



STATEMENT OF H.E. PROF. SARAH ANYANG AGBOR,

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UNION COMMISSION**

ON THE COMMEMORATION OF

AFRICA YOUTH MONTH, NOVEMBER 2020

The month of November is a special one for us in Africa. Fourteen years ago, the African Heads of State and Government designated November 1st as Africa Youth Day, and for the past few years, we have celebrated African Youth throughout the month of November. This year, the theme of Africa Youth Month is **'Youth Voices, Actions and Engagement: Building A Better Africa'**

This year's theme is a testament to the immense and inspiring work of young people, further highlighted by our youth's response to the COVID-19 pandemic which touched every corner of the world in 2020. As Africa grappled with real challenges which were further intensified by the pandemic, our youth more than rose to the occasion. 75% of all Africans are below the age of 35, and it goes without saying that majority of our first responders during the pandemic are part of our youth population. Young Africans spearheaded innovation, sensitization, community engagement and development and political accountability during this period. It is therefore apt that we celebrate their voices, actions and engagement as we strive to build back a better continent in the aftermath of the pandemic.

African youth have historically demonstrated their passion for change and development, proffering innovative solutions to Africa's age-old problems. Across the continent are several shining beacons of youth resilience and ingenuity. Wherever you look, regardless of the sector, young Africans are striving for sustenance, self-actualization, and collective prosperity. We have seen youth-led accountability, young Africans holding their duty bearers accountable, and taking up their civic responsibility. This is the spirit requisite for an Africa whose development is people-driven, as aspired by our Agenda 2063 blueprint.

At the African Union Commission, we endeavor to put youth at the center of our programmes and policies. As we enjoin young Africans to take ownership of their own development, we are also cognizant of the responsibility we bear to create favorable environments for young people to thrive. Our African Youth Charter, African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (APAYE), and our flagship project, the 1 Million by 2021 Initiative, all seek to provide both policy frameworks and tangible opportunities to empower our youth.

Therefore, this year, we pledge to redouble our efforts towards our enduring goal- building a critical mass of young Africans empowered to actualize the aspirations of Agenda 2063. We call



upon all AU Member States to reinforce commitments to the development, dignity and agency of our youth, viewing youth as an asset to be leveraged, not a problem to be solved.

We celebrate the young Africans who are contributing daily to Africa's progress, laying the building blocks and bridges for our sustainable growth and development. We hear your voices, we see your actions, we welcome your engagement. This month and beyond, we commit to working with you as partners as we march on to realizing The Africa We Want.

Happy Africa Youth Month!