperament and conviction to reimagine the civic, public and private sector machinery. 21st-century transformative leadership skills are required to anticipate, respond and contribute to the achievement of the *Africa We Want*.

Furthermore, achieving the *Africa We Want* in light of the rapidly changing global dynamics requires a paradigm shift and a renewal of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance spearheaded by young people. In 2013, the African Union dedicated a discussion on the topic in an effort to enhance the awareness of the new generation of Africans about the ideals of Pan-Africanism. These discussions are long overdue, and there is also a realization that ideas of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance will need to engender the participation of the young generation.

The African Union through the theme of the year is resuscitating discussions on Pan-African Renaissance and African Renaissance. The theme of the year for 2021, ***"Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the African We Want,"*** places emphasis on the importance of Arts, Culture and Heritage as a bedrock for a Pan-African Renaissance. This theme specifically draws inspiration from Aspiration 5 of Agenda 2063 and recognizes the role young people play in strengthening culture, identity and values for Africa's emergence on the global stage, creating a common destiny, African identity and Pan-African consciousness by enlisting young people as drivers of change.<sup>1</sup>

Conscripting young people as beacons for African Renaissance needs a strong political leadership fully committed to the development, democratic rule, equity, justice and rule of law<sup>2</sup> as prescribed by the Agenda 2063 framework. The bridge between the youth demographic bulge and the required dividend lies on the continent's adequately skilled and capacitated workforce that will be capable of driving Africa's Renaissance with strong socio-economic and political leadership. To do this, a new breed of young leaders with a Pan-African Consciousness need to arise with an impeccable knack for Afro-Centric policymaking that enhances democratic governance and peace, integration and technological awakening that will unlock new opportunities for citizens of the continent.

It is in light of this new dawn, that the African Union through the African Governance Architecture Platform is engaging in programs that have the potential to enhance the creation of cohorts of Pan-African young leaders that can work to resolve Africa's democratic governance issues, upholding the ideals of African

---

<sup>1</sup> E-Concept Note, 2021 as the year of Arts, Culture, and Heritage as Levers for Building the Africa We want, October 2020.

<sup>2</sup> African Union Agenda 2063 Framework Document

Renaissance while prioritizing the best interest of Africans instilled by the revolutionary heroes and heroines.

## II. RATIONALE

Young people have played leadership roles throughout history in liberation movements and post-liberation democratization struggles by amplifying popular struggles for democracy, human rights and justice. Youth have shown considerable commitment to African Renewal by becoming the heartbeat of citizens and expressing their concerns by using different platforms. They have organized themselves online and on the ground to make their voices heard.

Regression in democratic governance nonetheless has not impressed the masses of young Africans who perceive leadership and growth reported as non-inclusive and non-transformative.<sup>3</sup> The growing dissatisfaction of young people presents an immediate challenge which is creating a growing number of frustrated mushrooming youth population that is largely unemployed, poor and restless accounting for approximately 75% of the entire population of Africa. Even though leadership in the context of Africa's 21<sup>st</sup> Century problems is both complex and challenging, young people are up to the task. Young people crave moral leadership, transformative and informed leadership that puts the interest of citizens first.

Let us face the true concerns of youth, there is indeed a leadership lacuna that is immersed in ideals of the African Renaissance which is taking the continent in reverse. The year 2021 has witnessed more military takeovers, civil wars and popular protests. Reviving discussions on the African Renaissance that put citizens, especially youth at the centre is necessary. Africa needs more hands on deck to provide solutions, and young people can discuss and identify opportunities to deliver on the vision of the Africa We Want.

Indisputably, the process of raising a new set of African young leaders with the skills that are necessary to drive the implementation of Agenda 2063 should be a key priority. The responsibility of driving Africa's development agenda should be anchored on Young leaders who are deliberately and systematically cultivated for leadership on the continent. There is a need for a collective examination of what has worked, take lessons from what didn't and define Africa's path into the next millennium. The actual task of realizing Africa's aspirations rests squarely on the shoulders of the next generation of Africans. It is a must, therefore, to prepare Africa's successor generation for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> Youth have led, organized and strategized movements that have imparted lasting changes in communities by exercising adaptive leadership, intensifying their agency to build an Africa they want now more than ever.

