African Union | OFFICE OF THE YOUTH ENVOY

The Legacy

3 YEAR MANDATE

"Africa Rising to Shape the Future of Youth Engagement, Empowerment and Impact in Africa"

MARCH 2022 - MARCH 2025

THE AFRICAN UNION CHAIRPERSON'S YOUTH ENVOY

END OF TERM REPORT

MARCH 2022 - MARCH 2025

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SECTION A

The Legacy

Foreword

H.E. Ms. Chido Cleopatra Mpemba
African Union Chairperson's Youth Envoy
(MARCH 2022 – MARCH 2025)

Foreword

What an extraordinary journey this has been. From the moment my appointment was announced on Africa Youth Day in November 2021 by the African Union Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, I knew I had stepped into a defining moment not just for myself, but for the 870 million young people I was called to represent. The world was still grappling with the uncertainties of a pandemic, yet this responsibility came as both a challenge and an opportunity one I was determined to embrace with urgency, commitment, and purpose.

Arriving in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in March 2022 to officially take up my role, I stepped into history as the youngest diplomat on the 19th floor of the African Union headquarters. However, my mission was far greater than a title. It was about institutionalizing youth voices at the highest decision-making tables in Africa, ensuring that young people were not just seen and heard but actively shaping the policies and decisions that would impact their future. It was about creating a movement; a force of engaged, empowered, and globally positioned African youth.

Over the years, my team and I worked relentlessly to bridge the gap between policymakers and the youth, dismantling barriers and pushing for the mainstreaming of young voices in governance, development, and innovation. The milestones we achieved are not just markers of success but stepping stones toward an Africa that truly values its greatest demographic asset, its youth. Yet, the work remains unfinished. Structural barriers persist, and the journey toward full youth inclusion requires unwavering commitment, accountability and action.

What has been most inspiring is witnessing young Africans step forward, not waiting for permission but claiming their space. We are architects of new solutions, builders of stronger communities, and visionaries of a future that is unfolding today. Our actions are rewriting narratives and breaking cycles, proving that leadership is not defined by age but by impact, courage, and a relentless drive to transform societies.

As this tenure concludes, I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has been a part of shaping it but most importantly the young people in Africa. Our work is not merely about what has been accomplished, but about the legacy we leave behind; one that inspires, empowers, and paves the way for future generations. The journey of youth leadership at the African Union continues, and I am confident that the next chapter will build upon this foundation, taking Africa's youth agenda to even greater heights.

H.E. Ms. Chido Cleopatra Mpemba
African Union Chairperson's Youth Envoy
(MARCH 2022 – MARCH 2025)

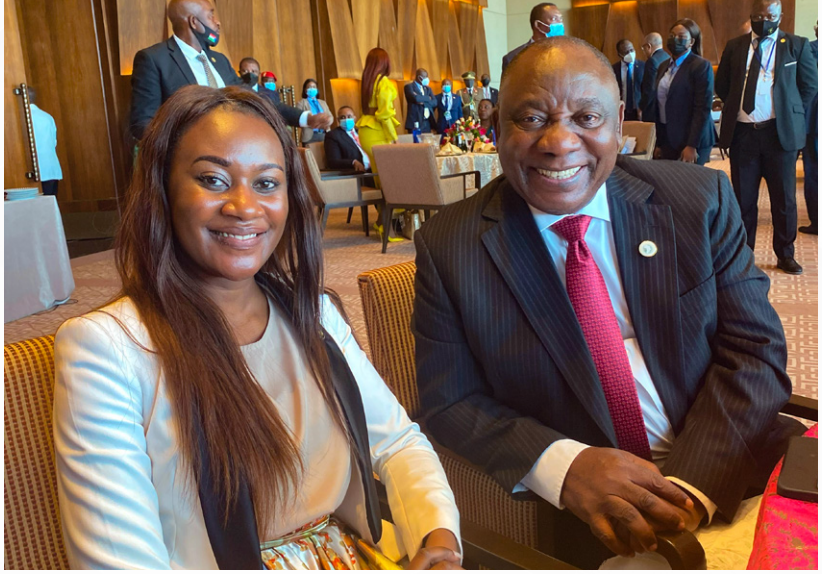
2. Executive Summary

The appointment of the African Union Chairperson's Youth Envoy is in line with decisions made during the 30th Session of the African Union Heads of State & Government Assembly, which called for the appointment of an African Union Youth Envoy to assist in championing youth development issues in Africa.

