Curating Youth Perspectives on the State of Human Rights in Africa

From Windhoek to Tunis, Accra to Kampala
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## Acronyms

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACHPR</td>
<td>African Commission on Human &amp; People’s Rights</td>
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<td>ACDEG</td>
<td>African Charter on Democracy, Elections &amp; Governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>AfCHPR</td>
<td>African Court on Human &amp; People’s Rights</td>
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<td>AGA</td>
<td>African Governance Architecture</td>
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<td>AGA-YES</td>
<td>African Governance Architecture – Youth Engagement Strategy</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>AUC</td>
<td>African Union Commission</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<td>DPA</td>
<td>Department of Political Affairs</td>
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<td>EAC</td>
<td>East African Community</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
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<td>HRDs</td>
<td>Human Rights Defenders</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>Institute of Security Studies</td>
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<td>MS</td>
<td>Member States</td>
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<td>NDI</td>
<td>National Democratic Institute</td>
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<td>RECs</td>
<td>Regional Economic Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern Africa Development Community</td>
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<td>VSO</td>
<td>Voluntary Service Organization International</td>
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2016 marks the fourth year in which we have ensured a deliberate and structured participation of young people in the programmes of the African Governance Platform, as guided by the African Governance Architecture Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES). This is especially true for our flagship initiative, the Annual High-Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance where we have instituted an annual youth pre-forum. The pre-forum provides a platform for young people to share their expertise and input into policy making processes for a given thematic focus. This year, we facilitated regional conversations as a mechanism for fostering inter-state experience sharing and collaboration amongst youth actors. Under the auspices of the African Union (AU) theme of the year, *Human Rights with a Particular Focus on the Rights of Women*, we organized four Regional Consultations covering the five regions of Africa. Culminating from a rigorous and open selection process, over 250 young people converged in Accra, Windhoek, Kampala and Tunis to shape the conversations around the human rights environment they want to live and thrive in. Participants articulated their visions, concerns and realities pertaining to the human rights situation in their respective countries and made concrete inputs to the proposed AU Ten-Year Action and Implementation Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human and Peoples’ Rights in Africa.

To maximize engagement and learning, we ensured an inter-generational and multi-disciplinary approach to allow for broad and informed exchange between the leaders of yesterday, today and tomorrow to curate concerns, insights and perspectives on advancing human rights on the continent. The 2016 Regional Youth Consultations also gave rise to a knowledge-sharing platform; *Africa Talks DG Trends* through which young Africans showcased their innovative solutions and initiatives to some of the continent’s human rights and democratic governance challenges. Henceforth, *Africa Talks DG Trends* is going to be an institutionalized platform for the Annual High Level Dialogue and its Youth Pre-forum. Furthermore, in line with our knowledge generation and management component, we have produced two policy briefs to inform policy making using a rights based approach to...
youth empowerment and particularly promoting young women’s rights in light of the 2017 AU Theme: *Harnessing Demographic Dividends through investment in youths.*

It has been a great pleasure, under my tenure as Commissioner for Political Affairs, to work with the AGA Secretariat, to provide guidance and support through the development of AGA-YES and to witness the growth and reach of our engagement with young people. It is my sincere belief that it is imperative to engage young people not simply as beneficiaries, but as partners and leaders in realizing the Africa We Want. We must continue to ensure the necessary enabling environment, leadership and political action for our youth to thrive and lead the future they desire. As young people have told us numerous times, there can be nothing for them, without them. It is clear from the contents of this report that young people have rich expertise and insights which they are already contributing, despite all the obstacles in their paths, towards the attainment of Agenda 2063.

**Dr. Aisha Laraba Abdullahi**  
Commissioner for Political Affairs,  
African Union Commission
Over a period of six weeks, the perspectives of youth from across Africa on the state of human rights in their respective communities were garnered. The consultations were convened as part of the activities to commemorate the African Union (AU) declaration of 2016 as the ‘Year of Human Rights with a particular focus on the Rights of Women’. The consultations convened under the theme “Promoting Young People’s Rights towards the attainment of Agenda 2063” and were held in Accra-Ghana from 22–23 August, Windhoek-Namibia from 8–9 September, Kampala-Uganda from 23–24 September, and Tunis-Tunisia from 30–31 September, 2016.

The consultations provided a platform for over 250 young people to share their insights, perspectives, analysis and inputs towards the enhancement of the protection and promotion of young people’s rights in Africa. Specifically, youth contributions provided strategic and programmatic perspectives into the African Human Rights Decade and its 10 Year Human Rights action plan for AU Organs with a mandate to promote and protect human rights.

The regional consultations gave young people the opportunity to assess, analyse and review progress and challenges faced in the protection and promotion of their human rights at the national, regional and continental levels. In depth conversations took place around issues of governance, peace and security; young women’s rights; inclusion, diversity management and popular participation; and employment, mobility and migration.

The following sections provide summaries of conclusions and key recommendations made at the four regional consultations towards enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights for young people.
Emerging Issues and Recommendations

1. Participants at the consultations decried the limited awareness, understanding and appreciation of the AU, its mandates, its organs and institutions and how they can engage and utilize its various frameworks, initiatives and programmes.

Specifically, the consultations reiterated the need for the understanding and utilization of the various avenues for engagement and redress provided by Organs such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, amongst others.

- It was recommended that the AU, through its Organs, needs to familiarise itself more with African citizens and intensify its citizen engagement initiatives particularly amongst young people.

- Specifically, participants called for enhanced youth-specific programming, capacity building for youth organisations and networks and development of youth friendly knowledge on the AU mandate, its organs, programmes and initiatives. This, it is hoped, will foster active and effective participation of African citizens in the African Union.

2. Participants acknowledged the efforts of the African Union and its Member States in the adoption of the Shared Values instruments (democratic governance and human rights norms) to promote and protect human rights of young people, particularly the African Youth Charter, amongst others.

They, however, argued for improved commitment to the ratification, domestication and implementation of national, regional and continental norms, particularly in areas of human rights and democratic governance.

- The AU was urged to leverage its convening power and political legitimacy towards encouraging Member States’ implementation of the various Shared Values commitments.

- Participants also called for coordinated action on the part of the AU towards supporting Member States’ implementation through technical assistance and support where required.

- Civil society organisations (CSOs), youth networks and other stakeholders were also called upon to live up to their responsibility in sensitizing African citizens on the value of AU norms and standards and to anchor their advocacy on the utilization of these commitments as a basis of accountability by Member States.

3. Participants also lamented the shrinking civic space in various Member States which inhibits young people’s exercise of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Such include suppression of freedoms of expression, assembly and the access to opportunities to live to the fullest of their potentials. Further to this, they argued that the shrinking civic space is directly linked to the varying political commitment to implement national, regional and continental norms that guarantee fundamental rights for citizens and young people particularly.

- Participants called for legal and policy reforms aimed at removing prohibitive roadblocks including age limits and financial requirements to participate in political and socio-economic spaces.

- Participants also called upon the AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and National Parliaments to enhance their monitoring and mechanisms on Member States’ compliance to national, regional and continental norms.
4. Participants decried the high unemployment rate and lack of economic opportunities for young people in their respective countries.

They attributed the increasing number of young people who continue to perish in the Mediterranean to economic migration and the increased urge by young people to join radical and extremist groups to lack of opportunities, self-actualisation and identity.

- Participants called upon Member States to step up the reform of school curricula to place greater emphasis on creativity, entrepreneurship, science and technology in light of the changing labour dynamics and need on the continent. This, they argued, would meaningfully transform school leavers from mere job seekers to job creators.

- Member States were encouraged to strengthen efforts towards supporting youth initiatives through capacity and resource assistance. In light of this, participants called for effective operationalisation of youth funds to enhance youth creativity and innovation. In the same vein, participants called for tax breaks and other incentives to actors in the private sector who provide decent jobs and business opportunities to budding entrepreneurs.

- Participants urged the AU to expedite its development of the AU Policy on Business and Human Rights to enhance promotion of workers’ rights at all levels. Furthermore, they called for active engagement of CSOs, labour groups and youth organisations in the advocacy for favourable working conditions on the continent.

