



## **Africa Youth Month 2019**

**Theme: 1 Million by 2021: Count Me In!**

## Background

Young people are at the very heart of Africa's development agenda. With over 75% of Africa's 1.2 billion inhabitants under the age of 35, and 453 million Africans aged 15-35, it goes without saying that the development outcomes of Africa's young people have a significant and lasting effect on the continent's trajectory. The challenges Africa faces in education, employment, health, and governance are most acutely felt by Africa's youth.

The African Union Commission, along with the rest of the world, recognizes this centrality of youth to achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063. Aspiration 6 in particular envisions a continent with people-driven development, relying on its youth. Together with the African Youth Charter and the roadmap on harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth, Agenda 2063 and its youth-centric action plans serve as continental frameworks which reflect the prioritization of youth development by the African Union Commission and AU Member States.

The Commission's strategy on youth engagement aims strengthen its relationship with youth, and equip them with the spaces needed to amplify their voices to audiences of influence. African youth are diverse in realities and skill set. They have the ability to provide the resolutions to challenges plaguing the continent, through their unwavering resilience, vibrancy and penchant for innovation. Young people, by virtue of their energy, vibe and adaptability, gravitate to the forefront of creating new, fresh solutions to old problems, and African governments must leverage this natural affinity through building their capacity and providing spaces for them to thrive.

In 2019, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission launched the 1 Million by 2021 Initiative, which will create direct opportunities for one million young Africans in the areas of education, employment, entrepreneurship and engagement (4Es). At the very core of the initiative are the principles of pan-Africanism, strategic partnerships and Africa-centric innovation and solutions, co-created and driven by Africa's youth, towards creating sustainable structures.

## Africa Youth Month

It is against this backdrop that the African Union Commission is celebrating Africa Youth Month in November 2019, under the theme **"1 Million by 2021: Count Me In!"** The African Youth Charter adopted in 2006 proclaims the 1<sup>st</sup> of November as Africa Youth Day, and in 2019, given the myriad of interventions and actions on youth spurred by the 1 Million by 2021, the Commission is celebrating youth in the entire month of November.

The 2019 Africa Youth Month (AYM) theme is a clarion call to all youth development stakeholders- governments, international organizations, development partners, private sector, civil society, and all African youth on the continent and in the diaspora – to stand up and be counted as drivers of the 1 Million by 2021 initiative towards youth empowerment. The focus of the 1 Million by 2021 Initiative on Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Engagement is underpinned by a firm foundation of strategic partnerships among stakeholders, and acknowledges young people beneficiaries and partners. Article 26A of the African Youth Charter charges youth to be owners of their own development.

Youth-led movements across the continent have been advocating for change in their respective areas of focus. The aim of Africa Youth Month 2019 is to amplify a unified youth movement to transform education, employment, entrepreneurship and engagement. Correspondingly, the 2019 AYM theme also calls upon governments and partners to mobilize and support the 1 Million by 2021 Initiative through creating and accelerating opportunities for youth in the 4Es.

## AYM 2019 Activities

Africa Youth Month will comprise of a launch activity on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, and thematic weeks across the month, aligned to the 4Es. Activities will include youth-led actions, conferences and meetings, dialogues and extensive social media engagement.

### **November 1<sup>st</sup>: Africa Youth Day Scavenger Hunt**

- **What:** The Africa Youth Month will be launched on November 1<sup>st</sup> with a continent-wide scavenger hunt. The first of its kind, the scavenger hunt will provide youth across Africa and in the diaspora with fun and instructive tasks and activities to perform across the day. These simple tasks are aimed to create awareness, learning, knowledge and interaction with Agenda 2063, the African Youth Charter and 1 Million by 2021.
- **How:** Each country will have its assigned national task, and there will be a list of simpler activities for youth who may not be able to join a national group. The aim is to ensure that every young African is able to participate and have their voice heard on that day. Tasks will essentially have little or no financial implications, and will only take creativity, vision and a willingness to engage. National and individual tasks will be revealed two weeks prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of November. Participants will share their efforts online which will be popularized by the AUC through an online interactive map.

