



## PRESS RELEASE

### African Youth Taking Ownership of Their Own Future

Banjul, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – The African Youth Commission (AYC) have developed a mid-term strategy to re-focus and align activities with the network’s objectives at a Leadership Retreat hosted by Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), Jitolee, Kenya held in Nairobi at Ngong Hills Hotel from July 28th to 30th, 2017. The 3-day retreat was supported by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). It brought together 37 participants mainly the leadership and Advisory Board of the AYC, key partners from 16 African countries and stakeholder youth groups based in Kenya.

While delivering the welcome address, Alix Masson, the Global Youth Advisor for VSO International, said; *“we are happy to host you and create the space for you to undertake this really important process. Get more youth voices aligned to your work, because it goes beyond drafting an abstract, to really mobilizing enough youth voices to be able to have a seat at the table.”*

Speaking during the strategy session, Honourable Patrick Zhuwao, Zimbabwe’s Minister for Youth, Indigenization and Economic Empowerment who serves as the Commission’s chief patron, stated that *“African youth with ingenuity must be assured of spaces to express themselves and get it done”*; as the AYC leadership met over three days to identify key operational thematic areas. The Minister advised the AYC leadership to *“focus on relevant thematic areas and align with best practices to better position for impact on the continent, as opportunities remain bountiful and young people must capitalize on evolving realities.”*

Kathy Vaughan, a Consultant to the retreat based in Nairobi, posited *“You are here, to help create a better future for my children, and I am more than excited and honored to be here to witness the process”*. For her part, Maike van Ueuem, Democratic Governance Advisor, Support to the African Governance Architecture at GIZ said, *“we are always happy to support youth actions which are geared towards the actualization of their potentials especially in Africa. For us, this is one of many processes we are happy to support in harnessing Africa’s youth demographic dividend.”*



Boubakar Yougbare, the Executive Chairperson of the Commission, in an interview, said; *“African youth must go beyond the rhetoric and carve their own future, if the world is unyielding to what should be rightly done. We are long due to have a seat at the table.”*

The retreat addressed the definition of the AYC, its scope of operation, values and vision. It prepared a short term plan of action focusing on a thorough membership mapping, capacity building of members within the network in alignment with relevant programmatic areas, as well as increased partnership scoping with regional, continental and international bodies. The leadership agreed to develop a long term strategic document in line with thematic areas on employment and entrepreneurship; health and well-being; governance and human rights; as well as peace and security. The draft strategy is expected to be finalized by January 2018.

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### **About AYC**

The African Youth Commission (AYC) is an independent Pan-African youth network founded by youth leaders to foster synergy amongst youth and youth organizations on the continent and Diaspora. Formally inaugurated on January 2013, the network is determined and committed to promoting the involvement of young people as key partners in the implementation of the Africa 2063 Agenda, support advocacy actions on the ratification and implementation of the African Youth Charter and contribute to advancing the AU shared values through a network of locally based youth actors.

**For more information, please visit:**

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