Activity Report

3rd Pan African Youth Conference on African Unity and Development, and the AYC GA

Theme: “The Future Is Now, Youth Are Not Too Young to Lead”

23-27 March 2019, Kairaba Beach Hotel, Banjul, The Gambia
I. Introduction


The objectives of the conference were 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 and 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.
- 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.

This conference on the successes of the 1st and 2nd editions of the Pan African Youth Conference on African Unity and Development held in January 2017 and March 2018 in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Republic of Zimbabwe respectively. The annual African Youth Conference on African Unity and Development is a multi-stakeholder youth-led and driven platform aimed 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/organizations 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.

II. Attendance

The conference brought together 405 participants mainly from youth organisations, networks, youth and student leaders, youth activists, young entrepreneurs, representatives of Government, policy makers, Inter-governmental Agencies, Employers’ Organisations, AU Commission, UN System, civil society, private sector, academia, and other local and international development partners and foundations from 38 countries (32 African countries and 6 diaspora).

Countries represented include The Gambia, Senegal, Mali, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Togo, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Spain, DR Congo, Austria, Mauritania, Ghana, Burundi, Tchad, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Turkey, Mozambique, Ivory Coast, Belgium, South Africa, Liberia, Namibia, and Benin.
Key guests included Dr Isatou Touray, Vice President of The Gambia; Hon. Hadrammeh Sidibeh, Minister of Youth and Sports of The Gambia; Hon. Fatou Kinteh, Minister of Women, Children and Social Welfare The Gambia; Ms. Sandra Lattouf, Resident Representative, UNICEF The Gambia; Mr. Kunle Adeniyi, Resident Representative, UNFPA The Gambia; Mr. Saikou J.K Trawally, Executive Director, National Population Commission Secretariat The Gambia; Dr. Desta Alamerew Tiruneh, Country Representative, World Health Organization The Gambia; Mr. Raimund Moser, Resident Representative and Project Manager, International Trade Centre/Youth Empowerment Project; Dr. Marema Toure Thiam, Head of Social and Human Sciences Unit, UNESCO Regional Office Dakar; Dr. Ebrima Sall, Executive Director, Trust Africa Dakar; Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, and head of UNOWAS represented by Ms. Kemealo Agathe TELOU, Gender Advisor, Focal Point Best Practices and Coordinator of the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel; Mrs. Musu Kuta Komma, Country Director for Child Fund International The Gambia represented by Mr. Nfamara Dabo, Programme Manager of Child Fund International The Gambia;
His Excellency Mr. Taha Ayhan, ICYF President represented by Mr. Rasul Omarov, the Director General of ICYF; H.E. Ismail Sefa Yuceer, Ambassador of Turkey in The Gambia; Mr. Dembo Kambi, Chairman of The Gambia National Youth Council; Ms Ms. Natalie Sonia Mukundane, Acting Executive Chairperson of the AYC, Mr. Boubakar Yougbare, Outgoing Executive Chairperson of the AYC, Ms. Sarata Ceesay, Speaker of the Children National Assembly of The Gambia; Mr. Khadim Diop, President, National Youth Council of Senegal; Mr. Talib Ahmed Bensouda, Lord Mayor of Kanifing Municipal Council; Ms. Anetha Awuku, Project Manager, International Organisation of Employers (IOE); Mr. Elyab Tilahun Mulat, Representative, Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) Addis Ababa University; Mr. Alieu Secka, CEO of The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry represented by Mr. Bubacarr Saho, Manager, Business Development and Projects; Dr. Mary Maboreke, Secretary, African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights; Dr. Uwemedimo Esiet, Convener of the African CSO Coalition on Population and Development (ACCPD); Ms. Lorence Kabasele, President of AfriYAN and Ms. Edith Asamani, Founder, Knitweb Foundation Ghana; Mr. Muhammed Lamin Saidykhan and Ms. Coumba Toure, Coordinators, Africans Rising Movement; Mag. Stephanie Fenkart, Director, International Institute for Peace Vienna; Ms. Anne Kahuria, Global Youth Engagement Officer, VSO International.
III. Opening session

The opening ceremony was moderated by Mr. Lamin Darboe, Executive Director of The Gambia National Youth Council (NYC). He first introduced members of the high-table, welcomed the dignitaries, participants and all partners, and thanked them for attending.
He requested the conference be started with individual prayers and followed by the national anthem of The Gambia. In his introductory statement, Mr. Darboe presented the agenda and gave a background of the conference as well as acknowledged the support of The Gambia Government through the National Youth Council and all the partners that contributed to the successful hosting of the conference.

