



...creating the Africa we want

Lusaka, Zambia
15th-17th August 2023

REPORT

**AFRICAN YOUTH
SDGS SUMMIT**

INTRODUCTION



The African Youth SDGs Summit secretariat hosted by Youth Advocates Ghana in collaboration with Alliance for Accountability Advocates Zambia (AAAZ), convened the 5th African Youth SDGs Summit at The Kenneth Kaunda Wing of Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Lusaka Zambia in a hybrid format (in-person and virtual participation) from 14-18 August 2023.

The summit was attended by about 1000+ in-person and virtual participants consisting of young leaders, government officials, ambassadors, diplomats, student bodies, United Nations agencies, bilateral organizations, local and international non-governmental organizations, and other primary and secondary stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

The African Youth SDGs (AYSDGs) Summit is a pan-African forum that connects the youth in Africa to learn about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to empower them to actively contribute to its implementation, monitoring and accountability. The AYSDGs Summit, launched by Youth Advocates Ghana, with support from UNDP Ghana, UNFPA Ghana and a host of organisations has witnessed significant growth since its maiden edition in 2017.

Over the past four years, the summit held in Accra and Ethiopia has attracted over 10,000 youth and other stakeholders to deliberate on critical issues affecting the achievement of the SDGs. The commitment of the youth from the previous summit is evident that, with the right space, they can influence policy and practice with different perspectives and innovations.

This year's theme, "**ATTAINING THE SDGs THROUGH YOUTH INNOVATION AND FINANCING FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**", was intended to initiate a continental conversation towards drawing attention to the need to focus on innovation in SDGs while combating the COVID-19 pandemic and other detrimental challenges, including inclusion, financing gaps and accountability for SDGs. Consequently, there was a need to focus deliberations on key issues and pathways to identify practical and actionable pathways to put the African continent back on the path to achieving the SDGs with youth at the center of the solutions, hence the 5th AYSDGs Summit.



OBJECTIVES OF THE SUMMIT



To lobby African Leaders to recommit to financing SDGs Implementation and priorities to youth development in their respective countries.



To create awareness of SDG and Agenda 2063.



To connect, network, and learn from a pan-African audience and contribute to an inspiring and constructive debate on the role of youth in the SDGs.



To identify, award, and encourage individuals and institutions whose initiatives are impacting the attainment of the SDGs.



Identify and scale-up about 10,000 youth-led SDG solutions by 2030 through the SDGs Innovation Challenge programme.



Raise resources for continental SDGs implementation for Youth-led Organisations.

The commencement of the 5th African Youth SDGs Summit marked the initiation of its proceedings, evoking a strong sense of dedication among the diverse assembly of delegates hailing from various corners of the African continent. The inaugural day was moderated by y Kenneth Wabuteya, Co-Chair of the African Youth SDGs Summit, Uganda, and Natasha from Zambia. The summit was characterized by a sequence of compelling dialogues, enlightening speeches, and introspective sessions, collectively laying the foundation for a concerted examination of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their profound results for the African youth.

SPEAKERS



H.E. HAKAINDE HICHILEMA, ZAMBIA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
GUEST OF HONOUR AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER



MR. CHARLES ABANI
UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR,
GHANA



MS. BEATRICE MUTALI
UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR,
ZAMBIA



NIYI OJUOLAPE
RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, UNFPA SOMALIA



MS. KEISHA LIVERMORE
CHIEF OF MISSION, UN INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM), ZAMBIA



HON. ABDIRAHMAN ABDI AHMED
MINISTER OF PLANNING & INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION, SOMALIA



EMMANUEL AMETEPEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, YOUTH ADVOCATES GHANA
CONVENER, AFRICAN YOUTH SDGS SUMMIT



JAMES MWANGA PIMUNDU
COUNTRY DIRECTOR, PLAN INTERNATIONAL ZAMBIA



KASAPO MANDA
COUNTRY DIRECTOR, 2ND DOOR ZAMBIA
CO-CHAIR, AFRICAN YOUTH SDGS SUMMIT



HON. ERIC UWAKWE
SPECIAL ADVISOR, GOVERNOR
OF IMO STATE ON YOUTH AFFAIRS



FELIX ADDO-YOBO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND ADVISOR, SDGS
ADVISORY UNIT OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, GHANA



**DR. THOMAS CHATAGHALALA
MUNTHALI**
DIRECTOR GENERAL, MALAWI NATIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION

SPEAKERS



DR. RALPH E. NORDJO
PROJECT MANAGER, AFRICA DIRECTORATE
COPENHAGEN CONSENSUS CENTER



KELECHI ACHINONU
NEXT GEN FELLOW FOR JUSTICE,
UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION



MTHEMBEBI BRIGHT HLONGWANE
SECRETARY GENERAL, YOUTH IN BUSINESS,
SOUTH AFRICA



CATHERINE BUSARI
PROGRAMMES COORDINATOR
LEAP AFRICA NIGERIA



LUCHEMBE M.K CHILUFYA
FOUNDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ALLIANCE FOR
ACCOUNTABILITY ADVOCATES ZAMBIA



JEAN-PAUL ADAM
DIRECTOR, POLICY, MONITORING
AND ADVOCACY OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL
ADVISER ON AFRICA TO THE UNSG



AMABELLE NWAKANMA
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMES
LEAP AFRICA, NIGERIA



JAMES MWANGA PIMUNDU
COUNTRY DIRECTOR, PLAN INTERNATIONAL ZAMBIA



DR. SAMUEL OFOSU AGAMAH
MEDICAL DOCTOR, UNIVERSITY OF
GHANA & BOARD
MEMBER, YOUTH ADVOCATES GHANA



FRANCIS MABERI,
FOUNDER & BOARD SECRETARY STEP UP YOUTH
INITIATIVE. COUNTRY, UGANDA

Reflections and key takeaways from the 5th African Youth SDGs Summit: Igniting Youth-Led Progress for Sustainable Development.

By Ametepey Emmanuel – Summit Convener and Executive Director at Youth Advocates Ghana-YAC



The recently concluded 5th African Youth SDGs Summit held in Lusaka, Zambia has illuminated a promising path towards sustainable development, as it empowered young minds across the continent to incubate innovative ideas and initiatives that hold the potential to contribute significantly to the localization and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within their respective countries.

The summit provided an essential platform for young people to harness their creativity and drive, allowing them to actively shape the trajectory of progress within their nations. The enthusiasm and appreciation displayed by the youth underscored the event's pivotal role in fostering innovation, while also cultivating a sense of ownership in the broader mission of achieving the SDGs.

However, it is imperative to acknowledge that, despite the summit's overarching

success, certain gaps were evident. Notably, the absence or limited involvement of duty bearers highlighted an area that requires attention. The true potential of youth-led initiatives can only be fully realized when all stakeholders, including those with the responsibility of upholding the rights of the population, are actively engaged. Ensuring their presence and participation will enhance the effectiveness and impact of youth-driven development efforts.

A notable outcome of the summit was the dynamic exchange of knowledge and innovative ideas. Civil society organizations played a crucial role in facilitating this knowledge transfer among countries. By enabling cross-border collaboration, these organizations ignited a spark of creativity that promises to amplify the positive impact of the SDGs.

The summit served as an arena for intensifying interactions between the United Nations and its agencies, fostering a stronger collaboration in pursuit of sustainable development goals. Nonetheless, a noteworthy observation was the lingering insufficiency in the interactions between the African Union, regional bodies such as the COMESA, ECOWAS, SADC, etc., and the youth. A well-rounded partnership between these entities is pivotal to forging a unified front in the pursuit of sustainable development. Strengthening these ties will ensure that both global and regional perspectives harmonize, thus leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions.

The business community, unfortunately, missed a valuable opportunity to identify and invest in bankable solutions emerging from the summit. As the SDGs present an array of challenges that require innovative solutions, closer collaboration with the private sector could unlock significant investment potential and accelerate the pace of development.

Funding from the Government of Zambia

and the United Nations emerged as a crucial pillar of support for the success of the summit.

The willingness to allocate resources not only demonstrates commitment but also paves the way for sustained efforts in realizing the SDGs. This financial backing is a testament to the belief and passion of governments and the UN Systems in the potential of young people to drive change. The summit showcased the inspiring reemergence of the continent's youth, with a clear demonstration of passion and unwavering belief in building a brighter future through the framework of the SDGs. This showcase not only serves as a source of motivation but also reinforces the importance of cultivating a platform that nurtures this energy and commitment.

Again, the summit continued to play its pivotal role in heightening the awareness and consciousness of young people. Their rightful place as participants in the development space was underscored, reminding all stakeholders that meaningful progress requires the active engagement of the youth. The continued support of the Summit's main partners, UNFPA and the UN System was highly appreciated, with UNFPA urged to elevate its interest, support, and technical participation in the summit as a further deeper demonstration of its belief in the youth.

A resounding call for strategic engagement with institutional bodies within the national and regional political systems emerged from the summit. This call reflects the youth's understanding that their role extends beyond participation—it encompasses active involvement in shaping policies that directly impact the future of the continent.

Lastly, the participation of national delegations in the summit was endorsed as a means of accountability to the youth and a significant factor needed to contribute to the summit's success. These delegations will act as conduits for channeling the knowledge and inspiration gathered during the event back into the fabric of their individual national policy and developmental frameworks. This bridging of the gap between the summit's ideals and on-ground implementation is a critical cornerstone of progress.

In conclusion, the 5th African Youth SDGs Summit provided an empowering space for young people to incubate ideas and

initiatives that contribute to sustainable development. The enthusiasm, awareness, and willingness displayed by the youth reaffirm their pivotal role in propelling Africa toward a brighter future.

The summit also serves as a mirror, reflecting areas that require attention and improvement, such as stakeholder engagement and private sector involvement. Moving forward, these insights must guide efforts to strengthen collaboration, enhance inclusivity, and ensure that the momentum generated during the summit continues to drive positive change throughout the continent.



DAY 1

SETTING THE STAGE: ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

The event commenced with an interactive session aimed at gauging the expectations of delegates for the summit. This provided a glance into the collective aspirations of delegates and underlined the significance of the summit as a platform for dialogue, learning, and action. Among the expectations voiced by delegates were:

A delegate from Zambia set the tone by emphasizing the need for comprehensive engagement, meaningful interactions with decision-makers, and the realization that the responsibility of shaping the future lies with the youth. "I expect to see full participation of all delegates and relevant interactions with decision-makers. It is really up to us to organize for the next generation."

A delegate from Uganda highlighted the significance of quality interactions among young individuals to effectively meet the summit's objectives "I expect to see quality interactions between young people to enable us to meet the aim of the summit."

A delegate from Malawi expressed a yearning for increased understanding and knowledge regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reflecting the pursuit of knowledge as a pivotal summit outcome. "For me, I want to understand and know more about the SDGs."

A delegate from Ghana voiced the desire to deepen comprehension of gender equality, equal opportunities, and resource allocation, aiming to advocate for these fundamental principles. "I hope to gain more understanding of gender equality, equal opportunities, and resources, so I can advocate for their achievement."

A delegate from Somalia underscored the role of the youth as agents of change and their pivotal contribution to shaping a better future, both locally and globally. "The youth are agents of change, so I want to fully participate and send the message back to my country."

A delegate from Kenya expressed a distinct perspective, highlighting the necessity for African-centric solutions that address the unique challenges of the continent. "I want African youth to discuss solutions that work for Africans and not the just global perspectives and solutions."

A delegate from Zimbabwe seized upon the summit as a platform to amplify youth voices and urged governments to take action for SDG achievement. "This summit provides the platform for the youth to be heard. I expect a call for our various governments to take the initiative to achieve the SDGs."

A delegate from Zambia spotlighted the importance of progressive education and participation for African youth, emphasizing the potential for advocacy in SDG attainment. "I expect progressive education and participation for African youth and how we can help through advocacy to achieve the SDGs."

A delegate from South Africa focused on sustainable development, specifically targeting SDG 4 for underprivileged children, exemplified the commitment to ensuring equitable growth. "I hope to contribute to sustainable development, especially SDG 4 for children in deprived areas."

A delegate from Ethiopia centered on

innovation and industrialization as a means to propel Africa forward, advocating for homegrown solutions. “I hope to understand how Africa can industrialize based on innovations and provide innovative African solutions.”

A delegate from Malawi voiced the view that the summit could serve as a catalyst for young people to permeate governance structures and catalyze positive change. “I see the summit as an avenue where young people can penetrate governance systems in Africa and make a change.”

A delegate from Nigeria recognized the summit's role in amplifying young voices, heralding it as a precursor to action. “Voices of young people are represented here. This summit will be the precondition for action.”

A delegate from Uganda drew attention to the imperative of full participation, improvements over past failures, and the youth's indispensable role in SDG realization. “I expect full participation and an improvement on the failures of the last summit and the role of youth in achieving the SDGs.”

Collectively, these diverse expectations encapsulated the overarching spirit of the summit. Delegates expressed a yearning for holistic engagement, a comprehensive understanding of the SDGs, active involvement in governance, innovative solutions, and collective action. Their expressions reverberated with determination, highlighting the potential of the summit to catalyze change and a transformative platform for youth-driven progress across the African continent.