- **Who:** The scavenger hunt will be convened by the AU Youth Envoy and the Advisory council, and they will lead and coordinate the national tasks. Any individual, youth organization, youth club, family, group of friends, community, etc, can get together and participate.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> November: Education**

The Education week will see the online curation of education initiatives across the continent, with a spotlight on innovative approaches. There will be profiling of outstanding individuals who are transforming Africa's education landscape, and social media interactions between key actors in the education sector and African youth. There will also be a reliving of the concluded Innovating Education in Africa Expo, and highlights of the best practices showcased at the event.

#### **11<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> November: Engagement**

The Engagement week will focus on youth engagement and mobilization across the continent.

- **Model African Union 2.0:** The Commission will organize a Model African Union event during this week which will launch the new Model AU platform as a continent-wide flagship leadership movement. The Model AU, themed ***Children Today, Youth Tomorrow: A Smooth Transition*** will explore the important transition from childhood to actualization as youth, and the cumulative gains of child welfare to the state of youth, as highlighted by the African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (APAYE). Participants will include youth who have experience and/or expertise in community engagement and leadership.

The event will comprise a three-day leadership training, an intergenerational mentorship session with identified community leaders, a training on the Model AU simulation, and an intergenerational dialogue with members of The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), comprising a simulation of the ACERWC, a simulation of the Heads of State summit, and a discussion session between the trainees and the committee members. This will be attended by the AUC Chairperson, the Commissioner of HRST, the UNICEF Executive Director and the UNICEF Representative to the AUC (High-level attendees TBC).

The Model AU event will be the launch of the AU youth leadership movement, a tool for youth participation and engagement at national and sub-national levels, responding to the need for spaces for youth to engage the AUC, and also be engaged at the community level. The new movement will nurture a large cohort of young people who will drive dialogue, action and change from the local to the continental levels. Through this channel,

the AUC will equip young people to build a movement which will put youth at the center of sustainable solutions, policies and lasting change. The movement seeks to engage youth who are diverse in expertise, education and life experiences, but are united by a keen desire to bring about an African Renaissance, where continental values underpin our lives, and young people are engaged in society as the drivers of development.

### **18<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> November: Entrepreneurship**

This week will tap into the Africa Industrialization Week activities, including the Korea-Africa Startup Fair at the AUC Headquarters, through co-convening some sessions at the Fair. It will also reflect on ongoing entrepreneurship initiatives under 1 Million by 2021, including national initiatives in pathfinder AU Member States.

### **25<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> November: Employment**

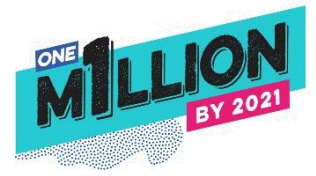
The Employment week will feature online engagement on employment practices, effective school-to-work transition, and skilling for the 21<sup>st</sup> century job market. There will be profiling of best practices, showcase of internship and apprenticeship opportunities and engagement with African youth on employment realities.

### **29<sup>th</sup> November: Closing**

To round out the Africa Youth Month Celebrations, there will be a #BeTheVibe Fire-Pit event at the AUC premises which will create a platform to relax, engage and celebrate music and arts in the context of the 1 Million by 2021 Initiative. The Fire-Pit event will bring together youth working at the Commission to celebrate youth ideas and expression. Hosted by the AU Youth Division and the AU Youth Envoy, the event will host local artistes and feature an open mic for all attendees. Youth around the continent will join the event through social media channels.

## **Count Me In!**

Member States, Individuals, Member States, African youth on the continent and in the diaspora, UN Agencies and Development Partners, youth-led and youth-serving organizations, private enterprises, and any interested groups should celebrate Africa Youth Month.



All stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the Scavenger Hunt on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, engage with the AUC Youth Program throughout the month on social media, and follow the activities throughout the month. Stakeholders are also encouraged to hold their own activities and share reports with the AUC.