5. Participants expressed their satisfaction and welcomed the efforts of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and Platform in ensuring active engagement of young people in policy processes as exemplified by the regional consultations.

They noted that such opportunities open a new vista for youth engagement in the workings of the AU and called for the institutionalization of such strategic initiatives.

- Participants called on the AU, RECs and Member States to continue to avail young people structured, continuous and safe spaces for engagement in their policy development and implementation processes.

- They urged the AGA Platform members to follow up the consultations with continued structured engagement of young people in the development and implementation of the 10 Year Human Rights Strategy at the national, regional and continental levels. They called for the operationalisation of the proposed AGA Youth Advisory Panel as a possible mechanism.

- Specifically, participants called for the full implementation of the African Governance Architecture Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES) within the aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063 for a united, peaceful and prosperous Africa. They specifically called for implementation of initiatives such as the AU Youth-in-Peacebuilding Initiative, Youth Electoral Participation Programme and the AU Emerging Public Service Leaders Initiative.
6. Furthermore, participants highlighted the plight of women and young women in particular, citing patriarchal and discriminatory attitudes and policies, as hindrances to full enjoyment of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

Participants also raised concern on the inadequate protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights and the continued existence of harmful cultural practices, despite existence of laws criminalizing such practices, which endangers the life of young women on the continent. Some of the practices include female genital mutilation, child, early and forced ‘marriages’ and ritual murder of albinos.

- Participants called for full respect of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including a total ban of harmful cultural practices and called for deliberate initiatives to engage traditional and cultural leaders towards attitudinal and behavioural change.

- Participants also called for the adoption of affirmative action policies towards enhancing women’s participation in socio-political spaces including at the senior and managerial positions. Further to this, they called for increased engagement of men in women’s rights advocacy initiatives.

- Participants further called for the protection and promotion of rights of persons living with disability, including guaranteeing their access to education, decent jobs and socio-political spaces.
Introduction

Contextual Background

The African Union (AU) has over the years adopted policies and normative frameworks as well as established structures that are aimed at enhancing young people’s participation in the development of Africa. Notably among these are the Constitutive Act of the AU, the African Youth Charter and the AU blueprint and roadmap for Africa’s development – Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 envisions “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.”

It places citizens at the heart of efforts to attain continental integration, prosperity and development and marks a significant paradigm shift by acknowledging that sovereignty vests with the people. Specifically, Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063 recognizes that “good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law” are critical enablers and drivers of integration, prosperity and development of Africa.

The AU’s increased commitment to youth engagement in issues on the continent continues to be spurred by the increasing youth demographic. Currently, young people constitute over 65 percent of Africa’s population, a scenario that presents both challenges and prospects. As the continent continues to struggle with issues such as unemployment, underdevelopment, poverty and conflict, which have both direct and indirect impact on the wellbeing of young people, the AU and its Organs are increasingly undertaking initiatives to channel the unique role of youth in the achievement of the vision for the continent. They are stepping away from categorizing youth as a “bulge” that need to be dealt with to considering youth as part of African solutions to African problems. Young people are being targeted as leaders, partners and beneficiaries in the socio-economic, cultural and political spheres of life.

Several AU normative frameworks spell out rights, duties and freedoms that accrue to young people; pave way for the development of national programs and plans for their empowerment; and ensure constructive involvement.
of youth in the development agenda of Africa and their effective participation in decision making processes at all levels. These continue to proffer a critical foundation for the full and active participation of young people in their societies as well as contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights for all.

Africa has come of age in its human rights trajectory and continues to register significant milestones. At its 25th Ordinary Summit in June 2015 held in Sandton, South Africa, the AU Heads of State and Government declared 2016 “the African Year of Human Rights, with particular focus on the Rights of Women.” The year marks the 35th Anniversary of the adoption of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) in 1981; the 30th Anniversary of the entry into force of the ACHPR in 1986; the 29th Anniversary of the establishment of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights in 1987; the 10th Anniversary of the operationalization of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights; the 15th Anniversary of the operationalization of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), as well as the 13th anniversary of the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).

Specifically, the year was intended to provide an opportunity for the peoples of Africa to mark, commemorate and celebrate significant milestones in Africa’s continental human rights progression. It also gave Africans the chance to tell their story – not only to raise awareness about the work they do to uplift their communities, but also to inspire future generations to emulate innovative and exciting approaches to making a difference through human rights based approaches.

As part of its contribution to Project 2016, the commemoration of 2016 as the year of human rights with particular focus on the rights of women, the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat based in the African Union Commission (AUC) Department of Political Affairs, in collaboration with the Human Rights Cluster, convened four Regional Youth Consultations. This report provides a synopsis of what transpired during the Regional Youth Consultations, including a highlight of the emerging issues and key policy recommendations.
About the Regional Consultations

The Regional Youth Consultations were convened under the theme, “Promoting Young People’s Rights towards the attainment of Agenda 2063.” The consultations were held under the auspices of the AGA Youth Engagement Strategy in Accra, Ghana for Western Africa; Windhoek, Namibia for Southern Africa; Kampala, Uganda for East and Central Africa; and Tunis, Tunisia for Northern Africa and brought together over 250 participants. Although focused on young people, the consultations took an inter-generational approach, involving AGA Platform members and non-youth participants. Participants in the consultations were selected through an open call, use of the AGA Secretariat database and nominations by African Governance Platform Members.

Thematic Focus of the Consultations

The consultations featured a number of discussions on issues related to the protection and promotion of young people’s rights. Participants tackled issues related to civil and political rights as well as social, economic and cultural rights that pertain to young people, including young women and their regional specific peculiarities and realities. The Consultations also discussed cross-cutting issues that were framed around four broad thematic areas as highlighted below:

1. Young Women’s Rights

The thematic area was inspired by the AU theme for 2016 Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women. It was intended to inspire discussions related to the protection and promotion of women’s rights, with particular focus on the rights of young women. This included a discussion on the injustices against young women and an assessment of the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms and initiatives at continental, regional and national levels aimed at protecting and promoting young women’s rights. The key focus areas under the thematic area for young women’s rights were:

a) Elimination of discrimination against young women in private and public sectors as well as addressing sexual and gender based violence;

b) Elimination of harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriages, female genital mutilation and ritual murders; and

c) Right to access, own and inherit property, centred on issues of arbitrary deprivation of young women’s rights to property, including land.

2. Governance, Peace and Security

Governance, peace and security remain critical issues in Africa, deficits of which are continuously blamed for perennial human rights violations and abuses on the continent as well as Africa’s slow development pace. In order to aggregate youth inputs in the ongoing conversations and efforts aimed at proffering solutions to governance deficits on the continent and state fragility, the consultations discussed the implications of these areas.

Goal and Objectives

The main goal of the consultations was to provide a collaborative, open and inclusive space for young people to provide input into the proposed AU 10 Year Human Rights Strategy. Specifically, the consultations set out to:

a) Assess the state of play in the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural as well as political and civil rights that accrue to young people;

b) Provide a platform for sharing of experiences and insights towards advancing the enjoyment, respect and protection of young people’s rights;

c) Strengthen the capacity of youth-led and oriented organizations on the African human rights system;

d) Aggregate youth inputs into the proposed 10 Year Human Rights Strategy for Africa as well as other mechanisms such as the AGA Human Rights and Transitional Justice Cluster programs; and

e) Establish regional learning platforms and networks as an ongoing knowledge sharing and peer mentoring platform for promoting human rights in Africa.
phenomena on the protection and promotion of human rights for all. They specifically discussed:

a) Issues related to violations and abuses of human rights with impunity;

b) Governance deficits, including weak democratic institutions, lack of transparency and accountability in governance, and economic inequality; and

c) Structural causes of conflicts, with particular focus on how to build political resilience to conflicts; perspectives on youth as actors, victims and peacemakers in conflict situations; and protection of rights of refugees and internally displaced persons.