INSIGHTS

FROM OPENING REMARKS BY HOSTS OF THE
5TH AFRICAN YOUTH SDGS SUMMIT



MWANSA CHUNGU

BOARD CHAIR ALLIANCE FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Mwansa Chungu, the Board Chair of Alliance for Accountability Advocate Zambia, delivered a compelling address that highlighted the immense potential within the gathering of young minds. “This summit stands as a testament to the unwavering commitment of African youth gathered here not only as representatives of our nations but as bearers of hope, catalysts for change, and architects of a brighter future for our continent, collectively illuminating the path towards a more inclusive future, each one of us bringing unique experiences, perspectives, and talents to the table.” As she emphasized. Stressing the significance of government accountability in attaining the SDGs, she encouraged delegates to wholeheartedly embrace their roles as catalysts of progress. Notably, she commended the Zambian government’s backing of youth interests and pressed African leaders to accord higher priority to youth development. Addressing global challenges, Ms. Chungu underscored the values of youth innovation, collaboration, resilience, empathy, and continuous learning. Her passionate plea resonated for greater government and stakeholder support for youth-driven initiatives and partnerships, emphasizing the readiness of youth to assume responsibility and actively contribute to shaping a promising future. **“This summit is more than just a gathering, it is a call to action, an opportunity for us, the young leaders of Africa, to turn our aspirations into reality.”** She concluded.



KASAPO MANDA

COUNTRY DIRECTOR 2ND DOOR &
CO-CHAIR AFRICAN YOUTH SDGS SUMMIT

Kasapo Manda, the Co-Chair of the summit and Country Director of 2nd Door set an optimistic tone by highlighting the power of youth innovation, collaboration, and unwavering passion as catalysts for change. The speaker acknowledged the undeniable potency of youth, innovation, and collaboration in driving positive change and advancing Sustainable Development. She emphasized that **“the summit symbolizes the unwavering dedication of**

African youth, who stood not only as representatives but as harbingers of hope, catalysts for change, and architects of a brighter future. Their diversity, reflective of a rich cultural heritage, showcased the power that lies in unity, working towards a prosperous and sustainable Africa.”

She called for the transition from abstract goals to tangible actions, adding **“As the challenges of climate crisis, poverty eradication, education, and gender equality are acknowledged, they are also recognized as sources of opportunity for innovation, collaboration, and lasting impact”**. She further opined that **“the SDGs, representing a global blueprint, held the promise to**



no one behind, with African youth positioned as the architects of this transformation.”

Reflecting on the summit journey, Ms. Manda reminded delegates of the first African Youth SDGs Summit in Ghana in 2017. She mentioned that back then, they started with an idea, and now they are seeing that idea come true in Zambia. She thanked partners like the Alliance for Accountability Advocates Zambia and Youth Advocates Ghana for their hard work in supporting African youth.

Further acknowledgments were extended to the secretariat, co-chairs, and convener Mr. Emmanuel Ametepey, whose trust and belief had made hosting the event in Zambia possible. She added that ***“the summit stood as a symbol of the united efforts of young people across Africa who rejected passive roles to become agents of change”***. With the call to challenge assumptions, embrace discomfort, and collectively shape a prosperous and sustainable Africa, she emphasized the transformative power of youth determination.

She described the summit as a chance to learn, share ideas, connect with others, and start new innovative initiatives. She stressed that “it is not just a meeting it is a call to action for young African leaders to make their dreams a reality.” Ms. Manda added that ***“this commitment does not end with the summit; it is about continuing to work on projects, speaking up for better policies, and helping communities.”*** She motivated everyone to inspire each other and make big steps towards progress.

In closing, she expressed gratitude to all the organizers, sponsors, and volunteers who worked hard to make the summit happen. She commended young advocates for their passion and dedication. She concluded with a message to delegates saying ***“With a spirit of creativity and determination, the African Youth SDGs Summit officially begins, marking a journey towards a better future for Africa and the world. The call to start this journey united, with the aim of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through young people's creativity and inclusive development in Africa, is needed strongly.”***

EMMANUEL AMETEPEY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, YOUTH ADVOCATES GHANA AND CONVENER, AFRICAN YOUTH SDGS SUMMIT

Emmanuel Ametepey, the Convenor of the Africa Youth SDGs Summit, extended a warm welcome to esteemed dignitaries and delegates, expressing heartfelt gratitude for their presence. He acknowledged the distinguished leaders and representatives in attendance, including President Hakainde Hichilema and the UN Resident Coordinators. Reflecting on the summit's evolution from its prior gathering in Addis Ababa, Mr. Ametepey highlighted significant milestones, from impactful capacity-building workshops to the expansion of the SDG Innovation Challenge and substantial contributions to regional platforms. Highlighting pivotal outcomes, he said ***“the resounding call for increased resources dedicated to youth networks and the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in shaping national development policies.”***

Mr. Ametepey passionately advocated for a harmonious alignment between Agenda 2063 and 2030, underscoring the urgency to expedite SDGs implementation, foster youth-led innovation, and overcome financial barriers.



Quoting President Barack Obama, he emphasized that **“Africa’s youth are not a problem; rather, we are the force for Africa’s rapid transformational growth, peace, and security.”** Within the scope of this summit, he recognized a beacon igniting transformative change, sparking creativity, and solidifying the commitment to a sustainable Africa.

He further opined saying, **“In effect, the children, youth, women, and able-bodied men of this great continent have been left bewildered, conflicted, impoverished, sickened, and abandoned in the conundrums of a rather bizarre anomaly. But it cannot always remain like this. Fellow youth, the past few years of organizing this summit have presented us the opportunity to gather in our numbers for a just cause, a demand on us to rise and make the future.”**

Expressing deep appreciation to the summit's partners for their unwavering support, Mr. Ametepey rallied for a united endeavor to shape a future that empowers Africa's youth and propels progress. In closing, he resonantly stated, **“Our forefathers made history; it’s our time to make the future. They created the path, built the foundations, and set the agenda; now it’s for us to take the path, raise the structures, establish the institutional frameworks, and walk the talk for a sustainably developed Africa.”** With a compelling call to action, he summoned a tide of meaningful change and unwavering progress.



JAMES WAKIAGA

UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE
IN ZAMBIA

James Wakiaga, UNDP Resident Representative in Zambia, restated the United Nations' resolute commitment to supporting the continent's young population in their pursuit of sustainable development. His address underscored the UN's high expectations for the summit's success and its unswerving dedication to nurturing youth-driven transformation. He

emphasized that **“achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a collaborative endeavor, necessitating active involvement from government, the private sector, civil society, and youth.”**

Mr. Wakiaga highlighted the significance of a comprehensive approach in light of interconnected challenges, stemming from the pandemic, geopolitical issues, and conflicts. He advocated for a consolidated and systematic strategy that harnesses the inventive spirit of young people. **“The vibrancy and innovativeness of our young people, from Bamako to Lusaka, and from Kigali to Nairobi, has demonstrated that indeed we can look inwards for the solutions to achieving sustainable development for our communities,”** he remarked.

In light of the ongoing environmental crisis, Mr. Wakiaga emphasized the pivotal role that youth initiatives and agencies play. As the call for collective responsibility to address climate change intensifies, he stressed that the world stands at a critical juncture where the energy of the youth is more essential than ever. He concluded by reiterating, **“We are under no illusion that achieving the SDGs is a collective enterprise and needs the concerted effort of government, private sector, civil society, and even our youth”.** He further added, **“Youth issues are integral to sustainable development, governance, climate action, and gender equality efforts.”**

Quoting President Barack Obama, he emphasized that **“Africa’s youth are not a problem; rather, we are the force for Africa’s rapid transformational growth, peace, and security.”** Within the scope of this summit, he recognized a beacon igniting transformative change, sparking creativity, and solidifying the commitment to a sustainable Africa.

He further opined saying, **“In effect, the children, youth, women, and able-bodied men of this great continent have been left bewildered, conflicted, impoverished, sickened, and abandoned in the conundrums of a rather bizarre anomaly. But it cannot always remain like this. Fellow youth, the past few years of organizing this summit have presented us the opportunity to gather in our numbers for a just cause, a demand on us to rise and make the future.”**

Expressing deep appreciation to the summit’s partners for their unwavering support, Mr. Ametepey rallied for a united endeavor to shape a future that empowers Africa’s youth and propels progress. In closing, he resonantly stated, **“Our forefathers made history; it’s our time to make the future. They created the path, built the foundations, and set the agenda; now it’s for us to take the path, raise the structures, establish the institutional frameworks, and walk the talk for a sustainably developed Africa.”** With a compelling call to action, he summoned a tide of meaningful change and unwavering progress.

ADDRESS BY THE SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOR JAYATHMA WICKRAMANAYAKE UN YOUTH ENVOY

The 5th African Youth SDGs Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, witnessed an enlightening address by Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Youth Envoy. Wickramanayake’s speech resonated with the spirit of the summit, acknowledging the challenges faced by the world while emphasizing the critical role of young people in shaping a sustainable future.

In her address, Jayathma Wickramanayake expressed her gratitude to the organizers for the opportunity to engage with the youth at the summit. She acknowledged the distressing state of the world, with its ongoing challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, escalating conflicts, the climate crisis, and eroding political and social trust. Amidst these complexities, she emphasized the need to prioritize long-term impact over short-term political gains. **“We cannot sacrifice our future for short-term political gains at the expense of the longer-term impact on the people and the planet. This young generation cannot afford to wait, we urgently need**



results” she emphasized.

Highlighting the potential of young people, Wickramanayake stressed that more than half of the world's population consists of young individuals adding that, this demographic group offers not only opportunities for youth development but also progress for everyone. She further acknowledged the energy, expertise, and ingenuity of young people to drive positive change while adding, **“It is the role of the young generation to get the world on track to attaining the SDGs and a world that leaves no one behind. We need a new approach, an anchor, a jump start for progress, and the need for unity and hope that this is an achievable reality”.**

Ms. Wickramanayake elaborated on the UN's strategic youth policy (Youth 2030), which aims to empower young individuals to achieve their potential and ensure their rights are recognized. While acknowledging the strides made in recognizing young people's contributions as agents of change, she stressed the need for further representation and participation across the globe. **“Elevating the voices of young women and girls, persons with disabilities, refugees, and other marginalized groups are of the utmost importance”** she emphasized.

She acknowledged young people's remarkable contributions even in challenging circumstances, from conflict settings to humanitarian crises. She urged decision-makers to invest substantially in youth, ranging from quality education to universal healthcare and decent work environments. Her address conveyed the urgency for immediate action and investment in youth, as they are the driving force behind creating a better world.

The speech concluded on a hopeful note, with Wickramanayake expressing her commitment to working hand in hand with the youth to achieve a sustainable world. Her words captured the spirit of the summit, emphasizing unity, collaboration, and the power of young people to overcome challenges and drive transformative change.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SUMMIT BY

ELVIS NKANDU

REPRESENTING PRESIDENT HAKAINDE
HICHILEMA OF REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

The Summit commenced with an inaugural address delivered by Elvis Nkandu, representing President Hakainde Hichilema of the Republic of Zambia. The opening ceremony marked a historic milestone for Zambia, as it hosts the summit for the first time in Southern Africa, providing an expansive platform for young individuals, private sector entities, development practitioners, government officials, and international entities to collaborate and forge synergies aimed at addressing the pressing challenges confronting the African continent.

Mr. Nkandu expressed deep appreciation for the collective gathering, highlighting the event's significance in fostering robust advocacy for strong youth participation in decision-making processes and the comprehension of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The theme of the summit, “Attaining the SDGs through Youth Innovation and Financing for Inclusive Development in Africa,” resonated with the critical importance of innovation and inclusive financing in achieving the SDGs.





EMPOWERING THROUGH INNOVATION AND INCLUSION

Mr. Nkandu emphasized the crucial role of innovation in addressing the SDGs, stressing how innovation can drive economic transformation, enhance competitiveness, and facilitate structural shifts toward high-productivity activities. He highlighted that innovation fosters inclusion by providing individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to actively engage in and benefit from the SDG achievement process.

The speaker acknowledged Africa's youthful population and the pivotal role youth participation plays in economic development. He underscored the necessity of involving the youth in sustainable structural transformation, enabling the continent to cultivate productive, green, and innovative capacities essential for regional and global competitiveness. "The energy, creativity, of our youth and the determination of our youth form the bedrock upon which sustainable development rest." He further opined.

Youth engagement in this transformation, he noted, would enable the continent to leverage regional and global trade agreements while remaining committed to combating climate change. While adding "The voices of the youth must be heard in the corridors of power, and your perspectives integrated into every decision that impacts the future".

ZAMBIA'S COMMITMENT TO YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Elvis Nkandu proudly enumerated various initiatives embarked on by the Zambian government to promote sustainable development and youth empowerment. Notably, he highlighted increased access to education through free education from early childhood to grade twelve, enhanced bursary allocations to tertiary education, and efforts to ensure food and nutrition security through diversified food production initiatives. Mr. Nkandu spotlighted the Zambian government's dedication to improving water and sanitation infrastructure, promoting digital skills development through digital transformation strategies, and implementing programs to provide on-the-job training and experience for young graduates. "My government has also developed a digital transformation strategy to support digital skills. This strategy will enhance digital innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as facilitate the establishment of innovation hubs through partnership with the private sector." He added.

Moreover, the Minister emphasized the invaluable role of young people in conflict prevention and resolution, peace promotion, and stability maintenance. "The partnerships we forge today, between governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector, must reflect the inclusive and diverse nature of our societies. The

synergy between the sustainable development goals and the African Union Agenda 2063 is undeniable. Both frameworks envision a continent free from poverty, conflict, and inequality.” He further emphasized.

Mr. Nkandu's address echoed the sentiment that youth participation in global, regional, and national processes, policies, and programs is a fundamental right and an essential component of effective development strategies. In his closing remarks, Elvis Nkandu called upon all attendees to actively engage in the summit's discussions, collaborate, and strategize to drive closer alignment with the SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063.