It is in light of this that the African Union is facilitating a discussion to foster a shared understanding, create intergenerational dialogue and experience sharing on the importance of youth leadership for the renewal of African Renaissance. The discussions will facilitate open and frank conversations for young people in preparation to take the mantle of leadership. More importantly, they will emerge with a set of values that will guide their leadership styles based on Pan-African principles, integrity and African Renaissance.

It is therefore based on the aforementioned narratives that the 2021 AU continental youth consultation is organized that under the auspices of the African Governance Architecture Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) spearheaded by the Secretariat on behalf of the African Governance Platform. The consultation is organized under the theme – '**Youth Leadership for a renewed African Renaissance**'. The Continental Youth Consultation is scheduled to take place virtually from **2-3 December 2021**.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> African Leadership Forum - Africa & The Successor Generation Sheraton Hotel, Cotonou, Benin 26-28 November, 1998

## I. GOAL

The main goal of the Continental Youth Consultation is to provide a collaborative, open and inclusive space to leverage and foster meaningful participation of youth in policy deliberations that contribute towards creating the revival of African Renaissance as a lever for building the **Africa We Want**.

## II. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the Continental Youth Consultation are to:

1. Create an understanding of normative and institutional frameworks on democratic governance, peace and security through the lenses of Culture, Pan Africanism and African Renaissance with a particular focus on youth leadership;
2. Share experiences of leadership journeys to build evidence-based knowledge and experiences in order to prepare young people in contributing to democratic governance and lasting peace in the continent;
3. Provide a platform for youth to bring about their concrete and innovative ideas and headline conversations in an effort to provide a renewed commitment for Pan Africanism and African renaissance to build an Africa we all want and importantly but an Africa youth want;

## III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The following outcomes are envisaged from the discussions:

1. Deep understanding of normative and institutional frameworks on democratic governance, peace and security through the lenses of Culture, Pan Africanism and African Renaissance with a particular focus on youth leadership created;
2. Recapped the importance of culture, heritage, Pan Africanism and African renaissance in redefining youth leadership in Africa;
3. Pan Africanism and African Renaissance instilled in youth as a means for building a peaceful, democratic Africa;
4. Showcased youth experiences in transformative leadership and African Renaissance for an Africa we want.

## IV. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The following outputs will be derived from the Continental Youth Consultation:

- A compilation of Africa Talks sessions showcasing innovations;
- An outcome statement of the conversations;
- Proceedings report;
- Press Releases, Media Interviews and topical social media clips and sound bites will be provided; and
- Social Media Engagement (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)

## V. THEMATIC AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) **THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP TO CREATE THE AFRICA WE WANT:** Through this discussion, speakers will provide an overview of the state of youth leadership in African democratic governance as a key lever to build the Africa We Want. The discussions will identify past, present and future contributions of young Africans to the democratic governance and present with solutions for the youth to play a part to the re-emergence of African democratic governance
- 2) **AU SHARED VALUES INSTRUMENTS INSTRUMENTS AND YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP:** The session will provide a horizon scanning of important normative and institutional frameworks as well as

African led initiatives available on democratic governance, youth leadership and Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.

- 3) **PAN AFRICAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT:** – Speakers will identify past, present and future contributions of young Africans to the democratic governance and present with solutions for the youth to play a part to the re-emergence of African democratic governance
- 4) **YOUTH REIGNING PAN AFRICANISM AND AFRICAN RENASCENCE:** This session will provide an opportunity to flesh out the role that youth are playing/can play in the renewal of culture, heritage and Pan African renewal and African Renaissance. This thematic area will assess the contribution of the creative arts in reinvigorating Africa's renewal. Experts, youth advocates and industry players will have a chance to discuss the role of youth in shifting the narrative on democratic governance through the creative arts, storytelling as key levers for building the Africa We Want.
- 5) **AFRICA TALKS:** This intergenerational conversation where young people will be provided the platform to showcase their leadership experiences to inspire and ignite. Young leaders, MPs, Advisors and Ministers will share their experiences on how you can effect change and ultimately contribute to the Africa We Want.
- 6) **INTERLUDE:** Interludes between sessions will be provided through creative means by sharing inspiring and relevant performances of culture, music, art and videos that are meant to inspire participants.

