

UNICEF Youth Statement on Generation 2030 Report

Acknowledging that almost 50% of the African population constitutes children under the age of 18, and about 65% under the age of 35, Africa could be seen to have a global competitive advantage. We, the youth of Africa declare our continuous investment towards the youth demographic, guided by the UNICEF Generation 2030 report, to create a youth dividend as opposed to a youth burden. We recognise the need for strong mechanisms of implementation, monitoring and evaluation, through the use of digital technology and social media platforms to track trends and progress indicators. The people of Africa should be sensitised on the potential of the demographic dividend and empowered to be drivers of change. This is only possible if young people are meaningfully engaged in decision making and implementation processes. We therefore recommend the following:

Peace and Security

We, the youth, emphasise that upholding universal human rights and socio, economic and political harmonisation is essential for ensuring growth and development. We the young people recommend that:

- All governments should have a clear legal and policy environment that ensures conflict resolution through promoting dialogue and mediation between communities and ethnic groups,
- Governments should implement post-conflict policies and strategies that promote peace, inter-ethnic dialogue and reconciliation and understanding, with a particular focus on education and sensitisation for young people,
- Rehabilitation of affected areas and communities should be prioritised, with increased economic and infrastructural development,
- Youth should act as the champions of peace, through acting as examples of change, promoting peer-to-peer education across different ethnic groups and through engaging community and political leaders in dialogue,
- African countries should tackle violence, terrorism, and extremism, collectively to have a better approach of this problem and ensure that marginalized and vulnerable children are not at risk of being recruited.

Education

We, the youth, believe that every child, especially the most marginalised and those living with disabilities, should have access to equitable and inclusive quality education. To achieve this, we recommend the following:

- All governments should prioritise increasing the number of teachers by at least 5.8 million, and especially in rural and marginalised areas to match the pupil-teacher ratio,
- Governments should increase innovative approaches to ensure equal access to education at all levels through public-private partnerships, the use of ICT and digital education, and through developing youth hubs that act as information centres for young people,
- Curricula across Africa should emphasise different types of education and skill-sets that are required to harness the demographic dividend, through providing theoretical and practical knowledge as well as life skills, civic education, entrepreneurship, and career guidance,

- Early childhood development and learning, with child-friendly spaces and teachers are needed to ensure that children are happy, healthy, and ready for school,
- Youth should be part of school planning and actively monitor access to services, through school and community participation mechanisms such as youth networks, peer-to-peer learning and student councils.

Health

We, the youth, believe that all people, especially children, have a right to quality and affordable healthcare for a long productive life. We recommend that:

- Investment in essential health services is increased, to ensure that Africa's population has easily accessible and affordable health facilities, medication, and skilled health workers. This includes mental health systems as an integral part of a productive workforce,
- There is provision of youth friendly health services that encourage young people to seek care and treatment in a stigma-free environment, especially for sexual, reproductive health and rights,
- Quality healthcare addresses the needs of vulnerable populations such as children, women, adolescent girls, and people living with HIV/AIDS,
- Communities are empowered, especially the youth, to sensitise the public on sanitation and hygiene, environmental health, and home-grown solutions that can improve their health.

Economic Growth

We, the youth, believe that young people can transform Africa's economy if our governments commit to the following:

- The improvement of incubation programmes in countries to develop young entrepreneurs, as nurturing the ideas of young people is the only way they can further themselves,
- Encourage the support of local businesses by maximising the use of technology and social media to increase visibility and promotion.
- The provision of mentorship and skills development of young entrepreneurs through national skills based programmes that enable young people to develop and grow their businesses.

Climate Change

We, the youth, note with the greatest concern, the devastating effects of climate change on our continent and the urgency to keep the increase in Global Temperature below 2 degrees Celsius by 2050. As young people, we:

- Acknowledge the development of the renewable energy industry in many African countries, and we advocate for the inclusivity of young, female renewable energy entrepreneurs,
- Note the urgency to change the attitude of community members with regards to the environment and its contribution to climate change, we encourage government to educate and sensitise its people in addressing energy consumption.
- Strengthen food security disaster preparedness and promote transition from emergency to long-term development through enabling resilient and sustainable communities to enhance

productivity, improve post-harvest management, create market linkages and increased agricultural diversity.