In his concluding statements, the Minister opined that “The collective vision of young people, harnessed through collaboration and unity, holds the key to unlocking solutions that will shape the course of our continent's destiny” while echoing a strong affirmation that Zambia is proud to host the event and looks forward to witnessing the outcomes of these vital deliberations.

PLENARY SESSION UNPACKING THE THEME:

ATTAINING THE SDGS THROUGH YOUTH INNOVATION AND FINANCING FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA.

Introduction

The plenary session, led by Lukonga Lindunda, focused on "Youth Innovation and Financing for Inclusive Development in Africa," a core theme of the summit. The panel, consisting of experts like Aziza Taylor, Kelechi Achinonu, Hon. Abdirahman Abdi Ahmed, and Sydney Tetteh Hushie, explored innovative ways to achieve SDGs, the importance of financing in inclusive development, and the impactful role of youth-led initiatives. The discussion brought forth the following emerging issues, trends, and solutions.



Pathways and Solutions



KEY MESSAGES

The key takeaway from the session underscores the pivotal role of youth-led initiatives in achieving the SDGs, addressing pressing challenges, and shaping a sustainable and prosperous future for Africa.

Pivotal Role of Youth-Led Initiatives

The session emphasized that youth-led initiatives are at the forefront of driving progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Youth Innovation and Inclusive Development Financing

Young people's innovative ideas and solutions are essential for addressing complex issues. Adequate financing is crucial to ensure that these innovative ideas are effectively implemented.

Addressing Key Challenges

Addressing challenges like limited opportunities, youth unemployment, and climate change is relevant to youth development and empowerment.

Importance of Mentorship Programs

By establishing effective mentorship initiatives, young people can benefit from the wisdom and insights of those who have navigated similar paths.

Transformative Potential of Youth Engagement

By equipping young individuals with essential skills, fostering leadership qualities, and engaging them as active participants, societies can harness their potential to drive positive change.

Determination of Youth

The youths commitment to fostering positive impacts reflects a sense of responsibility for the betterment of their communities, Africa, and the world.

CONCLUSION

The Plenary Session illuminated the transformative potential of youth-led innovation and strategic financing in achieving the SDGs in Africa. It showcased both the challenges and opportunities that lie within the realm of youth-led initiatives. As the session concluded, the resounding call was for governments, private sectors, the United Nations, and key stakeholders to embrace these insights and translate them into actionable strategies.

PARALLEL SESSIONS

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS. SNV

This side event, hosted by SNV/OYE Project and moderated by Sharon, offered a broad view of challenges, successes, and aspirations within the realm of youth entrepreneurship and employment.

The event's focal point centered around the immense relevance of agri-food systems for Africa's young population. SNV, in its extensive work across several countries, found that the bulk of economic opportunities for young men and women are intricately woven within these systems. Acknowledging this, the discussions ventured into fostering an environment where youth can cultivate their enterprises, specifically delving into leather processing as a viable avenue.

Robson, representing the SNV project in Zambia, illuminated the initiative's multifaceted approach. With a keen focus on improving the livelihoods of out-of-school youth in 23 districts, the project embraces a dynamic blend of skill-building, market-system strategies, and private-sector engagement. This effort has already borne fruit, with over 10,000 young individuals undergoing training in technical skills ranging from agriculture to beekeeping. These outcomes signal a promising shift towards self-sufficiency, addressing challenges like access to capital and land ownership along the way.

The pivotal role of mentorship was highlighted. Angela's narrative illuminated how mentoring, alongside skill-building, has unlocked opportunities in rural areas. Advocating for active participation in the private sector, Angela emphasized that youth should step forward with innovative solutions and advocate for policies aligned with their needs. Thelma echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the importance of changing mindsets and peer-to-peer learning in shaping young entrepreneurs.

The discussion gained depth as Trevor shared his journey, attributing his growth to project training. His perspective, however, identified challenges to young people's work ethics and a tendency to seek immediate remuneration for learning. Elizabeth's inspiring story from the Opportunities for Youth Employment project revealed how group savings and entrepreneurship paved the way to house building, underscoring the role of financial barriers in youth endeavors.

William from FSD shed light on the daunting challenge of financing, particularly in digitizing saving groups. Bridging the gap between financial services and understanding poses a complex endeavor. It was unanimously agreed that access to financing remains a pressing concern across the continent.

The interactive Q&A session raised questions about project sustainability, remuneration during training, program diversification, and inclusion. The emphasis on embedding initiatives into local structures and addressing gender and social inclusion showcased a commitment to holistic and enduring impact. Angela's insights on resource preservation underlined the need for balance in sustainable development.

The parallel session on youth entrepreneurship and employment in agri-food systems illuminated the undeniable potential of the African youth. Through mentorship, skill-building, and innovative thinking, young individuals are poised to reshape the agri-food landscape. Challenges, successes, and pragmatic insights converged to paint a vivid picture of a generation determined to overcome obstacles and lead Africa toward a more inclusive and prosperous future.



MOBILISING AFRICAN YOUTHS FOR CHANGE

OUR STORY BY COPPERBELT UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE DEBATE SOCIETY

This session offered profound insights into the challenges, opportunities, and transformative potential of the continent's youth. The session commenced with the resonating assertion that development-oriented policies tailored to address the specific needs of young people are paramount in the pursuit of the SDGs. Acknowledging a significant gap, it was emphasized that the voices and perspectives of African youth are often excluded from global decision-making processes, thus necessitating urgent reform.

Echoing a shared concern, the discussion highlighted the glaring lack of equal opportunities for African youth. Alarming vulnerabilities were unveiled, including the peril of cybercrime and its interconnectedness with more grave crimes such as human trafficking. A further revelation underscored the limited engagement of African youth within their countries' governance systems, depriving them of a platform to influence policy decisions.

KEY MESSAGES

1



Embracing Technology, Skills Investment, and Personal Branding

Emphasis was placed on how technology can serve as a catalyst for youth empowerment in sustainable development. While personal branding enhances their visibility, credibility, and opportunities for collaboration in the realm of sustainable development.

Policy Reforms and Transforming Virtual Opportunities into Reality

Supportive policies can facilitate entrepreneurship, innovation, and equitable access to resources and the importance of translating virtual opportunities into tangible outcomes.



2

3



Demanding Accountability and Translating Aspirations into Action

Delegates highlighted the significance of holding governments, institutions, and decision-makers accountable for their commitments to youth development and the SDGs.

Youth as Drivers of Impactful Change

The session illuminated Africa's youth as potential drivers of transformative change. With their energy, creativity, and determination, young people can bring about meaningful improvements in their communities and beyond.



4

5



Active Engagement and Innovation for Sustainable Prosperity

The session's discussions highlighted that active engagement and innovation are crucial pathways toward achieving sustainable prosperity.

In reflection, the parallel session underlined the pressing need for comprehensive efforts that encompass policy reforms, skills enhancement, and a proactive embrace of technological advancements. It laid bare the potential of Africa's youth to be the driving force behind meaningful change, envisioning a future where their collective actions propel the continent toward sustainable development and prosperity.

ACHIEVING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING THROUGH YOUTH-CENTERED SELF-CARE BY COPPER ROSE ZAMBIA

In the illuminating parallel session titled “Achieving Health and Wellbeing through Youth-Centered Self Care,” led by Copper Rose Zambia and moderated by Natasha Salifyanji, Executive Director of Copper Rose, a distinguished panel of speakers shared valuable insights. Dr. Chripin Sichone, Director of Health Policy, Ministry of Health, Emmanuel Chilongo, Youth Advocate, Mwaka Lengalenga, Journalist, and Mr. Casco Mubanga, PATA Country Representative, shed light on critical issues. The session highlighted the global shortage of healthcare workers, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, with a doctor-to-individual ratio of approximately 1:15,000, as per WHO. Self-care was underscored as a fundamental pillar of good health, with palliative care and rehabilitation serving as secondary options. The imperative of achieving universal health coverage for equitable access to quality healthcare and reduction of financial risks was emphasized. The media, notably social media, emerged as a potent tool for promoting self-care behaviors among the youth, while challenges in policy implementation and access to care persisted. This session underscored the role of media in advocating for self-care and the urgent need to address gaps in healthcare policies and services.

CLOSING REMARKS

Day one concluded on a note of profound gratitude and unity, with heartfelt acknowledgments extended to the Government of Zambia for graciously hosting this transformative gathering. The summit resonated with a collective commitment to shaping a brighter future for the continent, as distinguished speakers including Dr. Chripin Sichone, Emmanuel Chilongo, Mwaka Lengalenga, and Mr. Casco Mubanga, illuminated the pivotal role of youth in Africa's ongoing evolution. The summit highlighted the remarkable challenges confronting the continent, from the urgent impact of climate change to critical healthcare shortages, systemic inequalities, and socio-economic disparities. Nonetheless, a call for innovation, urging the youth to seize technology's potential, advocate for inclusive policies, and demand accountability from local and international governments. The summit emphasized the principles of inclusivity and collaborative engagement as essential to driving meaningful change, stressing the importance of united efforts to translate ambitious aspirations into tangible impact. As the curtains drew to a close, the African youth emerged from the summit galvanized by a shared purpose, ready to embark on a transformative journey guided by the principles of unity, innovation, and unwavering determination. The summit served as a resounding testament to the power of youth-driven change and underscored their role as architects of a future where prosperity, equity, and environmental stewardship flourish.



DAY 2

THE PATH TO 2030:

LEVERAGING HUMANITARIAN, PEACE, AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS TOWARDS MAKING THE SDGS WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN AFRICA.

OPENING STATEMENT BY

MR. NIYI OJOULAPE

UNFPA COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE FOR SOMALIA

Mr. Niyi Ojoulape, the UNFPA Country Representative for Somalia commended the attendees for their active participation, emphasizing their role in crafting a brighter future for their communities and nations. He recognized the effectiveness of youth leadership in various sectors, from digital marketing to sustainability and green industries. He highlighted that prioritizing youth-led innovations and financing, technology adoption, and sustainable funding mechanisms can amplify the impact of youth efforts and pave the way for inclusive and sustainable development. "There is a lot of evidence of young people who demonstrate effective leadership across the world and Africa and proving that they are not just leaders of tomorrow but leaders of today. I have witnessed firsthand the power of collaboration, innovation, and the unwavering spirit of young individuals in propelling us toward the sustainable development goals" He emphasized.

The power of collaboration, innovation, and the unwavering spirit of young individuals in achieving the SDGs was key as Mr. Ojoulape underscored how challenges can be transformed into opportunities when faced with determination and resilience. Despite this, He noted that the current SDGs lack specific targets for addressing youth-related issues. The energy of young leaders and their active



involvement in initiatives for inclusive development were also highlighted. He encouraged young people saying "The journey towards achieving the SDGs in Africa is one collective determination and shared responsibility. Let us harness the spirit of this summit to inspire action, break down barriers, and nurture a future where the aspirations of our continent's youth are realized."

Mr. Ojoulape stressed the need to empower young people by providing them with knowledge, skills, and resources to contribute actively to SDG realization. He emphasized an inclusive approach that transcends traditional boundaries and collaboration between policymakers, civil society, the private sector, and development partners. Encouraging youth participation in humanitarian efforts through innovative thinking was highlighted as a solution-driven approach.

KEY MESSAGES AND PATHWAYS

- Mr. Ojoulape opined that prioritizing youth-led innovations and financing is a core strategy.

- Governments are urged to create environments where young people are not just recipients but active contributors to change.

- Encouraging a closer connection between the African youth and the UN system and opportunities for professional development was recommended.

- The summit's spirit should inspire action, surmount barriers, and nurture a future where the aspirations of African youth are fully realized.

Mr. Ojoulape's address echoed a resounding call for unity, innovation, and collective responsibility, setting the tone for impactful actions toward achieving the SDGs in Africa. He concluded with a message saying ***“Together, we have the potential to transform challenges into opportunities and shape a legacy of inclusive and sustainable development for generations to come”***.

ADDRESS BY

MS. KEISHA LIVERMORE

THE CHIEF OF MISSION AT THE UN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM) ZAMBIA.



Ms. Keisha Livermore, the Chief of Mission at the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM) Zambia, delivered a captivating and insightful speech that highlighted the crucial role of the humanitarian, peace, and development nexus in realizing the potential of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the youth in Africa. The speech emphasized the need for Africa to invest in its youth population to reap the demographic dividend and create a brighter future. Ms. Livermore shared her perspective on various issues concerning youth empowerment, migration challenges, and the importance of collaborative approaches.

