

EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE;

Harness Demographic Dividend



NEWSLETTER

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THE POWER OF TRANSFORMING AFRICA IS IN ITS VIBRANT YOUNG PEOPLE....



Africa's investment in education, empowerment, job creation and adolescent sexual and reproductive health will stimulate economic growth, improve wellbeing, reduce poverty and build human capital for countries that have yet to benefit from the demographic dividend. Mindful of this, a working session was held on the "2017 African Union Roadmap on harnessing demographic dividend through youth investment." ...

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Dr. Akinyele Eric Dairo

Practice Manager, Sexual
and Reproductive Health
UNFPA, East and Southern
Africa Regional Office



"Africa's young people are truly its greatest assets. The more we invest in them, the better for the continent - including our social and economic development. UNFPA has always been at the forefront in supporting the African Union on Youth Development in Africa, including this Banjul+10 Commemoration of the African Youth Charter as well as the development, adoption and implementation of the African Youth Charter at regional and country levels"

C'EST LA VIE (THAT'S LIFE):

AN INNOVATIVE WAY TO COMMUNICATE
EFFECTIVELY ON ADOLESCENT AND
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



Ms. Marie Soulié - Maternal Health Technical Specialist for UNFPA's West and Central Africa Regional Office - presented on innovative ways on promoting adolescent and reproductive health.... More on page 2

MOHAMED ALI AMRI Y-PEER NETWORK TUNISIA



Advancing the health and rights
of young people in Tunisia

He explains that the network is a youth-led network delivering a project funded by UNFPA. We work basically on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescents and youth. We advocate for

the participation of young people in decision making and their participation in policy making and national procedures related to the health and wellbeing of youths.

He affirms that the 10th anniversary of the African Youth Charter is a good and big step for the young people of Africa and for their development. But, there is still more to do in involving and connecting the efforts of young people across the continent - from the north to the south and to the west to the east.

He concluded by stating that we also need national initiatives involving youths more and more. This could be youth parliaments and youth councils to foster real participation.



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... In his introductory remarks, Ms. Lamin Darboe, the Executive Director of the Gambian National Youth Council and member of the organizing committee, welcomed the delegates and guests and emphasised the need to always speak up about issues affecting the vocal and vibrant young people of Africa.

Dr. Mahama Ouedraogo, representing African Union Commissioner Dr Martial Depaul Ikounga, stated during the overview statement on existing continental challenges that President Nkrumah's vision for an interconnected and transformed Africa expressed more than 50 years ago remains relevant today. A vibrant African youth cohort must be empowered to play its part in achieving an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent by 2063.

Young people should be prepared to become job creators employment opportunities rather than only job seekers. The provision of the right skills set must commence from primary through secondary and university levels. In addition to the primary role that state authorities need to play, families and communities also need to ensure the protection and empowerment of young people.



Mr. Mabingue Ngom, UNFPA Regional Director for West and Central Africa: Ten years on following the adoption of the African Youth Charter, whilst it is an occasion to celebrate, it is also important to identify gaps and re-strategize to move towards the demographic dividend. To achieve the 2063 vision for a New Africa, stakeholders must work together in partnership and focus on actions and investments that fulfill the potential of young people across the African continent. The realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also depends on this.

Ms. Ngwenya Prudence Nonkululeko, of the African Union Commission, highlighted some of the challenges faced by young people, ranging from high unemployment rate, conflicts and wars, immigration, education and limited access to health especially SRH, HIV/AIDS, FP and unhealthy lifestyles.

Dr Mady Biaye from UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office stressed the need for more forward thinking actions for the betterment of young people and the future generation. He also pointed to the empowerment of women and girls and the reduction of the unemployment rate especially among young people.

A brief presentation on the African Union gender scorecard was made by Ms Yaye Ramatoulie Dieye of the AU Commission.

The outcomes of the Banjul+10 deliberations will feed into the meeting of AU Ministers in Charge of Youth, Culture and Sports and also inform the roadmap for the 2017 'African Year for Harnessing the Demographic Dividend for accelerated Youth Empowerment'.



C'EST LA VIE (THAT'S LIFE): AN INNOVATIVE WAY TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY ON ADOLESCENT AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

...She illustrated this by showing an interesting video to youth delegates and other stakeholders during a pre-event at the ongoing Banjul +10 conference.

The session was introduced by Mr. Nelson Muffuh - Regional Communications Adviser and chaired by Mr. Constant-Serge Bounda - Head of UNFPA's Liaison Office to the Africa Union and Economic Commission for Africa. Keynote remarks were provided by the Resident Coordinator of the UN System in The Gambia, Ms. Ade Lekoetje.

