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African Youth Declaration on Re-envisioning Global Governance for Peace and Development: The Future We Want

Fourth Edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development
Cairo, July 2024



PEACE. PROGRESS. PROSPERITY.



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We, the African youth, gather on the occasion of the 4th edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development titled, **“Re-envisioning Global Governance for Peace and Development: The Future We Want”**. We are determined to advance our voices and perspectives regarding the future of multilateralism and global governance, in anticipation of the Summit of the Future.

Underscoring that youth are at the forefront of conflict and violence, disproportionately affected by violent extremism conducive to terrorism, displacement, forced or voluntary recruitment to armed groups, violence against women and girls, and the impacts of climate change;

Stressing the need to shift the narrative from one perceiving African youth as victims and agents of conflict to one that puts a spotlight on their role as active change makers for peace, development, and resilience;

Acknowledging the significant efforts made by the African Union (AU), its bodies, and stakeholders to meaningfully engage youth in peace and security decision-making processes in Africa;

Emphasizing the importance of strengthening youth partnerships with the AU, its organs, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, and think tanks;

Highlighting the necessity of investing in youth education through capacity building, research, and knowledge exchange to leverage youth’s potential in promoting a culture of peace in Africa, in line with the AU 2024 theme, **“Educate an African fit for the 21st Century”**;

Building on the conclusions of the four editions of the Aswan Forum, as well as the key recommendations of the **Aswan Forum Youth Dialogue** titled **“Building Peace through Education: Youth Perspectives”**, held during the 4th edition, we pledge to the following:

1. Re-Envisioning Multilateralism and Global Governance

Ensure the inclusion of youth in the policy-making processes of the reform of global

governance frameworks and drive sustainable solutions to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Amplify African youth priorities in current proposals to re-envision multilateralism and global governance, aiming to **ensure** peaceful, inclusive, resilient, and just societies while addressing inequalities and challenges facing youth.

2. Reforming the Global Financial Architecture

Emphasize the need to increase the representation of African youth in policy and finance decision-making bodies and institutions to meaningfully participate in the reform of the global financial architecture.

Underscore the importance of promoting financial inclusion by engaging youth in addressing poverty, inequality, unemployment, and unsustainable debt burdens to support economic recovery and enhance resilience of African countries.

3. Capitalizing on the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review (PBAR)

Integrate significant perspectives of youth and their aspirations in the planning of a successful 2025 PBAR process, **take stock** of lessons learned from previous PBARs, and **call upon** ensuring youth-centered, cross-pillar approach, financing, and national ownership in scaling up peacebuilding efforts.

4. Enhancing Youth Participation in the Future of Africa’s Peace and Security

Champion meaningful participation of youth in the peace and security decision-making processes by increasing their representation in the Peace and Security Council and its subsidiary bodies.

Prioritize youth efforts in shaping the African Peace and Security Architecture and implementing the national and regional frameworks on Youth, Peace and Security to safeguard the different needs and priorities of youth and future generations.

5. Strengthening Conflict Prevention and Promoting Regional Stability

Enhance the capacities of youth to actively contribute to the Continental Early Warning System, effectively addressing the root causes of conflicts on the continent.

Emphasize tangible supportive policies to effectively implement the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Protocol on Women and Youth, leveraging trade and industrialization as a preventive approach to sustain peace.

Leverage the potential of mobility of youth and **ensure** safe, orderly, and regular migration enabling them to acquire quality education and decent job opportunities towards inclusive growth and sustainable development.

6. Operationalizing an Inclusive Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (PCRD)

Enhance the positive role of African youth as peacebuilding actors to effectively implement the “Youth Inclusion” pillar in the revised PCRD policy by increasing their capacity building and localizing their PCRD efforts to sufficiently and timely respond to different conflict phases.

Recommend that the AU and RECs/RMs should scale up the financing of youth-led PCRD activities, as well as leveraging its networks of peace practitioners, such as the Wise Youth Network to unlock the potential of youth in conflict prevention, mediation, dialogue, and election observation processes.

Enhance transition pathways that address the challenges of integrating young internally displaced persons and host communities to ensure adequate services and support.

7. Promoting the Peace-Development Nexus

Acknowledge the need for efforts by youth to implement integrated approaches in peacebuilding and **promote** comprehensive youth-led responses that address the policy-practice gaps in operationalizing the peace-development nexus.

Underscore the role of the youth in scaling up innovative financing mechanisms and

programming geared for countries affected by conflict to scale up solutions towards their transition and recovery.

8. Preventing Radicalization and Extremism Leading to Terrorism

Emphasize the need to strengthen the role of the young community and religious leaders in advancing inclusive and integrated solutions for preventing and countering extremism leading to terrorism, responding to the needs of youth on the ground.

Address the structural drivers that propel youth to engage/join terrorist groups, while **creating** an environment conducive to the rehabilitation and reintegration of African youth formerly associated with armed groups.

9. Cultivating Consensus Towards the Common African Position on Climate Change, Peace and Security

Underscore the need for contextualized responses to advance youth-led holistic perspectives on the implications of climate change on peace, stability, and development on the continent and amplify their perspectives in shaping the Common African Position on climate change, peace and security.

Emphasize the need for an integrated and inclusive approach on preventing and managing climate displacement.

10. Elevating African Youth Voices in the Lead-up to the Summit of the Future

Advance the perspectives of African youth to highlight the gaps in the Pact for the Future through the following actions:

Underscore the active role of youth in contributing to accelerating the implementation of **sustainable development and financing for development** as well as unpacking the different perspectives of young women and men in addressing development and financing challenges facing them.

Highlight the impacts of conflict and interconnected crises on youth and emphasize their contribution in addressing challenges facing them to achieve **international peace and security**.

Develop context-specific and conflict-sensitive approaches to enhance **science, technology, innovation, and digital cooperation** that benefit youth, while addressing emerging risks and challenges from using technology.

Recognize the necessity of institutionalizing the Youth Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda at the national level and relevant regional frameworks on YPS, and how its programming and activities bridge the gap between policy and implementation on the ground in favor of **youth and future generations**.

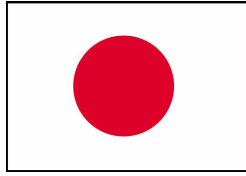
Feature meaningful youth engagement in **transforming global governance** by highlighting their significant leadership role in re-envisioning multilateralism and global governance.

In conclusion, we, the African Youth, pledge to work immensely towards building peace and resilience in our communities and bridging the gap between policy and practice in achieving sustainable peace and development on the continent and in the world at large.

Together, we aspire to break down silos and to create a future where peace and prosperity prevail for the next generation in Africa.

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