



4TH CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN UNION MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF YOUTH (COMY IV)

Africa, Deliver as ONE on Youth Development!

(Concept Note)

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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



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I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

A. Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Youth (COMY) – The rationale

The organization of a Conference of the African Union Ministers in charge of Youth (COMY) is a necessity set for the implementation of the priority lines of action from the AUC strategic plan that gives the deserved space to youth development and youth empowerment, such as capacity building, human resource development and education. Youth development and empowerment hold a vital role for the realization of the African Union vision based on the achievement of peace, integration and prosperity within a continent led by its peoples. This is indeed a challenging and sustainable goal that requires investment in both the present and the future that means investment in African youth who compose the largest, the most creative, receptive and highly skilled population of Africa.

The organization of a Conference of African Union Ministers in charge of Youth (COMY) is therefore necessary both for the validation process of all frameworks, policies, programmes, and continental initiatives, as well as all cooperation frameworks and strategies that facilitate the implementation of African youth continental agenda. The Conference of the AU Ministers in charge of youth also aims to revitalize the African commitments and to raise/strengthen engagement for concrete and sustainable changes favoring development with the meaningful



participation of the Youth reinforced by the Ministries' contributions and efforts in investment and capacity building, while ensuring the implementation of the adopted decision, frameworks, and policies at national level.

Finally, the Conference of the AU Ministers in charge of youth development is the statutory structure that validates the implementation report from Member States, strengthens its delivery capacity and encourages the countries in supporting youth development, makes recommendations to the relevant bodies, especially to the AU Commission in its coordination role in the follow-up and monitoring of the Ministers' commitments for youth development issues.

B. Previous Ministerial Conference's – the outcomes

The previous 3 Ministerial Conferences contributed to a number of achievements upon which Africa has built important outcomes and is engaged in the implementation of the on-going actions, decisions, frameworks. The accomplishment of efforts at continental, regional and national levels, towards youth development has contributed to the mobilization of partners, facilitated accessibility in the international fora and conferences, with more visibility to the African youth, its development agenda and priorities. The outcomes of the previous ministerial conferences, followed by the Heads of States Summit in June 2011 in Malabo are still raising new interest among the international stakeholders, the private sectors and a number of funding institutions. Below are some of the milestones already achieved and that justified that we have to increase efforts for urgent interventions to ensure sustainability of the accomplishments.

In 2006, the COMY I, the very first of the kind, was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and outcomes were as follows:

- ✚ The African Youth Charter was adopted by Executive Council and Heads of States in 2006 in Banjul, the Gambia;
- ✚ The 1st November became the African Youth Day – adopted by Executive Council in 2006 in Banjul;
- ✚ The Year 2008 was declared the YEAR OF AFRICAN YOUTH - adopted by Executive Council in 2006 in Banjul;



- ✚ The revitalization of the Pan African Youth Union strongly recommended - adopted by Executive Council in 2006 in Banjul.

In 2008, the COMY II was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Among other achievements

- ✚ The programmes for the Year of African Youth (YAY-including TVET for post conflict countries, as pilot project were presented and have been adopted; the development of a continental youth volunteer programme was requested, etc
- ✚ A proposition was made for a Decade for Youth Development (2009-2018) – and was approved by Executive Council in 2009 in Addis Ababa
- ✚ A requirement for the establishment of a Trust Fund for Youth Development was presented to Ministers for endorsement.

In 2010, the COMY III was held in Vic Falls, Zimbabwe,

- ✚ The plan of action for the Decade for Youth Development was adopted;
- ✚ The framework for the Youth Volunteer Corps was adopted;
- ✚ A Summit devoted to Youth matters was requested and a theme was proposed and later adopted by the Summit in Kampala in July 2010 to take place in Malabo Summit in June 2011 one year later.
- ✚ Recommended the preparation of the African priorities and common position on youth development priorities and African participation to the World Conference in Mexico – August 2010.

C. THE COMY III – ACTIONS AND EVENTS GENERATED

- ✚ **June 2010: COMY III BUREAU MEETING, in Abuja** hosted by the Minister of youth development of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: **Main objective:** Preparation of the African priorities and common position on youth development priorities. Led by the Ministers of the Bureau of COMY III, assisted by the AUC, some selected ministers and youth leaders.



- ✚ **July 2010:** Announcement of the Theme of July 2011 Summit on Youth as proposed by COMY III
 - ✚ **August 2010:** Strong African delegation at high level participated to the Mexico World Conference on Youth – About 30 Ministers, seniors Officers, youth leaders from Africa led by the African Union Commission attended the Mexico Conference on youth, with a strong political support to the Common position on African priorities
 - ✚ **April 2011 in preparation to the Summit on youth,** the pre-Summit activities and meetings were organized and outcomes were adopted by the COMYIII Bureau meeting and presented to the Summit in Malabo – June 2011;
 - ✚ **June 2011** Summit on youth empowerment in Malabo with a very comprehensive decision on the acceleration of youth empowerment and employment to sustain Africa's development – to be implemented through accelerated and concrete actions
 - ✚ **July 2011: The chair of the Bureau of COMY III** participated and presided the African Side event on "Cooperation for Financing the Resource requirement of the AU Youth DPoA during the UN High-level meeting on Youth – United Nations Headquarters in New York.
 - ✚ Currently Summit decision is being implemented and report is to be delivered in COMY IV among other achievements and challenges will be addressed.
- C. Fourth African Union Conference of Ministers in Charge of Youth (COMY IV) – the necessity

From the perspective of strengthening regional and national response towards implementation and accountability under the Assembly/AU/Dec.363 (XVII) Malabo Summit Decision on "*Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable development*" the COMY IV will focus on one major objective formulated as follows:

"Africa Delivers as One for Youth development!"

is the banner for this concept. It seeks to facilitate increased synergy in actions, coordination, tracking of progress and facilitate access to academic and technical



capacities in the domain of youth studies and research for evidence based arguments in Macro-economic frameworks.