3. Inclusion, Diversity Management and Popular Participation

The continued observance of cultural, social and political practices that marginalize youth, and in particular young women, in exploring their full potential and meaningful participation in all spheres of life inspired the thematic area of inclusion, diversity management and popular participation. The thematic area ignited discussions on:

a) Inclusion as a democratic principle that is key to ensuring effective engagement of all in political, economic and social development of their societies;

b) Diversity management in electoral processes and how it can be leveraged to facilitate the enjoyment of the right to vote for all as well as promote social cohesion and resolve contestations of power and control over natural resources; and

c) Popular participation as an enabling factor for young people’s participation in political processes, and enjoyment of civil and political rights, including right to information, freedom of association and access to media, particularly social media.

4. Employment, Mobility and Migration

As Africa’s youth demographics escalate, the continent continues to grapple with the challenge of unemployment and underemployment of its young population; a scenario that has prompted many young Africans to leave the continent and their respective countries in search of greener pastures. Africans constitute a relatively large portion of the victims of the migrant and refugee crisis, particularly those that have lost their lives trying to cross the Saharan Desert and the Mediterranean Sea in anticipation of better living conditions in Europe. In order to analyse the nexus between unemployment and mobility and migration, the consultations discussed:

a) Challenges of employment, including quality of education and existing initiatives to enhance investment in youth skills and innovations, as well as the concept of volunteerism and how it can be leveraged to promote young people's rights;

b) Issues related to free movement of people as an enabling factor for the enjoyment of young people's right to freedom of movement in their quest for job opportunities beyond their borders; and

c) Underlying causes of migration on the continent.

Strategic Outcomes

The consultations provided the selected participants with:

a) an opportunity to engage with Human Rights Cluster members and propose actionable ideas to improve their individual programming and that of Regional Economic Communities, national mechanisms and youth-led CSOs towards the protection and promotion of young people’s rights in line with Agenda 2063 aspirations;

b) a platform to interact and share experiences, comparable lessons and insights towards advancing the enjoyment, respect and protection of young people’s rights at regional and national levels;

c) awareness about the African human rights system;

d) an opportunity to provide input to the proposed 10 Year Human Rights Strategy for Africa; and

e) a chance to establish informal regional knowledge sharing and networking platforms, including group emailing systems and WhatsApp groups.
Report of Regional Youth Consultations on Human Rights with a particular Focus on the Rights of Women
Regional Snapshots

Report of Regional Youth Consultations on Human Rights with a particular Focus on the Rights of Women

PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
The West Africa Youth Consultation took place at the Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Centre in Accra, Ghana from 23 to 24 August 2016. The Consultation was attended by sixty-five (65) young people representing various organisations and networks from thirteen (13) Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Also in attendance were representatives of African Governance Architecture Platform; including the AUC, ACHPR and ECOWAS.

The following sections provide an overview of the emerging issues from the discussions and policy recommendations from the West Africa Consultations:

Emerging Issues

a) It was observed that Member States of ECOWAS have made tremendous progress towards macroeconomic development. This was largely attributed to deliberate efforts by Member States to support the agricultural sector, the continuation of post conflict reconstructions of war affected States, and adoption and operationalisation of an ECOWAS passport that has eased movement of people and goods across borders. Despite these commendable achievements, it was noted that West African States continue to experience high rates of unemployment, especially among youth and women. This phenomenon was attributed to low employability of labour, especially youth, explained by the lack of appropriate technical and professional training schools.

b) It was noted that although youth in West Africa are not homogenous, they continue to face similar challenges when it comes to engaging in elective politics. Participants pointed to the continued existence of cultural practices and laws that restrict participation of young people in elections either as voters or as candidates. To attest to this situation, Youth Initiative for Advocacy Growth and Advancement (YIAGA), a youth-based non-governmental organisation that promotes democratic governance, human rights and youth political participation in Nigeria was running a
campaign titled “Not Too Young To Run” that sought to reduce the constitutional age requirement for running for elective office in Nigeria. Despite the existence of these campaigns and other initiatives in the region, participants raised their concerns regarding the continued marginalisation of youth in elective politics and decision making in socio-economic spheres of life.

c) Related to the above, participants echoed concerns with the continued marginalisation of young people living with disabilities in political and socio-economic spheres of life. It was noted that persons with disability are often times looked at as liabilities to communities. There was consensus among participants that working conditions at places of work, discriminative laws, policies, and cultural practices continue to exasperate violations of rights for persons with disability, particularly young women in West Africa. Some of the human rights violations and abuses that were highlighted included sexual abuse of mentally challenged girls and denial of access to education and work.

d) While regional and national mechanisms on the continent endeavour to empower youth and promote their socio-economic rights, participants observed that an obvious but often ignored reality is the lack of financial support to youth initiatives that target poverty eradication. Participants proposed that such mechanisms provide pathways to unconditional loans for youth and impart entrepreneurship skills in order to promote young people’s self-reliance and increase their productivity.

e) As West African States continue to grapple with insecurities emanating largely from intra-state conflicts and terrorists’ activities, participants decried the impact of such situations on young people. Specifically, Boko Haram’s acts in Northern Nigeria and across the Sahel region were cited as key sources of instability that continue to create conditions that violate young people’s rights, including young women. The continued loss of lives, displacements and abductions, as was the case with the Chibok Girls, were highlighted as some of the unfortunate situations emerging from these conflicts.

f) Participants welcomed the move by some West African countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and recently the Gambia and Nigeria for adopting legislations that outlawed harmful cultural practices, particularly female genital mutilation. Such barbaric acts were strongly condemned as they violate women’s rights, including right to self-determination, health and dignity. Despite the existence of such legislations, participants were concerned about the slow implementation of these laws and deep-rooted cultural practices.
**Policy Recommendations:**

a) West African States, through strategic and technical support by ECOWAS, should strive to match norm setting with implementation, specifically those that promote young people’s rights. This includes strengthening independent regional and national human rights institutions and mechanisms to further protect and promote human rights, including young people’s rights, as well as redress mechanisms for human rights violations and abuses.

b) A stronger public-private partnership was proposed in order to address issues of youth unemployment and underemployment. Specifically, private enterprises were encouraged to prioritize African youth in recruitment and deliberately work to remove systemic hurdles that make access to employment difficult for the youth such as unreasonable requirements on work experience and dominance of available jobs by foreign experts.

c) Called for adoption and/or enforcement of disability laws and affirmative action policies to address discrimination of persons living with disability. These initiatives should ensure that people living with disabilities enjoy the same rights as the able-bodied, as well as offer a legal framework to protect the rights of physically and mentally disabled persons in all spheres of life, from education, training and employment to physical access and health care. This shall create an environment that will advance the economic well-being of disabled people and enable them to live a better life.

d) West African Member States were urged to mainstream positive aspects of traditional justice systems as one way of reconciling their norms and values with statutory norms, particularly where this harmonisation advances respect and promotion of human rights and promotes social cohesion. Specifically, Member States were urged to integrate efforts of traditional and religious leaders in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

e) Urged West African States to establish and operationalize youth funds to support youth and youth-focused innovations and initiatives as part of the youth empowerment and poverty alleviation strategies. These strategies should form an integral part of the national development plans.

f) The AUC, through its Education Division, should provide strategic leadership and technical support to Member States towards the revitalization and harmonisation of education systems to be responsive to the needs of Africa and grounded in African values and norms. This calls for review of school curricula to incorporate elements of citizenship, Pan Africanism, human rights, gender equality, entrepreneurship, innovation, science and technology as well as technical and vocational training. This review should bring about a paradigm shift towards transformative education and training systems that meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, research and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote regional integration as well as sustainable development.

g) The AUC, through the Pan African University (PAU), was urged to spearhead establishment of centres of excellence and youth leadership centres at the continental and regional levels in collaboration with RECs. Similar to the Centres of Excellence that were established by several countries in West Africa with support from World Bank, PAU should take an active role in establishing, operationalising and sustaining African Centres of Excellence and leadership centres. These centres should champion and equip young Africans with scientific and technical skills to increase the number of employable and skilled youth workers in various fast growing sectors, like extractive industries, energy, infrastructure, health, water and information and communication technologies (ICTs). In addition, the leadership centres should build youth’s capacity to meaningfully engage in political processes. One of
many ways to do this is by creating programs where the youth ‘shadow’ the leaders and have opportunities to interact and learn from those in leadership positions.

h) For meaningful participation of young people in political processes, including elective politics, West African Member States were called upon to repeal laws that marginalize young people in these processes. Specifically, participants called for legal reforms regarding young people’s rights to form or join political parties of their choice as well as the removal of restrictive age limits on running for public offices.

i) West African Member States were called upon to adopt and operationalise decentralised government systems in order to facilitate equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to all, including young people. Participants also called upon local governments to create rural communes far away from urban centres, with opportunities and basic services taken closer to the people in their localities. It was argued that this will go a long way in facilitating balanced development and equal access to opportunities by all.

j) Owing to the need for solidarity among young people and the difficulties of physical meetings, the youth and their networks were encouraged to develop online knowledge sharing platforms and databases where they can exchange information, share comparable experiences and lessons, and deliberate on issues pertinent to them. It was, however, noted that these platforms should not in any way or shape replace the need for young people to take action, through non-violent means, towards the realisation of their rights and contribution to improved democratic governance of their communities and states.