- with the African Union Commission Chairperson, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat

- with the President of Namibia H.E. Hage G. Geingob

- with the President of Senegal H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Faye



The mandate of the AU Youth Envoy is to serve as a spokesperson of the African youth before decision-making bodies on the continent and globally. In addition the AU Youth Envoy lobbies African Governments and relevant stakeholders to develop and implement youth friendly policies and initiatives at the national, regional and continental level.

This Legacy Report is a summary of what we have achieved in the past 3 years and embedded on the principles of:

Inclusive Participation

Advocacy

Partnerships

Harmonization

PRINCIPLE 01

Inclusive Participation

Ensuring that young people across Africa, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, disability, or geographic location, have a voice in decision-making processes.

PRINCIPLE 02

Advocacy

Amplifying the voices of young people by advocating for policies and programs that prioritize youth empowerment and well-being.

PRINCIPLE 03

Partnerships

Recognizing that youth empowerment requires multi-sectoral collaboration, the Youth Envoy works to build strong partnerships between young people, governments, civil society, the private sector, and multilateral institutions.

PRINCIPLE 04

Harmonization

Ensuring coherence and effectiveness in youth-related initiatives, the AU Youth Envoy focuses on aligning efforts across the African Union organs, member states, and stakeholders to ensure youth policies and programs are consistent and complementary.

3.1 Introduction

The Strategic Roadmap

3.1 THREE YEARS IN A GLANCE

01

01. AU YOUTH SURVEY
inclusion of the insights and perspectives of the youth within the OYE Mandate.

02

02. LISTENING TOURS
Shaping the priorities and setting the tone for the mandate through youth, community and political engagement.

03

03. FOUNDATIONAL SETTING
Institutional Budget and human capacity development to build a team for the office.

04

.04. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
Piloting projects and initiatives according to priorities established.

05

05. INSTITUTIONALIZING YOUTH LEADERSHIP
Ensuring lasting impact for youth through securing policy decisions for continuityof the youth within the OYE Mandate.

06

06. SUSTAINING IMPACT & ACCOUNTABILITY
Emphasizing continuity, long term influence and responsibility to ensure progress continues beyond the tenure.

