

Livingstone Declaration on Regional Collaboration for Youth Empowerment

Chrismar Hotel, Livingstone, Zambia 2-5 December 2013

We, the youth of Africa, government representatives, civil society organizations, development partners, regional economic community representatives and private sector representatives gathered at Chrismar Hotel, Livingstone, Zambia, from 2nd - 5th December 2013, to promote regional collaboration for youth empowerment,

- i. Acknowledging the efforts made by African heads of state and government in promoting youth development,
- ii. Appreciating the various policies and institutional frameworks in place at continental, regional and national level such as the African Youth Charter and the Pan African Youth Union,
- iii. Concerned over the continuing socio-economic, political, and environmental challenges faced by young people in Africa especially unemployment,
- iv. And noting that young people constitute well over 50% of the population in many African countries,

Call upon the African heads of state and government to:

- i. Set up and support the establishment of One Stop Youth Centres (OSYCs) as hubs for youth development and empowerment;
- ii. Where absent, formulate, and where existing, review and update youth policies taking into account lessons learnt and ensure meaningful participation of youth in this process;
- iii. Ensure meaningful involvement of young people in national budgetary processes and management of funds allocated to youth;
- iv. Encourage each country to, where absent, establish, and where existing, strengthen, a legislative framework for functional National Youth Councils (NYCs) with clear mandate and roles, which should include coordination of youth groups and youth-supporting institutions;
- v. Adopt the UN youth empowerment index as official criteria to measure progress and commitment at country level towards youth empowerment.

Call upon all regional bodies to:

- vi. Encourage establishment of OSYCs at national and sub-national levels and establish a platform for information exchange, learning and capacity-building at the regional level;
- vii. Put in place policy and institutional frameworks that provide for the establishment of youth commissions and Regional Youth Councils (RYCs) in all Regional Economic Communities;
- viii. Develop mechanisms for youth involvement in national and regional policy deliberations and programmes;
- ix. Formulate regional policies to support youth entrepreneurship and establish Regional Youth Development Banks;
- x. Put in place conducive policies for private sector participation in youth empowerment initiatives.

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Furthermore, we call on all stakeholders including youth bodies, civil society organizations, development partners and the media to:

- xi. Encourage the setting up of OSYCs and support them with necessary resources to address specific youth issues;
- xii. Monitor and follow up on mechanisms set up by governments for youth programmes;
- xiii. Enhance the capacity of regional youth networks to be effective in lobbying and advocating for youth empowerment in the regions;
- xiv. Promote principles of access and equity in information and services provision for youth to ensure inclusion of special interest and marginalized groups, including youth with disabilities;
- xv. Partner with local universities and research institutions to support innovation and knowledge development, as well as involve local communities, CSOs, private sector and other stakeholders in OSYC programmes;

In conclusion we believe that a society prospers when it recognizes and supports the potential of young people, and we therefore call on all Governments, Regional Economic Communities and other stakeholders to join us and all the youth of Africa in the search for deeper integration, participation and development of our continent.