Leveraging the Humanitarian-Development Nexus: Ms. Livermore explained that the IOM's approach to the humanitarian-development nexus is rooted in multi-sectoral collaboration with both national and international partners. This approach entails providing context-specific and conflict-sensitive support. The integration of gender and conflict sensitivity principles is central to the IOM's strategy,

as well as collaborating with various stakeholders to plan and achieve short, medium, and long-term collective priorities. This approach aligns to achieve Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

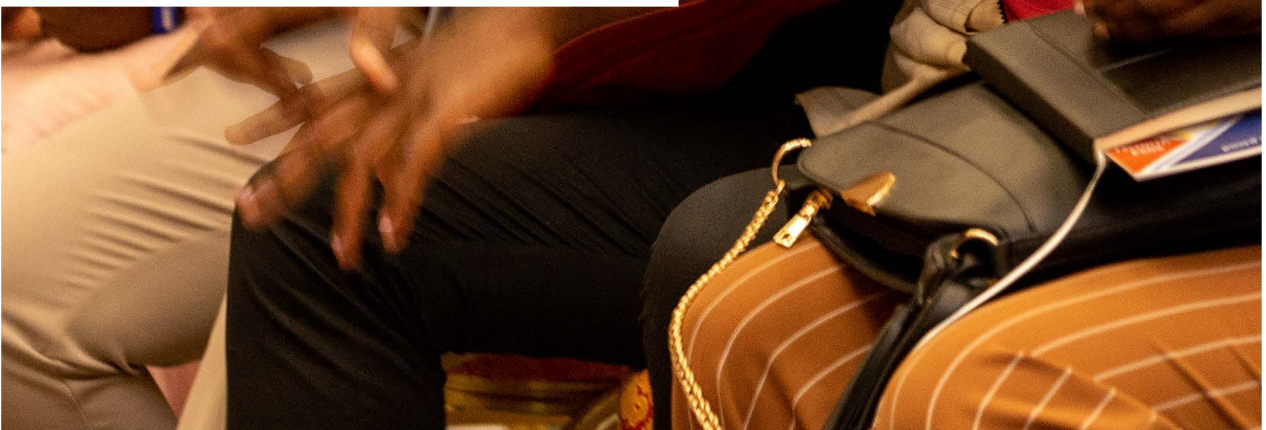
Youth as Key Players: She underscored the importance of involving young people in shaping their future. She encouraged the youth to take on leadership roles and actively contribute to creating the future they desire. Ms. Livermore commended the commitment, dedication, and hard work demonstrated by the youth, which has been instrumental in progressing toward the SDGs. ***“The youth possess innovative contributions to policy-making debates, programs, and processes that seek to avert and***

address situations of displacement due to disasters or conflicts such as peace-building processes". She added.

Ms. Livermore acknowledged the challenges faced by young people in Africa, including high levels of underemployment and unemployment, limited skills development, insufficient access to financial resources, and feelings of apathy and disillusionment. Additionally, she highlighted the migration crisis within the continent, attributing it to forced displacement due to climate and conflicts. "The displacement crisis has led to increased vulnerabilities, impacting both displaced populations and their host communities". She emphasized. She pointed out that the hosting communities of displaced people bear the brunt of the consequences, experiencing economic, political, and security implications. Furthermore, young people affected by displacement often encounter limited access to education and livelihood opportunities. The gendered impact of displacement was also highlighted—young males are sometimes seen as potential security threats, while females are often viewed as vulnerable victims.

Despite these challenges, Ms. Livermore highlighted the resilience of young people in crafting sustainable solutions. Many youths have demonstrated leadership through self-organization and community support. Those who return to their communities or are integrated elsewhere bring new skills and progressive attitudes that contribute to overall development in line with Agenda 2030. The youth have also shown innovative contributions to policy-making processes, offering insights to address the challenges at hand.

In light of the issues discussed, Ms. Livermore proposed key pathways for addressing the challenges and harnessing opportunities: Engaging young people in policymaking and program development ensures a demand-driven approach informed by firsthand experiences. Their insights can guide effective solutions and strategies that resonate with their needs and aspirations. Active Engagement in Migration Management: To effectively address migration challenges, it is essential to actively involve young people in the conversation. Their perspectives and ideas can contribute to the formulation of comprehensive migration management strategies.



PARALLEL SESSIONS

LEVERAGING THE VALUE CHAINS IN AfCFTA AND REGIONAL TRADING BLOCS FOR SUSTAINABLE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ACROSS AFRICA

The keynote address that set the tone for the session echoed the potential of economic engagement to empower the youth across the African continent. However, the discussions did not remain confined to theoretical notions; instead, they delved deeply into the emerging trends and pressing issues that require immediate attention for this potential to be fully realized. The global landscape of trade and economic development is evolving, and the African continent stands at a critical juncture with the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and regional trading blocs. These economic frameworks offer immense potential for fostering growth, innovation, and sustainable empowerment, particularly among the youth.

One of the critical issues that emerged is the lack of resources for youth innovation. Young entrepreneurs often struggle to access the necessary capital and infrastructure to turn their innovative ideas into tangible businesses. This resource limitation directly hampers their ability to contribute meaningfully to economic growth and development. Moreover, the slow willingness of member states to ratify and implement the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and its related protocols presents a significant hurdle. These protocols, if uniformly adopted and implemented, have the potential to create a seamless and conducive business environment across borders, which is essential for youth-led enterprises to thrive. Inadequate policies and legal frameworks further compound the challenges. A lack of clear protection for intellectual property and innovative business ideas stifles the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of young people. In addition, political and economic instability within the continent creates an unsafe business environment, discouraging youth from pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams. Taxation systems within the continent also play a role in discouraging young people from engaging in business ventures. Complex tax structures and high tax rates hinder the growth of youth-led enterprises, thus hindering the economic progress



they could bring about.

Furthermore, inclusivity emerged as a critical concern. Opportunities for individuals with disabilities are limited, highlighting a gap that needs to be addressed to ensure that all segments of the youth population have the chance to contribute to economic growth. The issue of corruption and corrupt practices was highlighted as a discouraging factor for young entrepreneurs. Rampant corruption not only erodes the trust in institutions but also deters aspiring youth from venturing into the business landscape. Limited access to technology emerged as another hurdle. The digital divide prevents young people from harnessing the full potential of technology to innovate and create viable businesses, thereby constraining their growth prospects.

EMERGING ISSUES AND TRENDS



01

Technology-Driven Innovation

The role of technology in driving innovative solutions across value chains and trading blocs is a key trend. This includes incorporating technology into businesses to enhance efficiency and competitiveness.



02

Youth Involvement in Trade

The struggle of young people to actively participate in trade and the need to empower them to harness their potential is a pressing issue.



03

AfCFTA and Regional Trading Blocs

The emergence of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and other regional trading blocs as platforms for promoting intra-African trade and economic growth is shaping the trade landscape.



04

Protection of Innovations

Concerns about protecting the intellectual property and innovations of young people within the trade context are gaining prominence.



05

Trade Restrictions and Barriers

The issue of trade restrictions and barriers across African countries is a challenge that needs to be addressed to fully unlock the potential of regional trade.



06

Transport and Infrastructure

The role of transport and infrastructure in enabling successful trade businesses and economic integration is a critical consideration.



07

Accessibility of Information

Ensuring equal access to information and resources for all participants in the trade ecosystem, especially youth, is essential for fostering inclusivity.

KEY MESSAGES

Incorporating Technology

Businesses, including those involving young people, must embrace technology to innovate and remain competitive.

Youth Empowerment

Empowering youth within the trade sector is crucial for sustainable economic growth and development.

Benefits of Free Trade

Highlighting the potential benefits of free trade for young people, including expanded opportunities and market access.

Protection of Innovations

Addressing concerns about intellectual property rights and ensuring young people's innovations are safeguarded.

Trade Barriers

Advocating for the removal of trade barriers and restrictions to facilitate smoother intra-African trade.

Infrastructure Investment

Emphasizing the importance of investing in transport and infrastructure for trade expansion and integration.

Information Accessibility

Promoting equitable access to information and resources for all participants in the trade ecosystem.

PATHWAYS AND SOLUTIONS

01



Capacity Building

Establish programs and initiatives to equip young people with the necessary skills and knowledge to engage effectively in trade.

02



Policy Advocacy

Advocate for favorable policies that support youth involvement in trade and protect their innovations.

03



Technology Hubs

Establish technology hubs and innovation centers to encourage technology-driven solutions across value chains.

04



Infrastructure Development

Collaborate with governments and organizations to improve transport and infrastructure connectivity within trading regions.

05



Knowledge Sharing

Facilitate platforms for sharing information, experiences, and best practices within trading blocs.

06



Simplified Trade Procedures

Work towards simplifying import and export procedures to reduce costs and facilitate smoother trade.

07



Documentation and Record Keeping

Encourage young people to document their activities, innovations, and transactions to build credibility and protect their interests.

CONCLUSION

The concluding message emphasizes the importance of active participation, documentation, and adaptability for youth within the evolving trade landscape. It's a call to action for young people to embrace technology, overcome barriers, and contribute to the sustainable growth of Africa's economies through trade.

PARALLEL SESSIONS

THE RELEVANCE OF YOUTH RESPONSIVE HEALTH SYSTEM TO ADDRESS SDG 3,4, AND 5 BY UNFPA

The panel featured Dr. Samuel Ofori Agamah, Medical Doctor at the University of Ghana Medical Centre; Joy Masheke, Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Youth Programme Specialist from Zambia UNFPA; Rachel Murekatete from Rwanda Men's Resource Centre; and Chisala C. Bwalya, Executive Director at the Centre for Research, Consultancy and Advocacy on Gender-Based Violence in Zambia. Discussions in the session revolved around how young people can access healthcare tailored to their needs.

EMERGING ISSUES AND TRENDS

The necessity for comprehensive sexuality education, youth-friendly services, and the concerning rise in STIs and cervical cancer among youth.

The prevalence of HIV among young people, particularly in southern Africa, especially men aged 15 to 24, was raised.

Proximity to healthcare services and the lack of accessible mobile services for young people were identified as challenges.

The prospects of achieving SDG Goal 3 by 2030 were deemed bleak due to emerging sexual behaviors of the youth, and mental health issues among young people in Africa were observed to be on the rise.

KEY MESSAGES AND PATHWAYS

Advocacy for condom use and protective behaviors.

leveraging innovations and technology in healthcare, such as AI, virtual medical services, and genetic modifications, were suggested.

The youth were encouraged to utilize research and technology for easy healthcare access, promote industrialization in the healthcare sector, and foster cross-sector education.

The need for creating a supportive environment for youth with mental health issues, including guidance and counseling, was emphasized.

Advocacy for HBV testing, social protection services like health insurance, and the inclusion of cultural norms in sexual and reproductive health education were also highlighted.

The session underscored the importance of addressing healthcare challenges faced by young people and emphasized the critical role of advocacy, innovation, and collaboration across sectors to achieve better health outcomes and contribute to the attainment of SDGs 3, 4, and 5.

RESOURCING YOUTH-LED INNOVATIONS FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT BY LEAP AFRICA

In the pursuit of a brighter and more prosperous future for the African continent, the session on “Resourcing Youth-Led Innovations for Africa We Want” emerged as a focal point of dialogue and insight during a significant event organized by LEAP Africa, Nigeria. The event brought together distinguished panelists and engaged participants to deliberate on the pressing issues, trends, and potential pathways to leverage youth-led innovations in shaping the trajectory of Africa's development.

Led by panelists Amabelle Nwakanma, Director of Programmes at LEAP Africa; Doras Chirwa, Program Director at Child Fund International - Zambia; and Kachigo Zulu, Founder of EcoCube, Zambia, the session delved into crucial themes that are shaping Africa's contemporary landscape. Catharine, representing LEAP Africa, adeptly moderated the discussions, ensuring that the dialogue flowed seamlessly and that key insights were shared among panelists and attendees.

The session shed light on several compelling emerging issues and trends that hold significant implications for Africa's development including, Land pollution and inadequate waste management practices that emerged as environmental predicaments that require immediate attention. Panelists underscored the urgent need for innovative solutions to address these issues and promote sustainable practices to protect Africa's natural resources. The session highlighted the unequal access to healthcare, particularly evident in rural areas where quality healthcare is limited. This disheartening reality underscores the urgency of comprehensive healthcare reform to ensure that every African has access to quality medical services, regardless of their location. An often-overlooked challenge was the lack of involvement of persons with disabilities in discussions surrounding sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Panelists advocated for greater inclusivity and recognition of the unique needs and perspectives of this marginalized group.

The youth's pivotal role in shaping policy and innovation was brought to the forefront. It was articulated that for youth to effectively contribute, they must be provided with an environment conducive to active participation, which includes quality education, skills training, and capacity-building opportunities. Despite the existence of policies aimed at addressing various challenges, a gap persists between policy formulation and effective implementation. This disconnection calls for strategies that bridge this divide and ensure policies translate into tangible outcomes.

The session provided valuable pathways and strategies to address these challenges and trends including Ensuring proper road connectivity to health facilities, especially in remote areas, and incorporating telemedicine for early

diagnosis and treatment were proposed strategies. These approaches aim to enhance healthcare accessibility and reduce healthcare disparities. Creating institutions that support young innovators, coupled with a deeper understanding of the issues they are addressing, was emphasized. This approach can empower youth to drive meaningful change by providing them with platforms to showcase their innovations.

The importance of advocating for proper waste management practices to address land pollution and other environmental issues was highlighted. By raising awareness and fostering behavioral change, communities can contribute to a cleaner and more sustainable environment. Advocacy efforts must focus on integrating the perspectives of persons with disabilities into national and sub-national policies. It was underscored that revising policies to encompass their unique needs is essential for fostering an inclusive society.


A recurring theme was the imperative of involving youth in policy-making processes, both locally and nationally. By integrating the insights and perspectives of young individuals, policies can be more relevant, impactful, and reflective of the population they aim to serve. In conclusion, the session on "Resourcing Youth-Led Innovations for Africa We Want" showcased the critical role that youth-led innovations play in shaping the continent's future. It underscored the need for holistic and collaborative approaches to addressing Africa's challenges, utilizing innovative solutions that consider the environment, healthcare, inclusivity, and policy effectiveness.