West African States, through strategic and technical support by ECOWAS, should strive to match norm setting with implementation, specifically those that promote young people’s rights. This includes strengthening independent regional and national human rights institutions and mechanisms to further protect and promote human rights, including young people’s rights, as well as redress mechanisms for human rights violations and abuses.
The Southern Africa Youth Consultation took place at Protea Hotel – Thuringerhof in Windhoek, Namibia from 8 to 9 September 2016. The Consultation was attended by fifty-eight (58) young people representing various organisations and networks from twelve (12) Member States of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Also in attendance were representatives of African Governance Architecture Platform; including AUC, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).

The following sections provide an overview of the emerging issues from the discussions and policy recommendations from the Southern Africa Consultations:

### Emerging Issues

a) Although Southern Africa was commended for its continued progress towards the regularisation of free and democratic elections, participants in the consultation noted with concern the continued political repression and suppression of dissent, particularly meted against young activists. Such acts were cited as some of the occurrences in Southern Africa that have sparked security concerns in the region. Cases of human rights abuses, including torture of members of opposition were cited, in addition to police brutality towards civilians.

b) Related to the repression and suppression of dissent was the shrinking civil society space in Southern Africa countries. It was observed that a number of states in Southern Africa have adopted legislations that restrict the workings of civil society organisations. It was further observed that despite the fact that some legislations comply with international law and continental normative frameworks, their implementation often takes a different path. This was noted as one of the issues affecting effective government accountability and transparency in Southern Africa.

c) Participants also decried the failure by Southern Africa States to ensure the full enjoyment of social and economic rights by all, including young people. Specifically, participants raised concern with regard
to the right to education, particularly issues around affordability, accessibility, availability, adaptability and acceptability. Cases of youth resistance of the status quo were cited in South Africa where students started the #FeesMustFall campaign, a student-led protest movement that began in October 2015 in response to an increase in fees at South African Universities, from University of Witwatersrand to the University of Cape Town and Rhodes University, among other universities across the country. It was observed that lack of access to quality education in the region is one of the leading causes of unemployment among young people.

While discussing issues related to women’s rights, participants commended the role of women movements in Southern Africa towards the promotion of women’s rights. Notably, women movements were commended for providing platforms and building women’s capacity to engage meaningfully in democratic governance processes at national and regional levels. They were further commended for championing the promotion and development of gender equality policies and legislations that outlaw harmful cultural practices as well as sexual and gender-based violence. Participants, however, noted that most of these movements operate on an elitist approach, which continues to marginalize rural-based, illiterate and young women in democratic processes. This coupled with discriminative cultural practices, prejudices and male dominance of the socio-economic and political spheres of life were highlighted as some of the issues that continue to hinder the effective realisation of women’s, particularly young women’s, rights in Southern Africa.

Participants further noted with concern the lack of human rights awareness among citizens in the region. To illustrate this phenomenon, findings that were presented from a baseline study by the Ombudsman Institution in Namibia showed that one-third of those surveyed thought people accused of committing serious crimes should not be granted the right to a fair trial, while 5 percent thought denying food to a child was suitable punishment for disobedience. Half of the respondents held the view that a husband was right to discipline the wife when she “misbehaves.” Although these findings were specific to Namibia, participants from other countries raised similar examples, citing the need for national human rights education initiatives to counter this narrative.

Like several African Union Member States, it was established that various Southern Africa States have laws that set minimum age limits for running for political offices. These laws were highly regarded as discriminative and a hindrance to young people’s meaningful participation in political processes, including elective politics.

Participants further deplored the high corruption rate in the region, citing instances where people pay bribes for public services. Corruption was cited as one of the leading causes of human rights violations in Southern Africa, with police being cited as one of the most corrupt public service providers. It was noted that corruption in public institutions in Southern Africa continues to lead to the violation of human rights among the poor that can neither buy their way out of a given situation, nor pay for services that are supposed to be free of charge.

Participants observed that there is increased cross-border migration in the region, with South Africa being the major regional destination. It was noted that almost half of the cross-border migrants are youth, whose decision to migrate is often influenced by economic (search for employment) and family concerns, living conditions and access to better schooling. It was further noted that cross-border migration has led to an increase in the number of non-citizens in the region, a situation that is viewed as a problem by citizens of the
affected countries. Citizens of South Africa, Namibia and Botswana were considered to have the strongest sentiments against non-citizens, something that participants attributed the recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa against non-citizens. Derogatory terms like “makwerekwere” (dark skinned Africans who do not speak “our” South African languages) were cited, which are often used against men at work.

1) While inclusion of women and youth in democratic governance and development processes is widely captured in international, continental, regional and national human rights instruments, definition of what inclusion entails lacks in many instances and disagreement on the threshold of the notion persists.

Policy Recommendations:

a) Participants urged Southern African Member States to undertake legal and policy reforms in all sectors to guarantee young people’s enjoyment of their fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to education, health and work, as well as the right to participate in socio-economic and political spheres of life. In particular, they called for attitudinal and cultural reforms as well as political commitment to address the plight of women and girls of all ages. In this regard, young people in Southern Africa were urged to acquaint themselves with continental, regional and national norms and mechanisms as advocacy tools for protection and promotion of human rights, including young people’s rights.

b) In addition, Member States were urged to adopt affirmative action both through laws and administrative measures to ensure gender parity in public and private spaces. Specifically, Member States were called upon to increase budgetary allocations that directly address the dignity and self-confidence of girls and women.

c) Participants called upon the AU, SADC and its Member States to undertake initiatives and programmes to increase citizens’ awareness about human rights, including duties, obligations and responsibilities. It was proposed that this would go a long way in facilitating the effective protection and promotion of human rights for all, as well as awareness among citizens about redress mechanisms for human rights violations at all levels.

d) SADC and migration-related organizations in Southern Africa were urged to develop strategies to build a new regional consciousness amongst citizens and policymakers in order to address migration issues in the region. In addition, participants called upon SADC to establish a regional labour migration governance system to facilitate free movement of goods and people as well as regional integration.

e) The AUC was urged to disaggregate the concept of “young people” as stated in Agenda 2063 in order to ensure targeted interventions. In this regard, participants urged AUC to provide strategic leadership and technical support towards the establishment of functional linkages and synergies between Agenda 2063 and the existing SADC and AU normative frameworks and policies to facilitate its effective domestication and implementation at all levels.

f) Southern Africa Member States were urged to adopt and/or implement legislations and policies, strengthen relevant institutions, as well as undertake initiatives to fight against corruption. Specifically, Member States were challenged to raise awareness amongst public service employees and citizens about the anti-corruption instruments in force and the adverse effects of corruption. On the other hand, citizens were urged to be more vigilant and committed to the fight against corruption.
g) Civil society organisations, networks and forums, with support from ECOSOCC, ACHPR and the ACERWC, were urged to create movements and undertake initiatives around human rights norms and mechanisms to enable African citizens to better relate with and utilize continental, regional and national instruments and redress mechanisms for human rights violations. In line with this, participants called for the use of multimedia tools, including new and traditional media to advocate for the protection and promotion of young people, including young women’s rights.

h) In an effort to address the high unemployment rates in the region, participants urged for the establishment of a strong public-private sector partnership so as to establish and sustain regional market value chains alongside national skills databases to maximize uptake of qualified youth in the employment market across sectors. Relatedly, they called for government regulation of internships to enable young people to acquire substantive experience in both public and private institutions.

i) AU was enjoined to adopt the use of sign language and braille as official languages in all AU events, interventions and initiatives, for effective engagement and inclusion of persons living with disabilities.

