

2024 Pan African Youth Forum Declaration

Oran, Algeria – November 4, 2024

Preamble

WHEREAS we, the youth of Africa, gathered at the 4th Pan African Youth Forum (PAYF), held from November 1 to 4, 2024, in Oran, Algeria, under the High Patronage of the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, H.E.M. Abdelmadjid TEBBOUNE, the auspices of the African Union Commission (AUC) and hosted by the Algerian Government through the Higher Council of Youth of Algeria, **which** is a consultative body for the President of the Republic, endowed with moral personality and financial independence.

WE WELCOME the celebration of African Youth Day in conformity with the AU's theme of the year: ***"Educate an African Fit for the 21st Century: Building Resilient Education Systems"***,

WE CONGRATULATE the Government and People of the People's the Democratic Republic of Algeria for hosting a successful Pan African Youth Forum 2024, coinciding with the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Algerian glorious Liberation Revolution: November 1st, 1954 - 2024, which shaped the commitment of African youth in the era of national liberation movements;

WE APPRECIATE the decision of the AU heads of state and government for deciding that Education take center stage in 2024 as it offers a transformative opportunity to address the challenges of the youth of Africa and build resilient education systems for a brighter future for the youth of Africa.

WE ALSO APPRECIATE the adoption of the 2025 AU theme on ***"Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations"***, and underlines the necessity to ensure involvement of youth in activities undertaken under this theme in order to instill in new generations the values and principles that have underpinned the heroic struggles of our ancestors and the African peoples for freedom, justice and dignity, as well as to continue supporting for the total completion of decolonization of the continent and the world.

WE CONSIDER the multifaceted challenges faced by the youth of Africa and the need for accelerating our collective action to address the plight of the youth in Africa and

RECOGNIZING the vital role that African youth play in the achievement of the African Youth Charter, the 1 Million Next Level Initiative, and Agenda 2063, we declare the following as our common call to action:

1. Education and Skills Development for the 21st Century

We call upon AU Member States to:

- Prioritize the development of **inclusive, accessible, quality, and resilient** digital literacy, critical thinking, and innovation.
- Ensure **universal access to quality education** by making primary, secondary, and tertiary education free and compulsory, particularly in rural and underserved communities. With an emphasis on Early Childhood Development as a catalyst necessary quality education.
- Invest in **lifelong learning opportunities** and vocational training to close the skills gap, promoting employment and entrepreneurship pathways for youth.
- Adopt a policy that **recognizes skills** as a basis for academic merit and employment, including experience gained through volunteer and professional placements.
- Invest in quality education that emphasizes teacher training and development.
- Invest in data collection and research on youth-related issues to inform evidence-based policymaking by creating youth-specific indicators for monitoring progress in Agenda 2063 and other youth development initiatives.
- Consider **declaring the African Union Decade of Education 2025-2035**, emphasizing the crucial role of Education in the transformation of the youth and renaissance of the Continent and enabling Africa to claim the 21st Century as its own Century of prosperity, peace, and integration.

2. Empowerment and Youth Participation in Decision-Making

We call upon AU Member States to:

- Promote and enforce the **African Youth Charter (AYC)** to ensure that youth voices are included, in shaping Africa's future. We reaffirm the need to accelerate the universal domestication, implementation, and **ratification** of the AYC by Member States.
- Support the **review process** of the African Youth Charter in line with the adopted youth engagement strategy to include new and emerging topics for accelerated Youth Development and Empowerment.

- Establish a sustainable **mechanism to accelerate** the identification, training and preparation of youth leaders who are change-makers.
- Commit to **youth-led accountability mechanisms** that ensure accelerated implementation of transformative youth policies and programs aligned with the **1 Million Next Level Initiative** and its reporting mechanism.
- Accelerate **the reform and revitalization of National Youth Councils** to usher in youth-centered, inclusive, and broad-based organizations reflecting the youth realities of today.
- Strengthen Pan-African cooperation by convening annual meetings of National Youth Council presidents, facilitated by a task force representing Africa's five regions, to optimize effectiveness.
- Call for **inclusive policies** that address the specific challenges faced by young women and marginalized groups in all spheres of youth development.
- Ensure that **youth policies and programs** include young women, rural youth, youth with disabilities, and other marginalized communities, promoting an inclusive approach to development.

