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AFRICA YOUTH DAY

The African Youth acknowledged as key actors towards implementing Africa's Agenda 2063 as Africa celebrates Africa Youth Day



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1st November 2015: About 300 young Africans from the five regions of the Continent and the diaspora gathered this 1st November at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to celebrate the Africa Youth Day under the theme ***“African Year of Human Rights towards Agenda 2063 – the Africa we want”***. The theme of this year's Africa Youth Day Summit is in line with the theme of the 2016 African Union Summit ***“African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women”***. The youth took advantage of this occasion to reiterate their willingness to be part of the implementation process of Agenda 2063, the new endogenous framework for Africa's development.

Addressing youth participants during the opening ceremony, H.E Dr. Martial De Paul Ikounga, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) at the African Union Commission highlighted the critical role young people will play for the achievement of the 7 aspirations of Agenda 2063. He recalled that our founding fathers committed themselves when they were young to liberating the continent from colonialism in order to guarantee the empowerment of the African people. It is therefore

the responsibility of the African youth to ensure that the vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa becomes a reality.

“I am not sure that I will be there to see the achievement of this beautiful vision. However, I strongly believe that the African youth will be able to turn this dream into reality”, said the Commissioner. In addition, H.E Ikounga expressed his gratitude to all the youth who made sacrifices to attend the celebration in Ethiopia.



In the same vein, the President of the Pan African Youth Union (PYU), Ms. Francine Muyumba, recalled that the Africa Youth day was established in 2006 in Banjul to ensure that African youth represent a significant stakeholder in implementing the people centered Union as stipulated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union. She added that the 1st November is a window of opportunity for young people to review their contribution to the development of the continent and pave the way for the role they will play as change agents in their different regions. She also emphasized on the need to address the issue of youth employment. In that regard, she announced that the Pan African Youth Union is planning to establish the African Youth Chamber of commerce during the Pan African Youth Forum on Entrepreneurship that will take place in March 2016 in Malabo, Guinea Equatorial. The institution will contribute to the achievement of aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063 “A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and development” and materialize the right to development for the African Youth as provided by article 10 of the African Youth Charter.

During the celebration, the African Union Commission recognized 10 young Africans from the 5 African regions, called youth heroes, for their work in the areas of human rights, especially the rights of Young Women in Education, Health, Gender Equality and Civic Engagement.

The celebration was preceded by a two days meeting organized by the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology of the African Union Commission in collaboration with the Youth Alliance for Leadership in Africa (YALDA). About 300 participants exchanged views on how to implement Africa's Agenda 2063. They drafted specific recommendations on gender equality, education, youth empowerment that will be submitted for consideration of the policy organs of the African Union.

About Africa Youth Day

The 1st of November was proclaimed and instituted as The Africa Youth Day on the occasion of the **African Youth Charter** adoption in the Executive Council Decision of the Banjul Summit 2006. Africa Youth Day is a day set aside every year to promote the increased recognition of youth as key agents for social change, economic growth and sustainable development in all areas of African Society.

About Agenda 2063

Agenda 2063 is the new Africa's development framework that was adopted on the 24th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly on the 31st January 2015. It is anchored on the AU Constitutive Act, the Pan African vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena", the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration 2013 as well as the national, regional and continental priorities. For more information, please visit our website: <http://agenda2063.au.int/>.

JL/HBS/BM

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