Delivering his welcoming remark, Mr. Dembo Kambi, Chairman of the Gambia National Youth Council gave a brief introduction of the African Youth Commission which he stated began three years ago and expressed delight to give the welcoming statement. The long struggle of AYC from its inception in 2017 to date is something that Mr. Kambi highlighted as a clear manifestation of the team’s commitment towards the African’s youth development agenda. He went further to highlight the great partnership that exist between the two institutions stating that, the NYC has had a great partnership and worked with AYC which they cherished so dearly and is convinced that, this will bring youth development in the Gambia and Africa at large. “I am convinced beyond reasonable doubt that there is talent and potential in the youth of the continent to deliver the Africa we want we want” Kambi emphasized to the delegates. He concluded by outlining the key role The Gambia is playing as the youth development Hub in Africa taking reference of the country been the birth nation of the African Youth Charter in 2006.
He thanked the Organizing committee, partners, staff of NYC and AYC for their tireless efforts in making this event a reality. Finally he reassured the delegates of the National Youth Council’s commitment to following up the recommendations of the conference and supporting the realization of African Youth Commission’s vision and its strategic plan.

**Ms. Natalie Sonia Mukundane, Acting Executive Chairperson of the AYC delivered the introductory statement**

On her part, Ms Natalie Sonia Mukundane, the Acting Executive Chairperson of the AYC gave an overview of African Youth Commission’s mandate and its journey from 2013 to date. She introduced the AYC as the only continental youth civil society led and driven platform which started as an African Union Youth Working Group to now a fully constituted independent Pan African Youth Network working closely with AU member states, UN agencies and other international and civil society groups to advance the rights and development of young people on the African continent. Ms. Mukundane noted that the Commission successfully organized its first ever Pan African Youth Conference on African unity and development in 2017 and the General Assembly in the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. She affirmed the AYC’s commitment to creating a space for young people to communicate, connect, collaborate, share ideas, amplify their voices and participate in the implementation of the African unity project, as well as the Africa 2063 and the UN 2030 sustainable development agenda for the Africa we want.
The acting chairperson recognized the important role that the Gambia has played and continued to play in the empowerment and development of African youth in past two decades. She cited the Gambia as one of the first countries in Africa to establish a National Youth Council in the year 2000, Hosted AU Summit in 2006 which gave birth to the African Youth Charter and later in 2016 hosted the Banjul +10 on the African Youth Charter which are all clear manifestations of the country’s commitment to advancing the youth development agenda and their participation in national and Africa’s development.

She concluded by assuring the delegates that the discussions and side events will bring out a concrete outcome that will be used as a tool to improve youth leadership and their meaningful engagement in all spheres of development in Africa. She commended the participants for sacrificing their limited resources to make it to Banjul for the conference, encouraged them to actively participate in discussions and wished them fruitful deliberations.

Ms. Sandra Lattouf, Resident Representative of UNICEF The Gambia, delivered the partnership statement on behalf of Ms. Seraphine Wakana, UN Resident Coordinator in The Gambia.

Ms. Sandra Lattouf started by conveying the greetings of the UN Resident Coordinator who could not make it to the opening because of travel outside the country for an official mission.
Ms. Lattouf expressed delight in participating in this year’s conference. She thanked the Government of The Gambia through the Hon. Minister of Youth and Sports and The Gambia National Youth Council for agreeing to host and for supporting this important youth gathering which brought together young leaders and development partners from across African continent and diaspora. She said this event is significant in many ways but chief among them is its coincidence with the 25th anniversary of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD25) which is quite central for investing in health and education of African youth to harness the demographic dividend. According to her, celebrating this 25th year anniversary during this Conference is key and timely for it addresses issues such as proper Health care, Gender-Based Violence and access to education to which children, youth, women and girls suffer a great deal from. “As you all know, the UN is strongly committed to attaining the SDGs in 2030 and through the 5 pillars of ICPD Plan of Action, we hope to achieve this agenda”, she stated.

“Together with our youth, we reaffirm our commitment to providing better Health care services, access to quality and relevant education and ending all forms of Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Traditional Practices in the World”, madam Sandra said. She expressed hope that participants will share experience both collectively and individually to help bring countries together for the Africa’s development, empowering its children, youth and women as well as come up with strategic and concrete recommendations. She assured the AYC and the NYC of the UN’s continuous support towards youth development in Gambia and Africa at large. She concluded by thanking the Government of The Gambia for launching the Children’s National Assembly and AYC for staging such a laudable initiative.

**Solidarity statement by Mr. Rasul Omarov, the Director General of Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF)**

Representative of the OIC Youth Forum’s President, Mr. Rasul Omarov conveyed the warm greetings from the entire management and membership of ICYF and expressed honor to deliver a solidarity statement at the 3rd Pan African Youth Conference in The Gambia on behalf his President H.E. Mr. Taha Ayhan.
He started his speech by praising the organizers of the forum for staging such an auspicious event bringing over 300 young people across the continent.

“At ICYF, we create channels of communication between young people and our leaders to foster mentorship programs and ease of communication between both the young and older generation, this I believe, is one fundamental way of the development of young people of this generation who are at the centre of their priorities,” he said.

He informed the gathering that, The Gambia will be hosting the OIC International Summit in November 2019 stating that, this forum has motivated and raised his hopes for a successful summit come November this year. He used the occasion to invite participants to their side event.
Opening Statement by Hon. Hadrammeh Sidibeh, Minister of Youth and Sports on behalf of H.E. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia

Giving the opening statement, the Hon. Minister of Youth and Sports Mr. Hadrammeh Sidibeh outlined the great role the Gambia has been playing in relation to youth development stating the country is the first to have a National Youth Council, formulate youth policies and the adoption of the African Youth charter 2006 which was equally celebrated in Banjul after ten years in 2016 as the Banjul Plus 10.