EMERGING ISSUES AND TRENDS




KEY MESSAGES AND PATHWAYS

- 

Strategies for enhancing healthcare accessibility, including proper road connectivity to remote health facilities and the incorporation of telemedicine for early diagnosis and treatment.
- 

Creation of institutions supporting young innovators, coupled with a deeper understanding of the issues they address.
- 

Advocacy for effective waste management practices to combat land pollution and foster a cleaner environment.
- 

Integrating the unique needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities into policy frameworks through revising policies.
- 

The imperative of involving youth in policy-making processes, locally and nationally, is to ensure relevance and impact.

In conclusion, the session underscored the critical role of youth-led innovations in shaping Africa's future. It spotlighted the necessity for holistic and collaborative approaches to address challenges spanning the environment, healthcare, inclusivity, and policy effectiveness. This session stood as a testament to the transformative power of inclusive dialogue and forward-thinking solutions in the pursuit of the Africa we aspire to create.



THEME INCLUSIVE APPROACHES - THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVING MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

The event, moderated by Tumelo Musole, explored the significance of involving marginalized groups in enhancing sexual and reproductive healthcare services. Panelists included Dr. Matilda Simpungwe from the Ministry of Health, Jane Mulenga Nkonde from Zambia Agency for persons with Disabilities, Nsofwa Sampa - a Youth Champion, Damaless Banda - a Service Provider at MSI Zambia Reproductive Health Choices, and Moses Kibet - DSW Kenya young adolescent champion.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVENT

Highlight the sexual reproductive health rights and needs of marginalized groups, including young people and persons with disabilities.

Showcase inclusive policy development through collaboration among government, civil society, and health care providers.

Strengthen young people's capacity to advocate for their rights and engage in decision-making processes.

Mobilize regional CSOs to engage with AU in legal frameworks ensuring comprehensive sexual education and contraceptive services.

Explore social accountability in promoting inclusive sexual and reproductive healthcare.

KEY MESSAGES AND EMERGING ISSUES

Ministry of Health's Adolescent Health Focus

Dr. Matilda Simpungwe highlighted the Ministry of Health's dedication to adolescent health, encompassing critical areas such as sexual reproductive health, gender-based violence, and substance abuse. This underscores a comprehensive approach to addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by young people.

Empowering Girls through Reproductive Health Education

Damaless Banda drew attention to the alarming early sexual activity among Zambian girls, emphasizing the urgency of providing reproductive health education. By empowering girls with accurate information, they can make informed decisions, ensuring better reproductive health outcomes and breaking the cycle of early pregnancies.

Kenya's Innovative Youth-Friendly Centers

Moses Kibet shared Kenya's innovative approach to establishing youth-friendly centers for sexual reproductive health. These centers not only address the issue of teenage pregnancies and infections but also serve as safe spaces for young people. This approach resonates as an effective solution for creating accessible and judgment-free healthcare environments.

Addressing Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities

The event's discussion focused on the unique challenges encountered by persons with disabilities in accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare. These challenges include issues of accessibility, confidentiality, and sensitivity. The need for tailored solutions to ensure their inclusion in healthcare services was highlighted.

Empowerment through Involvement and Peer Interaction

The significance of involving young people in policy-making processes was emphasized, promoting their active participation in decisions that impact their sexual reproductive health rights. Peer-to-peer interaction emerged as a key factor in delivering comprehensive sexual education, enabling young people to share accurate information and experiences.

CONCLUSION

The need to involve the youth in decision-making and enhance sexual reproductive health education. The event underlined the importance of inclusivity and social accountability to enhance sexual and reproductive healthcare services.



Alliance for Accountability Advocates Zambia's School Health Program Side Event



Zambia's School Health Program

The event focused on Zambia's School Health Program, addressing the objectives of SDGs 3, 4, and 5 related to health, education, and gender equality. The program aims to create effective partnerships between the Health and Education sectors to improve the well-being and education of learners.



Effective Partnership and Impact

The event emphasized the significance of a collaborative approach between the Health and Education sectors to ensure learners' overall well-being. Highlighting that illnesses divert time and resources from education, the program advocates for schools to serve as entry points to healthcare services.



Key Steps and Initiatives

The necessary steps outlined include training and equipping educators to address health issues in the learning environment, involving the entire community in the initiative, and creating suitable environments within learning institutions and communities. The "Think MD" initiatives involve educators monitoring students' health, emphasizing health education, and preventive care.

Contribution to Gender Equality

The program's conclusion underscored its major contribution to advancing gender equality, aligning with SDG 5's objectives.



Personal Stories Illustrating SDGs

Personal stories shared by Mr. Oumar Mulenga highlighted various aspects of SDGs. These narratives included experiences related to education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), and good health and well-being (SDG 3).



Discussion on Healthcare's Impact on Education

The panelists highlighted the interconnectedness of health and education. An educated society is crucial for development, but health impacts education. Preventive healthcare, regular check-ups, and introducing healthcare systems in schools were emphasized.

The role of parliament was discussed, emphasizing advocacy and influence in policy alignment for SDGs. The new government's realignment of health and education policies was highlighted.

The role of youth in holding leaders accountable, utilizing funds effectively, and ensuring inclusive projects for representation was emphasized.

Learner panelists expressed the need for mental health facilities, menstrual hygiene education, and facilities in schools.

Overall, the event highlighted the importance of collaboration, prevention, and inclusive approaches to achieve the goals of improved health, education, and gender equality among learners in Zambia's School Health Program.

LIBRARIES AS CATALYSTS FOR YOUTH INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AFRICA BY LIBRARY AID AFRICA

Library's Role in Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The event discussed the evolving role of libraries in fostering youth innovation and entrepreneurship. The speakers highlighted how libraries are repositioning themselves to stay relevant in the digital age and create interactive spaces for young

Modernizing Libraries

Libraries are embracing modern technology to enhance their offerings. They provide training to youth in areas like photography, digital media, and poetry, supporting them in entrepreneurship. Digital literacy programs are becoming crucial in libraries' efforts to bridge the digital divide.

Importance of Digital Transformation

The speakers emphasized the need for libraries to adapt to digital transformation. The Internet Society Foundation supports initiatives that leverage the positive impact of the Internet on society, and digital literacy gaps need to be addressed.

Youth Empowerment

Libraries play a vital role in empowering youth to challenge themselves and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Youth are encouraged to partner with stakeholders and utilize libraries for education, digital literacy, and skill-building.

Advocacy for Libraries

The event highlighted the importance of advocating for libraries, especially in cases where libraries are being repurposed or sold. Community involvement is essential to ensure the preservation and relevance of libraries.

Networking and Collaboration

Collaboration among library professionals, youth, and various stakeholders is crucial to achieving the goals of youth innovation, entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and community development.

Pathways

Libraries should embrace modern technology and provide digital literacy programs to bridge the digital divide.

Youth must take an active role in leveraging libraries for skill development and achieving SDGs.

Communities need to advocate for the preservation and relevance of libraries in society.

Collaborative efforts among library professionals and stakeholders are essential to drive positive change.

The event emphasized that libraries could serve as dynamic spaces that empower youth, promote digital inclusion, and contribute to societal development, and highlighted the need for continued support and modernization of libraries.

UNICEF SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION UNICEF ZAMBIA COUNTRY OFFICE UNICEF SIDE EVENT

Understanding Social Protection

The event highlighted the concept of social protection as a means to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable individuals, including children, youth, and women. Social protection includes various forms of support such as financial assistance, access to education, health insurance, job opportunities, and support services.

Challenges Faced by Girls and Women

The challenges faced by girls and women were discussed, including high rates of violence, lack of cash support for mothers with newborns, unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work, and limited access to formal employment, pensions, and benefits.

Gender-Responsive Social Protection

The importance of gender-responsive social protection was emphasized. Cash incentives to keep girls in school, access to health insurance and reproductive health services for women and girls, and support services for caregivers were highlighted as critical components.

Challenges in Social Protection

Despite its importance, gender considerations are often neglected in social protection programs. Women, girls, and youths are frequently excluded from decision-making spaces, even though they are at the forefront of advocacy movements.

Pathways

Policymakers and implementers should strengthen social protection policies through participatory policymaking that includes women, youth, and marginalized groups.

Comprehensive investigations into the role of social protection in addressing critical issues, such as gender inequality and youth empowerment, are essential.

Engage in a series of global and local consultations to gather diverse perspectives and insights.

Analyze both the benefits and limitations of social protection programs to enhance their effectiveness.

Develop strategies that empower implementers and policymakers to improve policies and programs by addressing gender-specific challenges.

The event emphasized the importance of gender-responsive social protection and the need for inclusivity in policy discussions and decision-making processes. It underscored the potential of social protection programs to uplift the lives of girls, women, and marginalized individuals while highlighting the necessity of addressing gender inequalities and involving youths in shaping policies and programs.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE CARTER CENTER SESSION ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND SDGS

Opening Speech

The session highlighted the importance of meaningful youth participation in development programs, emphasizing that empowerment is crucial for such participation. The role of the ministry in ensuring the expression of youth rights was emphasized.

Womba Wanki, Generation Alive

Providing platforms for youth engagement was stressed as a means to hold leaders accountable and generate action points for youth involvement.

Base Mwansa, Young Women in Action

Their organization focuses on governance, economic opportunities, and policy formulation for economic development. They aim to connect young people with government processes and policies.

Rashida Sanusi

Climate change and community-centered approaches were discussed, with emphasis on managing carbon budgets and just-energy transition.

Mwila, Be Relevant Africa

Their organization provides a platform for youth contributions to solving African issues and being a global solution to world problems.

Hon. Eric Nwakwe

The importance of youth involvement in political processes, planning, and governance was highlighted, with a focus on increasing youth participation in politics.

Group Activity



Identifying Legal and Policy Frameworks

Participants engaged in identifying subnational, national, regional, continental, and global legal and policy frameworks related to youth participation.



Promoting Meaningful Youth Participation

The frameworks' contents to promote meaningful youth participation were discussed, emphasizing the importance of alignment across various levels.



Alignment of Frameworks

Participants evaluated the alignment of these frameworks across different levels of governance.



Desired Changes in Frameworks

The group explored the changes they desired to see in these frameworks to enhance meaningful youth participation.

The session highlighted the significance of empowering youth for meaningful participation, showcased various organizations' efforts in engaging youth in governance, climate change, and problem-solving, and engaged participants in a group activity to assess existing legal and policy frameworks for youth involvement. The overarching message was the need for active youth participation in shaping policies and processes to achieve the SDGs.

DAY 3

On Day 3, Coach Darlington Mwandabeya emphasized the importance of critical thinking for achieving the SDGs. He highlighted that understanding one's true identity is essential for innovation and problem-solving. Answering questions about "who you are" and "what you are" helps individuals contribute effectively to society. The session encouraged recognizing uniqueness and managing various aspects of oneself. ME THE GUY's performance followed. During the summit recap, attendees shared their experiences. Responses included appreciation for informative content, unity among Africans, networking opportunities, and transformative side sessions on leadership and entrepreneurship. Participants expressed hope for utilizing the discussed insights and the need for continued dialogues to promote African development and sustainability. Gratitude was shown towards organizers and speakers, and the interlinking of SDGs was acknowledged.

PLENARY SESSION

SETTING PRIORITIES FOR ACCELERATING SDGS IN AFRICA: ENVISIONING AFRICA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SDG SUMMIT



The Plenary Session titled "Setting Priorities for Accelerating SDGs in Africa: Envisioning Africa's Contributions to the SDG Summit" held on the last day of the Summit, captured dynamic discussions that shed light on the critical imperative of accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across the African continent. The session brought together a distinguished panel of speakers representing various sectors, each offering unique insights into the challenges, trends, and pathways to drive the attainment of the SDGs. The session commenced with a virtual address by Dr. Felix Addo-Yobo, Deputy Director of the SDGs Advisory Unit at the Office of the President in Ghana, who point out the significance of Africa's role in shaping the global SDG agenda. This set the tone for the discussions that followed, highlighting the need for collaborative efforts to accelerate progress toward achieving the SDGs in Africa. Among the distinguished speakers were Dr. Samuel Ofofu Agamah, a Medical Doctor and Board Member of Youth Advocates Ghana. Their insights offered a comprehensive understanding of the complex intersections between population dynamics, health, and sustainable development in the African context. Dr. Ben Warr, the Regional Director of the SDG Center for Africa, further stressed the significance of regional cooperation and strategic planning as essential components of shaping SDG priorities on the continent.

EMERGING ISSUES AND TRENDS

The discussion brought forth the following

Financing Gap

- ✔ One of the notable challenges discussed was the existence of a considerable financing gap, which poses a hindrance to the full realization of the SDGs across the continent.

Data Deficiency

- ✔ Another concern raised was the lack of comprehensive data, which presents difficulties in effectively tracking progress and making informed decisions related to SDG initiatives.

Pandemic Disruption

- ✔ The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was recognized as a disruption, leading to the disruption of welfare programs aligned with the SDGs and revealing vulnerabilities in the pursuit of these objectives.

Inequalities in Implementation

- ✔ Inequalities in the implementation of SDGs were highlighted, with disparities observed across different regions of Africa, further complicating the achievement of these goals.
- ✔ The panel also noted the slow flow of funds into SDG initiatives and a reduction in donor support, underscoring the critical importance of sustainable funding mechanisms to sustain progress.
- ✔ The discussion also explored the role of youth initiatives and pathways as instrumental drivers for achieving the SDGs in Africa.
- ✔ Building social capital and understanding business compliance were identified as key factors contributing to the success of SDG-related efforts.
- ✔ Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) innovations were recognized as catalysts for progress, driving advancements in various sectors.
- ✔ Understanding regulatory frameworks within the business space was underlined as essential to fostering an environment conducive to SDG implementation.
- ✔ Gaining investor confidence through innovation and traction emerged as a pathway that can attract much-needed resources to support SDG initiatives.
- ✔ The establishment of development fund institutions aimed at supporting youth innovations was also highlighted as a practical and effective approach to address some of the challenges associated with SDG implementation in Africa.