Participants urged Southern African Member States to undertake legal and policy reforms in all sectors to guarantee young people’s enjoyment of their fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to education, health and work, as well as the right to participate in socio-economic and political spheres of life. In particular, they called for attitudinal and cultural reforms as well as political commitment to address the plight of women and girls of all ages. In this regard, young people in Southern Africa were urged to acquaint themselves with continental, regional and national norms and mechanisms as advocacy tools for protection and promotion of human rights, including young people’s rights.
The East and Central Africa Youth Consultation took place at Metropole Hotel in Kampala, Uganda from 22 to 23 September 2016. One hundred and twelve (112) young people attended the consultation from fifteen countries of the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Also in attendance were representatives of African Governance Architecture Platform; including AUC, ACERWC, EAC, ECCAS, the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights (AfCHPR) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

The following sections provide an overview of the emerging issues from the discussions and policy recommendations from the East and Central Africa Consultations:

**Emerging Issues**

a) Member States and CSOs should devise programs and projects that specifically target men for education and training on gender parity and respect for women’s human rights – an important step in making men allies in the women’s movement across the political, social and economic spheres.

b) Participants observed with concern that due to porous borders between East and Central Africa, what happens in one country affects its neighbours and tends to have ripple effects across regions. Participants raised examples of the current crisis in Burundi and the refugee situation it has caused in some countries of East Africa as well as Central Africa, particularly the Democratic Republic of Congo. Such occurrences were cited as some of the leading causes of insecurity in the regions.

c) In addition, participants decried the persistence of armed conflicts in countries like Somalia, South Sudan and Central African Republic, where civilians and particularly young people remain the main victims of human rights violations and abuses committed by armed groups. Some of the violations and abuses cited included killings, hostage-taking, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, sexual and gender-based violence and restriction
of freedom of movement. It was also noted that these situations have led to internal displacement of thousands of people, most of whom are young people, including girls. They are exposed to dire humanitarian situations and live in constant fear for their lives; basic rights like right to health, education, food, and adequate housing and shelter are hardly enjoyed.

d) Participants also raised concern with regard to the increasing number of youth who are being radicalized and engaged in violent extremism and terrorist acts. They cited Al-Shabaab, a terrorist group based in Somalia, which is continuously recruiting fighters from various East African countries and beyond to commit terrorist acts. Such youth radicalization and engagement in violent extremist acts were attributed to indoctrination through new technologies, including social media; socio-economic factors like high youth unemployment rates; lack of access to education, housing and health services; political exclusion and realities, including the desire to combat injustices, impunity and corruption; and lack of national identity.

e) Aside from armed conflict related human rights violations, participants affirmed the continued violation of children’s rights in the two regions. They cited violations like ritual murders of children with albinism, sexual abuse, child trafficking, lack of basic health services, and harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, early, child and forced ‘marriages’. Even though several East and Central African Member States are Parties to international, continental and regional normative frameworks on children’s rights, participants raised concern regarding the translation of these frameworks into action at national and local levels, leading to violation of children’s rights with impunity.

f) It was noted that a majority of young people in both East and Central Africa are more actively engaged in the informal sector than in the formal sector. Particularly, youth living in rural areas have very minimal interactions, if any, with state institutions, engage unregulated businesses and lack registered property. They engage in economic activities such as selling goods on streets and roadsides, working as day labourers and porters, cleaning homes, cooking meals, conducting small scale farming and making clothes. In this regard, participants expressed mixed views and opinions about youth working in the informal sector. They noted, on one hand, that the unregulated nature of most of the informal economic activities is a recipe for criminality among young people. On the other hand, participants recognized that such informal economic activities are a source of youth entrepreneurship and ingenuity and that without such activities, young people would likely experience higher rates of unemployment, idle and disorder.
g) Participants’ experiences tended to confirm the findings of empirical studies that indicate that patriarchy in East and Central Africa has become socialized and continues to negatively impact the protection and promotion of women, including young women’s rights and their effective participation in socio-economic and political spheres of life. It was further noted that often times, advocacy initiatives for women’s empowerment exclude men who are key actors in the process.

h) Participants noted with concern the shrinking civic space in the two regions, which is posing a challenge to young people’s meaningful participation in holding their governments accountable. They observed that in recent times, social media and the internet is playing a critical role in enhancing young people’s participation in social accountability initiatives. However, participants expressed mixed opinions about several governments’ moves to monitor and potentially limit young people’s access to social media, particularly during election periods. While some participants strongly felt that internet should remain an open space where ideas are freely exchanged, others expressed scepticism about the positive potential of the internet given the two region’s historic and contemporary vulnerabilities to civil wars and violent conflicts and remained open to possibilities of regulating online content.

i) According to participants, it is not enough for AU Member States to address political concerns in isolation of socio-economic challenges. The breakdown in the provision of basic socio-economic services, coupled with weak democratic institutions, unequal distribution of resources, high unemployment rates and insecurities were identified as some of the push factors for an increased number of East and Central African youth taking to the boats to cross the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. It was observed that most youth prefer to brave the deadly journey than stay with the status quo, a process through which thousands have lost their lives.

j) It was observed that politics in East and Central Africa are highly ethnic-based and this has not only infiltrated the youth movements in some countries, but also weakened their numerical power to meaningfully engage in political processes. Participants further noted that instead of nurturing young people’s political ambitions, youth wings of several political parties are instead using these structures to mobilize voters and establish youth brigades that are instrumental in creating havoc during election times. It was noted that this has worsened the relationship between young people and their governments.

k) In addition, participants decried the continued existence of age-limits in some countries that unjustifiably deny youths the right to vote and run for public offices. They cited various legislations that blatantly and deliberately curtail youth’s political rights by having the age for entry into the military at eighteen (18) and that for voting at twenty (20). Exorbitant fees required for vying for political offices was identified as another means of excluding youth in political processes. Already encumbered by unemployment and lack of opportunities and representation, requiring huge sums from young people in order to participate in elections as candidates was considered unjustifiably punitive.
Policy Recommendations:

a) Member States currently in conflict situations were urged to observe and protect civilian’s rights through strengthening state institutions, including security forces and justice institutions. In addition, these states and those emerging from armed conflicts or civil wars were urged to take deliberate efforts to include young people, particularly young women, in conflict mediation, prevention and peacebuilding efforts. This was identified as one of the probable ways of sustaining peace, stability and social cohesion in these countries. In addition, it was suggested that AUC establishes a youth peacebuilding program at the continental level anchored within regional and national initiatives to promote holistic involvement of the youth in peace building and conflict prevention and resolution processes.

b) In order to address youth radicalisation issues, participants acknowledged that governments need to promote interagency cooperation. They urged youth ministries to coordinate their interventions with security-related government institutions, including police, army and intelligence agencies. They also urged security agencies to remain in contact with non-security related agencies such as education, labour and health ministries. However, participants recognised that this is challenging given the competing priorities and limited financial resources, and instead suggested that external assistance might be helpful in meeting Member States’ financial needs for youth programmes.

c) Members States and their line ministries and agencies were urged to translate norms on children’s rights into everyday realities and undertake punitive measures on violators of children’s rights to deter such violations. In addition, Member States were urged to allocate more resources to improve the retention and completion rates for girls and young women in order to better their chances of accessing gainful and decent employment.

d) Member States were urged to strike a balance between addressing the negative externalities of the informal sector and incorporating its benefits to young people, particularly young women. They proposed that governments, through youth ministries, create programmes to promote entrepreneurship and business development, including establishing youth funds to avail young entrepreneurs with start-up business capital. In addition, participants called upon financial institutions to explore more options of extending unconditional credit to young entrepreneurs in the informal sector. They also called upon central banks to subsidise or underwrite loans that commercial banks and microfinance institutions extend to young businesspeople.

