



PRESS RELEASE

**AU Youth for Peace Africa (Y4P) Program validates the
Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security and Study on
the Roles and Contributions of Youth to Peace and Security**
Putting Youth at the epicenter of Governance, Peace and Security in Africa

Accra, 29 October 2019: The Youth for Peace Africa (Y4P) Program of the African Union Commission, managed by its Peace and Security Department, reviewed and validated the draft Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security and the findings of the Study on the Roles and Contributions of Youth to peace and security in Africa, in Accra, Ghana, from 22 to 25 October 2019. The validation followed extensive discussions and inputs from representatives of youth from the five regions of the Continent working on peace and security and those of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) in Africa.

The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its maiden Open Session on YPS held on 8 November 2018, requested the Commission to finalize the YPS Framework and conduct the study to ascertain youth contributions to peace and security on the Continent and submit it for consideration at its Open Session on YPS in November 2019.

The validation workshop brought together 40 participants composed of fifteen (15) Youth Representatives and Organizations, three (3) each from the five (5) regions of the continent who had participated at the consultative meeting on the YPS Framework, as well as at regional and field consultations for the Study, focal persons on YPS from the RECs/RMs, partners (GIZ, UNDP, OHCHR, ACCORD, TFP, ISS and NUPI), and focal persons on YPS from AU Departments of Political Affairs; Peace and Security; and Human Resources, Science and Technology.

During the four days of deliberations, presentations were made on the draft YPS framework and Study outcomes, summarizing and outlining the major findings gathered from field visits and regional consultations across the five regions of Africa. The overall objective of the YPS Framework is to facilitate the meaningful participation of youth in all spectrums of peace and security at the national, regional and continental levels; while the study seeks to document and project the rich and diverse- but often overlooked- contributions of youth to peace and security across the continent.

Speaking on behalf of the AU Peace and Security Department at the opening of the workshop, Dr. Rhuks Temitope Ako, Analyst within the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division (CPEWD) of the AU PSD, recalled the African Youth Charter adopted by AU

Assembly, in Banjul, The Gambia, on 2 July 2006, particularly Article 17, which recognizes the important role of youth in promoting peace and security in Africa. *“Greater participation by young people to peace and security is a fundamental requirement for the promotion of peace and security within the continent leading to the empowerment of youth in the decision making processes,”* he said.

Also speaking during the opening, the Head of Programme, Peace and Security, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit African Union Office (GIZ-AU), Mr. David Nii ADDY, stated *“This meeting is a testimony for joint commitment to protecting young people from the negative consequences of violent conflict, while searching to expand existing avenues for effective youth participation in national, regional and continental peace initiatives”*.

Representatives from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Training for Peace (TfP) who supported the study, as well as the Framework, applauded the process leading up to the validation and reiterated their commitments to support the program, including via the promotion of youth-centered conflict analysis; increased youth contribution to decision-making and expressed appreciation to the ‘Pan-African vision’ for continental prosperity through meaningful change in the life of the youth.

The YPS Framework and Study Validation Workshop with youth representatives built upon the outcomes of a pre-validation exercise held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 8 to 9 October 2019, with representatives of the Committee of Experts of the AU PSC and RECs/RMS, who provided substantive inputs and guidance for the finalization of the documents.

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Notes to the Editor

About the Youth for Peace Africa (Y4P) Program

The Youth for Peace (Y4P) Africa Program of the African Union Commission, managed by its Peace and Security Department, was launched in September 2018, in Lagos, Nigeria, with the mandate of implementing Article 17 of the Africa Youth Charter (AYC), United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 and all relevant regional, AU and international instruments, relating to the role of the youth in the promotion of peace and security in Africa and to contribute towards the actualization of Aspiration four (4) and six (6) of Agenda 2063, that is, especially its flagship project –Silencing the Guns by 2020.

The Program primarily seeks to promote the meaningful participation of youth in all spectrums of peace and security by engaging them as leaders, partners and implementers of peace initiatives but also working to dissuade them from all acts of violence.

