

# COMMUNIQUÉ

## A COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE YOUTH AND GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE HELD ON THE 12<sup>TH</sup> TO 14<sup>TH</sup> OF AUGUST 2009 AT THE ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, GHANA

### PREAMBLE

**Recognizing** the importance of good governance and democracy for the advancement of youth development in Africa;

**Mindful** of the sharp increase in the percentage of youth populations in Africa;

**Convinced** that Africa's greatest resource is its youthful population and that through their active and full participation, Africa can surmount the difficulties that lie ahead;

**Empowered** by the Declaration of 2009 – 2019 as a decade for youth development by the Executive Council of the African Union in its last meeting in January, 2009 in Addis Ababa;

**Concerned** by the slow response of African governments to ratify the African Youth Charter;

**Fully committed to** the virtues and values of African historical tradition and civilization which form the foundation for our concept of people's rights;

**Taking into consideration** the inter-relatedness of the challenges facing African Youth and the need for cross-sectoral policies and programmes which attend to the needs of youth in a holistic manner;

**Noting** with great concern the situation of the African youth, many of whom are marginalized from mainstream society as a result of unemployment and underemployment, HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty and hunger, illiteracy and poor educational standards, restricted access to health services and to information;

**Considering** that the promotion and protection of the rights of the youth also demands the performance of duties by the youth as by all other actors in society,

**Guided** by the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the States Parties of the African Union, Parties to 'African Youth Charter;

### **AND**

After a three day's Conference held in Accra, Ghana at the Accra International Conference Center on the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of August, 2009

## **NOTED THAT:**

1. Young people as a result of lack of capacity have failed to take their rightful place in governance and hold their representatives accountable for their political promises to empower the youth and actively involve them in positive development initiatives
2. The prevalence of weak structures and poor support mechanisms have contributed to the low rate of youth participation at the community and domestic levels.
3. There is a lack of common representative front for young people to engage government and other key stakeholders on critical decisions that affect them.
4. There is lack of strong political commitment to Youth Development as evidenced by the unwillingness of many African governments to ratify the African youth charter and develop precise and implementable youth policy which will address the many challenges facing the youth of Africa.
5. Corporate entities operating in Africa have failed to appreciate the importance of peaceful environment for successful and vibrant business climate.

### **The conference therefore calls on the**

#### **African Union (AU)**

1. To consider the urgency of promoting the integration of youth in the governance affairs of the continent by ensuring fair and equitable mandatory representation of the youth at policy meetings, dialogues and debates
2. Support and fund initiatives targeted at youth development to facilitate their empowerment and promote accountability of such measures with active participation of the youth as primary beneficiaries
3. Provide guidelines for the formulation of effective youth policies and monitor progress and effective implementation of such policies by AU member states
4. Step up information dissemination on all youth related government policies and programmes at the continental level and create measures obligating AU member states to entrench access to information laws

#### **African Governments**

5. To ratify the African Youth Charter and make it operational in their countries as a sign of commitment towards the youth
6. To develop proactive national youth policies and ensure their effective implementation
7. To provide adequate resources to fund youth programmes
8. To provide opportunity for quality education by developing curricula that meets local demands and improve graduate employability

9. To work together to accelerate vocational, technical (skills) training, exchange programmes in order to make it more attractive to the youth and disseminate information on its usefulness to personal and national development.
10. Conduct situational analysis of the status of young people in their countries to inform strategic planning of policies and support
11. Put in place measures to ensure that youth groups are strengthened and empowered to bring about positive change in national development.

### **Young People in Africa**

12. To conduct themselves in the spirit of integrity, respect and accountability to win support from stakeholders.
13. All youth organizations to work assiduously towards the realization of a broad based representative coalition to champion the cause of young people in Africa;
14. To dig deeper into their creative reserves and pull human and financial resources together to build partnerships and strategic networks to help break the cycle of poverty;
15. To commit themselves to research and study to build their capacity for positive action
16. To be patriotic and show positive attitude to work in their chosen careers

### **Media**

17. To join the advocacy campaign for governments to ratify the African Youth Charter
18. Disseminate information on the African Youth Charter and national youth policies
19. Engage in rigorous promotional activities for youth involvement in governance and create awareness about youth programmes
20. Disseminate information on structures, policies and programmes that contribute towards youth development
21. Ensure the voices of young people are heard

### **All Development Partners**

22. Support the operationalization of all youth related policies
23. Promote sustainable partnerships, networking and integration of youth in national development efforts

### **Corporate Entities in Africa**

24. To demonstrate high Corporate Social Responsibility in supporting programmes aimed at building the capacity of the youth and not to leave this task to the international development entities alone
25. Promote and sustain fruitful partnerships with youth groups for youth development