

REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE



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**TALKING POINTS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF
WOMEN AFFAIRS, GENDER AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT,
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**ON
YOUTH; AFRICA'S WAKE UP CALL**

AT

THE 18TH GIMAC PRE-CONSULTATIVE MEETING

MALABO EQUATORIAL GUINEA

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Introduction

For a continent with an estimated 70% population under 35, the norm is young people are to be seen but not heard. The events in North Africa are a wakeup call, a culture shock.

But who are the youths in Africa?

Definitions of Youth

- I. Institutional: U.N, A.U, Governments
- II. Chronological: 15-35
- III. Political: voting age 18-21, electable age 25,35,40
- IV. Psychological; immature/mature
- V. Socio-Cultural: single/married
- VI. Economic: Dependant or Independent
- VII. Sex: Male or Female
- VIII. Geographic: Rural/Urban

Characteristics of Youth

- I. Energetic
- II. Fashionable/Impressionable
- III. Imitators/ Original/Creative
- IV. Connected/Global
- V. Insecure/Vulnerable
- VI. Marginalized/secluded/excluded
- VII. Rebellious
- VIII. Hero worshipers (sports, entertainment and politics)

From the above, any examination and programming should avoid the one size fits all generalization of Youth.

Context for X-Generation Empowerment

- I. Description of economies of Africa
- II. Countries in economic transition/dynamic: (Movement from subsistence to interaction with global conglomerates or transnational)
- III. Contradictions (resource rich versus poor populations)
- IV. Ownership versus dispossession
- V. Globalization versus national, regional and global economic dynamics.

Youth is the biggest demographic factor on any country versus total marginalization or non involvement.

So what?

- I. A development model that socially, politically and economically in environmental sustaining.
- II. Youth economic empowerment programmes that are practical and meaningful
- III. Politically-Youth quotas in all decision making bodies.

Zimbabwe's Case Study (a practical approach towards youth empowerment)

- I. The Government of Zimbabwe in its commitment towards youth involvement for empowerment and sustainable development created a Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenization and Empowerment.
- II. An act of Parliament was put in place for the creation of a National Youth Council of Zimbabwe.
- III. The government of Zimbabwe established a youth development fund which was in the 2010 national budget, was allocated U.S 1million dollars by treasury similar to that of the Women Development Fund for economic empowerment of youth and women.

-This fund is a revolving fund and through it the youth can learn how to be responsible and inculcate a culture of savings and loans.

- IV. In Zimbabwe government has created a junior parliament.
- The Junior parliament has managed to have the 50/50 representation as it at times has for female M.Ps than male.
 - The junior parliament is a mentorship programme for youths and they get involved through public speaking competitions and the winners who are drawn from constituencies represent their constituencies and are attached to senior Members of parliament for mentorship.
 - The junior parliament is taken seriously and they meet on the 16th of June every year on the International Day of the African child.
 - At this meeting the president and Cabinet and senior members of parliament are present to listen and respond to the concerns and questions of youths.
- V. Zimbabwe has a National Youth Service Programme that meant to instill and inculcate citizenship and nationalistic ideologies in the youths and equip the youth with real life practical strategies for survival such as vocational training and education.

Conclusion

Countries ignore youths at their own risk.