



Jwara Building, West Field  
Serrekunda  
Banjul, GAMBIA

## CONCEPT NOTE

**3<sup>rd</sup> African Youth Conference on African Unity and Development**  
**Theme: 'The Future Is Now; Youth are Not Too Young to Lead'.**  
**23-26 March 2019, Banjul, The Gambia**

### **African Union Heads of State and Government**

***"Urges States Parties to take measures to promote active youth participation in society; Facilitate the creation or strengthening of platforms for youth participation in decision-making at local, national, regional, and continental levels of governance"***

***(Article 11 African Youth Charter).***

### **1. Background and rationale**

The African Youth Commission (AYC) has, over the last 2 years, provided a space and voice for youth and youth organisations to set and drive their own development agenda, promoted the involvement of young people as key partners in the implementation of the Africa 2063 Agenda as well as the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, supported advocacy actions on the ratification and implementation of the African Youth Charter, other youth rights-based legal instruments and contributed to advancing the AU Shared Values through a network of locally based youth actors.

The annual African Youth Conference on African Unity and Development is a multistakeholder youth-led and driven platform aims at building capacities and strengthening engagement of children and youth in the current policy and decision making processes at national, sub regional and continental levels. It's part of the Commission's efforts to improve the interactions between children, youth-led and youth serving networks/organisations focusing on their shared objectives and challenges, and skills on how to engage with the respective national, sub-regional and continental children and youth development actors to support and continue their collaboration on the children and youth issues. As children and youth from different levels are communicating on a regular basis, they are inspired and empowered to speak in a coherent manner, to a wider range of stakeholders, expanding their capacity to be involved in policy discussions, implementation and monitoring thereof.

Africa is a continent of the young, and this youthful energy, large numbers and enthusiasm means the youth have great potential to transform the African society into a sustained, integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena. Yet, children and youth are amongst the most vulnerable groups in many African societies because of their age and social status they are often excluded from policy and decision-making when important political and social changes are underway. Young women are affected differently by the society than their male counterparts and often in ways that bring stigma and rejection when they speak out about issues that affect their development.

Today, the condition of youth in Africa is a growing concern, with limited participation of young people in governance, irregular youth migration increasing at an alarming rate, our continent's peace and security as well as social, economic and political development is under a serious threat. The Government and development actors in African countries

**"Uniting Youth in Action for African Unity and Development"**



Jwara Building, West Field  
Serrekunda  
Banjul, GAMBIA

must collaborate and accelerate efforts to facilitate the creation or strengthening of platforms for youth participation in decision-making at local, national, regional, and continental levels of governance, and ensuring young people's active engagement and leadership in promoting social progress, reducing political tension and maximizing economic performance. Over the long term, the potential of youth as primary agents of positive change on the African continent if put into good use, many believe would drive the continent to rapid economic transformation, socio-cultural advancement and political development. The continent's unity and development depends on how well its youth resources are nurtured, deployed and utilized.

Building on the successful 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> editions of the African Youth Conference on African Unity and Development held on January 2017 and March 2018 in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Republic of Zimbabwe respectively, the 3rd conference is co-hosted by the Gambia National Youth Council and the AYC Secretariat under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth and Sports The Gambia.

Recognizing the important and critical role of African Youth in advocating for the inclusion and representation of young people in governance; social, economic and political development, advancing the Continental Agenda for peace and security as well as their contributions to ensuring youth irregular migration is collectively and swiftly addressed in Africa, the third edition of African Youth Conference on African Unity and Development will take place in Banjul, The Gambia from 23rd to 26th March 2019.

## 2. Objective

The overall objective of the conference is to:

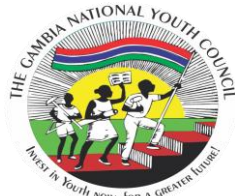
- Create a youth-led open space for young people to interact, promote Pan Africanism and participate in the implementation of African Unity project.
- Inspire and encourage active youth leadership and participation in social, economic and political spheres at all levels.
- Dialogue and interact with policy makers to amplify youth voices in policy and decision making processes.
- Encourage youth-led action on curbing cross-border youth irregular migration and children on the move in Africa.
- Empower children and young women to make their voices heard in policy and decision making processes.
- Connect, build alliances and the capacity of youth to influence policies and practices of their National Governments, the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and other youth development actors on the African continent.

## 3. Thematic Focus

The discussion at the Conference will be centered on the following six (6) thematic areas aligned to the AYC Strategic Plan 2018-2020 and The Gambia Country Programme of Action on Youth:

1. **Pan Africanism and African Integration:** Youth inclusion and participation in Africa's integration using AU Agenda 2063 and UN 2030 SDGs as a spring board.
2. **Governance and Empowerment:** Youth participation and leadership in Political, Civic and Economic developments at all levels.
3. **Irregular migration:** Youth Cross-border Migration and Children on the Move.
4. **Silencing the Guns:** Youth and Peace building.
5. **Health and Wellbeing:** Reproductive Health and Rights, and Gender-based violence.
6. **Climate Change:** Environmental Conservation and Governance.

**"Uniting Youth in Action for African Unity and Development"**



Jwara Building, West Field  
Serrekunda  
Banjul, GAMBIA

Partner youth organisations and youth development actors will be invited to organise side event workshops in alignment with their programmatic area of interest and conference themes during the forum.

#### **4. Expected outcome:**

By the end of the conference, it is anticipated that;

- Youth will be inspired to take ownership and drive the Africa's development Agenda.
- Integration of youth-led initiative into national, sub-regional and continental development agendas will be promoted.
- Active participation of youth in socioeconomic advancement of the African continent will be improved.
- Youth political leadership and participation beyond the ballot box will be encouraged.
- Youth will be mobilized to take action on curbing irregular migration and children on the move in Africa.
- Safe spaces for youth participation in policy and decision making at all levels of society will be advocated.
- Participants will be familiarized with the African Youth Commission and its ways of working, in order to foster greater participation, networking and engagement with the Commission.
- Youth's concerns/recommendations regarding their inclusion and participation in policy and decision-making at local, national, regional, and continental levels of governance will be brought to the attention of the national government, regional economic communities and the African Union in a form of outcome document.

#### **5. Format**

The session will take the format of expert presentations, parallel side-event workshops (breakouts), and interactive plenary panel and roundtable discussions.

#### **6. Participants**

The Conference aims to bring together around 300 participants from youth organisations and networks, youth leaders, youth activists, young entrepreneurs, representatives of Government, policy makers, Inter-governmental, AU Commission, NEPAD Agency, UN agencies, civil society and private sector, academia, and other local and international development partners and foundations from across Africa and Diaspora.

#### **7. Language**

The deliberations of the meeting will be conducted in English and French.

#### **8. Contacts**

**Mr. Kawsu Sillah**  
Executive Secretary  
African Youth Commission  
Email: [avc@auvc.org](mailto:avc@auvc.org)  
Phone: +220 9865300

**Mr. Lamin Darboe**  
Executive Director  
The Gambia National Youth Council  
Email: [nycgambia@gmail.com](mailto:nycgambia@gmail.com)  
Phone: +220 9962763