

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Press Release No: /2020

Date: 25 June 2020

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Youth Innovation Challenge on Democracy and Governance in Africa kicks off.

The African Union (AU), through the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat, in a joint project with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) have launched the "**Democracy and Governance in Africa- Youth Innovation Challenge**", seeking to identify, capacitate and recognize youth working on digital or non-digital innovations for structural prevention of conflict through addressing issues of democracy deficit, lack of good governance and work to promote human rights practices.

The [innovation challenge](#) targets youth innovators, innovation hubs and incubation centres across the continent led by the youth. The challenge seeks ideas or innovations that have been implemented and/or tested with a level of success and impact, and open for prospects of improvement, replication or scale up at national, regional or continental level. Innovators, innovations, innovation hubs should be based in Africa, however, Africans in the diaspora are also open to apply if the innovation is based in Africa or focused on addressing challenges in the continent.

The launch of the call for submissions is aligned with the African Union theme of the year 2020 on "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's development". The theme aims to promote prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa to achieve a conflict-free Africa while taking stock of challenges and identify opportunities in an effort to make peace a reality for all, rid the continent of wars, violent conflicts and human rights violations.

Undeniably, there is a clear nexus between democracy, governance and conflicts with the lion share of the continent's peace and security problems arising out of deficits in democratic governance. Democracy and governance challenges specifically weak state institutions, issues of transparency, accountability, and legitimacy; marginalization of citizens and groups; insufficient civic engagement, participation, lack of basic human rights, justice and the rule of law progressively culminate to conflict. To silence the guns in Africa, the continent must work to address the structural root causes of conflict by using different approaches – innovation being one.

In recognition of the value that young people bring to Africa's development and democratization process - the African Union has set youth engagement as one of its priorities by identifying youth as partners, leaders and beneficiaries. Through a

comprehensive selection process, twenty (20) applicant will be shortlisted to benefit from an accelerator training programme with experienced trainers and experts, to help develop their ideas further for replication or scale-up. The training will be followed by the final process to identify the top innovations for awarding. The call for submissions will close on the 28th of July 2020.

To participate in the innovation challenge or for more details on the initiative, visit – [Democracy and Governance in Africa- Youth Innovation Challenge](#).

For further information please contact:

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