Impact

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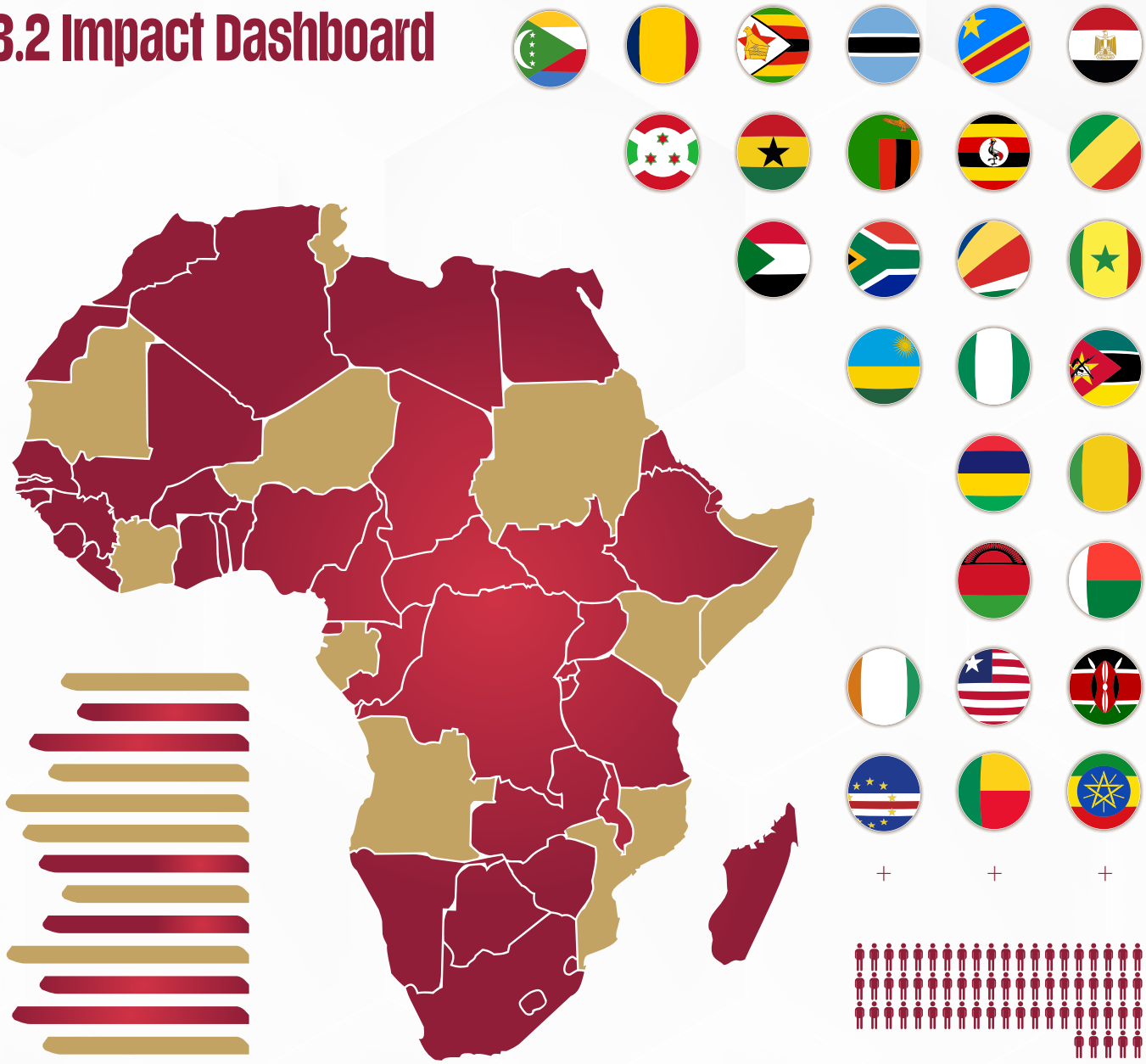
3.2 Impact Dashboard



30+ Projects & Initiatives implemented with the youth

41+ Countries with missions to amplify youth voices in Agenda 2063

22 Heads of State Engaged for Political Lobbying

50+ Ministers and Multilateral leaders (EU, AFDB, AFREXIMBANK, WORLD BANK GROUP & UNITED NATIONS) collaborated with in various portfolios on youth related initiatives

