

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



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NOVEMBER 1ST, 2012

AFRICAN YOUTH DAY

THEME:

" AFRICA MUST DELIVER AS ONE TO EMPOWER YOUTH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,"

STATEMENT BY

H.E Dr. NKOSAZANA C. DLAMINI ZUMA

CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

Today, 1st November 2012, we are celebrating the 7th African Youth Day, since the adoption of the Decision by the AU Heads of State in Banjul in 2006. The theme for this year is; **“Africa Must Deliver as ONE to Empower African Youth For Sustainable Development.”** This theme has been chosen to encourage youth to be involved in the decision-making processes at national, regional and continental levels for their own development, as well as the achievement of Africa’s agenda for sustainable development. It is also dedicated to highlight the current progress and efforts made to ensure that Africa can speak with one voice on issues of youth development.

It is worth noting that major decisions that have a bearing on Youth Development were recently made by the Assembly of African Heads of State and Government. These include:

- the operationalization of African Union Youth Volunteers Corps (AU-YVC) and its scaling up;
- the establishment of the Pan African University (PAU)
- the promotion of youth employment within the reduction by 2% of the youth unemployment rate
- the revitalization of the Pan African Youth Union (PYU)

Other major achievements include the following;

- ✓ The acceleration of the Decade Plan of Action on Youth development with the involvement of the Regional Economic Communities and the visible role of the Member States,
- ✓ The quick entry into force of the African Youth Charter and other relevant instruments on the Continent
- ✓ A Rio+20 Conference Development Conference that assisted in positioning the Commission as the framework in consolidating the world-level interactions on-behalf of African Youth around the Green Economy negotiations with a Youth perspective on the common African Union Position.
- ✓ Many more actions following the memorable July 2011 Summit on accelerating youth empowerment for sustainable development in Africa in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

The African Union believes young people should be an integral part of social and economic development. Today, Africa is the youngest continent in the world and is projected to begin experiencing a demographic window for the next decades should we make the right investments in our youth. This population dynamic must appear as the

strength for the continent that must work as a collective to deliver on youth development and empowerment.

To deliver as one on youth development and empowerment, Member States, that yet need to do so, must expedite their efforts to sign, ratify, domesticate and implement the African Youth Charter and national youth development plans must be aligned with the youth decade (DPoA) together with ensuring data and information on young people is available to inform sustainable actions and progress reports. The commission commits to continue providing the requisite technical assistance to this end to member states and the concerned stakeholders.

The African Union Commission wishes to associate itself to the celebration of the African Youth Day 2012 to congratulate the African youth for their respective efforts in the capacity building process, and to all its partners and stakeholders working closely with us to build robust institutions to empower our greatest resources that are the youth, I express my deep gratitude.

Finally, on the auspice of the celebration of the African Youth Day 2012, I call upon all stakeholders including Member States, the Pan-African Youth Union, Regional Economic Communities, Private Sector, NGO's, UN agencies, bilateral and multi-lateral and development partners to synergize efforts in delivering as ONE on Youth development and empowerment in Africa.

The African Union Commission commits itself to work together with its key partners to deliver as ONE on Youth development and empowerment and ensure that Africa's young people are playing their role in the decision-making process by working side by side with their leaders in the Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and at continental level.

Long live Africa!

God bless the African youth!