



3rd Africa Europe Youth Leaders' Summit

People, Prosperity and Peace

31 March to 1 April 2014

Summit Paper

Introduction

In 2014 half of the world's population are under 25 years old. In order to give young people more opportunities, the **3rd Africa Europe Youth Leaders' Summit** will address three of the main themes that young people in both Africa and Europe struggle with on a daily basis. These three themes are **leadership development, entrepreneurship/employment and peace**. They are interlinked and can, if opportunities are exploited, create a self-enforcing cycle of growth, prosperity and democratic societies. By incorporating youth and youth organisations in the inter-governmental partnership between Africa and the European Union, decisions and joint initiatives should become more favourable towards the younger generations, thus improving their ability to pursue opportunities and to contribute effectively to the benefit of the two continents. This in turn will prevent the youth from being easy prey for agitators and enable them to end the conflicts that are present in many of their home countries.

The **Africa-EU partnership aims to 'facilitate and promote a broad-based and wide-ranging people-centred partnership'**. Without more empowerment of young people and youth organisations, who are a significant part of the present reality and key to the future of Africa-EU relations, the inter-continental partnership will not be able to achieve its objectives of strengthening and promoting '*peace, security, democratic governance and human rights, fundamental freedoms, gender equality, sustainable economic development, including industrialisation, and regional and continental integration in Africa*'.

In view of this, **the Africa-Europe Youth Leaders' Summit will request the establishment of an Africa-Europe Youth Facility. The Delegates will exchange views on the main challenges faced by youth on the two continents and debate how the Africa-EU partnership and the Africa-Europe Youth Facility can empower the youth and their organisations to find solutions to their own challenges.**

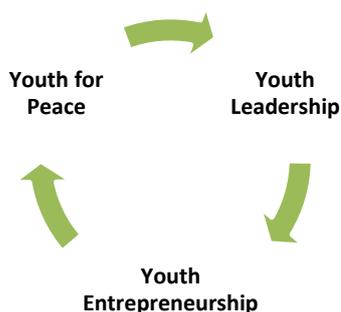
Paving the way for more active involvement of youth in the Africa-EU Partnership

In order for the joint African and European youth to present tangible recommendations to the 4th EU-Africa Heads of States Summit on the 2-3 April 2014, the 3rd Africa Europe Youth Leaders' Summit will convene earlier in the same week in Brussels, Belgium. The Youth Leaders' Summit will bring together more than 100 youth leaders from both continents, including African Diaspora youth leaders. The inter-continental youth summit will be dedicated to discussing three themes, youth leadership, youth entrepreneurship/employment and youth for peace. In order to enable a fruitful discussion, this paper aims at incentivising participants to share forward-looking ideas and solutions relating to those issues.

The specific objectives of this paper will therefore be twofold. First, to focus discussions on concrete initiatives and results which will **effectively address the common challenges of youth on the two continents** and secondly to **identify joint actions which can be undertaken at an inter-continental level**. This will be achieved by:

a.) Identifying the main challenges young people face on both continents and proposing joint actions that could be supported by the Africa-EU Partnership

b.) Define and operationalise the three themes, Youth Leadership, Youth Entrepreneurship/Employment and Youth for Peace, as the framework for intercontinental actions in the coming years.



c.) Enable the youth organisations on both continents to articulate the common needs and expectations for empowerment of the youth and the establishment of an Africa-Europe Youth Facility at the 4th Africa-EU Heads of States Summit.

The Youth Leaders' Summit will discuss the above specified points within the forward-looking vision and objectives of the Africa-EU Partnership. In particular it will seek:

- *To move away from a traditional donor-recipient relationship and forge a real partnership characterised by equality and the pursuit of common youth objectives.*
- *To build on positive experiences and lessons learned from the past years of youth dialogue and cooperation where successful initiatives have been realised and to learn from shortcomings in establishing a strong involvement of the youth in the inter-continental partnership.*

- *To promote more accurate understanding of each other cultures and realities, in place of those that are dominated by negative stereotypes that ignore the overwhelmingly positive developments on the two continents.*
- *To integrate, in the inter-continental agenda and the next generation of Africa-EU initiatives, common responses to global youth challenges and strengthen youth dialogue in the multilateral context.*
- *To bear in mind that we can only achieve our youth objectives if this strategic partnership is owned by young people and youth organisations.*

Youth Leadership

Young people in Africa represent a majority of the population, with 10-24 years olds constituting 31% of the total population in 2013 and 10-35 year olds constituting a solid 65%. Meanwhile in Europe, young people are becoming a minority of the population, with 10-24 year olds constituting only 17% of the total population. Yet young people from both continents are continuously facing the challenges of being at one end of the population age spectrum. There is a need for young people and the organisations representing them to be engaged with all levels of government, the private sector and civil society. This stretches from grass-root level, all the way up to the intercontinental level and should include the relationship between Africa and the EU.

Some of the main challenges faced by representatives of youth on both continents involve exclusion from positions of power (in the economic, social and political life) and debates on topics ranging from economy to politics in general and other spheres of life. This is sometimes caused by stereotypes of inexperience and outright age discrimination. In order to counteract these obstacles, there needs to be a conscious effort on the behalf of African and European leaders at all levels to engage with young people and their organisations.