MORE THAN

12 000 000

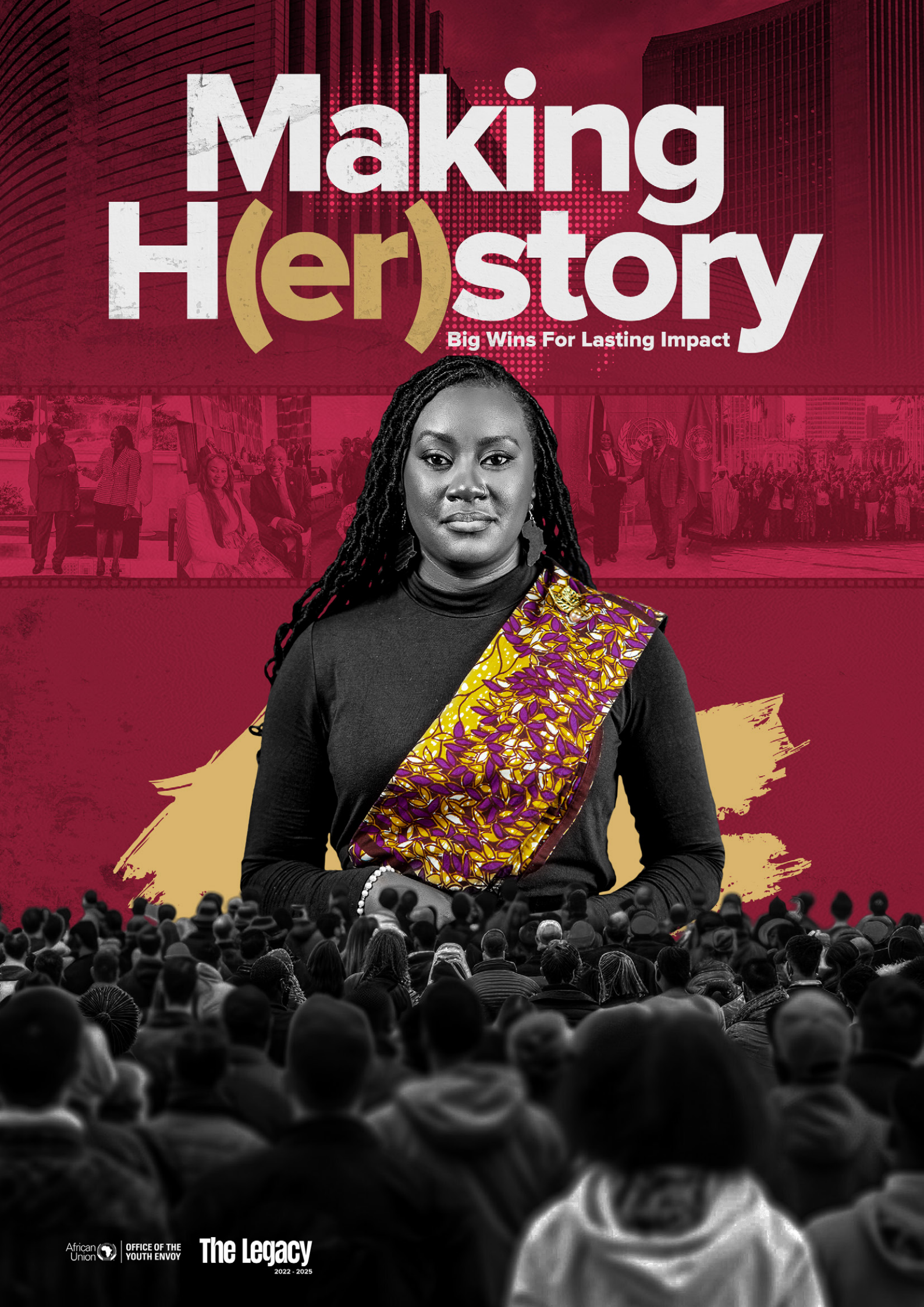
youth reached through various platforms and engagements

US$ 2.4 Million

fundraised in 3 Years from ZERO BUDGET

Making H(er)story

Big Wins For Lasting Impact



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3.3 Making H(er)story: Big Wins For Lasting Impact

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE AU YOUTH ENVOY OFFICE EX.CL_DEC/1439(XLIII

Influenced 55 African Union Governments to adopt a decision for the institutionalization of the role of the Office of the AU Youth Envoy.

REFORMS TO THE AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER

For nearly two decades , the African Youth charter, adopted by Heads of State in 2006 in banjul, remained unchanged, despite the evolving challenges and aspirations of Africa's youth. Recognizing this gap, the envoy challenged the status quo and advocated for its urgent reform , bringing to the forefront the reality that the charter had not been revisited in 19 years. We received an executive council decision that supported the reform process.

RATIFICATION OF THE YOUTH CHARTER

At the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State, the Republic of Burundi submitted their instrument of ratification of the African Youth Charter, thus becoming the 40th AU Member State toratify the Charter.