Hon. Sidibeh signaled the event to be another platform for young people from Gambia and beyond to synergies actions and programs that can accelerate youth development through their micro and macro-economic and political development programs in Africa. He said youth development is very central and key in the Gambia’s national development plan under the able leadership of H.E President Adama Barrow, and assured both NYC and the AYC his Ministry’s and Government of The Gambia’s continued support.

Finally, on behalf of the Government of the Gambia Hon. Minister declared the 3rd Pan African Youth Conference and the AYC GA 2019 officially opened.
Summary of the Discussions and Presentations

IV. **Intergenerational Panel Discussion on the main theme of the conference “The Future is Now, Youth are Not Too Young to Lead”**

**Moderated by Mr. Lamin Darboe, Executive Director, The Gambia National Youth Council**

This first plenary intergenerational panel discussed the main theme of the conference “**The Future is Now, Youth are Not Too Young to Lead**”.

The session explored the different ways the potential and capacity of African youth can be leveraged to increase inclusion and representation of young people in Governance in Africa.

Some of the key highlights during this session included:
- Youth irregular migration should be eliminated completely through support based initiatives by governments to encourage these youth to stay and strive towards the attainment of the NDP.

**Panelists: L-R: Mr. Lamin Darboe, NYC (Gambia), Ms. Natalie Sonia Mukundane, E.C, AYC (Uganda), Mr. Ousseine Diallo, Secretary General of the Federation of Employers’ Organisations (FOPAO) West Africa (Guinea), Mr. Kebba Omar Jagne, Founder, Movaar (Gambia), Mr. Khadim Diop, President, NYC (Senegal)**
• There is need for paradigm shift by adopting new realities and problem solving initiatives
• African Governments should make deliberate efforts to provide Economic opportunities for the youth including seed funding for youth entrepreneurs
• Youth should be meaningfully involved and included in decision making processes at national and regional levels
• Governments should work with non-state actors to initiate programmes that will build the capacity of youth and prepare them to be job creators instead of not job seekers
• Youth should not shy away from jobs in sectors like Agriculture and Solar energy
• Youth should be encouraged to attend TVET for vocational skills training as they are lucrative employers
V. THE LAUNCH OF THE U-REPORT GAMBIA

Moderated by Mr. Alagie Jarju, Programme Manager, The Gambia National Youth Council

During the launching Ms. Sandra Lattouf, Resident Representative of UNICEF The Gambia, thanked the stakeholders for championing this unique youth platform for children and young people to connect and report stories and issues affecting them from different parts of their countries. She introduced U-Report as a free social messaging tool and a real-time information system that allows community participation. “It is designed to strengthen community-led development, citizen engagement, and positive change. SMS polls and alerts are sent out to U-reporters and real-time response information is collected”, she added.

She further call on every young person to effectively utilize the platform with strong emphasis on it is for the youth and should be used by the youth which is why the process of launching is facilitated by National Youth Council of the Gambia with technical and financial support from UNICEF.
Ms Fatoumatta Camara, a student of the University of the Gambia who serves as UNICEF Youth Ambassador, equally gave a brief breakdown of the U-REPORT, stating it's operating with two GSM companies for now which are Africell and Qcell. To join one has to type JOIN and send it to 1234.

Ms Camara concluded by calling young people to cherish effectively utilize this platform for information sharing and data collection.
Among the speakers, was the newly elected Speaker of the Children’s National Assembly of The Gambia, Hon. Sarata Ceesay who gave a quick rundown of UNICEF’s Country program towards the children of the Gambia.

She further highlighted the key role the newly constituted children’s parliament will play in mainstreaming issues of children into policy frameworks which will be discussed and critically analyzed for proper actions to be taken by relevant stakeholders especially the Government of the Gambia. She thanked UNICEF on behalf of the Gambian children for yet another unique platform - the U Report.
At the end of the launching, Hon. Hadrameh Sidibeh, Minister of Youth and Sports was on board to recommit the government support towards children which eventually lead to the formation of a new ministry called “Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare” for the first time in The Gambia.

He thanked UNICEF for supporting the process of constituting a children’s assembly and now to the U-Report which both signifies the agency’s commitment towards children welfare advancement and development in the Gambia. Hon. Sidibeh concluded by officially launching the U-Report Gambia.
VI. SIDE EVENTS AND BREAK OUT SESSIONS

SESSION 1: PROTECTING CHILD’S RIGHT AND CHAMPION ACTIVE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: Learning from Child Fund The Gambia

This session was facilitated by Mr. Nfamara Dabo, Program Manager at Child Fund The Gambia. He started his presentation by introducing Child Fund The Gambia is an international non-governmental organization, previously called the Christian Children’s Fund which started its operations in the Gambia in 1984 and currently works in 32 communities in Western Region with over 200,000 children benefiting with their family through Child Fund’s six legally constituted Community Associations. According to Mr. Dabo, the organization works in the area of promoting Quality Education, Health and Nutrition, Basic Education, Water and Sanitation, Livelihood Skills and Youth Development.

