



REGIONAL YOUTH CONSULTATIONS ON AU PROJECT 2016 CONTINUE IN WINDHOEK

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Under the theme, *'Promoting Young People's Rights towards the Attainment of Agenda 2063'*, four regional youth consultations are being organized across Africa. The consultations are part of preparatory activities for the Fifth Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in Africa as well as the African Union's Project 2016 – the Year of Human Rights with a Particular Focus on the Rights of Women. The African Governance Architecture (AGA), the African Union Commission Department of Political Affairs in collaboration with National Democratic Institute (NDI) are organizing these convenings.

The Regional Consultations were inaugurated with the West African Consultation that took place in Accra, Ghana last month from 23-24th August, 2016. These consultations are followed by the Southern African Consultations that opened today in Windhoek, Namibia with the presence of over 50 participants from 12 Southern African countries. This gathering was officially opened by Ambassador Salah Hammad on behalf of the Commissioner of Political Affairs H.E. Dr. Aisha Abdullahi. In his address, Ambassador Hammad reaffirmed that the goal of the consultations is to 'provide a collaborative, open and inclusive space for young people to provide input into the AU's 10 year Human Rights Strategy.' The Southern Africa Consultation is the second of four consultations which will be followed by Eastern and Central Africa Consultations in Kampala from 22-23 September and North African Consultations in Tunis from 29-30 September 2016. The Regional Youth Consultations will bring together over 200 selected youth from across the five regions of Africa. Discussions are centered around four broad thematic areas; young women's rights; governance, peace, security and migration; inclusion, diversity management and popular participation; and employment and mobility.

The consultations provide a platform for aggregating youth concerns, insights and perspectives, building capacity as well as showcasing youth initiatives that advance human rights on the continent. The consultations also seek to create an avenue for interactions and exchanges between participants and AU Organs, Regional as well as National Human Rights Mechanisms towards the advancement of human and peoples' rights in Africa.

Overall, the consultations are expected to provide an opportunity for youths to provide input to the African Union's 10 Year Human Rights Strategy. The Strategy will be a guiding framework for collective action

by the AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and member states to strengthen the African human rights system and address the current challenges of the African human rights system.

Note to Editor

The African Governance Architecture (AGA) is a mechanism for dialogue between stakeholders that are mandated to promote and strengthen democratic governance in Africa as a way to deepen coherence, synergy and coordination. The AGA is the overall political and institutional framework for the promotion, protection and sustenance of democracy, governance, human rights and humanitarian assistance on the continent. The principle objective of AGA is implementation of AU Shared Values and in particular the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG). Established in 2011 AGA is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in the AU Headquarters with the AGA Platform Members across Africa.

The African Union's African Governance Architecture - Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES) sees youth as leaders, beneficiaries and partners and is focused on elevating African youth voices on issues that highly affect their present as well as their future. As this year commemorates the "African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women" it is important to give these issues high ground as they are the center piece for the respect and protection of fundamental human rights in the continent.

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