The youth population remains Africa's untapped resource for socio-economic growth. As argued by experts, the opportunity of a demographic window for Africa by 2032 can also become a disaster; unless there is the conscious multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral and integrated system positioning youth leadership and participation as a development theory, in favor of Africa's broad sector growth.

The development priorities for Africa must include the *change of paradigms, strategies and mechanisms* to ensure the sustainable impacts of interventions. Within the *change of paradigms*, high consideration must be given to the youth participation and concrete involvement. The *change of strategies* requires the use of common roadmap for concrete interventions, addressing the concerned peoples. Towards the *change of mechanisms*, aggressive and concerted efforts will be needed to assist the implementation, the monitoring, the evaluation and the reporting from the regional blocks and in Member States, by building up the knowledge base, multi-sectoral mechanisms in place for policy formulation and implementation, which include all the relevant actors.

There are also the increasing *unmet expectations for a popular investment framework* that will argue the meaningful and concrete role of youth as an emerging pull of critical human capital and young professionals at Pan African level. Skilled inputs within all sorts of competences, quality service driven business sectors, innovations in various academic fields, research and policy analyst at international policy tables and inter-continental negotiations, and young political leaders engaged in constructive reflections for sustainable development.

Africa has succeeded articulating its priorities on youth development and empowerment and called on the development partners to identify with these priority areas, and shape the Aid discourse on Africa's overall performance in good governance, human rights, trade projections and human capital development. The recent announcement of a youth-centered programme in his 2012 - 2017 mandate by the UN Secretary General also requires a stronger collaboration with the African Union and its Commission, including the necessary alignment with the African adopted instruments and frameworks.



Finally, the role of the Commission as the central clearing house and with a mandate to facilitate a continental outlook on youth development and empowerment will depend on the operational orientation within the regions and the Member states engagement on strategic negotiations to position at a higher level the youth development in regional and National development plans, with the adequate resource. The AU Commission also must go on increasing its role in setting-up joint programming that respond to the inter-sectoral mandate prescribed by the African Youth Charter and Youth Decade Plan of Action and requires the partners to align to the mentioned framework and policy documents. These concerted efforts will contribute to the acceleration of the implementation of the Summit decision on Youth empowerment, within which Africa could deliver as one.

II. THE AIM OF COMY IV

In view of what precede, the fourth African Union Conference of Ministers in Charge of Youth (COMY IV) will globally aim to *facilitate the provision of a multi-sectoral platform to discuss and build consensus not only on the above imperatives, but also to achieve the following specific objectives:*

III. THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF COMY IV

The conference aims specifically to

- ✓ Deliberate on short term, medium and long term actions required to mobilize support for existing technical and financial resource requirements to achieve the **Mid-term priorities of the AU Youth Decade at all levels** (e.g. Youth Volunteerism; Technical Vocational Skill Development; Employment creation at 2% per annum; etc.)
- ✓ Deliberate and adopt implementation **plan and resource availability for the proposed framework for acceleration of actions for Youth empowerment/employment**, with specific orientations and strategies to enhance collaboration with regional blocks and Member States on the role and responsibility of the AUC for capacity building and oversight.
- ✓ Adopt the proposed **mechanism to strengthen the capacity of Member States, continental organ (PYU) and regional institutions** in responding



to their obligations towards the adopted policy documents and increase their accountability in accordance with the deliverables and track progress on the targets set in the AU Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009 - 2018)

- ✓ Engage in consolidating Africa's commitment by adopting an **investment framework** and buy-in the global engagement toward the international youth development agenda with the international partners in support the **funding of the priorities** as set and agreed upon with the AU Heads of States and Government.

III. PROPOSED FORMAT

COMY IV will be divided into three parts: Pre-conference activities, Side events and Main programme

- A) **See Annex 1 for pre-Conference activities**
- B) **See Annex 2 for side events**(exhibition and parallel meetings)
- C) **See Annex 3 The Conference's traditional approaches and 2 Special debates on:**
 1. *High-level exchange on Cost of doing business for youth entrepreneurship in Africa*
 2. *Professionalizing Youth Work in Africa*

COMY IV will offer a high-level platform (panel for discussion) to give more attention and in-depth discussion of the following sub-themes, presented by 2 guest speakers 20min each presentation.

3. *The plenaries*

The main programme of the conference will comprise of two (2) Plenary-sessions with opening and closing ceremonies.

The statutory plenary sessions will highlight the key issues and challenges and will provide platform for review and broad policy orientations needed to address these challenges. The Conference will formulate the necessary recommendations (action-oriented) for quick wins and medium term implementation of the proposed frameworks and conclusion of debates. The last plenary session will



thus adopt or endorse the outcome document based on the proposals and recommendations made during the Ministers Conference.

IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

Presentations, Panel discussions and dialogue during COMY IV will result in:

- Enhanced understanding of the priorities for African agenda on youth empowerment and employment and the role of concerned stakeholders
- Better understanding of the needs and expectations of the young people in business and trends and stakes related to entrepreneurship and self-employment
- Strengthened multi-level support for the implementation of Africa's common priority on youth development and empowerment
- Adopted implementation plan for the acceleration of action for youth empowerment and employment
- Adopted mechanism for strengthening capacity of Member States, PYU and the RECs for enforcement of respective accountability regarding expected outcomes/outputs
- Strengthened capacity of AUC to mobilize global partners and building strategic alliances on the resource requirement to achieve the AU Youth Decade Plan of Action and Platform Support and Development Assistance Investment Framework