

AFRICAN UNION
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**Executive Council
Eighth Ordinary Session
16 – 21 January 2006
Khartoum, SUDAN**

EX.CL/221(VIII)

**REPORT OF THE YOUTH FORUM ON EDUCATION AND
CULTURE**

Report of the Youth Forum on Education and CULTURE

Introduction

The 6th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which will be held in Khartoum in January 2006, will have the theme “Education Culture”. As part of its preparation for the Summit, the AU organized a Pre-Summit meeting with the African Youth, to discuss their role in Culture and Education for sustainable development, and the impact of Culture and Education on their development. A Concept Paper was prepared to lead the discussion with the Youth.

The meeting gathered Pan African Youth representatives, Youth Associations’ representatives, and a few Youth Experts. Through a very participative approach, the youth contributed enthusiastically to discussions mainly focused on the concept paper described below.

The Concept Paper outlined the definition of Culture as:

- the roots and foundation of the values of a Nation,
- the source of our identity, but also as
- the first basic knowledge or way of learning, which should be serving the development of learning strategies for sustainable knowledge acquisition.
- culture embodies values, beliefs, artistic expression, government and organisational systems, science and technology etc
- culture is a way of being, of thinking and of learning.

Education was then defined as:

- a fundamental and universal a right for everybody.
- a tool for addressing the multiple challenges Africa is facing regarding its development, globalization and many other issues.

The Paper further stated that linking Education and Culture is essential for ensuring education relevance, equity of access, and quality of learning processes and outcomes. It is the best way to ensure the added value to modern knowledge and to adapt science and technology to the specific needs of Africa. This link is necessary if African Youth are to develop a desirable African identity that they will be proud to uphold.

Youth are particularly important in the linkage between education and culture because:

- Youth ought to be preparing themselves to take over as leaders. They should receive the best Education and training. It is therefore incumbent on AU Member States African States to deliver good quality of Education and training for all.
- Youth need to be provided an accurate definition and description of the African Culture as part of their preparation for leadership. They will

provide the link for sustainable transmission of African culture to the next generation of Africans

- Culturally sensitive policies of quality Education and Training are necessary to enable youth to fit in and contribute to society through employment and other development activities.
- The Youth have the right to claim their Cultural identity and they are claiming their Identity and their involvement in development.

The AUC took advantage of the youth participation in the meeting, and presented the draft Pan African Youth Charter and the Pan African Youth Federation proposal for their preliminary inputs. African Youth delegates, Member States delegates, and Youth Experts brought qualitative contribution for the improvement of the two draft documents presented for their consideration.

In response to the concept paper prepared, the youth drafted the Culture, Education and Youth Statement, regarding the theme: Education and Culture and their own involvement.

This declaration by the youth emphasizes the importance of a good quality of education and training, which provides for their the holistic development. The Youth agreed on the importance of strengthening the link between Culture and Education, but they want to be certain that culture is defined and used in such a way it focuses on positive values, attitudes and cultural identity. They are aware of the challenges of the globalization, but they maintain that Africa should be a part of it, because in the process the Continent would be obliged to build the capacity and the leadership of its young people in order to confront the challenges facing Africa.

The African Union Commission is ready to respond to the Statement from the Youth on the basis of its three years Strategic Plan. The annual agenda of the Human Resource, Science and Technology Department includes in its programme related to the Youth, specifically the development and implementation of the Pan African Youth Charter. The Youth Charter will be an official and legal framework for each Member State to address all Youth issues at country level. In Addition to the development of the Youth Charter, the African Union Commission is committing itself to the elaboration of continental strategic documents and curricula development for training and capacity building in the various areas, such as:

- Vocational and technical training for youth in and out of school,
- Technical and professional training for the Youth in conflict and post conflict reconstruction situation;
- Positive cultural values development
- Distance Education and teacher training programme
- Promotion of science and technology in education programme
- Promotion of basic Education and adult literacy
- Promotion of Higher Education and Scholarship programme
- The development of African Universities, etc
- Indigenous knowledge & technology

The Department of Human Resources Science and Technology has forged a close partnership with the Department of Social Affairs, which is responsible for the Culture

programme. This partnership will enable joint planning common programme to reinforce the link between culture and education.

The following is the Youth Declaration on Culture and Education:

CULTURE, EDUCATION AND YOUTH:
YOUTH STATEMENT

We, Representatives of Youth Organisations have read the document on Culture, Education and Youth presented to the Youth Workshop during the Pre-Summit Workshop of Experts and Youth on the Pan-African Youth Charter. After defining Culture, Education and Youth, the paper proceeds to demonstrate that Education cannot be sustainable without being linked with the culture, and that Youth have a major role to play in relation to Education and Culture. After extensive discussion of the document, we have resolved as follows:

We, Representatives of Youth Organizations in AU Member States recognize that education and culture represent a constructive synthesis for our development and empowerment.

We admit that Culture should be well defined to every young person in order to improve the perception of African culture and positive values among African Youth.

We agree that Education linked to our African culture, values and identity ensure the sustainability of our knowledge.

We agree that Africa needs to be provided with well-balanced and well-educated Youth, culturally sensitive and sufficiently skilled to contribute effectively to development.