e) Further still, participants underscored the importance of education to finding suitable and decent jobs, urging Member States to invest more in tertiary and vocational training programmes that correspond to market needs. They unanimously agreed that vocational training should be offered equally to young men and women, even if this is against cultural norms about women engaging in certain occupations. In
this regard, civil society organisations were urged to undertake campaigns to destigmatise professions that young people consider undesirable such as construction, sanitation, fishing and farming, to which their counterparts in other fast growing economies of the world are comfortably employed in. In the same vein, young people were urged to demand their respective governments to require investors to source labour locally in order to build their professional skills and enhance their employability. Also young people were encouraged to take up volunteer opportunities as an entry point in the job market.

f) Although participants’ views about the internet and social media varied, they agreed that freedom of expression and the right to access to information are not absolute rights and as a result, enjoyment and regulation of these rights should be in line with the laws. Specifically, participants called for special protection of girl child’s rights as these are more susceptible to violations.

g) National human rights institutions and AU Organs with the mandate to protect and promote human rights were urged to undertake programmes and initiatives aimed at creating awareness among citizens about the available redress mechanisms for human rights violations and abuses at continental, regional and national levels. Specifically, participants called for the adoption of enforcement mechanisms for human rights decisions by AU Organs, including AfCHPR, ACHPR and ACERWC. They also called upon East and Central African Member States to remove reservations placed on human rights instruments that continue to inhibit full protection and enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms for all, including youth and women.

h) The AUC and members of the Human Rights and Transitional Justice Cluster of the African Governance Architecture were urged to expedite the establishment of the Pan-African Human Rights Institute. Participants noted with excitement that the Institute will be very useful in facilitating research, documentation and knowledge generation on Africa’s human rights trajectory, including documentation of abuses and violations and proffering empirical solutions on the same. They further called for the documentation and dissemination of best practices across countries and regions in line with the protection and promotion of young people and particularly, young women’s rights to facilitate cross-fertilisation of ideas and sharing of comparable lessons and experiences.

i) East and Central African Member States were encouraged to learn from Uganda’s experience in incorporating human rights education in school curricula. This was noted as one of the good practices in the region aimed at inculcating a culture of respect for human rights at an early age.

j) Participants called upon national actors, including youth ministries to undertake programmes and initiatives that holistically address youth challenges and cover the political, economic and social spheres of life. They called for effective regional integration that would enable free movement of people across borders and access to better services and living conditions. In addition, they called for an urgent need for Member States to address the root causes of off-continent migration, including adoption of living rather than minimum wages that can sustain a decent life for citizens.

k) Participants urged civil society organisations to advocate for the banning of cultural practices that contribute to human rights violations and cause insecurities in communities. It was observed that reforming harmful cultural practices such as cattle rustling, through participatory processes that involve custodians of culture (traditional leaders), will prevent needless loss of life and insecurity that in turn hampers development.
Member States currently in conflict situations were urged to observe and protect civilian’s rights through strengthening state institutions, including security forces and justice institutions. In addition, these states and those emerging from armed conflicts or civil wars were urged to take deliberate efforts to include young people, particularly young women, in conflict mediation, prevention and peacebuilding efforts. This was identified as one of the probable ways of sustaining peace, stability and social cohesion in these countries. In addition, it was suggested that AUC establishes a youth peacebuilding program at the continental level anchored within regional and national initiatives to promote holistic involvement of the youth in peace building and conflict prevention and resolution processes.

l) Political parties in East and Central African Member States were challenged to strengthen youth wings in order to create space for young people’s meaningful participation in political processes, including elective politics. It was suggested that youth with political ambitions should be nurtured and supported to take up public offices and articulate their fellow youth’s issues and concerns. In addition, political parties were urged to undertake political party reforms to remove age restrictions and financial requirements for running in order to level the political playing field for youth. In view of this, youth were challenged to organize and advocate for legal reforms of such laws.

m) In an effort to create spaces for young people to inform policies and decision making at continental levels, the AU and its Organs were urged to mainstream youth issues in their interventions. Specifically, participants called for deliberate inclusion of youth in the AU Elections and Human Rights Observer Missions as well as integration of youth perspectives in the monitoring and reporting on human rights situations to Organs like ACHPR and ACERWC.
The following sections provide an overview of the emerging issues and policy recommendations from the discussions that ensued during the North Africa Consultations:

**Emerging Issues**

a) Participants noted with great concern the continued prevalence of the underlying factors that led to the North Africa uprisings against decades of repressive regimes. Unemployment, particularly among educated youth; lack of civil liberties; and growing inequality pose challenges for these countries already burdened by a volatile and fragile political environment. Participants noted that while there have been several efforts by States in the region to address some of these challenges; there still exists huge disaffection and disenchantment, particularly among young people, who were at the epicentre of initial transitions. It was further noted that the disaffection and disenchantments occasioned by socio-economic marginalization, as well as political and institutional alienation of young people, is creating fertile ground for youth radicalization with opportunistic conflict and political entrepreneurs taking advantage of the situation.

b) Relatedly, many participants expressed concern about the security situation in several countries of the region, worsened by increasing terrorism activities, allegedly by ISIS. Participants acknowledged that resolution of security issues in countries like Tunisia, Egypt and Libya require more than lip service. They noted that these states require constitution building and strong
institutions to consolidate the gains of the revolutions and address issues of state fragility. Specifically, on Western Sahara, participants observed that without the country’s total independence and self-determination, Africa cannot claim to be fully independent from a colonial mentality.

c) In addition, participants noted that the immediate gains of the uprisings with regard to opening up the civic space have since diminished in some countries with instances of violations of freedom of association and expression cited. They noted that despite the qualitative and quantitative development of civil society organisations, their workings are continuously kept in check by some governments.

d) Participants further expressed concern over the existing racial and ethnic differences in the region, which are widening inequality gaps and putting a strain on diversity management in some of the countries. Participants attributed the increasing migration, particularly of youth from the region as a direct consequence of this inequality gap.

e) While discussing issues related to women’s rights in the region, participants observed that a considerable number of women in the region continue to experience severe curtailment of their human rights, owing to conservative standpoints on the role and place of women in society. They specifically mentioned the right to education, work, property and the right to participate in decision making and political processes. Specifically, participants expressed concern with the continued existence of harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and forced, early and child ‘marriage’. Participants noted that despite international and regional advocacy against the practices as well as the existence of legislation in some countries, these practices are deeply rooted in societal and cultural norms. The human rights for girls and young women continue to be violated with impunity.

f) Participants further observed that like the rest of Africa which is being affected by climate change, North African countries are continuously experiencing adverse impacts of greenhouse emissions and climate change. It was noted that these countries are experiencing extreme weather events which are expected to worsen over time, heightening social tensions.

g) While discussing the current political situation in the region, participants noted that there is continued marginalisation of youth in political processes. Participants observed that the surge of self-assertion and political activism by youth in North Africa has led to the emergence of youth who are considered radical by the establishment. As a result, those engaged with and leading youth movements are continuously viewed as dissidents, leading to regular clashes between youth and government agencies.

h) Participants learnt with concern that there is a persistent existence of slavery in countries such as Mauritania, with youth and young women, particularly, bearing the brunt of the practice. It was noted that the practice is deeply rooted in the structure of Mauritanian society and closely linked to the ethnic composition of the country. Despite the fact that slavery was formally abolished in Mauritania and a law adopted to provide a framework for prosecution of slaveholders, participants learnt with concern that the implementation of the law is not effective, hence the continued existence of the practice.
Policy Recommendations:

a) In order for Member States in North Africa to avoid vicious cycles of revolt, participants suggested that governments, including transition governments in the region, adopt legislations that promote youth, particularly young women’s, inclusion in socio-economic and political processes. Specifically, they called for adoption of affirmative action measures, such as quotas, to improve the levels of youth and women participation and representation in all spheres of life. Participants noted that this will go a long way in closing the generation gap of those in power in relation to those that are being governed.

b) Further still, participants called for candid discussions in the region among key stakeholders with regard to the relationship between religion and the state. They called for inter-regional dialogue among political leaders, parliamentarians, civil society organisations and members of the academia to share good practices, comparable lessons and experiences on transition in democratic governance in North Africa and protection and promotion of young people and women’s rights.