Time to deliver on the 'youth commitment' of the Africa-EU Partnership

'Africa and the EU will promote the empowerment of Europe's and Africa's youth..' (page 13 of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy)

In order to shape sustainable political inclusiveness on both continents, a shift is needed. This shift would include investing in leadership competence development for young people, an aspect that is already being worked on by several other organisations and initiatives, but which would benefit greatly from the focused efforts of the inter-continental partnership, and in particular the EU and the AU. For example, North Africa and the EU are engaged in political dialogue on higher education and youth policies with active involvement of Ministerial

counterparts, universities and other key stakeholders from the South Mediterranean region. To sustain this dialogue the EU financing of the current Euro-Med Youth Programme has more than doubled with an additional EUR 6 million added to the original EUR 5 million budget. Concerning the people-to-people contacts, EUR 29 million was allocated to the 'Youth in Action' thus enabling support to some 1400 projects affecting some 21 000 young people and youth workers.

Questions for discussion:

- **What common obstacles do young people face in acquiring leadership capacity, skills and knowledge?**
- **How would you suggest that young people's leadership skills could best be developed to benefit from relations between Africa and the EU?**
- **What can young people and youth organisations do to facilitate leadership development?**
- **What can the inter-continental partnership between Africa and the EU do to address these shared challenges faced by youth and youth organisations on the two continents? What should an Africa-Europe Youth Facility prioritise to help the youth develop skills and leadership capacities?**

Youth Entrepreneurship

Young people in both Africa and Europe face great challenges with unemployment and exclusion from the labour market. This includes 60% of African unemployment being made up of youth and at least 23% of European youth between 15-24 years old being unemployed. Increasingly, migration is seen as the only way to overcome the lack of opportunities at home, be this in the way of outwards migration from Europe to Africa (or vice-versa) or the internal migration within the European or African continents, where youth goes from state to state.

Realising the youth commitments of the Africa-EU partnership

'Investments in private sector development will be promoted, looking in particular to youth and women. The service sector will be further developed as this is where women and youth are mostly involved. Africa and the EU will make technology work for employment, and will ensure that

infrastructure works to create jobs for Africans, both skilled and unskilled. In addition, attention will be paid to the creation of jobs through micro-finance schemes.' (page 27 of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy)

Although Africa and Europe are each other's biggest trading partners, with around €100bn worth of exports and imports in 2009, there have been no programs or very little visible activities to promote business links between young entrepreneurs from the two

continents or exchanges of ideas and competences. This would be one area in which the potential cost-benefits of investment by the Africa-EU partnership would be positively felt by the youth.

Young people have a particularly hard time to access available support schemes and mechanisms for setting up their own businesses. But to allow young people to drive innovation and to enhance their entrepreneurial skills, access to development programs would benefit society at large. One example of such an initiative that could be used as template for future developments is the Youth Entrepreneurship Facility (YEF). This is a partnership between the African Commission, the Youth Employment Network and the International Labour Organisation, which has unleashed an African entrepreneurship initiative enabling young people to turn their energy and ideas into business opportunities. Another example is the EU support for technical and vocational education, as well as training amounting to EUR 50 million that will improve the employment and entrepreneurial prospects of young Egyptians.

Questions for discussion:

- **What are the main hindrance for pursuing entrepreneurial ideas and starting your own business?**
- **How could young people's ability to get funding and loans be improved? Are there other key issues which need to be addressed?**
- **What can the inter-continental partnership meaningfully do to promote a conducive environment and opportunities for African and European youth to realise their entrepreneurial potential? What should an Africa-Europe Youth Facility focus on to make a difference?**
- **How can the IV Africa-EU Summit best assist the youth to tackle the common challenges and to grasp the opportunities which exist within the relationship between the two continents?**

Youth for Peace

Young people's idealism, vulnerability as well as their aspirations are often manipulated by political, military or religious leaders to ferment violence, instability and conflicts. The energies of youth should be positively deployed and the practice of forcing young people into the centre of political and armed conflicts should be prevented. This is why young people and youth organisations' stakeholder position must be strengthened in conflict prevention, conflict management and peace building.

Young people and youth organisations often take the role of community builders, both because they have the energy and motivation, and constitute a large part of local societies. Young people also have the open-mindedness necessary to engage with other cultures, and to see past previously held stereotypes, making them ideal practitioners of intercultural dialogue. This continues to be an increasingly important ability in today's world, where

mobility and economics bring different cultures ever closer. The diaspora has in this regard an essential role to play in connecting cultures and people from both continents. Even as we speak, citizens from both continents continue to gather through exchange programs, activities and trainings to share best practices and experiences. These include the 'Youth Peace Camp' hosted by the Council of Europe and 'United Network of Young Peacebuilders'.

Questions for discussion:

- **How could youth organisations be further enabled to promote conflict-prevention, peace-building or post-conflict rehabilitation in Africa and Europe?**
- **What do you think can be done to prevent young people from being drawn into violence and armed conflicts in your community?**
- **How can the exchange between young people on the two continents be further developed, so that experiences, skills and capacities can be shared, developed and possibly used elsewhere?**
- **What can the inter-continental partnership between Africa and the Europe do to strengthen development of peaceful societies and relationships within and between the two continents?**
- **How can the IV Africa-EU Summit best assist the youth in pursuing these efforts?**

Conclusions

To ensure that the future Africa-EU partnership will include a stronger focus on youth and youth organisations, the youth of Africa and Europe call upon the heads of state and government at the 4th Africa-EU Summit to build on success of the Africa-Europe Youth work and address the common youth challenges through establishment of an Africa-EU Youth Facility targeting joint actions on:

- 1. Leadership development,**
- 2. Strengthened Africa-EU youth entrepreneurship and**
- 3. Promotion of the role of youth for peace.**