

# EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE;

Harness Demographic Dividend



**NEWSLETTER**  
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## WE MUST SHOW AND HONOUR THE PLACE OF AFRICAN YOUTH IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CONTINENT



The high-level forum and commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the African Youth Charter was officially opened by the Vice President of The Gambia, H.E. Dr. Aja Isatou Njie Saidy. The Vice President delivered the official opening statement to over 400 people present at the ceremony, a great majority of whom were youth delegates from across the continent...

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### Ms. LORENCE KABASELE

YOUTH ACTION FOR ACCESS  
TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH  
TO HARNESS DEMOGRAPHIC  
DIVIDEND...



YouthFIM-Girls Coordinator AND AfriYAN  
Representative,  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

"I liked the session which focused on adolescents and youth reproductive health because in my country, UNFPA and other United Nations agencies are collaborating with the Ministry of Education to enhance adolescent and youth reproductive health especially with the school context.

This is very important because in order to harness the demographic dividend we need to improve young people's health especially their reproductive health.

#AUBanjulPlus10 gives the youth delegates the opportunity to interact and share knowledge about youth health issues and actions in their various countries."

### MR. FILINTO OMAR MARTINS SALLA



President of the National Youth Institute of Guinea-Bissau, also representing the Minister of Youths, Culture and Sport stated that the organization of Banjul + 10 was timely and with the right level of information and knowledge exchange, youth delegates can contribute to efforts to strengthen the implementation of the African Youth Charter and national youth policies leader to the harnessing of the demographic dividend.

### MR CONSTANT-SERGE BOUNDIA



**THE ROADMAP OF THE AU DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND INITIATIVE IS TO PUT YOUNG PEOPLE FIRST...**

The representative of the UNFPA to the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa encourages youth delegates at Banjul + 10 and others across the continent to actively contribute to the ongoing effort to shape a roadmap and initiative on the demographic dividend at the request of Heads of State and Government at the African Union. With the right actions at the country level, at the sub regional level and at the continent level, the lives of young people in our continent will be transformed."

### DR. RAYMONDE AGOSSOU



**THE EMERGENCE AND IMPACT OF THE AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER...**

The former Head of the Youth Division of the African Union Commission who helped shape the Charter, highlighted the fact that UNFPA helped support and accompany the development of the African Youth Charter following a call from then AU Commission President Alpha Oumar Konare. In addition to formalizing the relationship with youth organizations and structuring the functioning of youth councils and unions at regional and national levels, the Charter sought to leverage Africa's young people as its biggest asset.



#AUBanjulPlus10 #TheAfricaWeWant #DemDiv  
#EndFCM #YouthPower #EndChildMarriage

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H.E. Njie Saidy expressed delight in being a part of the event, especially mindful of her position as the Minister for Women's Affairs, adding that "if we want to ensure meaningful change in Africa, women must be involved". She commended the youth of Africa for the progress made in implementing the Charter, while highlighting the need to use this opportunity to also reflect on challenges and devise solutions.

H.E. Njie Saidy also stressed that "governments must invest heavily in youth to move Africa ahead and bridge the intergenerational gap. Young people must be involved and mainstreamed in government programs, not just youth-related programs." She expressed gratitude to UNFPA for consistently supporting the youth and women in the Gambia, and Africa by extension.

Mabingue Ngom, UNFPA West and Central Africa Regional Director and Head of UNFPA delegation also addressed the gathering, placing strong emphasis on the 2017 AU theme on the demographic dividend through investments in youth. He emphasised that youth can be a formidable force in the transformation of Africa and the creation of a better world. He, however, stated that strong actions must be taken to empower youth and protect their interests.

#AUBanjulPlus10 provides an opportunity to clarify elements of the roadmap and continental initiative that will turn the possible demographic crisis into a demographic dividend. Therefore, youth and governments should be actively involved in improving access and quality of education, reducing forced and illegal migration, eliminating harmful traditional practices and building the skills and capacity of youth across the continent.