CHAMPIONING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR YOUTH IN AFRICA

Over 4000 youth trained in 8 countries to date on Digital literacy & Artificial intelligence through pioneering the "Make Africa Digital Campaign"

APPOINTMENT OF AU CHAMPION ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

The AU Heads of State appointed the President of Burundi, H.E Evariste Ndayishimiye as the Inaugural African Union Champion for Youth, Peace and Security at the 36th Ordinary session of the Assembly of State, signaling a major shift in the political consensus by Heads of States in prioritizing youth issues as a pivotal subject in AU Statutory meetings.

AFRICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP

The Envoy realised a strategic partnership by initiating an MOU with the African leadership Academy that creates employment opportunities for young people in policy structures across the African Union and its member states through mentorship, training and deployment under the Umholi Fellowship.

SECURING SEATS FOR YOUTH ON THE AU PROCUREMENT BOARD

Worked with AUC in revising its procurement policy to mandate 35% youth inclusion in tender evaluation boards, a bold step towards institutionalizing youth participation in governance and economic development.

Media

Contributions and Publications

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3.4 Editorial Contributions and Publications

MEDIA CONTRIBUTIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

The Youth Envoy actively contributed to global policy discussions by authoring and co-authoring a series of publications, opinion pieces, and reports in collaboration with policymakers and multilateral institutions. She also engaged in high-profile media interviews and delivered keynote interventions at major global forums, advocating for the institutionalisation of youth leadership in Africa. Below is a comprehensive list of her media contributions and publications.

PUBLICATIONS

1. **UNITED NATIONS** - Empowering Africa's Youth: A Commitment to Our Future
2. **WORLD BANK** - Transforming Education and Skills Development in Africa
3. **DEVEX** - Opinion: Africa's youth will change the world order. Are we ready?
4. **WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM** - How will Africa's youth population drive global growth?
5. **UNESCO** - Putting a spotlight on foundational learning across Africa
6. **GOOGLE** - Unlocking Africa's Potential – Why Digital Skills are Crucial for the Future of Work
7. **MAIL & GUARDIAN** - Mobilizing Africa's Youth for Political Change
8. **AFRICAN UNION** - #ICanSurvive Mental Health Toolkit

Clinton Foundation
@theclintonfoundation

CGI University 2022. Plenary Session: Vaccine Inequity and Vaccine Hesitancy

04:00 a.m. • Dec 16, 2021 • Twitter for iPhone

60 Retweets 31,2 K Quote Tweets 10,2 K Likes

123 245 134

African Union
@africanunion_official

AU Press Conference by H.E. Chido Mpemba.

08:00 a.m. • Mar 10, 2025 • Twitter for iPhone

100 Retweets 1,1 K Quote Tweets 20 K Likes

403 15 1K

African Union
@africanunion_official

Youth are vital for Africa's progress - AU Youth Envoy.

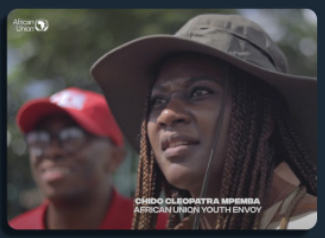
1:30 p.m. • Nov 17, 2023 • Twitter for iPhone

100 Retweets 31,1 K Quote Tweets 2 K Likes

114 205 1K

African Union
@africanunion_official

AU Youth Envoy Visit to South Africa. She met young people in communities for discussions on topics affecting youth.



09:00 a.m. • Feb 28, 2025 • Twitter for iPhone

40 Retweets 21,9 K Quote Tweets 41,8 K Likes

323 53 90

European Commission
@EU_CommissionM

EU Talks Ep. 9 - Digital and Gender Divide is available to listen to.