c) Participants urged AU, government agencies and institutions, academia and civil society organisations to undertake initiatives aimed at building young people’s leadership capabilities, skills in conflict prevention and management, as well as vocational training, innovation and entrepreneurship. In addition, Member States were urged to seek for public-private partnerships to enhance job creation and youth employability.

d) The role of civil society organisations in promoting democratic governance and human rights principles and holding those in power accountable for their actions in the region were underscored. Also, civil society organisations were urged to advocate for the ratification, domestication and implementation of AU Shared Values Instruments, particularly on democracy, governance, elections and human rights, including those on women and young people’s rights by North African Member States.

e) Participants called for durable solutions to the triggers of revolutions in the region, citing, among others, the need for political and economic reforms, as well as human security and broad-based security initiatives. In addition, participants called for the use of alternative dispute resolution and transitional justice systems to promote peace, stability and social cohesion in the region.

f) To address youth marginalisation, participants urged government line ministries and civil society organisations to undertake programmes that reach young people, including young women in rural areas, as well as at-risk youth whose voices are the most underrepresented in public debates, policy formulation and decision making processes.

g) Participants further called upon AU and North African Member States to unequivocally denounce slavery in the region and take measures, including enacting and implementing norms and legislations at continental and national levels, to abolish the practice.

h) Member States and civil society organisations were urged to work with custodians of cultures and traditions with the aim of reforming or re-interpreting cultural practices that are harmful to women and girls and aligning them with international and continental human rights standards.

i) Participants suggested that the scourge of youth radicalization should be countered ideologically by Member States and civil society organisations working in close collaboration with religious leaders to prevent further misuse/misinterpretation of religion to fuel conflict and human rights abuses.
j) Participants urged AUC to work with Member States to strengthen the African Peer-Review Mechanism (APRM) and other state reporting mechanisms to enhance state accountability not only on democracy, governance and human rights obligations but also the implementation of national development plans, guided by values and principles of Agenda 2063.

k) AUC was encouraged to promote the principles of Pan-Africanism through organising cross-cultural exchanges among young people to promote values of respect and tolerance for diversity.

In order for Member States in North Africa to avoid vicious cycles of revolt, participants suggested that governments, including transition governments in the region, adopt legislations that promote youth, particularly young women’s, inclusion in socio-economic and political processes. Specifically, they called for adoption of affirmative action measures, such as quotas, to improve the levels of youth and women participation and representation in all spheres of life. Participants noted that this will go a long way in closing the generation gap of those in power in relation to those that are being governed.
#DG TREND TWITTER TRACKER: REGIONAL YOUTH CONSULTATIONS
Aug 21, 2016 - Sep 30, 2016

3.3M
POTENTIAL REACH

9,523
TOTAL TWEETS

1,779
CONTRIBUTORS

AVG TWEETS/DAY
232.3

POTENTIAL IMPRESSIONS/TWEET
6,182

POTENTIAL IMPRESSIONS/DAY
1.4M

RETWEET RATE
4.0

TWEET BREAKDOWN

9,523 TWEETS
Regular 1,689
Retweets 7,623
Replies 211
GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION by participants at YOUTH CONSULTATIONS
The principle that guides the work of the AGA, as laid out in AGA-YES, views young people not as empty vessels to be filled, but as leaders and partners in democratic governance and development processes. To underscore this, Africa Talks DG Trends was launched in Accra, Ghana using the platform of the Regional Youth Consultations. Africa Talks DG Trends is aimed at showcasing innovative, game-changing and solution-oriented initiatives that are conceptualized and driven by young people across Africa. Four editions of Africa Talks were held – the first in Accra, followed by Windhoek, Kampala and making its final stop in Tunis.

Through the Africa Talks DG Trends series, it was evident that young people continue to demonstrate the value they can bring to governance if afforded the enabling space. Young people are dynamic, visionary and pioneering. This was clear through the various initiatives that were shared, from the creation of Model African Union in Tunisia to the #NotTooYoungToRun Campaign in Nigeria to lower age requirements to enter parliament to Project Unbreakable in Botswana, a campaign to counter sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning, to the One Student, One Tablet initiative in Guinea.

Africa Talks DG Trends is a knowledge and idea sharing initiative aimed at inspiring and appreciating youth, to showcase programs or initiatives aimed at improving human rights conditions in a specific community, country or region. The Africa Talks DG Trends platform creates a space for young Africans to illustrate how young people continue to contribute their quota to the attainment of Agenda 2063 and SDGs 2030 in spite of challenging environments.
Curating Youth Perspectives on the State of Human Rights in Africa
From Windhoek to Tunis, Accra to Kampala

Profile of Presenters from the Four Regions

WEST AFRICA

CYNTHIA MBAMALU - Youth Initiative for Advocacy Growth & Advancement

*Young Legislators Accountability Project (YLAP) and #NotTooYoungToRun* are civic participation projects based in Nigeria and aimed at encouraging young people to play active roles in public service and governance processes.

A native of Nigeria, Cynthia Mbamalu is a dedicated human and gender rights advocate, youth pro-activist and a social development practitioner. A lawyer by profession with an LLM in Comparative Constitutional Law, she specializes in legislative, public policy and human rights advocacy, youth political development, issues of constitution building and electoral democracy. She is a co-founder of the Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement (YIAGA, www.yiaga.org) a notable youth organization that promotes democracy, human rights, good governance and youth political participation. Ms. Mbamalu currently serves as the Programs Manager of YIAGA where she develops project ideas and manages the organisation’s programs under YIAGA's thematic areas of focus.

ALPHA BARRY - Digital Learning Guinea

Hailing from Conakry, Alpha Barry is a youth employment expert and the Founder and CEO of Jatropha, a micro finance institution designed to help young people access financial products – the very first bank for young people. Currently, Mr. Barry is involved in the design and manufacturing of ICT tools for Africa. He previously served as the Africa Desk Officer for Peace Child International where he developed the Be the Change Academy Concept of a youth-led enterprise training and creation. While working for UNIDO in West Africa, Mr. Barry also set up a sub-regional youth employment programme in the Mano River Union Basin. In addition, he was the youth employment specialist to implement a Peace Building Commission programme in Guinea. Mr. Barry holds a Master’s Degree in Management from Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridgeshire, UK.

CYNTHIA MBAMALU

@DCYNTHIAM

SOBEL NGOM - Social Change Factory

*Voice of Youth* – a program that provides key information regarding the voter registration process during the 2012 elections in Senegal. It has become a leading Youth Citizenship Programme in West Africa.

Sobel Ngom is a young Senegalese entrepreneur and is the current head of the Africa region for Ashoka’s Changemakers program, working to harness the entrepreneurial spirit of a network of over 2,000 young Africans and facilitate their access to life-changing opportunities. An entrepreneur himself, Mr. Ngom founded a civic leadership centre, the Social Change Factory, in order to not only redefine and redevelop the sense
of citizenship amongst African youth, but also strengthen their leadership and entrepreneurship skills. He is also behind Voix des Jeunes (Voice of the Youth), the biggest television program dedicated to youth empowerment in francophone Africa. He represented Senegal in the Young African Summit in 2009 as well as at the UN World Forum for Youth Policy in 2014. As the youngest fellow to take part in the first edition of President Obama’s Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), Mr. Ngom had the privilege of being quoted by President Obama – first during an address to African youth and then again during a speech at the African Union in Addis Ababa.

KULA V. FOFANA - Deputy Minister, Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports – Liberia

Journey into Public Service and life as a young public servant. She shared her experiences on why young people should engage in governance processes across Africa.

Kula V. Fofana is a passionate Liberian activist and advocate focusing on youth issues, with a particular focus on young women and girls. Before reaching her current role as the Assistant Minister for Youth Development at the Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ms. Fofana worked at the Ministry of Gender, where she established and coordinated the Adolescent Girls Unit. She also served as the Executive Director of the Paramount Young Women Initiative; an organization that seeks to advocate, educate and empower young women and girls. In 2012, Ms. Fofana was appointed by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to co-chair Liberia’s Vision 2030 Committee as the only youth representative working to develop the country’s post-war long-term development plan. The following year, she went on to lead the process to develop the Liberian Youth Common Position as a National Consultant on the post 2015 development Agenda. Ms. Fofana holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communications and Sociology from the African Methodist Episcopal University in Liberia and an Advance Certificate in International Affairs from American University in Washington, D.C.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

NTEBALENG MORAKE - Feminist Action Research Group

Modern day racism and feminism movement in South Africa from the perspective of a young woman.