Mr. Bounda highlighted the need to eliminate harmful practices including early marriage and pregnancies in order to harness the demographic dividend.

An episode of "C'est la vie!" was shown, after that the participants were invited to discuss the bottlenecks hindering access to quality sexual and reproductive health and the harnessing of the demographic dividend as envisioned in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2063.

Developed as part of the French Muskoka Fund initiative, "C'est la vie" is a multi-episode soap-opera and digital campaign that covers all the priority thematic areas of UNFPA and seeks to influence health workers, families, traditional and religious leaders on maternal health, sexual and reproductive health, family planning, gender based violence, and quality of care.

According to Ms. Soulié, "the first season is already done and is currently receiving lot of commentary and social media attention. This program is being broadcasted on TV5 and A+ channels. More than 44 countries will air the video across Africa."

Ms. Lorence Kabasele from DR Congo was among the youth delegates who welcomed the effort and stressed its significance for young people. She informed the gathering that the adolescent and reproductive health behavioral change message will be sent across to the people of DR Congo when she goes back.

BANJUL +10 IS A MOMENT OF CELEBRATION AND ALSO A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

"This is a moment of celebration and also of reflection as to how far we have gone in bridging the gaps identified and the way forward. We need to re-strategise as young people in a bid to make the provisions of the 10 year old African Youth Charter a reality for young people of the African continent. In advance of the 2017 AU Summits that will focus on this theme, Banjul + 10 provides a timely platform for young people to contribute their ideas as to the best strategies and approaches required for Africa to reap the demographic dividend".



LAMIN DARBOE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GAMBIA NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

ACCESS TO HEALTH TO HARNESS THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND



As part of the Youth Forum for #BanjulPlus10, UNFPA also coordinated a working session on the demographic dividend, with a specific focus on health. Delegates from different African countries used the opportunity to speak of the various problems they face, in relation to the theme, as well as suggest solutions to these challenges, with youth taking a central roles.

Young people usually face challenges with access to quality healthcare, especially services that relate to their sexual and reproductive health. Family planning services and abortion clinics are not accessible to the younger generation due to legal constraints, cultural and traditional beliefs. This, in addition to unaffordable services, has been a major setback in the health field especially young women.

The issues are even more challenging for youth in rural communities, who generally have limited access, and even when they do, the quality is still low compared to the urban areas.

Condoms and other contraceptives are more difficult to access too, with the cultural taboos having a stronger bond on the youth in these areas.

To address these issues, it is important to place heavy emphasis on sexual and reproductive health education. However, this is hardly accessible, even in institutions of learning and health facilities. When the information is shared, it is often shared against the backdrop of cultural and traditional values, limiting the information being shared. This has led to many young people resorting to self-education and experimentation which increases the risk of child pregnancy.



Medical personnel also face limitations on capacity building, especially with regards to training. This also extends to data collection, especially when it relates to young people. As such, they are not capable of sharing adequate information with them, even in these health facilities.

Child mortality, sexual and gender-based violence, and HIV/AIDS cases continue to occur in significant numbers, sometimes putting a strain on the limited resources in the healthcare facilities. These facilities are also not readily equipped for emergencies, as manifested in the Ebola outbreak, Lassa fever and the Zika virus... [more on page 4](#)



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The youth agreed that States must increase their budget allocation for health, invest in modern tools and technology, and increase access to - and affordability of - facilities and services accessible and affordable. States should also work to provide more healthcare support for internally displaced people and refugees, who often face marginalisation as a result of their status.

More progressive laws must be developed to protect people from sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence and harmful traditional practices. These may serve as a deterrent for offenders, thereby reducing the constraints on reproductive health services.

Comprehensive sexual education must be provided for young people to encourage the flow of adequate information. This can be done at school level through its incorporation into the school syllabus, and through the mass media. Harnessing the potential of social media due to its popularity among young people is also an opportunity to spread more information.

The delegates, in taking a proactive step in implementing these suggestions, moved to involve parents, religious and community leaders in sexual education trainings to supplement the work of teachers. There is also a need for more joint programming and work to be done through a collaboration of different youth groups throughout Africa.

These programmes should also lay much emphasis on the right messaging for the different target groups, with youth at the centre of planning and implementation. It should be noted that the active participation of youth in these processes can make a big difference, and contribute to more progress in the improvement of health care systems in Africa.



21-22 May. Training workshop on youth, peace and security, gender and humanitarian rights, citizenship and heritage. Sponsored and organised by UNESCO in collaboration with the African Union, UNCT and AAPI.



MS. NGWENYA PRUDENCE NONKULULEKO, OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION.

TALKING ABOUT AU ROADMAP ON DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

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