11:08 p.m. • Jan 12, 2022 • Twitter for iPhone

500 Retweets 24,5 K Quote Tweets 54,3 K Likes

23 335 434

World Bank
@worldbank

Women of Action,v Stories of Change - Chido Cleopatra Mpemba

04:00 a.m. • Dec 16, 2021 • Twitter for iPhone

60 Retweets 31,2 K Quote Tweets 10,2 K Likes

123 245 134

African Development Bank Group
@AfDB_Group

36th AU Summit AfDB AUC Side Event, Intervention by African Union Youth Envoy Chido Mpemba.

08:00 a.m. • Mar 10, 2025 • Twitter for iPhone

100 Retweets 1,1 K Quote Tweets 20 K Likes

403 15 1K

Afreximbank Trade Intelligence Solutions
@Afrexim_TRIN

Interview with Chido Cleopatra Mpemba, Youth Envoy at the African Union Commission.

1:30 p.m. • Nov 17, 2023 • Twitter for iPhone

100 Retweets 31,1 K Quote Tweets 2 K Likes

114 205 1K

Mastercard Foundation
@Mastercardfdn

#IncredibleAfricans 2023 Full Panel Discussion. Follow along this amazing conversation.

09:00 a.m. • Feb 28, 2025 • Twitter for iPhone

40 Retweets 21,9 K Quote Tweets 41,8 K Likes

323 53 90

3.4 Editorial Contributions and Publications

TV INTERVIEWS AND MEDIA FEATURES

BBC NEWS AFRICA - Focus on Africa
HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL - Interview with African Union Youth Envoy Chido Mpemba
FRANCE24 - Africa in 2024: Continent's youth pushing for more political empowerment
UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT - Interview with Chido Cleopatra Mpemba, Special Envoy on Youth to African Union Chairperson & Cabinet
FINANCIAL TIME - FT Live: Cooperating to Solve Shared Challenges
CNBC AFRICA - Africa: Affecting the needed change among the youth
FORBES AFRICA - #LWS2O22: The Future of Relationships in a Pandemic World
CLINTON FOUNDATION - CGI University 2022 | Plenary Session: Vaccine Inequity and Vaccine Hesitancy
AFRICAN UNION - Press Conference by H.E. Chido Mpemba, AU Chairperson Special Envoy on Youth
AFRICAN UNION - Youth are vital for Africa's progress - AU Youth Envoy
AFRICAN UNION - AU Youth Envoy Visit to South Africa
EUROPEAN UNION - EU Talks Ep. 9 - Digital and Gender Divide
WORLD BANK GROUP - Women of Action: Stories of Change - Chido Cleopatra Mpemba
AfDB GROUP - 36th AU Summit AfDB AUC Side Event, Intervention by African Union Youth Envoy Chido Mpemba
AFREXIMBANK TV - Interview with Chido Cleopatra Mpemba, Youth Envoy at the African Union Commission
MASTERCARD FOUNDATION - #IncredibleAfricans 2023 Full Panel Discussion
CHANNELS TELEVISION - From Bank Worker to Africa's Youth Champion: Chido's Story
KTN NEWS KENYA - Unlocking Africa's Youth Potential: Exclusive Interview with AU Youth Envoy Chido Mpemba
JOY NEWS GHANA - Personality Profile: Chido Mpemba shares her story of determination and persistence with Lexis Bill
ARISE NEWS - It is Important that We Capacitate Young People for Leadership Opportunities -Mpemba
ZIMBABWE ECONOMIC FORUM - ECONOMIC FORUM_CHIDO MPEMBA_02 AUGUST 2022
AFRICA 24 - Africa: Chido Mpemba, voice of young people within the African Union
SABC NEWS - AU Youth envoy visits SADC region
AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES - Including Young People for Peace & Security: A Discussion with AU Youth Envoy Chido Mpemba

UNITED NATIONS INTERVENTIONS

1. Host of 78th United Nations President of the General Assembly #AskPGA Youth Town Hall Meeting
2. UN Peace Building Commission – Chido Mpemba United Nations HQ briefing to the Peace Building Commission
3. United Nations Youth Ecosocc Forum – Moderator of Africa Session featuring Sadio Mane
4. United Nations Security Council – Briefing by the AU Youth Envoy
5. 77th United Nations General Assembly – SDG Moment 2022 | Priyanka Chopra Jonas | Nomzamo Mbatha |Poet Amanda Gorman| Judith Hill |BLACKPINK