In his presentation, he highlighted their work experience with children in communities outlining their specific interventions areas in the Gambia; Child Sponsorships Educational Centres, 11 community clinics, conduct quarterly growth monitoring, and establish Child Clubs in schools.
Mr. Drbo also mentioned that his organisation has an ongoing building of recreational center projects in 30 communities with trained monitors as well as a sponsorship package that is targeting underprivileged children to give them opportunity to feeding, education and livelihood. Following the questions and answers, he played a video documentary showcasing of the ongoing project activities of Child Fund the Gambia with testimonies from beneficiaries. Key among the program was their recent shoe distribution, training of mentors for the children and livelihood improvement support against hunger.

**SESSION 2: YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT with specific focus on political pluralism and tolerance.**

*Facilitated by Ms. Fatou Jawo, Deputy Speaker, National Youth Parliament of The Gambia*

Before inviting the panelists, Ms. Jawo welcomed the participants and thanked them for joining the session. He gave a background of the National Youth Parliament, as a body working in the area of youth and women political participation, social cohesion, voter education, awareness raising and civic orientation programs.
She then passed the floor to Mr. Lamin Darboe, the Executive Director of National Youth Council to make his intervention. Mr. Darboe gave a brief breakdown of the council’s work towards youth engagement in political participation. He highlighted the formation of an Inter-Party Youth Platform which connects all the youth leaders in the different political parties in the country. Mr. Darboe stated the significance of youth involvement to have understanding on the issues, and then be able to hold the duty bearers to account and be prepared to take up the mantle of leadership.

The next to speak was Mr. MC Cham who is the Party youth leader of Gambia Democratic Congress (GDC). He highlighted his personal experience as a young politician learning from elders and participating in politics make him better and understand the narratives especially issues that are affecting the electorates. Mr. Cham called on the youth to give it a try for only when one participates, can one contribute towards making meaningful impact.

Key issues emerged for necessary actions towards improving youth political participation were as follows:

- The youth should be better prepared to participate in political processes including vying for political positions
- There is need to have a generation of Selfless leaders
- Participation in political processes helps build confidence
- There is need to for financial support of young people seeking electoral positions
- Youth should join the political parties and register as members as well as be active party members
- Youth inclusion in decision making processes should be mainstreamed across all levels of decision making
- Engage youth on issues around policies and make them understand and know the existing policies to create better policies that’s reflects the needs and aspirations of young people.
- Inculcate the right values in the minds of youth to better prepare them to become good decision makers
SESSION 3: YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES: CLOSING SKILLS GAP FOR BETTER HEALTH SYSTEM IN AFRICA BY OAFRESS, UCD AND YWA/SENÉGAL
Co-facilitated by Claire Sambou and Pape Bah

The skills development through an entrepreneurship concept was framed during this session with stakeholders and youth leaders. The session equally highlighted the issues of health accessibility and the quality of services. The following recommendations emanated from the discussions:

Recommendations and Actions to move forward in promoting entrepreneurship in Africa;

- Create a business that meet local needs and standards;
- End brain drain and encourage the young generation to apply their skills and knowledge in Africa;
- Capacity building in technology fields (engineering in Agribusiness and food processing);
- Promote leadership of African women;
- Regulate investment from international donors;
- Promote more African and local investment, small and medium enterprise development;
- Invest more in the value chain: Promoting health system by developing more IT solution eg. Doctix platform, Cardiopad, Faso soap etc,;
Promote Demographic dividend to attract more innovative youth;
Educational curriculum needs to be addressed on how to deal with innovations.

SESSION 4: PAN AFRICANISM AND AFRICAN’S INTEGRATION
This session was moderated by Mr. Bakary Fatty. The panelists include Dr. Mary Maboreke, Secretary, African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and Ms. Coumba Toure, Co-coordinator, the Africans Rising Movement

This session discussed how to engage youth meaningfully in promoting Pan Africanism and reflect on commonalities and framed out strategies on how to curb the current challenges that affects the African integration agenda.

Key recommendation that came out of the discussion are as follows:
- There is need for African states manufacturers and service providers to offer quality services to encourage intra Africa trade
- Technology has the power to help Africans integrate well if used for the common good of Africa
- African Governments should ensure seamless travel by Africans across Africa through a common passport and reduced airfares.
There is need to ensure inclusivity of all youth in all spheres of PanAfricanism discussions such that it is not a talk for the elite youth only.

Youth in diaspora must be taken into consideration when talking about PanAfricanism and African integration.

SESSION 5: EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Facilitated by Ms. Anetha Awuku, Project Manager at International Organisation of Employers.

As the world of work continues to transform, it is imperative to reflect on a number of questions including: What is the future of work for youth? What do young men and women desire the most from their jobs? Which sectors remain underexplored yet have potential for youth employment? This session sought to answer these questions and more.

