

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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AU COMMISSION COMMEMORATES AFRICA YOUTH DAY 2016

“Promoting youth mainstreaming as a catalyst towards harnessing the Demographic Dividend”



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1st November, 2016: The Africa Youth Day takes place every 1st November and was proclaimed and instituted on the occasion of the African Youth charter adoption in the Summit Decision of 2006. The event was yet again celebrated successfully this year at the African Union Headquarters, in Addis Ababa.

The purpose for this year’s celebration was to promote an increased recognition of youth as key agents for social change and economic growth in all aspects of the African society, to contribute and channel youth motivation, energy and idealism, to reinforce the efforts towards the achievement of sustainable development in Africa.

His Excellency, Dr. Martial De-Paul Ikounga, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) at the AU Commission stated that youths are not only defined by their age but youths are also defined by what they carry in their minds. He emphasized the importance and the purpose to involve youths in the on-going activities at the African Union commission, as a path to realizing the 6th Aspiration of Agenda 2063.

According to the Commissioner the 2017 theme of the African Union will mainly be focused on the youths, under the theme ‘*Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investments in the youth*’.

In his keynote address H.E. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, said that he is always delighted to interact and address the young people of the African continent. This he explained was because he believes the young people hold the key to the transformation and development of the African continent.

He commended the young people for their energy, drive, enthusiasm, fresh ideas and ambition – a combination he esteemed as magical. This, he further stated was a huge blessing and asset to the African continent. ‘The youth of Africa take up the largest percentage of the continent’s population and must therefore be empowered in order to maximize on their potential otherwise the continent would be wasting at least 50% of its productivity’, Mr. Mwencha highlighted.



The Africa

Youth Day, he stated, presented all an opportunity and platform to highlight the roles, prospects and challenges of the African Youth. He went on to call upon all leaders, institutions and development partners and urged them to use the day to reflect on the practical actions in ensuring that young people are accorded the needed opportunity to play their part in Africa’s development. *(The complete speech of the Deputy Chairperson is available on www.au.int).*

Following the keynote address the Deputy Chairperson and the Commissioner launched the AUC Youth Mainstreaming Guideline, and the AU 2017 theme logo competition respectively.

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