

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat Launches 1 Million Next Level Initiative During 3rd Pan African Youth Forum

The African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate through the Division in charge of Youth Development and Engagement convened the 3rd Pan African Youth Forum at the AUC Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 1st – 3rd November. The Pan Africa Youth Forum was held under the theme “Breaking the Barriers to Meaningful Youth Participation and Inclusion in Advocacy”.

During the Forum H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the AUC [launched the 1 Million Next Level Initiative](#) where he encouraged all stakeholders including government, civil society, youth and private and public sector partners to support the implementation of the initiative which seeks to provide opportunities for 300 million African youth by 2030 in the areas of Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship, Engagement as well as Health & Wellbeing.

“It is at the heart of this commitment that I have the distinct honor of launching the 1millionNextLevel initiative, an initiative that has been revised to a higher level of ambition and that will undoubtedly benefit from the enormous success of the 1million by 2021.

Our ambition here is to foster investment in youth in the happy prospect of achieving the Africa we want. As such, the commission plans to achieve its initial goal of providing opportunities for 300 million young Africans by 2030 in the 4Es, to which will be added the areas of health and welfare,” H.E. the Chairperson said.

The Forum was convened in adherence to the decision of the 3rd Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sports which “REQUESTS that the Pan African Youth Forum be organized annually as an exchange platform with youth on the 1st of November to mark the celebration of the African Youth Day”.

The Forum convened 150 youth from across Africa, in collaboration with partners from UNICEF, UN Women, GIZ, Trace Africa, Amref, International Youth Fund and African governments.

H.E. Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa lit the proverbial AU Bingwa Torch. The torch represents the number of countries and communities that will be activated across Africa to ensure youth are mobilizers to get their communities vaccinated against COVID-19. “The consolidation of efforts to advance this critical focus area is important and in order for the work to succeed there is a requirement for all stakeholders to play their part. As we all ponder the exciting opportunity that awaits us to protect each other by being Bingwas. I declare this torch lit and my call to action is for each of you not to let the flame die and when it comes near you make sure to pass it on,” H.E. said in her remarks.

Ms. Chido Mpemba, the AUC Chairperson's Envoy on Youth said, “Today, we celebrate young people's milestones and further highlight the need for prioritization of

youth development. Young people continue to cross the traditional boundaries, confronting barriers that compromise effective participation and their meaningful engagement. Let us all challenge the barriers to meaningful youth participation and advocacy in Africa. Africa's future lies in the hearts and hands of the African youth. The continent's future now depends on our ability, today, to equip young people, provide spaces for decision-making, establish strategic partnerships, meaningfully include them in development structures, co-create solutions, provide resources and key initiatives for their wellbeing”

Mr. Omar Abdi, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director paid a courtesy call to the AUC and addressed the participants of the Youth Forum to convey UNICEF's support for the recently launched 1 Million Next Level Initiative. He congratulated the Commission for convening youth to reflect on the theme of the Forum while mapping out key strategies and actions for moving effective youth engagement advocacy and action in Africa. “Specifically, I would like to congratulate the African Union Commission for the successful implementation of the 1 million by 2021 initiative that reached about 8.7 million young Africans with opportunities in education, entrepreneurship, employment, and engagement. This major achievement in just two years has shown what we can achieve a lot if we work together and in concert. UNICEF therefore fully shares in the AU's commitment to a greater and bolder ambition for the young people of Africa,” he said.

Some highlights of the Forum included;

- **Partners pledging their support to the AU COVID-19 Vaccination Bingwa Initiative**

Dr. Edward Addai, UNICEF Representative to the AU and UNECA encouraged youth to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to make their mark in this initiative which requires the continent to reach 70% vaccinations against COVID-19. “A Bingwa breaks barriers, the frontiers of the possible cannot be determined by what is happening today – so with that I encourage you to make your presence felt, persist against challenges and you must always persevere”, he said.

Honorable Daniel Obal, Presidential Advisor on Youth Affairs to the president of Uganda shared with the youth participants how H.E. Yoweri Museveni was the first Africa Head of State to be a Bingwa when he pledged to support the initiative in Uganda in August. On the 2nd of November, during the high-level session he extended an invitation from the Government of Uganda to host the 4th Pan African Youth Forum under the auspices of H.E. the President.

Trace Africa's Anthony Opara, Head of Campaign and Events, reiterated their support of the Bingwa Initiative and emphasized on the importance of communicating creatively to African audiences in order to increase the number of COVID-19 Vaccinations in Africa.

- **1st Ever Live Digital AU Bingwa Night**

The AU Bingwa Night is a creative partnership between the AUC, GIZ and Trace Africa to use the arts to reach young people and diverse African audiences to spread the importance of getting vaccinated against COVID-19. The concert MC was Anele T and was headlined by Kenyan Grammy Award winning artiste, Ben Soul. Among the songs he performed was fan loved; Favourite Song.

- **Youth Co-Create Manifesto on Priorities**

The Forum allowed youth to identify barriers to meaningful youth inclusion and subsequently co-create solutions to address these barriers as a way to enhance the implementation of the 1 Million Next Level Initiative. The participants went into thematic breakout groups titled;

- Youth Consultation on Engaging Positive Masculinity to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls – hosted by the WGYD
- The Role and Contribution of Young Women in Peace Processes in Africa – hosted by UN Women Liaison Office to AU and UNECA
- Youth Engagement and Advocacy Co-Creation Station – hosted by WGYD, GIZ, IYF and Say What
- Youth Entrepreneurship Masterclass – hosted by WGYD and UNDP
- The Role of Youth in Transforming Education in Africa – Hosted by WGYD and UNICEF Office to the AU and ECA.
- Youth Career Fair – hosted by WGYD and AUC Human Resources Management Department

The outcomes of the discussion will be compiled into a Youth Manifesto which will outline thematic recommendations on how to break barriers of access in the aforementioned areas and be presented to Heads of State and Government.

- **#WeMove Aerobathon**

The 3rd Pan Africa Youth Forum ended on a high note with an energizing one-hour Zumba aerobathon physical activity, to encourage young people to focus on moving their bodies as part of their overall wellbeing.

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