The panelists were: Ms. Beatrice Okuah Prempeh, Ghana Employers’ Association-GEA, Richard Gbedoah, Global Apprenticeship Network-GAN) who discussed the current landscape for jobs and skills in Africa, Momar Mass Taal, CEO of Tropingo Foods and Tony Nyagah, CEO Strauss Energy whose discussion was focused on employment sectors are conducive for job creation in Africa, Ms. Caroline Balikungeri, International Organisation of Employers, Mr. Balongum Odunayo, Nigerian Employers’ Consultative Association, Mr. Paul Adama, Nigerian Employers’
Consultative Association, Alieu Secka, CEO, Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry represented by Baboucarr Saho and Ms. Anne Kahuria, Global Youth Engagement Officer, VSO International

For his part, Tony Nyagah emphasized on the need to embrace solar sector as it is not only environment friendly but also a lucrative employment sector, and while Momar Taal, shared his testimony, after his visit from Canada, he decided to innovate and initiate a mango processing factory in 2012 and in 2016 employed a total of 230 people. He explained that the idea came as a result of abundance of mango that often went to waste during the rainy season and his motivation to create jobs for fellow youth.

**Key recommendations from this session were as follows:**

- There is a need to initiate programs that will capacitate youth and prepare them to be job creators and not job seekers.
- The need for young people to develop the needed skills prerequisite that employers needs as well as for innovativeness
- Youth should be encouraged to take up volunteerism opportunities as these help to build skills and gain job experience
- Create and initiate entrepreneurship programs for youth
- Youth should try to be innovative to create job.
SESSION 6: ICPD+25 BY UNFPA The Gambia

This high level side event was moderated by Ms. Gogontlejang Phaladi of Bostwana. She walked the participants’ through the background of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) convened under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). According to her, the process began in July 1989 when ECOSOC passed resolution 1989/91 that called for an international meeting on population. In the later resolution 1991/93, the Council decided to call the meeting the "International Conference on Population and Development" and further defined the objectives and themes of the Conference. A third resolution, 1992/37, accepted the offer of the Government of Egypt to host the Conference in Cairo on 5-13 September 1994.

The ICPD+25 sessions were divided into three parts; an opening plenary dubbed ICPD+25: Accelerating the Promise from Cairo; a TV show style dubbed ICPD CAFÉ: The Unfinished Business and a TedTalk style dubbed Young, Bold and Winning!
DAY TWO (2) 25th March, 2019

ICPD+25: Accelerating the Promise from Cairo

The first panel on day 2 of the conference, saw the official opening of UNFPA The Gambia’s ICPD+25 engagements in the country, was graced by Her Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of The Gambia, Dr. Isatou Touray, government Ministers, heads of government and diplomatic missions, youth from across the continent, among others.
Following the opening ceremony, the panel on “Accelerating the Promise from Cairo”, took place, bringing together representatives from government, civil society organisations, UNFPA. This panel, which was aimed at marking the twenty-five years of work since the ICPD in Cairo, focused on discussing progress that has been made since ICPD in 1994 and ICPD+20 as well as a call to action to accelerate actions towards delivering transformation for individual dignity and human rights for all, leaving no-one behind in Africa as part of realizing sustainable development.

ICPD CAFÉ: The Unfinished Business

The second session was styled as a TV show focused on the unfinished business, served as a call to action for young people to take up their roles in delivering on the Pan-African sustainable development and transformation vision which is aligned to ICDP ideals. Since governance and accountability are the primary means of achieving all goals espoused in the ICPD plan of action, the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa’s Agenda 2063, panelists discussed the gaps that still exist towards the realisation of the Cairo promise and highlighted where we currently stand as a continent.
Being young people with lived experiences, in advocacy around the pillars of the ICPD agenda on the continent, they shared their experiences and their recommendations going forward on how young people in Africa can better mobilize and organize to effect the change they wish to see.

Through the session, some best examples of where youth leadership has played a pivotal and instrumental role in uplifting the ideals of good/progressive governance and fostering a culture of citizen led accountability and delivering on human rights including sexual reproductive rights, were highlighted.

The panel was concluded with a presentation on Block Chain Technology and the role of technology in delivering on the development agenda., highlighting digital transformation opportunities and challenges in the current 4thIndustrial Revolution.
ICPD Talks
Dubbed “Young, Bold and Winning!” the ICPD Talk session was the final engagements on the ICPD+25 at the African Youth Conference. The session featured young people who took it upon their social responsibility to challenge the status quo and embark on advocacy efforts.
These young people are, Ms. Jaha Dukureh from The Gambia, end FGM campaigner, Founder of Safe Hands for Girls and UN Women Goodwill Ambassador for Africa, Mr. Gossy Ukanwoke from Nigeria, a Social Entrepreneur using technology to provide Nigerian Youth with an opportunity to get university education and finally, Ms. Bina Maseno from Kenya, a politician, social justice activist and founder of Badili Africa. These young people’s work is inspirational and epitomizes the kind of African Leadership we aspire to see leading our transformative agenda. They have saved lives, improved livelihoods, influenced changing legislation, compromised their lives in their pursuit of social justice and have gone boldly and fearlessly in the direction of their dreams.

