

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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AU-SARO and AUC Model AU Summit Simulation at University of Johannesburg

Johannesburg, South Africa - The African Union Southern Africa Regional Office (AU-SARO) in close partnership with the African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate and University of Johannesburg, organized a 4-day AU Model Summit Simulation exercise from 17th to 20th of April at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa.

The objective of the exercise was to train 250 students on the proceedings of the AU General Assembly and to offer a unique opportunity to study and familiarise themselves with the decision-making processes of the African Union. The Model AU Training was delivered through the African Union Youth Empowerment and Development Toolbox developed by the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD). The toolbox is a minimum package for the orientation and activation of young people to solve Africa's challenges and achieve the 7 Aspirations of Agenda 2063. The Toolbox has been curated to build a critical mass of young Africans who are empowered and equipped to solve 21st century challenges as it is crucial to provide the requisite tools for the optimization of the attitude, aptitude, awareness, and activation of Africa's youth.

The AU-SARO Permanent Representative to the African Union, Ambassador David Claude Pierre said, *"At the African Union, we understand the important role the youth of Africa play, this gathering couldn't have come at a better time when Africa seeks to empower its young people with calls in all corners of the continent to build the capacity of our youth and to create space and the kind of environment that will allow the youth to find constructive avenues through which to promote peace and unity."*

On behalf of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg, Dr Nolitha Vukuza, Senior Executive Director in the Office of the Vice Chancellor noted that the significance of the Model AU Training was that it was taking place during the institution's graduation season. She further implored the students to incorporate the lessons of the training in their careers and personal development journeys.

"The University of Johannesburg's participation in such a training demonstrates our commitment to Africa's development agenda, which is very similar to the ethos of the university. I encourage all of you to carry this experience forward into your future careers as diplomats, strategists and educators in your own rights," Dr Vukuza said during the closing ceremony.

Other speakers included Pan African Parliament President Honorable Senator Chief Fortune Charumbira, United Nations Assistant Secretary General (UN-ASG) and

Director General (GDG) of the African Risk Capacity Ibrahima Cheikh Diong, Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) Dr Vasu Gounden and Ammanuel Desalegne Haile, Program Manager at Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung.

The immersive Model AU Training was delivered by Nontobeko Tshabalala and Keagetswe Kgotlaetsile from the AUC Women, Gender and Youth Directorate and it covered core modules from the toolbox such as Pan-Africanism, the AU and AUC, Youth as Change Agents, Model African Union Simulation and Pitching.

The programme is part of the AU-SARO mandate which is to popularize AU programmes in the Southern Africa region as well as champion the 1 Million Next Level initiative to inspire investments in African youth through Education, Entrepreneurship, Employment and Engagement as well as Health and Wellbeing popularly known as the 4Es + H.

The AU Model Summit is a simulation exercise which ties with AUC strategies that work towards eliminating barriers to achieve active participation of young people and aims to identify solutions and opportunities that contribute to their development. It serves to enhance the leadership and decision-making capabilities of African youth and educate them through the practise on diplomatic behaviour through negotiation, consensus building and compromise to become action stakeholders in the vision, mission and activities of the AU.

Note to Editors

About the AU 1 Million Next Level Initiative

The AUC's initiative provides direct opportunities to African youth in the areas of Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Engagement through partnerships with critical stakeholders in the private and public sector. The initiative's success hinges on uptake and domestication by AU Member States as a strategy to unleash the potential of Africa's youth/

About AU-SARO

The AU-SARO is a representational office of AU in Southern Africa, it develops, maintain constructive and productive relationships between the AU, its Member States in the Region as well as SADC and COMESA. The office aims to Increase awareness about AU programmes and its mission in the region; monitor socio-economic and political and cultural developments as well as liaise and harmonize specific policies of the AU in the Southern Region.

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