



**DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION**

**PRESS RELEASE N°11/28<sup>th</sup> AU SUMMIT**

## **African Union Commission hosts Youth Consultation Meeting on Gender**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 23rd January 2017:** The Youth Consultation Meeting, taking part of the activities of the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Gender is My Agenda (GIMAC) Pre-Summit, was held on, Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme **“Harnessing The Demographic Dividend Through Investment In Youth: Empowering young people, empowering young women.”**



Amongst the participants present at the meeting were young Africans representatives from all regions of the continent including the Diaspora, women led CSOs and groups, young women individual leaders doing inspiring work to bring about change and African Union Youth Volunteers amongst others. The

objective of the consultation was to create a space for African Youth to discuss and provide feedback on the AU theme of the year: **‘Harnessing the Demographic Dividends through Investments in Youth’** and the proposed Roadmap, in order to reflect on issues affecting young people in the continent- including but not limited to: Civic participation and leadership, Human Rights Violations, Gender Based Violence, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Economic justice. This meeting will also give African youth the platform and opportunity to engage with African Ministers and other key decision makers on policies that will foster effective responses to their needs, and aspirations.

The outcome of the youth consultation will inform platforms such as Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) and the Consultation meeting of AU Ministers of Gender Equality and Women’s Affairs on harnessing demographic dividend from a gender and rights

perspective, the role of Youth and commitment towards the implementation of the DD roadmap at local, national, regional and continental levels identified.



In her opening remarks, H.E Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) addressed the youth and noted that “Africa’s young people must be the ones to have direct access to the continent’s own resources”. With regard to the theme on harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in the youth, the AUC Chairperson urged the older generation to finance the development of the future generation so as to ensure that they play a more dynamic role in the global arena.

“If we look at our continent, we want to bequeath to the future generations a prosperous, peaceful and integrated continent driven by its citizens and playing a dynamic role in the global arena”

She concluded her speech with a powerful quote from Ben Okri that says , “The most authentic thing about us is our capacity to create, to overcome, and to endure, to transform, to love and to be greater than our suffering.”

H.E Dr Martial De-Paul Ikounga, Commissioner for Human Resources Science and Technology of the AUC, noted the importance of the role Youths play and their contribution to the development of policies affecting day-to-day African lives «Africa cannot develop without the tremendous contributions by its largest resource – the youth. As you already know young people below the age of 35 constitute 65% of the population on the continent and this means actions being taken around the continent mainly affect them and nothing can prosper without their inclusion from decision making to implementation”.

Following brief presentations on strengthening Youth Public Service Leadership and the Demographic Dividend, participants were divided into 4 working groups to deliberate and provide recommendations on: Young People’s Economic Empowerment through Innovation; Youth Driving Social Change and Young People’s Political Engagement. The outcomes of these working groups and social media exchanges, via the hashtags **#All4Gender** and **#AUYouth2017**, will be presented to African decision makers and Ministers for further discussions and consideration.

#### **Note to Editor**

The GIMAC is a network consists of more than 55 civil society organizations promoting gender equality and accountability for women’s rights. It was launched was launched in 2002 in Durban, South Africa and has

since held bi-annual civil society consultative meeting in advance of the AU summit to engage AU member states on African women's rights, issues and concerns.

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