Knowing that action is needed to ensure youth participation and commitment towards African development, instead of presenting a technical working document to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, we, the representatives of Pan-African Youth Organisations agree to present the following:

We, the Youth Representatives:

Affirming that the African Union Commission should recognize the definition of youth as being all young people aged 15 to 30 years of age

Considering that Education and training are non-negotiable conditions to ensure the development of Africa,

Considering that Culture helps the contextualization of our knowledge and is a fundamental asset for a holistic contribution to the sustainable development of the continent,

Considering that Education cannot be meaningful or relevant when it has very weak links with social and cultural realities,

Aware of the role of the historic, social, economic, political and cultural commitments of youth towards Africa,

Aware of the fragility of a Continent inadequately prepared for globalization;

Aware also that no one, except us, can efficiently build our Continent,

Being confident that our active participation and continuous effort in the development of Africa can lead to sustainable results,

Reaffirming our commitment to the fight to attain a leading role in participating in development debate and processes:

We suggest to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, regarding the theme Education and Culture, the following

- Request the African Union Commission to encourage Member States to promote African Culture, positive values and African identity through school curricula in order to ensure the transmission of African values through generations.
- Request the African Union Commission to develop a framework promoting the development of new technologies and ensuring the positive and constructive link with endogenous knowledge;
- Request pedagogic and educational experts to remove from school curricula, sensitive subjects which promote conflict and replace them with values of democracy, good governance and peace;
- Inform Education Experts on the necessity of technical, vocational and professional training, as alternative educative systems which respond to the needs of Youth and of the society for new technologies;
- Request the African Union Commission to promote in-service training for teachers at all levels;
- Ensure free access to quality education for all.

- Encourage the establishment of national, regional and continental Cultural Centres with modern facilities
- Encourage the effective implementation of intercontinental and international commitments and Conventions signed by Member States of the African Union Commission for the benefit of the Youth.
- Encourage all initiatives and actions undertaken by Civil Society to improve or accelerate the development of Youth;
- Contribute to the respect of the Human Rights and particularly those related to the welfare Of Youth
- Encourage the inclusion of our culture in Education sector and the use of African languages for teaching.
- Prioritize research on Culture, which will provide a full and holistic definition of African Culture.
- Encourage the transformation of Culture and Education into every day means of acquiring new life skills, skills of living and well-being.
- Encourage the formation of Networks among Youth from African Countries, and African Youth in the Diaspora.

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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Annex

DECLARATION OF YOUTHS ON CULTURE AND
EDUCATION

DECLARATION OF YOUTHS ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION

Preamble:

We, Representatives of Youth Organisations have read the document on Culture, Education and Youth presented to the Youth Workshop during the Pre-Summit Workshop of Experts and Youth on the Pan-African Youth Charter. After defining Culture, Education and Youth, the paper proceeds to demonstrate that Education cannot be sustainable without being linked with the culture, and that Youth have a major role to play in relation to Education and Culture. After extensive discussion of the document, we have resolved as follows:

Considering that education and culture represent a constructive synthesis for our development and empowerment;

Considering that Culture should be well defined to every young person in order to improve the perception of African culture and positive values among African Youth;

Guided by the principle that Education linked to our African culture, values and identity ensure the sustainability of our knowledge;

Convinced that Africa needs to be provided with well-balanced and well-educated Youth, culturally sensitive and sufficiently skilled to contribute effectively to development;

Convinced also that action is needed to ensure youth participation and commitment towards African development;

Affirming that the African Union Commission should recognize the definition of youth as being all young people aged 15 to 30 years of age;

Considering that Education and training are non-negotiable conditions to ensure the development of Africa;

Considering that Culture helps the contextualization of our knowledge and is a fundamental asset for a holistic contribution to the sustainable development of the continent;

Considering that Education cannot be meaningful or relevant when it has very weak links with social and cultural realities;

Aware of the role of the historic, social, economic, political and cultural commitments of youth towards Africa;

Aware equally of the fragility of a Continent inadequately prepared for globalization;

Aware also that no one, except us, can efficiently build our Continent,

Being confident that our active participation and continuous effort in the development of Africa can lead to sustainable results,

Reaffirming our commitment to the fight to attain a leading role in participating in development debate and processes;

We, Representatives of Youth Organizations in Member States of the African Union, present at the preparatory meeting to the Khartoum Assembly, declare to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, with regard to the theme education and culture, as follows:

We suggest to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, regarding the theme Education and Culture, the following

1. **Request** the African Union Commission to encourage Member States to promote African Culture, positive values and African identity through school curricula in order to ensure the transmission of African values through generations;
2. **Request also** the African Union Commission to develop a framework promoting the development of new technologies and ensuring the positive and constructive link with endogenous knowledge;
3. **Request also** pedagogic and educational experts to remove from school curricula, sensitive subjects which promote conflict and replace them with values of democracy, good governance and peace;
4. **Inform** Education Experts on the necessity of technical, vocational and professional training, as alternative educative systems which respond to the needs of Youth and of the society for new technologies;

5. **Request** the African Union Commission to promote in-service training for teachers at all levels;
6. **Ensure** free access to quality education for all;
7. **Encourage** the establishment of national, regional and continental Cultural Centres with modern facilities;
8. **Encourage also** the effective implementation of intercontinental and international commitments and Conventions signed by Member States of the African Union Commission for the benefit of the Youth;
9. **Encourage** all initiatives and actions undertaken by Civil Society to improve or accelerate the development of Youth;
10. **Contribute** to the respect of the Human Rights and particularly those related to the welfare Of Youth;
11. **Encourage** the inclusion of our culture in Education sector and the use of African languages for teaching;
12. **Prioritize** research on Culture, which will provide a full and holistic definition of African Culture;
13. **Encourage** the transformation of Culture and Education into every day means of acquiring new life skills, skills of living and well-being;
14. **Encourage also** the formation of Networks among Youth from African Countries, and African Youth in the Diaspora.

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