

MEDIA RELEASE

UNDP and the African Union Commission join forces to empower young African women leaders for sustainable development

Addis Ababa/New York, 16 July 2019: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Union Commission (AUC) join forces to implement an African Young Women Leaders (AYWL) Fellowship programme to develop the next generation of young African women leaders and experts to serve Africa and the world.

The fellowship programme aims to equip outstanding young African women leaders with leadership skills and experience required to contribute effectively to decision making in public, private and multilateral institutions.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African development Agenda2063, the partnership will build on the African Union's "1 million by 2021" Youth initiative that seeks to connect 1 million young Africans to opportunities through education, employment, empowerment and engagement.

"This initiative is an important component of the strategic AU/UN partnership to strengthen and harmonize the complementary between the UN's Agenda 2030 and the AU's Agenda 2063. It is also a key activity by the African Union Commission to accelerate investment in the Youth, in order to achieve sustainable development by ensuring access to opportunity in the world of work for the youth of the continent, especially young women," said Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. "With more partnerships from players in the development space and the private sector, we can pool resources and build a sustainable ecosystem to accelerate economic development for the Africa we want", Chairperson Faki added.

The African Young Women Leaders Fellowship programme also aligns with UNDP's YouthConnekt initiative that is supporting young Africans to enhance their entrepreneurial skills. Through the YouthConnekt initiative, UNDP and the Tony Elumelu Foundation recently launched an entrepreneurship programme targeting 100,000 youth in Africa. This innovative fellowship programme is another unique opportunity to involve the youth in advancing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa.

"Investing in youth, especially young women, is critical for inclusive, sustainable and transformative development in Africa. We need to grow the next generation of women leaders and experts to drive the future of development, enhance gender parity in the political, economic and social domains and unlock creativity and innovation for the achievement of agendas 2030 and 2063", said Assistant Secretary-General, Ahunna Eziakonwa, Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa.

The Fellowship programme will start with a cohort of 20 leading young women in 2019. The target is to train and mentor several young experts from each African country, with financial support from UN Member States, the African Union, private partners and development organizations by 2021.

Serving in locations such as UNDP's headquarters, regional offices worldwide and in Africa, this growing network of African young women professionals will engage in promoting innovative, sustainable and inclusive development through South-South development exchange. Interested applicants are required to apply for the fellowship programme on the UNDP job portal via this link: bit.ly/2XAC5hp

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