SESSION 7: EDUCATION FOR JUSTICE BY UNODC. The session was facilitated by Ms. Wambui Kahara

The side event followed the “Living Library concept”. The librarian – Ms. Wambui Kahara, prepared the audience for the “reading process” to empower the “readers” (the audience and participants) to ask questions to the “living books”. The “Living Books” - four young African leaders - shared their experiences working in their respective countries as agents of change. They discussed how they see their role in achieving the SDGs, particularly SDG 16, what they expect from UNODC and how they can support their governments, regional and international organizations and their communities to strengthen the rule of law in their countries.
Ms Wambui Kahara informed the audience about how UNODC operate in empowering Education for justice through inclusion of all forms of interest in acquiring education to become change makers, and also connect youth leaders to strengthen their voice.

Edward Githaiga is the author of Open book. The book has four chapters and they are: Entrepreneurship, Culture, Trade and Agriculture. He emphasized that African can only make money through Entrepreneurship. Culture is important in our social circles and we need to nurture it now to preserve it and not being the generation to destroy culture. Africans need to integrate and trade among themselves.

Pricscilla Wepia Ameam is the author of a book called TMI. The book focuses on Education. She challenged young people to be very much concern about education and think rationally in setting carrier at a young age.

Kudzai Mukaratirwa is the author of where the journey begins. He emphasized that young people need to find out what their Government needs and try to venture into those activities. He also lamented that young people have to initiate organizations based on their experiences and reputation.
Tiruwork Mekuriaw Kelkay authored a book called economic empowerment that entails about how youth of Africa could be empowered economically.

**SESSION 8: TANA YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: YOUTH IN PEACE AND CONFLICT; DOES MY VOTE COUNT?**

Co facilitated by Elyab Tilahun Mulat and Onike Shorunkeh Sawyerr

The overall rationale of this side event was to bring forth open and frank discussions pertaining to the critical issues surrounding youth engagement in political processes and how this is tied to peace and security on the continent. This corresponds with IPSS’ objective of creating outreach platforms for exchange and collaboration hosted in partnership with various stakeholders. The outcomes of these discussions will be brought forward to a greater audience at the 2019 Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa to be convened on May 4-5, 2019.

The discussions with youth focused on the following four key questions/issues:

1. Youth as political representatives
2. Role of civil society (organizations)
3. Role of (social) media
Participants were asked to discuss where they see the key challenges/potentials of these actors/fields and make recommendations for action to policy-makers all of which are highlighted below.

After a presentation on IPSS’ activities in the areas of research, training and policy dialogues with a focus on the Tana Forum and its youth engagement activities, the topic and format of the session was introduced. This was followed by a presentation by the special speaker, Ms. Agathe Telou, Gender Advisor, Focal Point Best Practices and Coordinator of the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security at the UN Office in West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). She spoke on the UN’s activities/instruments for youth involvement in peace and security with a focus on initiatives in West Africa and the Sahel.
Around 30 youth participants from different African countries reflected on the four key questions. They were very frank and vocal and raised many concerns, at the same time emphasizing their interest in being politically more engaged. The participants also raised critical concerns they analyzed the above-stated actors and forwarded key recommendations and comments made by youth. These outcomes shall be brought forward at the 2019 Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa convening on 4-5 May 2019.

Youth reflections at the first Pre-Tana Forum Youth Consultation in Banjul, The Gambia include:

1. **Youth as political representatives**

   **Challenges:**
   - Continual marginalization of youth;
   - Politicians not respecting their commitments or honouring their promises to engage youth within their governments.

   **Recommendations:**
   - Instituting a quota system for youth engagement, quota for youth in political parties and government bodies;
   - Localizing Resolution 2250 in communities and cities, moving past ratification into practice;
   - Removing fees for political party membership or candidate registration;
   - Removing mandatory residency requirements to be eligible for political engagement;
   - Reviewing existing youth-centred policies and drafting implementation frameworks;
   - Instituting penalties/consequences for governments who default on youth engagement standards;
   - Providing training for youth in politics in profile management skills;
• Providing financial support to ease the burden of campaigning/promotion/outreach activities;
• Creating more robust grassroots mobilization platforms; and
• Creating possibilities for youth to receive mentorship from seasoned politicians.

2. The role of civil society organizations (CSOs)

Challenges:
• Fracture among CSOs, competition for financial resources and the spotlight; and
• Only seasonal mobilization during election season, lack of year-long engagement.

Recommendations:
• Creating unity and synergy among CSOs, to leverage collective power and presence;
• Diversifying activities, programs and engagements to rural communities instead of metropolises;
• Engaging in year-long efforts instead of seasonal engagements;
• Encouraging CSOs to specialize on specific topics, instead of spreading too thin to cover everything;
• Promoting advocacy on behalf of youth in holding governments accountable for failed promises;
• Teaching youth the humanitarian principles of respect, dignity, integrity…etc; and
• Offering capacity building training in communication skills, leadership skills, entrepreneurship and awareness raising campaigns.

3. The role of social media

Challenges:
• Increased lack of fact-checking efforts and the sensitization of information; and
• Increased control of traditional media by state actors.