KEY MESSAGES AND PATHWAYS FOR ACCELERATING SDGS IN AFRICA

From the discussion, several key messages and pathways emerged, offering valuable insights for accelerating the achievement of SDGs in Africa:



Targeting Priority Areas

Prioritizing specific sectors and areas aligned with the SDGs can streamline efforts and maximize impact, driving progress more effectively.



Leveraging Technology Uptake

Embracing technology across sectors can enhance efficiency, data collection, and dissemination, contributing to accelerated SDG implementation.



Fostering Transparent Governance

Transparent governance practices foster accountability, ensuring that SDG initiatives are carried out effectively and resources are utilized optimally.



Strengthening Institutions

Reinforcing institutions, particularly through prioritizing SDGs 16 and 17, will provide a foundation for sustainable and collaborative development efforts.



Enhanced Regulatory Frameworks

Advocating for enhanced regulatory frameworks supports an environment conducive to successful SDG implementation, promoting innovation and compliance.



Internal Mobilization of Funds

Mobilizing internal funds within member states contributes to sustained financing for SDG initiatives, reducing dependency on external sources.



Collaboration and Partnership

Collaborating among member states and regional institutions fosters synergies, knowledge sharing, and collective action towards achieving the SDGs.



Inclusive Decision-Making

Involving girls and women in decision-making processes ensures diverse perspectives and promotes gender equality as a crucial element of SDG progress.



Resource Allocation for Gender Equality

Allocating resources specifically for gender equality initiatives reinforces commitment to achieving SDG targets related to gender.



Civil Society-Private Sector Collaboration

Collaborating between civil society organizations and the private sector leverages diverse resources and expertise, driving SDG implementation forward.

In conclusion, the Plenary Session on "Setting Priorities for Accelerating SDGs in Africa" highlighted the pressing need for concerted efforts to drive sustainable development across the continent. The insights, trends, and pathways discussed in this session serve as a blueprint for action. Achieving the SDGs in Africa requires the collective commitment of governments, youth, and international partners. The shared vision of harmonizing SDGs, AU Agenda 2063, and AFCFTA to streamline efforts is indicative of the path forward. By embracing collaboration, innovation, and strategic planning, Africa can truly contribute to the global SDG agenda and pave the way for a brighter and more sustainable future.

PLENARY SESSION

YOUNG VOICES IN CONVERSATION- UNLEASHING YOUTH POWER FOR GENDER EQUALITY; PLAN INTERNATIONAL

The event was marked by insightful discussions, reflections, and valuable exchanges that featured the importance of involving youth in driving transformative change toward gender equality. Victoria Okwujia, the Executive Director of The Ochanya Humanitarian Foundation Youth Reference Group Plan International Nigeria, delivered an opening statement. She emphasized that the event, along with the summit, showcased the dynamic energy, unwavering passion, **and resolute determination that African youth contribute to global transformation. Victoria stressed that “the SDGs represent a visionary roadmap to create a world free from poverty, inequality, and injustice by 2030 and that African youth bear the profound responsibility of turning this vision into reality”.**

EMERGING TRENDS

The event's discourse unveiled several emerging trends that shape the journey towards gender equality:

Dynamic Youth Energy

- ✓ The discussions revealed the vibrancy, dedication, and resolute determination that African youth bring to the global transformation agenda. Young voices showcased their deep commitment to eradicating poverty, inequality, and injustice as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Incomplete Transformation without Gender Equality

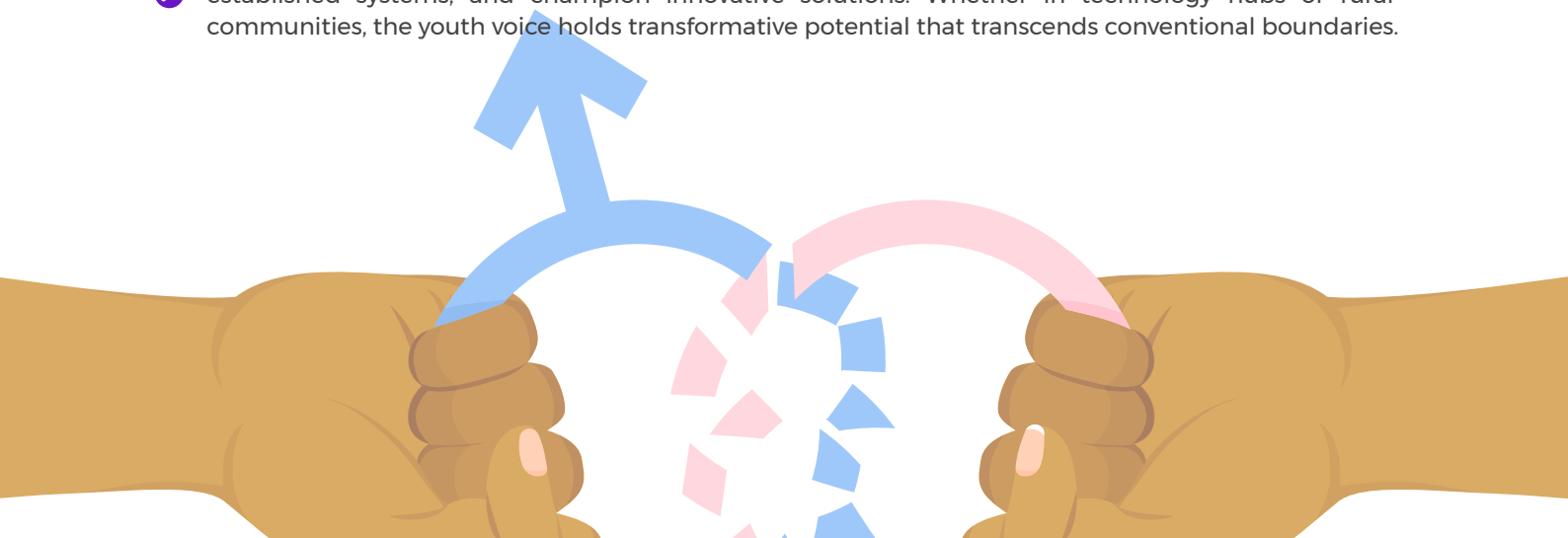
- ✓ While acknowledging the significant potential of youth to drive transformative change, speakers highlighted the persistent challenge of gender inequality that hampers progress across societies. The discussions emphasized that gender equality is not a goal confined to a portion of the population but a precondition for sustainable development, social advancement, and comprehensive prosperity.

Diversity as a Strength

- ✓ A recurring theme highlighted the value of diversity and the strength it infuses into societies. The discussions underlined the need to dismantle barriers that hinder potential, suppress talents, and restrict aspirations solely based on gender.

Youth-Led Innovation

- ✓ The event emphasized that young individuals possess the power to challenge norms, question established systems, and champion innovative solutions. Whether in technology hubs or rural communities, the youth voice holds transformative potential that transcends conventional boundaries.



KEY PATHWAYS

The discussions revealed key pathways to leverage youth power for gender equality and enact tangible change



Translating Potential into Action

The event underscored the need to harness the transformative potential of youth into concrete actions, policies, and projects that advance gender equality and ensure inclusivity.



Youth Engagement and Advocacy

Participants recognized that youth engagement and advocacy are pivotal for dismantling gender-based discrimination and ensuring that no one is left behind. This encompasses sensitization, awareness creation, and collaboration across diverse sectors.



Diverse Gender Transformative Initiatives

The conversations spotlighted the importance of gender-transformative engagement and initiatives that sensitize and empower young people across genders. It was noted that involving young men in the fight for gender equality is equally crucial.



Infrastructure and Access

The discussions emphasized the need to ensure equal access to opportunities, resources, and facilities for young people of all genders. This extends to sanitary facilities, access to digital technology in rural areas, and promoting equal opportunities for decent work.

In conclusion, the event "Young Voices in Conversation: Unleashing Youth Power for Gender Equality" provided a platform to recognize the potency of youth in steering transformative change. Emerging trends highlighted the dynamism and inclusivity of youth-led initiatives, while key pathways illuminated strategies for translating potential into impactful action. As the event concluded, the prevailing sentiment was that by embracing youth-driven innovation, collaboration, and policy advocacy, a future of gender equality and inclusive development can indeed be realized.



AFRICAN YOUTH INNOVATION AWARD: SMSS AND INNOVATION FOR SDGS

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) organized a compelling side event in partnership with the Africa Youth SDG Summit and AfriLabs. This event highlighted the Youth SDG Innovation Award, an initiative aimed at recognizing and rewarding young African entrepreneurs who have developed innovative solutions to address specific challenges faced by firms, governments, households, or communities, thereby contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. The event not only celebrated the winners of the award but also aimed to inspire African youth to embrace innovative entrepreneurship for the betterment of their societies and the achievement of the SDGs. The event showcased the six winners of the Youth SDG Innovation Award and provided them with the platform to share their experiences, challenges, and the journey behind their innovative solutions. This allowed them to inspire and encourage other young Africans to pursue high-growth entrepreneurship that has the potential to create a significant impact on their communities and contribute to the SDGs.

During the event, key speaker presentations resonated with the theme of the award and the summit's focus on science, technology, and innovation (STI). Ms. Aissatou Gaye highlighted the global responsibility of young people in building the future for themselves and the planet. She emphasized that this award serves as a testament to the potential of youth to drive positive change. Ms. Nako Madu offered words of encouragement to non-winners, urging them not to be discouraged by this outcome. She emphasized that this moment is a stepping stone, and there will be numerous other opportunities for them to refine their innovations and continue making a difference. The winners of the Youth SDG Innovation Award then proceeded to present their groundbreaking innovations, sharing their journey, challenges, and solutions. Noteworthy innovations included:

GDome Ltd (South Africa): Brett Eagle, CEO of GDome Ltd, introduced their innovation—an acrylic dome-shaped cover that protects underwater cameras. This allows users to capture stunning underwater and over-water shots. The GDome promotes SDG 8 and has received over 14,000 orders worldwide, with Australia and the United States being its largest consumers. The innovation addresses challenges like making high-quality photography and video affordable and creating long-lasting camera housings.

SAYeTECH (Africa): Gift Amakuku, Co-founder of SAYeTECH, shared how their smart agricultural solutions are benefitting smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. These solutions lessen post-harvest losses, grain breakage, and other challenges faced by farmers. SAYeTECH's innovations align with SDGs 1, 2, 4, 8, and 9.

Simbona Africa (Ethiopia): Habtamu Abafoge introduced Simbona Africa, a MedTech company that designs and manufactures medical devices in Ethiopia. Their products include UVC light-based sterilization devices, phototherapy devices, and infant radiant warmers.

AI Glasses: Ayombule Sayabula shared his innovation, an AI-powered pair of glasses that help people identify colors, scan text, and convert it to audio.

This innovation aims to break down language barriers and make technology accessible to a wider audience.

Zelij Factory: Honda and Saif presented Zelij Factory's innovative approach to solving the housing and plastic pollution crises. They create building blocks from plastic waste, contributing to SDGs 11, 12, 13, and 9.

Pine Kazi (Kenya): Olivia Awuor, Co-founder of Pine Kazi, discussed how their Kenyan startup transforms pineapple leaves and recycled rubber into fashionable footwear. This initiative promotes a circular economy by using pineapple waste to craft eco-friendly products like shoes and bags. The approach connects waste management with product design and contributes to SDGs 11 and 12. Challenges faced by the winners ranged from funding constraints to language barriers and difficulties in accessing partners. Despite these challenges, these innovative entrepreneurs demonstrated resilience and determination in addressing critical issues through their creative solutions.

UNDERSTANDING WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA COMMITMENTS FOR EDUCATED, HEALTHY, AND THRIVING ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

The event resonated as a testament to the dedication of regional leaders to nurturing a future where youth are educated, healthy, and prepared for success. During the session, leaders from West and Central Africa discussed their commitments to education and health, focusing on important aspects of youth development in the region. The panel discussions emphasized the significance of accountability and the necessity for a well-defined strategy, inclusive of comprehensive sexuality education. These commitments transcended mere words, constituting a robust cornerstone. The conversations also emphasized their potential as catalysts for advocacy and transformative change. A call to action was made to address urgent concerns such as the elimination of taxes on sanitary pads and the provision of support for victims of sexual harassment.

KEY MESSAGES FROM PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel discussion ignited a series of poignant insights, shedding light on the significance of the commitments and their multifaceted impacts. Notable messages from the discourse included:

- ✓ The West and Central Africa commitments represent a robust accountability framework.
- ✓ Comprehensive sexuality education is a paramount facet of these commitments.
- ✓ The commitments provide a powerful tool for advocacy.
- ✓ Advocacy is needed for the removal of taxes on sanitary pads and the subsidization or elimination of medical bills for victims of sexual harassment.
- ✓ These commitments have the potential to hold governments accountable for their promises.

The session then transitioned to breakout groups, where participants collaborated in three groups to deliberate on essential advocacy actions. These actions spanned the regional, national, and community levels, emphasizing tangible steps to ensure the full realization of the commitments.

