



# **STATEMENT TO ALL THE AFRICAN YOUTH**

**From the CHAIRPERSON**

**OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**

**8<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF THE AFRICAN YOUTH DAY**

**1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2013**

On the commemoration of **2013 African Youth Day**, I wish to congratulate and extend my best wishes to **all the young people of this continent.**

This celebration is very important to us at the Commission of the African Union, especially because it coincides with the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Organisation of African Unity. This organisation was founded in 1963 and for the period of its existence incorporated programmes and strategies for self-reliant development and cooperation among African countries. This dream and aspiration for a self-sufficiency led to the formation of the African Union in 1999. It is for this reason that the African Union was formed and has as a vision “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena”. It is against this background that the African Union set out the Agenda 2063, a strategic plan of action, which is aimed at ensuring that we work together to achieve the vision of the African Union in the next 50 years. Depending on how the agenda 2063 will be implemented, Africa’s development will reflect your efforts, involvement and commitment for action. ***Africa we want to see and deliver in 2063 will be the legacy you will handover to your children and grandchildren.***

It is not enough to speak, write and disseminate a content and planned strategy to improve the development of the African continent and its people. It is not enough to involve the youth in the process. It is important and non-negotiable to ensure meaningful participation of all

segments of African citizens in the implementation of the agenda 2063. There will be no excuse for anybody not taking part in this process. Each stakeholder must play its role. African Youth, be aware that you have to play your part, starting from now. Be confident that we know that YOU CAN DELIVER.

More than anything else, we, The African Union and its Commission, realise that the success of this Agenda 2063 can only be achieved with the active engagement and participation of all, especially the young people, who will be delivering to the younger generation in 2063. We realise that when we speak of a transformed Africa we speak of the Africa where the young people of today are our main players and partners for a sustainable development of the continent. We also acknowledge the fact that the resourcefulness, energy and dynamism of our young people are important assets, which should help us achieve our objectives. For these reasons, we are earnestly desirous of the full commitment of young people, both on the continent and in diaspora, to the vision of a prosperous and peaceful Africa by 2063.

A key component of our call, today, is for young people to take ownership of this vision of a prosperous and peaceful continent. As recommended by the framework of Agenda 2063, our invitation on this day is for young people to work with us at all levels for a common goal – a desire for accelerated progress on the continent. Ownership of this vision ensures that young people take their future, our collective futures, into their hands. It means that young people are active and

engaged to meaningfully participate in the conception, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063.

It must be said that effective engagement and involvement in development begins from being adequately prepared, educated, skilled and trained to take action. For this reason, it is important to proactively improve our work on human capital development. We are fully committed to seeking out new ways to aggressively develop new skills and update competencies for the requirement of a modern technology and innovations on the continent. More importantly, our young people should show commitment for self-development and make themselves open to the various opportunities, which are made available to them. Action is required more than ever. We have said it all. Reports, resolutions, decisions, declarations are all adopted. Only actions, implementations, innovations are what Africa needs most. *Youth United in Action towards the Agenda 2063* is and must be the one of the ways to go for positive and constructive changes

While we discuss the need for young people to take action, I want to enjoin the AU Member States to accelerate their work towards creating an enabling environment to make this happen. May I remind us of our commitment to youth engagement and the Entry into Force of the African Youth Charter and the African Youth Day, the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of which we celebrate today? I enjoin all member states to invest in youth and support activities towards the ratification and implementation of the African Youth Charter thus re-affirming their commitment towards the development of the youth on the continent.

Finally, I call on all of us, partners in development, to continue to create platforms and networks that increase participation of our young people in very concrete ways, to continue seeking opportunities and challenging yourselves so as to significantly continue to contribute to a prosperous and peaceful continent.

As we have made commitments to the future we want, I enjoin us to always remember to match our words with concrete effort and actions as we chart this new course.

All the best,

Long live African Youth!

God bless Africa!

I thank you!