



## **THE ABIDJAN DECLARATION**

### **4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit**

9 - 11 October 2017, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

We, representatives of the youth organisations from Africa, Europe, and the Diaspora gathered in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire for the 4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit, commit to build on the legacy of our existing cooperation and pave the way for its sustainable future.

The 4th edition of the Africa-Europe Youth Summit was organised by youth platforms in Africa and Europe (the Pan-African Youth Union, the European Youth Forum and the Network of International Youth Organisations in Africa) as well as organisations of diaspora youth (ADYNE, ADYFE and ACP-YPN), with input from the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe.

We wish to express our gratitude to H.E. President Alassane Ouattara and the people of Côte d'Ivoire for their genuine hospitality and hosting of the Youth Summit. We also recognise with appreciation the financial and institutional support from the EU, in partnership with the AU.

This Declaration, which we address to Heads of States and governments and the institutions gathering at the 5th AU-EU Summit, is the fruit of active discussions among the 120 youth representatives participating in the Youth Summit.

It builds on the past decade of Africa-Europe Youth Cooperation, within the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership, during which three Youth Summits presented recommendations to AU and EU governments and institutions. In this context we recognise all that has been achieved<sup>1</sup>, but we regret the lack of implementation of many of these recommendations.

Welcoming the decision to focus the 5th AU-EU Summit on “investing in youth”, an overdue decision in which we foresee the potential to review the Africa-EU Partnership’s shortcomings in relation to youth, re-establish a long-term Africa-Europe Youth Cooperation framework and put in place a plan of action to support the recommendations presented here.

Investing in youth is a prerequisite for building a sustainable future. To achieve this we must collectively work to overcome the issues preventing progress within our interconnected societies. It requires support to and the advancement of education, skills development, mobility and access to markets, youth participation and young people’s access to rights. Investing in youth means providing the right environment for young people to reach our fullest potential and positively impact our societies.

We wish to highlight the vital role youth organisations in Africa and Europe, including those representing the Diaspora, play in the development of young people in our continents. Governments and institutions must increase investment in, facilitation of and support to our multiple roles and contributions to society, including as a bridge between the State and young people.

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<sup>1</sup> Such as the support to the creation and consolidation of the Africa-Europe Youth Platform, Africa-Europe Training Course for Youth Organisations, the African Diaspora Youth Network in Europe, the African Diaspora Youth Forum in Europe on “Entrepreneurship, Employability and Civic Engagement”, the African Union Youth Development Fund and the support rendered to our cooperation.





To support investing in youth for a sustainable future, we present the following general and theme-specific recommendations:

- Building on their commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, AU and EU governments must work together towards sustainable development as the overarching objective of national policies and the Africa-EU Partnership, focusing attention on the needs of future generations.
- Implement a cross-sectoral and participatory approach to youth policy, ensuring structures for effective coordination and mainstreaming of youth in all policies, and creation of, or support to, existing mechanisms that guarantee extended and improved youth participation in policy-making processes.
- Leverage the unique potential of the Diaspora Youth to inspire and channel positive change and effective cooperation between Africa and Europe.

### Education and Skills

1. We call upon AU and EU Member States to create and incorporate a framework for the recognition and validation of competences gained through non-formal education, including that provided through youth organisations, to ensure life-long learning and skills development.
2. We call for further collaboration under the Africa-EU Partnership to accelerate the implementation of the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative and urge a move towards mutual recognition of evaluation systems and formal education diplomas between African and EU countries to enhance mobility of students and young professionals.
3. We call on AU and EU Member States to guarantee universal access to quality and inclusive education, recognising the importance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

### Business, Job Creation and Entrepreneurship

1. We strongly urge AU and EU Member States to work closely with economic actors and other relevant stakeholders to create a conducive business environment that boosts investment and makes it easier for young people to establish and operate enterprises within and across both continents.
2. We call upon AU and EU Member States to facilitate programmes that enhance sustainable access to finance, ensuring that young people from all backgrounds are enabled to access enterprise funding.
3. We urge the Africa-EU Partnership to create a framework that provides comprehensive and continuous capacity building programmes to enhance young people's employability and the ability of young entrepreneurs to run sustainable business.

### Governance, Political and Democratic Inclusion, and Activism

1. We call upon AU and EU Member States to invest in citizenship and human rights education providers and foster and financially support spaces for exchange and learning between them, to support the enhancement of the meaningful participation of all young people, including vulnerable groups, in society.
2. We call on African and European leaders to bring the age of candidacy in line with the voting age, as it is only rational that young people who are eligible to vote should be equally eligible to stand for election.
3. We call on governments and institutions to work with youth organisations towards the creation of a European Youth Charter, taking inspiration from the African Youth Charter and, in the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership, to define mechanisms for monitoring young people's access to rights on both continents.





### **Peace and Security, including Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation**

1. We call upon AU and EU Member States to urgently implement UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security, securing the necessary financial and other resources, and developing long-term national action plans, with the involvement of young people and youth organisations in their design, implementation and evaluation.
2. We call upon Member States in Africa and Europe to involve young people, including young migrants and the Diaspora, in the conflict prevention process in addition to supporting local initiatives such as awareness-raising campaigns and capacity building to curb forced migration, including internal displacement.
3. We call upon the EU and AU to support the participatory development and implementation of national strategies by the relevant institutions, civil society and youth at local and national level, to tackle racism and discrimination in all its forms, including that based on gender, ethnicity, religion, culture and geographical location.

### **Environmental Preservation and Climate Change**

1. To counterbalance existing tendencies and interests that work against the environment, AU and EU Member States must support youth-led initiatives, while establishing strong institutions and clear regulatory frameworks for environmental accountability.
2. We call upon the AU and EU to facilitate the implementation of sustainable agricultural programmes that promote technology transfer, sharing of good practices and provide subsidy programmes to promote organic farming, especially among young people.
3. We urge AU and EU Member States to develop incentives to move towards more environmentally-friendly economies, based on the Paris Agreement and recognising common but differentiated responsibilities, by financing sustainable production and investing in renewable energy while enhancing environmental education.

### **Culture and Arts**

1. We call upon AU and EU Member States to put in place policies and action plans to support and promote emerging and innovative arts and cultural production, while promoting and preserving all art forms in their respective societies.
2. Within the Africa-EU Partnership, we call on AU and EU institutions to facilitate increased accessibility to funding for arts and culture, including support to an Africa-EU Programme on Culture and Creativity.
3. We call on AU and EU Member States to support young people working in creative industries, through local structures, investment in training, leadership, management, production and promotion of culture for young people.

### **To guarantee the successful implementation of these recommendations we stress the undeniable need for:**

- The establishment of a participatory mechanism to monitor and evaluate the progress of the Africa-EU Partnership, which ensures cross-sectoral collaboration between governments, CSOs, diaspora and youth organisations.
- The dedication of funding from the AU and EU institutions within the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership and Erasmus+ programme, as well as innovative mobilisation of additional resources to advance this Africa-Europe Youth Cooperation, to further boost opportunities for real partnership and exchange and to support the implementation of these recommendations.