The Minister for Youth and Sports of The Gambia, Hon Alieu K. Jammeh, in his welcome remarks, stated that youth must be encouraged by national leaders to face their challenges and tackle them as a generation. He commended the delegates on their efforts to improve the state of the continent, adding that "we are African first before any other considerations". He further stated that #AUBanjulPlus10 is probably the most meaningful youth gathering in Africa, an evidence of the inherent potential of young people in Africa.

Ms. Francine Muyumba, President of the Pan-African Youth Union, highlighted the work being done by her organization to promote youth activities across Africa. She urged representatives of states that have not signed the African Youth Charter to encourage their governments to sign, ratify and implement the Charter, for the best interests of the youth of their countries. She emphasised the need to mobilize funds for the implementation of the Charter. She urged governments to include youth in their activities saying "actions for the youth without the youth are against the youth."

Commissioner Martial De Paul Ikounga of the African Union Division of Human Resource, Science and Technology remarked that it takes commitment and courage to tackle problems faced by youth currently. "Youth must be more demanding in their strive to realize the rights afforded to them". He further mentioned the need to invest in a budget for intergenerational dialogue, as up to 75% of the African population is below the age of 35. He encouraged states to uphold decision 571 which provides that they are to define progressive actions for 2017 and beyond, starting now.



## **"THERE IS A PRESSING NEED FOR NATIONAL YOUTH STRUCTURES TO REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE YOUTH CHARTER. GOVERNMENTS NEED TO SUPPORT THIS EFFORT."**



## **BOUBAKAR YOUGBARE EXECUTIVE CHAIR OF THE AFRICAN YOUTH COMMISSION**

"The African Youth Commission (AYC) is the youth organization that has been established to act as an umbrella that can give space, to allow youth structures across the continent to voice what they are doing and also to lobby or advocate for what they want from member states, from private sector and also from their peers.

The key challenge that we are facing as structures across the continent is that not we are not yet well organized within the Commission, the main objective for us is to create a platform "where all inspiring and capable young African leaders and African Diaspora can organize themselves" and can find a space to voice and to act for youth development.

There is a strong need for youth structures to also report on the implementation of the African Youth Charter so the African Union Commission can be able to cross check the information given within the report of the member states.

During our side event meeting at Banjul+10, it was important for us to sit and to think about what happened during this past ten years and what can we take away from now. We need to work towards having a program on civic education and leadership towards the harnessing of the demographic dividend.





## THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT FOR AFRICA'S YOUNG PEOPLE....

Hon Alieu K. Jammeh is of the view that through the enhanced implementation of the African Union Youth Charter, the potential of every young person on the continent will be fulfilled.

Stating that "we are Africans first before any other consideration", he pointed to the pan-African vision embedded in the Charter and the progress realized by The Gambia in implementing its provisions.

"The Gambia as a country has ensured that we dwell more on capacitating our young people especially through entrepreneurship. We are incorporating entrepreneurship in our school curriculum to encourage self employment and job creating initiatives".

"In fact The Gambia had a National Youth Council in place before the establishment of the Charter. We have set up the National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI) which provides soft loans, business and entrepreneurship training for young people among other opportunities", he concluded.



**HON. ALIEU K. JAMMEH**  
MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS, THE GAMBIA

## RESPONDING TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE...



Following the panel discussion on advancing the demographic dividend and the ensuing working group consultations on education, health, governance and entrepreneurship, the following outcomes amongst others emerged:

- Revise the African education systems from early childhood to focus on skills in order to increase productivity.
- Reduce the age limit and fees for political participation to encourage access and youth leadership.
- Scale up provision of comprehensive sexuality and science based education for adolescent and youth.
- Increase support and establish systems and centers for innovative service delivery leveraging the potential of young people.
- Create a youth development fund to support entrepreneurship.







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