ADVOCACY AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

- ✓ Advocate for the involvement of ministries of gender and youth in the commitments.
- ✓ Emphasize the visibility and functionality of the commitment's implementation process.
- ✓ Augment participation and engagement of young people.
- ✓ Include persons with disabilities as integral components of the commitment.
- ✓ Establish a clear and concise definition of the commitment.
- ✓ Encompass adolescent boys and young males in the commitment's scope.
- ✓ Ensure comprehensive dissemination of commitment-related information.

- ✓ Foster collaboration and involvement of international organizations.
- ✓ Respect and incorporate cultural norms and practices within the commitment framework.

ADVOCACY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- ✓ Foster collaboration among ministries of education, health, and other sectors for a holistic implementation.
- ✓ Develop comprehensive educational and awareness programs about the commitment of young people.
- ✓ Create bottom-up national strategies that are tailored to implement the commitment effectively.
- ✓ Formulate an inclusive adolescent policy with input from political, traditional, and faith-based leaders.

ADVOCACY AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

- ✓ Empower young people in rural areas to actively participate in commitment-related initiatives.
- ✓ Promote education, training, and awareness about the commitment within communities.
- ✓ Strengthen support systems among young people to ensure their successful engagement.
- ✓ Adapt commitment implementation to align with the unique contexts of local communities.
- ✓ Facilitate community engagement and dialogues to raise awareness and foster ownership.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ The inclusion of persons with disabilities is crucial for successful commitment implementation.
- ✓ Stakeholders should strategically choose allies to drive effective advocacy agendas.
- ✓ Youth inclusion must be embedded throughout commitment implementation.
- ✓ Governments, CSOs, and young people should collaborate at all levels for successful realization.
- ✓ Capacity building for young people is essential for their effective engagement.
- ✓ Community capacity building is key for sustainable and impactful implementation.

To conclude, this side event shed light on the commitments propelling the progress of young individuals in West and Central Africa. Through dynamic panel discussions and interactive breakout sessions, concrete strategies for advocacy and implementation emerged, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, inclusivity, and strategic alliances in translating commitments into substantial, enduring transformations. The event highlighted that these commitments hold more than mere words, they serve as steppingstones towards a future where the youth of the region are empowered, educated, and healthier, ultimately paving the way for meaningful change.

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF YOUTHS IN ACCELERATING EFFORTS TOWARDS RECOVERY OF COVID 19 AND ACHIEVEMENT OF SDGS AS WELL AS AGENDA 2063

The panel discussion centered on the critical topics of navigating SDG achievement amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the integration of the African Union's Agenda 2063 with the Global Agenda 2063. The insightful deliberations shed light on the role of youth in driving sustainable development, the importance of harmonizing continental and global frameworks, and the strategies to overcome challenges. The main points of the speakers' presentations encompassed the essential role of youth voices and participation in shaping the path toward SDG achievement. Emphasis was on the importance of amplifying the voices of young people and ensuring their rightful place in decision-making processes. And that what is owed to young people should be granted without compromise. The Agenda 2063, established in 2015, serves as a global blueprint for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On the other hand, Agenda 2063 is a developmental program by the African Union that centers on the African continent, guided by the principles of pan-Africanism.

The discussion then delved into the harmonization of these two frameworks into one cohesive strategy. Tumelo highlighted the importance of individual self-awareness and purpose in contributing to both agendas. She emphasized that understanding why SDG implementation matters to oneself forms the foundation for contributing effectively. It was also suggested that partnerships between youth and governments could play a pivotal role in realizing this integration. The role of governments in policy implementation was also highlighted. While young people possess solutions, governments should provide avenues for youth to be trained and engaged in achieving the SDGs. Addressing the political nature of the SDGs, advocacy spaces are essential, and governments must be open to working with youth in achieving their goals. It was shared that the UN has established school clubs and group chats for teachers to share information not found in local contexts. Furthermore, the UN has translated the SDGs into various languages globally, including 17 Zambian languages. However, funding constraints have limited the availability of more translations, although efforts are ongoing to rectify this gap.



EMERGING TRENDS

Several salient trends emerged from the discussion, illuminating key pathways that drive the nexus between recovery, SDG achievement, and harmonization:



Youth Voices and Participation

The crux of the discussion rested on the essentiality of youth voices and active participation in shaping the trajectory toward SDG fulfillment. The emphasis lay on magnifying young individuals' voices and securing their rightful inclusion in decision-making processes, leaving no room for compromise. The consensus was that young people's rightful dues should be unequivocally granted.

Global and Continental Frameworks

The harmonization of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 was a pivotal theme. The panel recognized the global significance of Agenda 2030, a blueprint for SDG attainment since its establishment in 2015. On the other hand, Agenda 2063, championed by the African Union, echoed the developmental aspirations of the African continent, grounded in the principles of Pan-Africanism.



KEY PATHWAYS

The discussions illuminated strategic pathways to foster the integration of these two frameworks and enhance youth engagement:

1

Individual Purpose and Contribution

Tumelo articulated the importance of individual self-awareness and purpose in aligning with both agendas. Understanding the personal relevance of SDG implementation formed the bedrock for impactful contributions. The role of partnerships between youth and governments emerged as a catalyst for effective integration.

2

Governmental Role in Policy Implementation

The role of governments in policy execution was highlighted. While young people possess innovative solutions, governments should facilitate avenues for their training and active engagement in realizing the SDGs. Advocacy spaces were identified as critical, necessitating government openness to collaborate with youth.

3

Youth Engagement in Advocacy

Advocacy was underlined as a potent force. Active collaboration between governments and youth in pursuing common goals was underscored. A call to provide spaces and platforms for advocacy was made, recognizing the political nature of the SDGs and the imperative of youth-government synergy.

4

UN Initiatives

UN-driven initiatives were spotlighted, showcasing efforts to amplify SDG awareness. The establishment of school clubs and group chats for teachers to share contextual information and the translation of SDGs into diverse languages globally, including 17 Zambian languages, stood as evidence of these efforts.

THE BIG CONVO

FAST-TRACKING THE SDGS IN AFRICA - THE YOUTH, THE GOVERNMENT, THE UN, THE AU

This engaging segment aimed to shed light on the pivotal role of collaboration between youth, government bodies, the United Nations (UN), and the African Union (AU) in accelerating the progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across the African continent. The session was marked by a series of enlightening discussions, highlighted by the following key moments:

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

MR. JEAN-PAUL ADAM

DIRECTOR, POLICY AND
ADVOCACY, OFFICE OF THE
SPECIAL ADVISOR ON AFRICA TO
THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL



MR. Jean-Paul Adam in his address highlighted the significance of the summit and the urgency of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He emphasized that while the conversation about the SDGs is crucial, it must be followed by substantial action, given the ongoing challenges and disparities. He stated, "There is no bigger topic than achieving the SDGs, as they represent the future we want."

Mr. Adam acknowledged that the current times are challenging, marked by rising costs of living, inadequate job creation, climate change impacts, political instability, and insecurity. However, he emphasized that the potential for accelerating the SDGs still exists. He noted that the principles discussed in the summit's agenda hold the key to this acceleration, which he believes should be driven by and for young people.

The speaker outlined three key principles that underpin the acceleration of the SDGs:

Active Participation of Young People

1

He stressed that young people need to be fully engaged in democratic processes, including running for office and demanding accountability. He emphasized the importance of innovation, technology, entrepreneurship, and investment in the continent among young individuals.

Role of Institutions

2

He highlighted the need for institutions to be representative of young people's aspirations. The collaboration between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) aims to ensure that young people are not just present but driving the agenda.

Promoting Change Levers

3

Mr. Adam called for identifying game changers that can accelerate progress. He questioned the sustainability of historically driven economic sectors, like raw material export, and advocated for sustainable value chains that empower youth and lead to fulfilling livelihoods.

The speaker further emphasized the importance of key levers of change that can drive acceleration:

1

Access to Energy

He noted that providing electricity access can significantly boost per capita household incomes, which would stimulate economic growth and increase demand for goods and services. He highlighted the importance of building African value chains around the energy sector.

2

Financial Resources and Investment

Mr. Adam acknowledged the challenge of access to financing in Africa and proposed reforms in the international finance environment. He suggested curbing illicit financial flows, facilitating intra-African investment, and utilizing carbon credit markets to boost resources.

3

Inclusive Governance

The speaker also stressed the vital link between development, peace, and security. Strengthening institutions and delivering essential services to vulnerable populations as the key aspects of achieving lasting peace.

4

Climate Resilience

Mr. Adam highlighted the urgent need for climate-proof investments, given the projected economic impact of climate change on African countries. Green investments, in turn, can serve as drivers and accelerators of the SDGs.

He concluded by thanking the participants and expressing hope that their activism and efforts have already made a difference. He encouraged the continuation of discussions and collaborative efforts, emphasizing the transformative potential of collective action towards the SDGs. He noted, *“The process requires many people acting separately towards these goals. This is not always simple. And the process can be frustrating. But I would like to tell you that your activism has already had an impact...despite the challenges before us, we should still have hope.”*

PANEL DISCUSSION

The session was a dynamic panel discussion, featuring esteemed panelists from various sectors, each bringing a unique perspective on fast-tracking SDGs in Africa

Dr. Ben Warr, Regional Director, SDG Center for Africa, Dr. Warr elaborated on the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration and the role of the SDG Center for Africa in facilitating partnerships that drive progress. He stressed the need for actionable strategies and innovative solutions to overcome challenges hindering SDG achievement.

Dr. Thomas Muthali, Director, National Development Planning Commission, Malawi, explored the role of national development planning in aligning with the SDGs. He highlighted the importance of inclusive governance and policy frameworks that incorporate youth aspirations and concerns.

Kasapo Manda, Co-Chair, African Youth SDGs Summit shared insights into youth-led initiatives that amplify the impact of SDGs. He emphasized the role of young people as change agents and their potential to drive transformational change across Africa.

Sara Hamouda, representing the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), communicated the significance of accountability mechanisms and peer reviews in ensuring SDG progress. She highlighted the importance of data-driven decision-making and transparent reporting.

UNFPA Zambia Dep.Rep: The UNFPA Zambia Deputy Representative shared insights into the UN's

commitment to supporting youth-focused initiatives. She discussed the importance of prioritizing sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, and youth empowerment within the SDG framework. The panel discussion initiated interactions with the audience, who posed questions that ranged from engaging young people in policymaking to overcoming bureaucratic challenges. The exchange of ideas underlined the importance of collaborative efforts and inclusive decision-making to overcome obstacles in SDG implementation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

Collaboration among youth, governments, the UN, and the AU is essential for accelerating SDG progress in Africa.

2

Inclusivity and youth engagement are key to addressing challenges and finding innovative solutions.

3

Data-driven approaches and transparent reporting are crucial for accountability and measuring impact.

4

Gender-responsive strategies and addressing disparities are integral to achieving the SDGs.

5

Cross-sectoral partnerships and actionable strategies are needed to overcome obstacles hindering progress.

6

A demand for the AU to send delegations to youth summits and a complete representation of all African youth in Summits of this nature.

In conclusion, "The Big Convo Fast tracking the SDGs in Africa" session emphasized the collective responsibility and shared commitment to transform Africa's development and the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. The collaboration between youth, governments, the UN, and the AU serves as a beacon of hope, signaling the potential for positive change that emerges from unified action. As the summit continues, the discussions from this session will undoubtedly serve as a driving force to shape policies, initiatives, and collaborations that will fast-track the achievement of the SDGs across the continent.

SDG ACHIEVERS' AWARDS



The official closing of the 5th African Youth SDGs Summit was characterized by the SDG Achievers Awards, the dissemination of outcome statements, and the unveiling of the next host city for the next edition of the Summit. The SDG Achievers Awards, led by Ako Foundation, recognized and awarded individuals and organizations who have shown innovative leadership in contributing to sustainable development in Africa.

CLOSING AND SOLIDARITY

The closing message delivered by the Convener encapsulated the essence of the summit, highlighting the shared commitment, collective strength, and transformative potential that characterized the event.

Emmanuel Ametepey acknowledged the remarkable contributions of the attendees, including dignitaries and the youth of Africa who participated with enthusiasm and dedication. He expressed his gratitude for the vibrant discussions, valuable insights, and purposeful engagement that transpired throughout the summit.

Mr. Ametepey emphasized the significance of the summit as a platform that illuminated the path forward for both the present and future generations. He commended delegates for their commitment to driving positive change and expressed his admiration for their passion to create a better future for Africa and the world.

He urged participants to carry forward the spirit of

collaboration and shared purpose that characterized the summit, translating their discussions and commitments into tangible actions that uplift communities and nations. He encouraged attendees to internalize the lessons learned, forge connections, and leverage their collective energy to create lasting positive impact. In closing, Emmanuel Ametepey called upon the participants to depart from the summit with a sense of purpose and determination. He urged them to carry the ideals and commitments forged during the event into their respective spheres of influence, channeling their energy towards creating a future where aspirations are fully realized. Finally, the Convener of the African Youth SDGs Summit, Mr. Emmanuel Ametepey, announced that the 6th African Youth SDGs Summit will be held in Accra, Ghana.

CLOSING AND SOLIDARITY MESSAGE FROM THE CONVENER



We, the participants of the African Youth SDGs Summit, convened in The Kenneth Kaunda Wing of Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Zambia, from August 5 to 17, 2023, recognizing the urgent need to accelerate progress towards the attainment of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

Acknowledging the interconnectedness of our aspirations with various continental and global policy frameworks, including the African Union's Agenda 2063, Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) and West & Central Africa Commitments (WCA) towards Educated, Healthy and Thriving adolescents and young people, together within the frameworks of regional bodies including ECOWAS, COMESA;

Reaffirming our commitment to active participation, collaboration, innovation, and action to catalyse transformative change across Africa and the world;

Recall and draw inspiration from:

1

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all, highlighting the importance of youth empowerment and participation in achieving the SDGs.