3. Youth Employment and Economic Opportunities

We call upon AU Member States to:

- Address youth unemployment and underemployment by promoting **demand-driven pro-employment macro-economic measures** and **entrepreneurship** through targeted financial support, access to credit, and capacity-building initiatives that enable young entrepreneurs to thrive in the global economy.
- Enforce policies that enhance access to **decent, productive, and sustainable jobs** for youth, particularly in the green economy, technology, and digital sectors, to harness Africa's youthful workforce for innovation and industrialization.
- Support the African youth to play a key role in **implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA)** by facilitating cross borders youth employment, launching youth-led initiatives in agriculture, financial technology, Information technology (IT), the creative industries and other relevant sectors.

- Strengthen the **AU Youth Fund** mechanism to support youth-led businesses and social enterprises, ensuring that young entrepreneurs have reliable access to finance across Africa.
 - Enhance public-private partnerships to create **job opportunities** and develop an enabling environment for youth to participate in productive sectors such as agriculture, health, education, and technology.
 - Promote **youth volunteerism** by improving **the volunteerism ecosystem and enhancing the enabling environment**, and innovatively use youth volunteerism as a pathway to decent youth employment.
 - Cascade the youth quota and gender parity introduced by the African Union Commission by reserving entry level posts for young graduates at the member states level.
 - Promote a comprehensive, concerted African Union policy to address the **brain drain** which negatively impacts African development.
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4. Health and Well-being

We call upon AU Member States to:

- Call for greater emphasis on **mental health and psychosocial support**, particularly considering the challenges faced by African youth due to existing and emerging health issues, socio-economic pressures, conflict, and climate change.
- Ensure that **health systems are youth-friendly and accessible**, addressing the specific needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people through the design and implementation of inclusive health policies and programmes.
- Ensure young people's universal access to reproductive health services, and guarantee their reproductive rights by focusing on marginalized groups.
- Invest in youth-led research and domestic ventures to help establish local pharmaceutical manufacturing for endemic diseases affecting young people.
- Promote digital health solutions to ensure adequate accessibility of health care services, particularly in underserved areas.
- Lifelong upskilling of healthcare workforce and providing adequate working conditions for young healthcare workers.

5. Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

We call upon AU Member States to:

- Engage youth as partners and leaders in **climate action** by incorporating youth perspectives into national climate policies and the implementation of regional, continental and International agreements.
 - Safeguard the **well-being of Young People** by investing in sustainable practices and prioritizing climate adaptation strategies.
 - Promote green entrepreneurship and youth-led initiatives in **sustainable agriculture**, renewable energy, and natural resource management, ensuring that young people are at the forefront of efforts to **combat climate change** and mitigate its impacts on communities.
 - Promote capacity-building and support climate education in both formal and non formal education settings to ensure that African youth are well-prepared to lead the continent in sustainable development.
 - Involve young people for the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of National Adaptation Plans and National Determined Contributions.
 - Ensure adequate representation of youth in climate change related negotiations.
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6. Peace, Security, and Good Governance

We call upon AU Member States to:

- Ensure the inclusion of youth and women in **peacebuilding processes**, self-determination, conflict resolution, and post-conflict recovery, recognizing the critical role of young people in promoting stability across the continent.
- Implement youth-focused strategies for **preventing terrorism, violent extremism and organized crimes**, as well as addressing the **root causes** of conflict, such as unemployment, inequality, exclusion and colonialism.

- Reinforce the **African Youth Peace and Security Agenda** to enable young people to be champions of peace and active participants in governance reforms and transparency efforts.
- **Engage African youth abroad** in the continent's development agenda, addressing the root causes of migration and supporting young migrants to contribute actively to Africa's growth and peace.

7. Digital Transformation and Innovation

We call upon AU Member States to:

- Bridge the **digital divide** by investing in digital infrastructure and ensuring affordable internet access for all youth across the continent, especially in rural areas.
- Support youth-led **startups** and innovation hubs that foster creativity, technological advancement, and solutions to Africa's socio-economic challenges. In this context, we welcome the outcomes of the African Start-up Conferences held since 2022.
- Incorporate **digital skills** into education systems and promote **cybersecurity** to protect young people from online threats while maximizing the potential of the digital economy.

Conclusion

We, the youth of Africa, represented by over 600 participants from all corners of Africa, stand united in our commitment to building a peaceful, prosperous, and people-driven Africa. To ensure the sustainable implementation of this Declaration's priorities, we call upon AU Member States, development partners, and regional and continental institutions and organizations to commit adequate resources and sustainable financing for youth-led initiatives across the continent.

We present this Declaration, as a proposal for sustainable youth development across Africa for adoption at the upcoming Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union.



**Adopted by the 2024 Pan African Youth Forum youth participants,
Oran, Algeria, on November 4, 2024.**