



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Press Release

AUC and UNFPA recommit to accelerate efforts to implement roadmap to harness the demographic dividend through investments in youth

Addis Ababa, 5th July 2017- The African Union Commission and the United Nations Population Fund met Saturday to discuss joint action to accelerate the implementation of the African Union Roadmap to Harness the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth. The Roadmap was endorsed by the Heads of State and Government in January this year.



Built around four pillars of employment and entrepreneurship, education and skills development, health and wellbeing and rights, governance and youth empowerment, the Roadmap provides clear catalytic actions and deliverables to harness the demographic dividend emanating for an increasing youthful population in Africa.

“Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth is the key to achieving the bold aspirations of Agenda 2063. We need to implement the key deliverables in the Roadmap and transform education and skills development, health and wellbeing, empowerment as well as employment and entrepreneurship as we march towards inclusive economic growth and sustainable development,” said Her Excellency Amira El Fadil, the Commissioner for Social Affairs at the African Union Commission.

The central importance of the demographic dividend to Africa’s transformative development has been repeatedly acknowledged by African leaders at the highest level and in key ministerial platforms. Over the last ten years, it has become evident that a demographic dividend lens offers a strategic basis for focusing and prioritizing investments in people in general and the youth in particular. During the meeting the Commission highlighted the need for continued engagement in the Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa, the Campaign to end Child Marriage that seeks to keep girls

out of early marriage and in school and the need to fast track the implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Sexual Reproductive Rights and Health.

"Harnessing the demographic dividend requires that we all work together to fully implement the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa. We are committed to support the African Union in its efforts to address sexual and reproductive health and rights, child marriage, female genital mutilation and other practices that violate women and child rights and impede their role in transforming our societies" said Dr. Natalia Kanem, the ad interim Executive Director of UNFPA.

According to the UN World Population Prospects the continent's population reached 1.2 billion in 2015 and is projected to grow rapidly, reaching 1.7 billion in 2030 and more than double by 2050, to 2.5 billion and 3 billion in 2063. Its share of the global population will increase from 16 per cent in 2015 to more than 29 per cent in 2063. More remarkable is the fact that about 46 per cent of the 1.3 billion increase in Africa's labor force over the period 2015-2063 will be young people aged 15-34, averaging 12.1 million a year. With this fast transformation in the age structure and a decline in dependency ratios, there is a potential for economic growth spurred by the increased labor income and increased savings.

To harness the potential that this brings there is need for the development and implementation of sound policies in education, health, including family planning and the creation of an enabling macroeconomic environment. Facilitating job creation and access to decent employment and increases in the productive workforce will lead to higher growth and rising income. Harnessing the demographic dividend presents an opportunity to build resilience of young people and address the root causes of many of the key challenges facing Africa including forced migration, radicalization and violent extremism.

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