Hailing from Cape Town, South Africa, Ntebaleng Morake is a young intersectional feminist thinker and advocate for the dismantling of all forms of oppression. Ms. Morake holds a Bachelor’s of Social Science in International Relations, Public Policy and Administration and Gender Studies from the University of Cape Town. Currently, she is studying towards an Honours degree in Gender and Transformation at the University of Cape Town, where she is also involved in a feminist research group working to stop rape culture and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights. Ms. Morake is passionate about the promotion of Human Rights in the global political economy and hopes to be a Diplomat upon completing her studies.
UNAMI MOATSWI - Activist against all form of violence against women

Enhancing gender parity and eliminating incidences of violence.

Unami Moatswi is a young women’s rights activist from Botswana pushing for active political participation of women. Ms. Moatswi currently leads Project Unbreakable, a sexual harassment campaign in institutions of higher learning in Botswana. She is also a Southern Africa Representative in the Africa-Europe committee for the Commonwealth Youth Council. Prior to that, she worked as a Development Manager in a youth grassroots organization, in addition to pursuing her MSc in Development Studies at the London School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) as a 2015 Chevening Scholar. Ms. Moatswi also completed a civic leadership institute at Rutgers University in the United States as a Mandela Washington fellow, where she was honoured as a Royal Commonwealth Society Associate for the advancement of youth voices in the Commonwealth. Ms. Moatswi hopes to affect better policy implementation, analysis and evaluation as a means to enhance parity and reduce incidences of gender-based violence in Botswana, the SADC region and the rest of Africa.

BRIAN TAMUKA KAGORO

Pan-Africanism, young people and their contribution to Africa’s renaissance.

Brian Kagoro is a passionate Pan-Africanist from Zimbabwe. A lawyer by training, Mr. Kagoro’s background is in Constitutional & International Economic Governance Law. He served as the Director of Uhai Africa Group & Penul Investment P/L (www.uhaifrica.com). Mr. Kagoro has formed, headed and chaired different organizations – notably he was the Former Head of Governance for Africa UNDP & Former Pan-African Head of Policy & Advocacy at Action Aid International. He founded and served as former secretary and is now a member of the Centre for Citizen Participation in African Union (CCP-AU). Mr. Kagoro was also the former Chair & Founder of Director Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition and Founder Member & Former Spokesperson of National Constitutional Assembly.

CHRISTABEL MWANGO

Youth participation and ensuring high-level participation in government delegations.

Christabel Mwango, a native to Zambia, holds a BA in International Relations and Diplomacy. As an expert in international peace and security and international studies, she has served as a volunteer for the SADC youth network, and as a project coordinator at the European Youth Parliament. Ms. Mwango is the recipient of prestigious fellowships from the International Political Science Association, Council for the Development of Social Science Research, the Young African Leadership Initiative, Southern Africa Regional Leadership Centre and the Zambia Institute of Human Resource Management.
**EAST & CENTRAL AFRICA**

**GODIVA AKULLO**

**Women, feminism and activism**

Hailing from Uganda, Godiva Akullo is a Pan African feminist thinker, and renowned lawyer, activist and lecturer at Makerere University. She holds an LLM in International Trade Law, International Commercial Arbitration, Sexuality, Gender and Law from Harvard Law School. Through her work and scholarship, Ms. Akullo seeks to challenge the thinking around feminism and black womanhood.

**MBAYANI TAYAI**

**Enhancing creative capacity of youth and women for community empowerment – an experience of Vijana Assembly.**

Mbayani Tayai is an Organizational Development (OD) Practitioner, youth activist and political analyst from Tanzania. He is the CEO and founder of Vijana Assembly, an NGO working to empower youth and women in Tanzania and East Africa by enhancing their creative capacity. He is also the co-founder of Elewa Limited, a company that partners with educators to provide online ICT, marketing, and advertising services to government and private institutions. Mr. Tayai is also a facilitator and trainer with the East African Support Unit for NGOs (EASUN) working in capacity building for NGOs in the areas of leadership and good governance. He holds a BA in Political Science and Public Administration from the University of Dar Es Salaam. Mr. Tayai hopes to reach and impact more than 20,000 youth and women through Vijana Assembly by 2020, with the Tanzania National Youth Assembly platform.

**NANCY SIBO**

**Mobile Cow, creating local solutions to local problems.**

Hailing from Rwanda, Nancy Sibo is a social development and entrepreneurship expert with three years of experience working directly with communities focusing on education and social development. She is passionate about social entrepreneurship and building solutions-based technologies to uplift the everyday lives of communities. Ms. Sibo travels to the rural communities of Southern and Eastern Rwanda teaching rural farmers new techniques to improve their agricultural productivity and reduce poverty and malnutrition. Ms. Sibo is the founder of Mobile Cow Initiative, a mobile tech hub platform that provides information to farmers and links them with the market. It was for this initiative that she became a Queen Young Leaders Award Winner in 2016. Ms. Sibo is currently pursuing an MS in Global Health Delivery.

**SAKAH BERNARD NSAIZEDZE**

**Reclaiming space for young people.**

Sakah Bernard Nsaidzedze, a native of Cameroon, has over 15 years’ experience as a youth activist and a community leader focusing on the leadership of young people. Mr. Nsaidzedze is the Co-founder/Managing Director of Big Steps Outreach Network (BONET)-Cameroon; an activist at the International Panel of Ignite the Youth; mentor, and public/motivational speaker. He received the ‘Princess Recognition Award 2016’ for his outstanding leadership and community service in Cameroon and was one of the ‘African Union Youth Heroes 2015’ for his human rights activism. Mr. Nsaidzedze holds a MA in Governance and Regional Integration and a BS in Sociology & Anthropology. He remains particularly interested in advocacy and research on issues of leadership, gender, human rights, education, entrepreneurship, and governance grounded on local and international experiences of participation, organization or facilitation at over 100 multi-dimensional forums.
NORTH AFRICA

M’HAMED KOUIDMI

Espousing interfaith tolerance, equipping young people with skills to excel

M’hamed Kouidmi is a passionate Algerian social entrepreneur, motivational speaker, business coach and development expert. Mr. Kouidmi studied conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue. As an international exchange student, Mr. Kouidmi received recognition for his extensive work promoting dialogue and understanding among the Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities in Des Moines. To this day, Mr. Kouidmi’s business is built on the principles of social and solidarity economy, creating opportunities for youth in Algeria and elsewhere, reducing unemployment, strengthening social responsibility of corporates locally and regionally and is recognized by many as a role model in his field.

FATIMA ZAHRA MENOUAR

Overcoming indoctrination

Fatima Zahra Menouar is an Algerian Youth and Marine Engineering Student. She is a young activist, debater and debate trainer with the British Council’s Young Arab Voices Programme. Ms. Menouar also serves as a youth ambassador at the Arab Thought Foundation and is a cultural democracy trainer. She is particularly passionate about overcoming youth’s indoctrination and the challenge of upholding social and religious values in the modern age where competing values from the West are dominating.

BABA BOUBACAR SY

Impacting locally, making change

A Mauritanian native, Baba Boubacar Sy currently serves as Program Officer for Citoyennes & Citoyens Debout. Mr. Sy holds a degree in Public Law, Political Science and an MA in International Relations. He is a young activist and trainer with several years of experience in the humanitarian field. Mr. Sy identifies himself as one of the young Africans who are certain that any development process requires well-trained human resources and an endogenous approach to African issues.

HAMZA GHEDAMSI

Model African Union: Pan African youth movement

Hamza Ghedamsi, a Tunisian native, is the President and Founder of the Model African Union, which is meant to serve as a ‘Pan African Youth African Union’. He aspires to work with African youth on capacity building, political and civic engagement, social justice, governance, human rights, climate and environment. Mr. Ghedamsi is a member of the core group of the network for Global Education ‘Learn 2 Change’ as well as a member of the African German Youth Initiative in partnership with Engagement Global.
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