

## DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

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### **The 1 Million by 2021 Initiative Mobilises for Action in its 1<sup>st</sup> Year**

The 1 Million by 2021 Initiative celebrates 1 year since the initiative was launched by African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat with over 400 African youth in attendance as well as development sector, private sector and Member States representatives at the Pan African Youth Forum.

At the outset the visionary initiative sought to provide at least 1 million education, employment, entrepreneurship and engagement opportunities to African youth. Since the launch the initiative has attracted pledges from 26 reputable organisations which include companies like Facebook, VMWare, ILO and several UN agencies. These joint efforts have so far reached over 50 000 young people and counting.

As efforts accelerate to reach young people the anniversary presents an opportunity to look at the journey thus far, celebrate the ground that has been covered and consider how to scale up current partnerships while seeking to make more.

To ensure all stakeholders remain apprised of the progress of the initiative, a website for the 1 Million By 2021 initiative was developed and launched on Friday 24 April 2020. This virtual hub allows audiences to find out more on the pledges that have been made towards the initiative and provides an option for stakeholders to get involved. This gives anyone interested in the initiative an opportunity to connect directly with the AUC's Youth Division.

Some of the notable key moments of the initiative are;

**April 2019:** [Launch of the initiative](#) with 400 youth participants in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**August 2019:** A call for [Innovating Education in Africa](#) was launched to get the brightest ideas from African youth that can innovate education on the continent. 307 applications were received and 450 youth attended the event in Botswana

**August 2019:** The first [African Women Leaders Network \(AWLN\) Inter-Generational Retreat](#) on Leadership in Africa with the theme: Women Leadership in Africa: "Building the Africa We Want Together". This retreat was in partial fulfilment of AWLN's pledge to the African Union Commission's 1 Million by 2021 Initiative, which committed to building capacities of young leaders on civic leadership from community to continental level.

**October 2019:** The [AfriLabs Annual Gathering](#) was held at the AUC Headquarters and it annually engages people and organisations passionate about building the future of African innovation, solving development challenges and supporting technology driven enterprises on the continent. 350 Young people were in attendance.

**November 2019:** A significant portion of the 1 Million by 2021 communication takes place online and in partial fulfilment of its pledge to the initiative **UNICEF** hosted a meeting of a Pan-African Media Technical Working Group to support visibility and amplification of the initiative.

**November 2019:** [Africa Youth Month](#) was themed ‘1 Million by 2021: Count Me In’ and served as a clarion call to all stakeholders to get involved in the initiative. It kicked off with a continent-wide online scavenger hunt which encouraged participants to learn more about the [African Youth Charter](#) and the 1 Million by 2021 Initiative. The engagement continued for the rest of November where youth were encouraged to engage on the 4 Es (employment, education, entrepreneurship and engagement).

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic the AU is also currently implementing its youth sector response which focuses on reducing the health risk, minimising impact and mobilizing youth as responders in the areas of health, education, innovation and engagement. One of the elements of the response is a health social media campaign which promotes messages of Covid-19 knowledge and prioritising self-care during this period.

Visit <http://1millionby2021.au.int/> for more information on the initiative, details on how to get involved and all the work being done in the AU Youth Division, including the Covid-19 youth sector response.

## Note to Editors

The 1 Million By 2021 Initiative responds to Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 which speaks to “an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children”. This recognizes the importance of harnessing Africa’s demographic dividend through investing in its youth. The African Union defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 to 35.

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