2**Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want**

The African Union's strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent, aiming to achieve a prosperous, integrated, and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and capable institutions.

3**The Paris Agreement on Climate Change**

Our commitment to addressing climate change and promoting sustainable development, recognizing the need for adaptation and resilience-building efforts in the face of environmental challenges.

4**The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**

Our dedication to reducing the impact of disasters and enhancing resilience at the local, national, and regional levels.

5**The African Youth Charter**

A framework for fostering the participation, development, and empowerment of young people across the continent, ensuring their voices are heard in matters that affect their future.

6**The Addis Ababa Action Agenda**

Our understanding of the importance of financing for sustainable development and the role of partnerships in supporting our collective efforts.

7**The Declaration of the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent**

Our recognition of the need to address the challenges faced by people of African descent in promoting and protecting their rights and dignity.

8**The New Urban Agenda**

Our commitment to creating inclusive, sustainable, and resilient cities that can serve as hubs for innovation, economic growth, and social progress.

OUTCOMES OF THE 5TH AFRICAN YOUTH SDGS

We, the dynamic youth of Africa, gathered at the esteemed Kenneth Kaunda Conference Center for the 5th African Youth SDGs Summit, profoundly aware of the commitments voiced by our governments at various echelons in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Guided by our fervent commitment to the ideals of the African Union's Agenda 2063, along with the steadfast regional commitments within the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) and West and Central Africa (WCA) frameworks, dedicated to nurturing empowered and thriving youth across the continent; Recognizing that Africa's march towards SDG attainment is intricately woven with domestic actions; Hereby enunciate and adopt the ensuing declarations as the distinguished outcomes of the 5th African Youth SDGs Summit:

African Governments and National Authorities:

- Strongly demand the formulation of a specific SDG addressing youth-related issues beyond 2030 to ensure sustained focus on our needs and aspirations.
- Call for the prioritization and rationalization of the SDGs and its targets to fit the African context.
- Call for the strengthening of regulatory frameworks in Africa to take advantage of corporate social responsibilities (CSR) of multinational cooperations to finance the implementation of SDGs.

- Urge member states to rectify the Free Movement Protocol and The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to enhance free movement of persons, labor, and services and provide for the right of establishment of youth innovations in the achievement of the SDGs.
- Urge member states to promote peace and security to create environments for the realization of youth innovations.
- Urge African countries especially governments to mobilize resources internally to finance the implementation of the SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063.
- Charge African youth to initiate innovations targeting one issue on an SDG indicator or target from our communities.
- Call on governments to earnestly domesticate regional commitments such as the ESA and WCA commitments to deliver on quality Education and Comprehensive health services including sexual and reproductive health education; mental health or psychosocial support into school-based curriculum and out-of-school based curricular and interventions and allocate health facilities that provide youth-friendly comprehensive SRH services to adolescent and young people.
- Call upon national governments and development partners to ensure youth are not only heard but understood; not only engaged but empowered; not supporting but leading the efforts to achieve SDGs.
- Further call upon national government in Africa to develop self-reliant policies, projects, and programs to ensure sustainable financing, development, and youth innovation.
- Urges African national government to prioritize and invest in quality and skills-based education in attaining SDG 4.
- Urge all concerned bodies to ensure the full, effective and meaningful participation of girls and adolescent girls in decision-making processes at all levels, including in the design, implementation, and monitoring of policies and programs that affect their lives.
- Call on member states to establish robust accountability mechanisms that ensure that governments are held responsible for their commitments to promote the rights of girls and achieve the SDGs, including regular reporting and review processes at the national, regional and global level.
- Urge the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) to strengthen monitoring systems to ensure that at a minimum, gender and age-disaggregated data is available and used to inform action policies and programs that promote the rights of girls and achieve the SDGs and AU Agenda 2063 Goals.
- Call on member states to adopt a gender transformative and age responsive approach to all action policies and programmes that priorities the needs and rights of adolescent girls, particularly those most at risk of being left behind.
- Further call for the restructuring of systems and frameworks to improve work conditions of the youth in harnessing the demographic dividend.
- Call upon African countries to put young people at the center of policy making through stakeholder engagement, mainstreaming youth issues along SDGs and AU Agenda 2063.
- Call upon the UN, AU, NGOs, CSOs, governments, and all other stakeholders to ensure no action is taken to implement the SDGs and Agenda 2063 Goals is detrimental to the rights of the Child.

I African Union (AU) and Regional Bodies

- Call for the inclusion of youth in international summits and panels to ensure inclusive discussions, commitments, and solutions to development challenges.
- Call on the intergovernmental bodies to prioritize African perspectives in climate change discussions as well as budgeting and expenditure to suit African climate challenges.
- Demand for AU to send a delegation to Youth summits and the representation of youth from all African Countries.
- Call for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all sectors and stages of decision making and policy formulation.
- Call for robust multi-stakeholder collaborations and partnerships among national governments, private sector entities, and civil society organizations, particularly in pursuit of SDGs 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).
- Urge African governments to prioritize Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), accessible reproductive health services, and robust measures to combat gender-based violence (GBV). These essential provisions ensure youth empowerment, gender equality, and equitable development, aligning with SDG objectives for a prosperous and sustainable Africa.

I Private Sector Entities and Development Partners

- Call for the strengthening of regulatory frameworks in Africa to take advantage of corporate social responsibilities (CSR) of multinational cooperations to finance the implementation of SDGs.
- Call for building of a labor market for innovation.
- Call on development fund institutions within member states to allocate resources and funding to support youth-led innovations to facilitate the achievement of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).
- Call on governments, international organizations, private sector, and civil society organizations to prioritize capacity building accelerated programs targeting the youth.

I Youth and Civil Society Organizations

- Urge African youth to initiate innovations targeting one issue on an SDG indicator or target from our communities.
- Charge African youth to aspire and take up political and leadership roles in decision-making processes pertaining to the SDGs.
- Call for robust multi-stakeholder collaborations and partnerships among national governments, private sector entities, and civil society organizations, particularly in pursuit of SDGs 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).
- Call for the building of a labour market for innovation.

- Call on development fund institutions within member states to allocate resources and funding to support youth-led innovations to facilitate the achievement of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).
- Call on other stakeholders to increase investment for programs that promote gender equality and the empowerment of girls, including education, health, and economic opportunities, and ensure that these programs are accessible to girls and adolescent girls, in all their diversity, regardless of their socio-economic status.

■ United Nations

- Call for the inclusion of youth in international summits and panels to ensure inclusive discussions, commitments, and solutions to development challenges.
- Call on the UN to demand accountability of governments the reflections on national and regional actions towards advancing youth development.
- Call on the UN and other intergovernmental bodies to prioritize African perspectives in climate change discussions as well as budgeting and expenditure to suit African climate challenges.
- **Empowerment Through Supportive UN Systems:** Urge United Nations to create platforms for meaningful youth engagement, fostering collaboration and mentorship. Empower African youth as active contributors to SDGs and Agenda 2063 through dedicated mechanisms.
- **Integration of Youth-Centric Approaches:** Call on United Nations to prioritize youth-led initiatives by allocating resources and support. Integrate youth-centric approaches across UN activities, recognizing youth as agents of transformative change.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making for Youth Advancement:** Encourage United Nations to gather and share gender and age-disaggregated data in collaboration with regional bodies. Use data for targeted policies and resource allocation, ensuring African youth progress towards SDGs and Agenda 2063.

With these guiding principles and frameworks, including those from the UN Systems, AU, ECOWAS, COMESA, ESA, WCA, and other regional and principles firmly in mind, we declare our unwavering dedication to translating discussions, ideas, and aspirations from the African Youth SDGs Summit into tangible actions that will drive positive change in our communities, nations, and across the continent. We commit to working collaboratively, harnessing the power of technology, innovation, and cross-sector partnerships to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, leaving no one behind.

We acknowledge the host country and government of Zambia for providing the platform for this crucial summit and extend our gratitude to all partners, stakeholders, and participants, especially UNFPA and the UN System in Zambia, whose collective efforts have contributed to the success of this endeavor. Let us emerge from this summit with renewed determination, forging a path towards a sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for Africa and the world.

POLICY STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED

I Addressing the Financing Gap

- Establish a dedicated fund for SDGs implementation at both national and regional levels to ensure consistent resource allocation.
- Explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as impact investing, public-private partnerships, and green bonds, to attract private sector investments.
- Advocate for international financial institutions and donor organizations to increase funding support for African countries' SDGs initiatives.

I Enhancing Data Collection and Analysis

- Strengthen national statistical systems to collect accurate and comprehensive data on SDGs indicators.
- Develop data-sharing platforms to enable cross-border data collaboration and information exchange.
- Invest in training programs to enhance data collection and analysis capacities within government agencies and civil society organizations.

I Addressing Inequalities

- Develop targeted interventions and policies that address inequalities in access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.
- Implement affirmative action measures to ensure marginalized groups' participation and representation in decision-making processes.
- Establish mentorship and capacity-building programs to empower vulnerable populations, particularly youth and women.

I Resilience to External Shocks

- Develop adaptive strategies that can withstand external shocks, such as pandemics or economic downturns, to ensure the continuity of SDGs implementation.
- Establish contingency funds and emergency response mechanisms to address unforeseen challenges that may hinder progress.

I Effective Fund Disbursement

- Implement streamlined and efficient processes for disbursing funds to SDGs initiatives, reducing administrative bottlenecks.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of fund disbursement mechanisms to ensure resources are reaching intended beneficiaries.

■ Youth-Led Innovation Support

- Establish innovation hubs, incubators, and accelerators to provide young entrepreneurs with resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities.
- Develop funding programs specifically tailored for youth-led innovations, including grants, seed funding, and low-interest loans.
- Create platforms for showcasing and scaling up successful youth-led innovations to attract investments and partnerships.

■ Technology Integration

- Incorporate technology into various sectors, including agriculture, healthcare, education, and governance, to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Invest in digital infrastructure, broadband connectivity, and e-governance platforms to facilitate technology adoption across the continent.

■ Transparent Governance Practices

- Strengthen transparency and accountability in public administration through open data initiatives and citizen engagement platforms.
- Implement mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on progress toward SDGs targets, ensuring transparency in resource utilization.

■ Strengthening Partnerships

- Foster partnerships among governments, civil society organizations, private sector entities, and international organizations to pool resources and expertise.
- Facilitate knowledge-sharing and cross-sector collaboration to leverage collective efforts for SDGs implementation.

■ Gender Equality and Inclusion

- Develop policies and initiatives that promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and the inclusion of girls in education and decision-making.
- Create mentorship and leadership programs to support women's participation in STEM fields and entrepreneurship.

■ Alignment of Agendas

- Harmonize the SDGs, AU Agenda 2063, and AFCFTA to ensure coherence and avoid duplication of efforts in driving sustainable development across Africa.
- Develop frameworks for collaboration and coordination among regional organizations and governments to leverage synergies.

Internal Resource Mobilization

- Encourage member states to allocate a portion of national budgets to finance SDGs initiatives, demonstrating their commitment to sustainable development.
- Establish mechanisms for tracking and reporting on the utilization of funds allocated for SDGs implementation.

CHALLENGES

Challenges encountered during the Summit:



Sound Quality

There were issues with sound quality in some sessions, affecting the participants' ability to fully engage in discussions and presentations.



Side Events

The coordination and management of side events was sometimes challenging, leading to overlaps or confusion in scheduling.



Wi-Fi Connectivity for Foreign Delegates

Inconsistent or unreliable Wi-Fi connectivity for foreign delegates posed challenges in their ability to access online resources and engage in social media components of the summit.



Timing Management

Some sessions experienced delays or ran over the allocated time, impacting the overall schedule.



Gender and Ethnic Imbalance

The representation of different genders in sessions was not always balanced, affecting the diversity and inclusivity of discussions.



Poor Management of Tea Breaks

Issues in organizing and managing tea breaks led to disruptions in networking opportunities and refreshment breaks for participants.



Engagement and Liveliness

Some sessions lacked liveliness and engagement



Program Line-up

The arrangement and flow of sessions in the program could be optimized to maintain participant interest and ensure a balanced mix of topics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RAPPORTEURS

We extend our sincere gratitude to the team of dedicated rapporteurs who played a pivotal role in documenting the proceedings and outcomes of the summit. Their diligent work has been crucial in capturing the essence of the discussions and distilling key insights from the event.

We would like to acknowledge the following rapporteurs for their invaluable contributions:

- **Doris Odei**
- **Mac-Donald Abopaam**
- **Bwalya Mutale**
- **Felix Siwaba**
- **Musenge Chocha**
- **Mwansa Kanyanta**
- **Chibangu Kalaba**

Their dedication to the various sessions, discussions, and conclusions with accuracy and precision is commendable. Their efforts have ensured that the essence of each discussion and the significance of the summit's outcomes are preserved for future reference and action.

The success of the summit owes much to the commitment and hard work of these rapporteurs. documentation will serve as a lasting resource for continued progress and informed decision-making.

Tap here to access pictures from the summit



Contact Information

Emmanuel Ametepey

- ✉ e.ametepey@youthsdgssummit.org
- ✉ info@youthsdgssummit.org
- ☎ +233242842833

Organizing partners:



Supporting partners:



5TH AFRICAN YOUTH SDGS SUMMIT