

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

N\_O:

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Venue: Kigali, Rwanda

### PRESS RELEASE

#### AFRICAN UNION AND IOM CONVENE OVER 80 AFRICAN YOUTHS FOR MIGRATION CONSULTATION

A key gathering of over 80 young people from African Union Member States has commenced today in Kigali, Rwanda, marking the start of a three-day Continental Youth Consultation on Migration, taking place from August 28th to August 30th August, 2023

The event seeks to amplify youth voices with the aim to develop a common position, articulating a road map of concrete actions to drive the migration and youth agenda on the continent forward.

Organized collaboratively by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), African Union Commission Gender, Women and Youth Directorate and Office of the Special Envoy on Youth, the consultation seeks to provide a dynamic platform for discussions centered around key themes, including the impetus for the implementation of the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** and the **AU Free Movement of Persons (FMP)** for continental integration and sustainable development, the **Global Compact on Migration (GCM)** progress and way forward, as well as **health** and migration.

Other thematic areas of discussion for consideration are **climate change-induced** mobility and sustainable development, **labour** and skills mobility within the continental market, and **diaspora** engagement and contribution to development.

As part of the consultation, there will also be the **launch of the Youth for Migration Ambassadorial Program**, where 10 successful candidates will be unveiled to carry on activities based on respective work plans, which will complement the commitments drafted in the Declaration at their respective regional levels.

During her opening remarks, the IOM Senior Regional Adviser, Sub-Saharan Africa, Ms. Aissata Kane, noted the importance of migration as a matter of choice and informed decision, advising all stakeholders to adhere to the rights and protection of migrants in ensuring safe and regular migration pathways.

“We are liable to all the youth of Africa to ensure that we are not here for ourselves, but we represent their interests; that we do not compete, but we collaborate; that we do not just hear but we listen; and that we do not just speak but we act,” she said.

She added that the expected outcomes from the consultation is a joint declaration on African Youth Migration that will be binding on all.

In a speech read on her behalf, the Director of the AUC’s Women, Gender and Youth Directorate, Ms. Prudence Ngwenya noted that safe, orderly, migration and human mobility, also form the basis of human capital development.

“It is important for us to understand that safe, orderly, migration and human mobility, also form the basis of human capital development. The journey towards youth development and empowerment in Africa is additionally underpinned by some of the flagship programmes and initiatives of the African Union Commissions (AUC) Women Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD) such as the 1 Million Next Level Initiative as well as the Women and Youth Financial and Economic Inclusion (WYFEI) 2030 Initiative”, she said

In her address, the AUC Chairperson’s Youth Envoy, Ms, Chido Cleopatra Mpemba, added “Solution-Oriented dialogues present targeted opportunities for young people to contribute their expertise and innovative reflections to decision-makers with the aim of influencing positive migration Governance,”

The Continental Youth Consultation on Migration stands as a pivotal moment in empowering African youth and driving the migration and youth agenda toward a more progressive and inclusive future. Africa's youth population, numbering over 400 million individuals aged between 15 and 35, forms a significant demographic force, comprising an estimated 65-70% of the total population. Remarkably, nearly 80% of migrants on the continent seek to enhance their economic and social opportunities. Harnessing the potential of Africa's youth has become a strategic imperative, with well-designed policies aimed at sustainable development. The African Youth Migration Ambassadorial program will serve as a rallying point for future advocacy efforts on both the continental and global fronts and the unveiling of youth issues and contributions to migration.

**For further information please contact:**

Ms. Janice Zibusiso Gugu Khumalo| Youth Engagement Officer, Youth Division | Women, Gender, Development and Youth Directorate| African Union Commission | Email: [JaniceZ@africa-union.org](mailto:JaniceZ@africa-union.org)

Ms. Sandzisile Madonsela| Policy Officer, Youth Division | Women, Gender, Development and Youth Directorate | African Union Commission | Email: [madonselaS@africa-union.org](mailto:madonselaS@africa-union.org)

**For media inquiries, please contact:**

Ms. Arlette Akingeneye | Programme Associate, Youth Division | Women, Gender, Development and Youth Directorate | Email: [AkingeneyeA@africa-union.org](mailto:AkingeneyeA@africa-union.org)



Ms. Faith Adhiambo | Communications Officer, Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission| Email : [OchiengJ@africa-union.org](mailto:OchiengJ@africa-union.org)

**Information and Communication Directorate**, African Union Commission | **E-mail:** [DIC@africa-union.org](mailto:DIC@africa-union.org)  
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