



African Youth and Governance Convergence



Bridging Gaps for Positive Youth Development

14TH AYGC, LUSAKA 2022 COMMUNIQUÉ

Theme:

Harnessing Technology and Digital Innovation
to Advance Africa's Youth Development Agenda



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Lusaka, August 23, 2022

Preamble

We, youth delegates from 20 African Countries and Diaspora at the 14th African Youth and Governance Convergence held at the Kenneth Kaunda International Conference Centre, from the 8th–13th of August, 2022, under the theme “**Harnessing Technology and Digital Innovation to Advance Africa’s Youth Development Agenda**”, organized by the Youth Bridge Foundation;

Awakening to the enabling potency of digital technologies to overcome short-term disruptions resultant from COVID-19;

Acknowledging that Technology and Digital innovation have opened up new possibilities for ingenuity in a wide range of domains, including health, education, entrepreneurship and business optimization, environment, agriculture, social protection and governance;

Considering that the online penetration rate in Africa is measured at 66 percent with the number of internet users in Africa increased to around 600 million in 2022, six times more than in 2010 and is projected to increase to 700 million in 2025;

Noting that the adoption of the AU Agenda 2063 provides an opportunity for Africa’s youth to help reshape the continent’s destiny, especially as we plan a rebuild from COVID-19 and global economic downturn with a slump from 5.7 percent in 2021 to 2.9 percent in 2022;

Considering that Africa remains the only continent with a significant growing youth population, with 72% of the continents over 1.4 billion population under the age of 35years;

Fully aware that Africa’s current demographic dynamics presents both threats and opportunity for national and continental development;

Recognizing that youth skills, creativity and overall potential in digital technologies are enormous and must be harnessed;

Concerned that about 90% of African Businesses are operating without the necessary cybersecurity protocols and, therefore, are exposed to cyberattacks;

Further alarmed that there are over 700 million threat detections in Africa within a one-year period enhancing the vulnerability of citizens, youth-led small-scale businesses and online education;

Availing ourselves and remaining committed to complementing efforts at implementing AU Agenda 2063 to transform Africa “into the global powerhouse of the future”;



We therefore, Having brainstormed for 3-days in Plenary and Committee Sessions under the AYGC 2022 theme in the seven (7) Standing Committees, delegates make the following calls;

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY (AFS)

- * **Appeal** to AU Member states to support the development and improvement of indigenous appropriate agriculture technologies, promote climate-smart techniques and user-friendly digital systems that are inclusive and easily accessible in the Agro-business value chain;
- * **Asks** the AU Member States to, consistent with SDG17, harness digital technologies to support the creation of coordinated national and transnational youth-focused partnerships or cooperatives and exchanges in the Agro-business value chain under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA);
- * **Charge** the AU Member States to harness digital technologies to create information bank, market space and access to both local and international Agro-technologies in the Agric value-chain;

EDUCATION (EDU)

- * **Urge** the AU Member States to consider, as a matter of urgency, the implementation of an affordable hybrid education system that takes cognizance of varying learning needs and infrastructure to increase access to education at all levels for all, utilizing fit-for-purpose traditional classroom instruction and commendable online learning activities;
- * **Charge** African governments, the private sector and academia to invest adequately and equitably in offline educational resources and infrastructure for rural communities to enhance access to quality education;
- * **Encourage** the AU Member States to exchange experiences to promote youth-led National Service Schemes to develop volunteerism and make available to deprived communities skilled and specialized personnel to teach;
- * **Recommend** to the AU Member States to consciously harness and promote digital technologies in TEVT programming at all levels to both promote efficiency and make TVET attractive to the youth;
- * **Solemnly call** on the AU Member States to prioritize cyber security measures and public sensitization on the consequences of digital technologies in digital education systems;

GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY (GLA)

- * **Recommend** AU Member States' speedy development and implementation of both online and offline e-governance systems to facilitate youth participation in decision-making processes and accountability at local and national levels;
- * **Urge** the AU Member States to design digital systems to involve African Diaspora youth in the development agenda of their home countries in addition to the receipt of their foreign remittances;
- * **Charge** the AU Member States to enforce and publish reports on ethics compliance on digital technologies and make same accessible to citizens;
- * **Implore** the AU Member States to sensitize its citizens through civic education on digital threats and vulnerabilities as we advance the digitization of Africa's economies and train its youth in combating these threats;

HEALTH (HTH)

- * **Highly recommend** to the AU Member States to develop the needed infrastructure to implement and report on telehealth programs and education for various health care professionals (physicians, clinical assistants, nurses, and social workers) to expand the field of telehealth in both urban and rural communities;
- * **Ask** the AU Member States to prioritize cybersecurity protocols in the pursuance of telehealth programs and build citizens' confidence in their safety and data protection;

GENDER, EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI)

- * **Implore** the AU Member States to prioritize digital technologies as an important wheel to advance quality and equitable education for the empowerment of all young persons without any geographical, gender or any form of disability discrimination;
- * **Urge** the private sector, civil society and academia to complement African governments in investing adequately and equitably in both technological and innovative education for both genders from primary school to tertiary education, including those with disabilities and those who are socially excluded;
- * **Encourage** AU Member states to design and implement a digital system of reporting abuse of the rights of minority groups, including youth, women and young persons with disability;
- * Charge AU to demand annual reports from Member States on compliance with equitable distribution of opportunities for minority groups, including youth, women and young persons with disability and publish compliance reports that are accessible to the citizens;

ENVIRONMENT (ENV)

- * **Urge** the AU Member States to use digital technologies as a tool to support indigenous conservation and reforestation campaigns;
- * **Call** on the private sector, civil society, and other interest groups to support the research, design and application of digital technologies to complement AU Member States in their climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts;
- * **Urge** AU to encourage Member States to honour their commitment to invest 1 percent of their GDP towards financing science, technology and innovation development and publish annual reports on same;

EMPLOYMENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT (EED)

- * **Urge** the AU Member States and International Development Partners to prioritize the development of reliable and secured information technology infrastructure, streamline processes to foster digital innovation and optimization of youth-led small-scale businesses;
- * **Implore** the AU Member States, International Development Partners and private sector to invest more in equitable skills training in digital technologies for youth-led entrepreneurs without any geographical or disability limitation/discrimination.

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