

Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development
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Youth empowerment for sustainable development is it a dream, a roadmap, a mere political statement? Is it a challenge, or an ideology without meaning? Youth empowerment is a right and the African Youth Charter Guarantees and upholds these rights. The AYC has only been ratified by 24 countries. We call on all those countries that have not signed and ratified the African Youth Charter to do so immediately that is youth empowerment.

The African youth is not a political material but the present and future of Africa. We are the power house of every nation.

- “Sixty per cent of Africa’s population and about 36.9 per cent of its work force are youth.
- More than 50 percent (133 million young people) of Africa’s youth are illiterate. The purpose of education is to replace an empty mind with an open one
- In Sub-saharan Africa HIV/AIDS (WHO): top five killers of young men and women aged (15-29). HIV/AIDS accounts for over 53 per cent of deaths among Africa’s youth, followed by maternal conditions at 16.7 per cent and tuberculosis at 4.5 per cent.
- Girls in sub-Saharan Africa have the highest rates of early marriage and early motherhood, as well as the highest mortality rates for young mothers and their babies. Young teenagers in the sub-Saharan countries are more vulnerable to becoming pregnant
- Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents (IPCC, 2007). The costs of global warming could result in a 4-5% permanent reduction in annual income per capita in Africa (and Asia). These will be mainly due to impacts in the agricultural sector—which is a major sector in the economies of these countries (World Development Report, 2010).

Issues affecting young people are attempted solved by political authorities and older generations without truly consulting young people for their inputs to address youth problems. Young people challenges and exclusiveness from decision making processes can be explained from political and traditional standpoints with perceptions of youths as ignorant, problematic and useless. All these lead to undermining the rights to participation by young people in decision making process even on issues that young people could solely deal with. They are virtually left with no room to learn by doing.

The major challenges facing governments, UN agencies, NGO's and civil society is providing tools in creative and thoughtful ways that engage young people to work collaboratively in improving their communities. ask for tools such as internet access, meeting spaces, adult mentors and allies, opportunities for volunteerism, access and training to information communication technologies (ICTs), business training, civic education, and access to political leaders, information sharing, education, and general support and encouragement from government and institutions, including resources and funding.

Lack of Youth Empowerment such as the absence of inadequacy of essential services, the lack of livelihood and educational opportunities, and the non-participation of youth in decision- and policy-making processes are conditions that promote the involvement of young people in conflict. Conflict prevents children from obtaining a decent education and learning useful skills. Lacking any real social capital, many feel excluded from mainstream society and seek to become part of an armed militia, where they feel accepted

Talk about the AU Pre-Summit African Youth Forum Meeting in Addis Ababa and open the other doc.

Wayforwards

1. Children and young people's participation and empowerment need to go beyond "platforms of participation" and move beyond token to intrinsic engagement. This requires governments to avail basic access to information especially to the marginalized, younger, and hard to reach youth demographically. This information must incorporate improving their awareness through engaging children and youth about constitutional rights, basic governance, zero tolerance on corruption, and leadership principles. The rest of civil society plays a role in more integrated lobbying for accountability on the part of governments, in true partnership with youth
2. *Promoting mass information, education and communication that enables young people to express their needs and participate in making decisions affecting them at all level*
3. *Ratification of the African Youth Charter by all AU members state and the implementation of the plan of action in member states*
4. *Empowering young women with life skills to be economically independent in order for them to circumvent problems affecting them at all level*
5. *Youth empowerment for sustainable development will continue to be a lip service if we don't have a platform or a place we call home. So at the Global Level create a UN Agency for Youths, African Level we need a commissioner for Youths Affairs and the activation of the African Youth Funds at the Local Level establish National Youth Councils and youth policies and plan of actions*

In conclusion ladies and gentlemen,

Convinced that young people wish to have an assured future and that education, peace, freedom and justice are among the chief guarantees that their desire for happiness will be fulfilled

Africa is a continent of extreme! Extreme wealth and extreme poverty

To empower youths for sustainable development we need 3 kinds of people

Thinkers-: These are the politicians and our leaders of today

Builders-: Are the civil society, private sectors and most importantly you the women our mothers and mentors

Sustainers- : The youths are the most important pillars of development (the sustainers) and we are the ones that will inherit this world the way you the older generation leaves it.

As a young African it is my fear that if the future generation which is my children inherits what we have inherited from you the older generation then they will never be sustainable development in Africa.