## **VI. ABOUT THE CONTINENTAL YOUTH CONSULTATION**

As an institutionalized platform and a pre-event to the Annual High-Level Dialogue, the annual continental youth consultation is convened under the auspices of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Youth Engagement Strategy (YES). The consultation will present an open and safe space for young people to think outside of the box and engage in a conversation that can potentially provide practical solutions to deficits of democratic governance in Africa, leadership to contribute to the African We want.

In furtherance, the outcomes of the consultations will be part of the deliberations of the 10<sup>th</sup> High-Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human rights and Governance exploring trends, challenges and prospects. The consultation will also contribute to policy discussions on the theme of the year by different AU Policy Organs and Department.

## **VII. METHODOLOGY**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Continental Youth Consultation has gone virtual once more. The convening of the Continental Youth Consultation will use a combination of methodologies to facilitate deliberations. Discussions at the Consultation will be conducted through several interactive strategies including

- Panel Discussions;
- Deep dive conversations with high-profile individuals and experts;
- Intergenerational Conversations;
- Africa Talks; and
- Plenary forums.

The Consultation will feature robust social media engagement, informative threads on sessions and sound bites and other innovative means to spur debate during, before and after the virtual consultations.

## **VIII. PARTICIPATION**

Participants at the Continental Youth Consultation will be identified through an online pre-registration process. Specifically, participants will be drawn from:

1. Youth-Led and Youth Oriented organizations working on democracy, governance, leadership, Culture, Heritage, Pan Africanism, African Renaissance issues in general and specific thematic areas under consideration during this consultation;
2. The AU Member States, including representatives of National Institutions, Agencies that focus on good governance, building the culture of democracy;
3. Selected Think Thanks and Academic Research institutions with experience on issues of democratic governance, leadership, culture, heritage, Pan-Africanism, African Renaissance;
4. Selected Media Practitioners;
5. Private Sector;
6. Representatives of the African Governance Platform Members;
7. International organisations, Development Partners and UN Agencies; and
8. Diaspora.

## IX. DATES AND DETAILS

The youth continental consultations will be convened online from **2-3 December 2021**.

## X. DOCUMENTATION AND WORKING LANGUAGES

The Continental youth consultations will be held virtually and the documentation will be shared electronically. All High-Level Dialogue documents and news updates will be available on the [www.au.int/aga](http://www.au.int/aga), @AUC\_PAPS @AGA\_Platform @\_AfricanUnion and on Hashtags #DGTrends

The Meeting will be conducted in all of the AU official languages **Arabic, English, French, and Portuguese**. Simultaneous interpretations will be provided in all the 4 languages while documentations will be provided in **French and English** only.

In addition, **SIGN LANGUAGE** interpretation will be provided for the entire conversation.

## XI. PARTNERSHIP, INSTITUTIONAL AND MANAGEMENT

The Youth Consultations to the High-Level Dialogue is an institutionalized initiative of the African Governance Platform aimed at facilitating youth engagement and participation in policy deliberations on democracy, governance and human rights. The Continental youth consultation will be supported by the Department of Social Affairs of the AUC as the lead entity for the AU theme of the year, WCYD and the Office of the Special Envoy on Women and Peace and Security with the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department leading the process through AGA-APSA Secretariat.

## XII. CONTACT DETAILS

### Amb. Salah Hammad

Ag. Head, AGA-APSA Secretariat  
Governance Conflict Prevention Directorate,  
Political Affairs Peace and Security  
African Union Commission  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Email: [HammadS@africa-union.org](mailto:HammadS@africa-union.org)

### Ms. Makda Mikre Tessema

Democracy and Governance Expert  
AGA - APSA Secretariat  
Department of Political Affairs  
African Union Commission

Email: [MakdaM@africa-union.org](mailto:MakdaM@africa-union.org)

### Ms Hagar Azzooz

Project Officer  
Governance Conflict Prevention Directorate,  
Political Affairs Peace and Security  
African Union Commission  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Email: [Azzoozh@africa-union.org](mailto:Azzoozh@africa-union.org)