About the Study on the Roles and Contributions of Youth to Peace and Security in Africa

The African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (AUPSC), during its first open session on Youth, Peace and Security, held on 8 November 2018, mandated the Youth for Peace (Y4P) Africa Program, to conduct an authoritative study on the roles and contributions of youth to peace and security in Africa. The major aim of the study, as mandated by the PSC, is to highlight the roles and contributions of African youth in peace and security to inform strategic policy making and programming that will foster effective youth engagement and inclusion in the promotion of peace and security on the continent. The specific objectives of the study include: identification of existing mechanisms and strategies at national, regional and continental levels for meaningful participation of youth in peace and security; examine the challenges confronting active youth involvement in peace and security; and recommend policy and program-oriented strategies to facilitate meaningful engagement and participation on peace and security.

To achieve the aforementioned aim and objectives, a methodological workshop with youth representatives and researchers held in December 2018, to define the most suited approach to be adopted for the study. The workshop identified need to organize regional consultations in each of the five (5) regions of Africa, conduct field visit in three (3) countries each from five (5) regions including key criteria for selection; and identified thematic areas of focus to include conflict prevention, management and resolution; peace support operations; post-conflict reconstruction and development; and cross-cutting issues of gender, climate change and migration.

About the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security

The YPS Framework is a joint initiative between the Departments of Peace and Security; Political Affairs; and Human Resource, Science and Technology. It provides the normative guidance for engagement between and among the Commission, RECs/RMs, Member States and youth based on existing frameworks and policies. It is anchored on Article 11 and 17 of the Africa Youth Charter (AYC) of July 2006, as well as United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 of December 2015.

The Framework seeks to actualize the objective of the Y4P Africa Program by providing normative guidance to facilitate the meaningful participation of youth in all spectrums of peace and security. As such, the Framework provides contextual background on the existing normative frameworks at the continental, regional and national levels for youth engagement; highlights the major and specific objectives of which it seeks to achieve; identifies gaps and challenges confronting youth involvement in peace and security; enumerates the cardinal priorities; proposes criteria for effective programming on youth, peace and security and elaborates on cross-cutting issues of gender, capacity building, communication, inclusivity and knowledge management as enabling mechanisms for the implementation of the Framework. It is expected that the Framework will guide the development of continental and regional strategic plans but most importantly the development and implementation of national action plans on YPS.

Existing Frameworks and Foundation for YPS

The importance of youth to socio-economic development, peace, and security in Africa is recognized by African institutions, including the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms (RMs) and their Member States. In fact, the AU and RECs/RMs have a track record of policy action and commitments on youth participation in

democratization, socio-economic development, peace and security. Since the 1990s, the AU and RECs/RMs have adopted several normative instruments, including Charters, Protocols, Declarations, Policies and programmes that address the needs of young people broadly and in relation to peace and security.

Continental Initiatives: the normative frameworks and policy initiatives collectively serve as the rationale for this Framework and include the following: the AU Constitutive Act (2000); the Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council (PSC); the AYC; Agenda 2063 – especially Aspiration 6 “An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children”; Silencing the Guns by 2020 Initiative; AU engagement with CSOs; AU theme on Youth in 2017; and Programmes of AU Youth Division; the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Platform; the Y4P Africa Program including landmark decisions by the PSC at its 807th meeting of 8th November 2018; and the Chairperson’s one million by 2021 initiative.

Regional Initiatives: RECs across Africa have also initiated a series of policies and programmes on youth development or mainstreamed youth issues into their peace and security agendas. For example, in West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has included youth among the priority areas in its conflict prevention Framework; the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mainstreamed youth and youth issues into its Regional Strategy; and the East African Community (EAC) launched a Youth Policy and instituted the Youth Ambassadors to promote youth engagement. In other instances, RECs have launched programmes designed to address the underlying conditions associated with youth participation in violence, especially initiatives on youth empowerment and employment such as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) Youth Employment Promotion Policy.

National Initiatives: In tandem with Article 12 of the AYC, several Member States of the Union have developed a national youth policy, which is cross-sectoral in nature in view of the interrelated challenges confronting young people. National Youth Council (NYC) has equally been established to foster youth participation and coordinate the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies. Most of the national youth policies provide cardinal roles and responsibilities for young people in the field of governance, peace and security. Other programmes such as National Youth Services Schemes or Programmes are developed and implemented.

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