Recommendations:
• Encouraging social media users to engage in better profile management, fact-checking and positive promotion of youth;
• Monitoring content on social media to promote neutrality and clarity, establishing enforcement mechanisms for those who break the rules;
• Taking into account the array of youth with limited ICT access through the use of community radio stations;
• Supporting the use of social media as an alternative tool for youth political engagement;
• Maintaining consistency in efforts to advocate and mobilize, instead of waiting for election season;
• Encouraging youth to distinguish facts from fiction to prevent distorted stories and videos from getting traction; and
• Engaging political conscious artists, musicians, athletes etc to utilize their large online presence and platform for youth-related activities.

4. Campaigning/electoral processes

Challenges:
• Increased lack of faith among youth in the electoral process;
• Lack of strong leadership within youth organizations;
• The heavy financial burden to fund campaigns;
• Fear mongering by governments and contending political parties to intimidate and reduce youth engagement;
• Bribing of youth to provide votes, without due attention given to their needs and requests; and
• Lack of technology/reluctance of governments to invest in technology to moderate and facilitate the electoral process.

Recommendations:
• Encouraging synergy among youth organizations to create solidarity in numbers for campaigning and fundraising;
• Engaging in better profile management among youth candidates, to appeal to a wider audience/general public;
• Instituting a quota system for youth members of political parties prior to election season;
• Supporting year-long awareness-raising programs to promote youth engagement in elections;
• Teaching children about political engagement from an early age;
• Utilizing ICT to enhance voter registration;
• Mandating that political parties clearly articulate their youth-focused policy platforms;
• Promoting youth chapters of political parties; and
• Requiring the inclusion of youth as election officers and election observers.
SESSION 9: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND JOB CREATION

Talib Ahmed Bensuda, the youngest Mayor in West Africa, with one of the biggest municipalities (19 wards) in The Gambia. “KMC is currently working on eradicating the Kotu dump site and trying to introduce a waste management program”, Mayor Bensuda said.

Mr Dembo Kambi, Chairman NYC, talked about his experience and road towards being chairman of NYC “youth work has been part of my plan” He encouraged youths to keep working towards taking our nation forward “I have never doubted the energetic and powerful youths we have in the country”

Rohey M Bah, Social Entrepreneur, shared her story saying “I saw the need to be self-employed”; she started with a poultry farm about four years ago. After being dissatisfied with the fact that there are only foreigners in the fishing industry, she decided to go in not only to change the narratives but brake the stereotype that “it’s a man’s work”. Today, Rohey is the first Female Fisher in the Country.

Chairman Kambi made mention that NYC has been playing a pivotal role in the development and interest of youth in The Gambia. Of recent is the negotiation with both Gambian and German Governments to stop the mass deportations of our Gambian youth. If they want to bring them back, they should train them on skills before bringing them and on genuine reasons. “It is better to
keep our youth busy than for the youth to keep us busy, because if they keep us busy, it would not be good for us". Mr. Kambi cited Youth Connekt Gambia as one of the initiatives rolled out by his Council to contribute to creating jobs for youth in The Gambia.

SESSION 10: PRE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION
The session aimed at introducing delegates to the aim of the General Assembly, rules of procedure, dress code as well as other expectations for the General Assembly. It also gave them an opportunity to ask questions and clarify doubts.

3RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING OF THE AYC
The 3rd General Assembly Meeting of the African Youth Commission followed the following format:
- Submission and adoption of the Commission’s activity and financial reports
- Resignation of the Outgoing Executive Council
- Candidate-facethe-Electorate debate and election and Inauguration of duly elected Executive Council

Only members of the AYC consortium were qualified to partake in the congress which comprises of The Gambia, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Liberia in line with elections
rules. The electoral body received twenty three applicants from the AYC member states but only three countries were qualified to participate in the congress.

The results of the elections were as follows:

- Ms Natalie Sonia Mukundane - Executive Chairperson (Uganda)
- Mr Flomo M. Maiwo - Deputy Executive Chairperson (Liberia)
- Moussa Fara Diop - Commissioner for Political Affairs (Senegal)
- Jennifer Yere - Commissioner for Gender (Nigeria)
- Dennis Sankale Keis - Commissioner for Peace and Security (Kenya)
- Patrick Michaelson Gibrilla - Commissioner for Trade and Industry (Sierra Leone)

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the 3rd AYC Conference ended with a short closing ceremony featuring various speakers including the Minister of Youths and Sports.
ANNEX 1: OUTCOME STATEMENT OF THE 3RD PAN-AFRICAN YOUTH CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT AND THE ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING OF THE AFRICAN YOUTH COMMISSION

We, the participants of the 3rd Pan-African Youth Conference on African Unity and Development and the Annual General Assembly Meeting of the African Youth Commission (AYC) held on 23 - 27 March 2019 in Banjul, The Gambia resolved to the following;

Guided by the Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 of the African Union which states the development of an Africa which is “People-Driven, Unleashing the Potential of its Women and Youth”, by putting children first and engaging and empowering youth;

Inspired by the UN’s Youth 2030 strategy that is geared towards Working With and For Young People towards realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

Motivated by the spirit of Pan Africanism and integration started by our forefathers that have had great impact on the development of the continent;

Acknowledging our diversity and common objectives of advancing the Continental Agenda for youth leadership and political participation, peace and security, as well as their contributions to ensuring youth irregular migration is collectively and swiftly addressed in Africa;

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO:

1) Support AYC in its mandate of uniting African youth by actively engaging in all AYC activities and programs whenever we are called upon to;
2) Continue to raise awareness and advocate for recognition, financing and acknowledgement of the role of youth in Africa towards achieving the AU vision of the Africa We Want;
3) Ensure inclusion of young people from diverse backgrounds in all our engagements and advocate for inclusion of marginalized
youth at national level through our national consortia and at continental level in realizing the AU Agenda 2063 and SDGs;

4) Support fellow young people vying for political seats in our various countries through financially and materially supporting their campaign efforts;

5) Invest in self enhancing skills that can make us easily employable including workplace readiness skills, information technology skills and vocational skills;

6) To fully engage our governments in realising the recommendations of the 3rd Pan-African Youth Conference on African Unity and Development and the Annual General Assembly Meeting of the African Youth Commission as stipulated in this document.

CALL ON AFRICAN UNION HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT, KEY STAKEHOLDERS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AS WELL AS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS TO:

1) Make it possible for youths to occupy central leadership positions in decision-making and the management of programmes across the continent which must include the financing of youth specific needs;

2) Set up a youth trust fund to be championed by African Heads of States through their respective youth ministries;

3) Consider the convening of a Special Session of Heads of State on “Acceleration of Political Participation of Youth” with focus on strong interventions and legislative support that will eliminate all barriers and create well-resourced and gender sensitive political and electoral processes for effective participation of all including women;

4) Adopt policies and measures that prioritize comprehensive gender responsive local and national youth frameworks and develop gender responsive sector plans that address empowerment mechanisms for young people, internally displaced persons and returnees as well trafficked youth with
active involvement and support of the countries that serve as source, route and recipients;

5) Increase public investment in provisioning of youth friendly centers in urban/rural areas with specific focus on key services such as water and sanitation facilities, quality education and information technologies complemented with long term efforts of creating safe spaces for youths across the continent;

6) Engage youth from all spheres in policy and decision making processes, create awareness on existing policies and programmes to ensure youth understand the provisions and jointly monitor and review the policy implementation process with intentional focus and engagement of most marginalized e.g Youth with disabilities, minority groups, Migrants and youth from rural areas.

7) Put in place a youth indicator to track progress made on commitments made locally, regionally and internationally to enhance meaningful youth participation;

8) Invest in education technology for youth who find themselves vulnerable to risks such as child labour, sexual exploitation, physical abuse, and early marriage and pregnancies;

9) Introduce Comprehensive Sexuality Education for young people and ensure they have access to integrated package of sexual and reproductive health interventions and information;

10) Strengthen National Youth Councils to empower young people through skills development and capacity building

11) Eliminate completely youth irregular migration through support based initiatives by governments to encourage these youths to stay and strive towards the attainment of the NDP.

12) Build Profiles of aspiring youth politicians and offer material and financial support they need.

13) Focus on adequately implementing and financing youth entrepreneurial programmes as well as support youth intervention programmes in an inclusive manner that protects
and strengthens young people’s economic empowerment and also create space and opportunities to ensure the contributions of youth;

14) Provide gender sensitive support to IDPs, refugees and forced displacement people, by putting in their security and defence forces, gender equity and equality policies coupled with tailored capacity building and training programmes in collaboration with African Centres of Excellence and partners;

15) Adopt processes, practices, and structures to mitigate climate change and moderate potential damages associated with climate change-related displacement including robust social protection schemes and support to build the resilience of youth and women pastoralists and farmers.

Done in Banjul, this 26th day of March 2019.

-The End-

Side Event Reports are available from this link: http://africanyouthcommission.org/current-activities/
SPECIAL APPRECIATION

The AYC Secretariat and The Gambia National Youth Council wishes to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Government of The Gambia through the Ministry of Youth and Sports for hosting the event, all the assistance and facilities put at our disposal, to all the participants for attend the conference and the AYC GA 2019, and to our following valuable partners for their immense contribution towards the success of this event: UNICEF The Gambia; UNFPA The Gambia; UNDP The Gambia; Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Senegal/Gambia; International Organisation of Employers (IOE); Child Fund International The Gambia; The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI); Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC); Institute for Peace and Security Studies Addis Ababa (IPSS); Ethiopian Airlines; International Institute for Peace (IIP); the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR); Africans Rising Movement; United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC); Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF); International Organisation of Migration (IOM Gambia) and International Trade Centre/Youth Empowerment Project (YEP Gambia); The African Artists Peace Initiative (AAPI); University of The Gambia and Coventry University of England; She Leads Digital Brussels; National Youth Parliament of The Gambia (NYP); The Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC); Your Change for A Change (YCFaC); Gender Equality & Empowerment of Women; OAFRESS, UCD and YWA/Senegal; Activista The Gambia; Young Activists Initiative Nigeria and local partners in The Gambia.