Youth

Engagement and Advocacy

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4. Youth Engagement and Advocacy Tool

Model of Youth Engagement: Direct, Inclusive, & Impact-Driven

The Youth Envoy's model of engagement was rooted in direct, inclusive and participatory approaches that ensure African youth are not only heard but are actively involved in shaping policies and programs that transform their lives. Central to this model is the principle of direct engagement with youth, both in person and virtually, through community consultations, town halls, and targeted platforms that bridge the gap between grassroots realities and high-level policymaking.

Part of the Youth Envoy's mandate was to advocate for the interests of African youth at the highest levels of governance, ensuring their perspectives are prioritized in policy formulation and implementation. This involved a continuous cycle of consultation, advocacy, and feedback, where youth concerns are gathered, analyzed, and presented to AU organs and member states, while the outcomes of these efforts are communicated back to young people for accountability and engagement.

Youth Reference Committee

The establishment of the African Union Youth Reference Committee (YRC) in June 2023 marks a pivotal milestone in Africa's approach to youth inclusion in policy and governance. Historically, African youth have been marginalized in decision-making processes, often relegated to symbolic roles rather than being recognized as key stakeholders in shaping policy. The AU-YRC was created to address this gap, serving as a structured advisory and consultative body to ensure that young people's voices are not only heard but actively influence national, continental, and global policies. This initiative aligns with Africa's broader vision for socioeconomic transformation and inclusive governance, as articulated in the African Youth Charter (AYC) and the AU's Agenda 2063, the continent's strategic blueprint for development.

Comprising an inaugural cohort of 25 young Africans, the YRC functions as an interactive mechanism to amplify youth voices, foster collaboration, and facilitate dialogue on critical policy frameworks, including the AU Agenda 2063, the African Youth Charter, and the UN Agenda 2030. With a mission to promote global solidarity, elevate youth perspectives, and propose innovative solutions, the YRC focuses on thematic areas crucial to Africa's development: Governance, Peace, and Security; Climate Change and Migration; Entrepreneurship and Innovation; Education and Skills Development; and Health and Human Rights.

The formation of the YRC underscores the urgent need to move beyond tokenistic youth engagement and towards institutionalized, action-oriented youth participation. The longstanding principle of "Nothing for Us Without Us, From Start to Finish" has been a rallying cry among African youth, yet it has rarely been translated into binding policy commitments. By design, the YRC sought to bridge this gap by establishing a structured mechanism through which grassroots consultations directly inform AU decision-making processes, signaling a transformative step in youth governance, positioning young Africans not as passive beneficiaries but as active architects of policies that shape their present and future.

Youth Reference Committee during Africa Youth Climate Summit in Nairobi

Youth Reference Committee Study Visit to Vienna, Austria

AU Youth Envoy with Youth Reference Committe and Global Shapers Vienna Hub

Panel of the Future

The Panel of the Future , an initiative pioneered by the AU Youth Envoy, to engage on the nexus of the AU Agenda 2063 and UN SDG goals, as a vital commitment to the future of Africa and the continent's growing role in global governance , international cooperation and multilateralism. The Panel Of the Future is composed of 12 young and prominent African change makers in diverse fields, whose influence is pivotal in advancing young people's endeavors in Africa and poised to transform the landscape of multilateralism. Since it's inception, the panel has convened over 10 engagements in 2024 on the regional and global level, through strategic high -level meetings such as the 79th United Nations General Assembly, the Summit of the Future, the African Union Peace Security Council, Youth Town Halls and Youth Engagement Events. Overall, the Panel pushes youth voices on the global multilateral platforms ensuring meaningful youth participation in Governance.

Panel of the Future during 79th UNGA

Lead(H)er Fellowship

The Lead(H)er Fellowship, which stands for "She is a Leader", is a pan-African young women-led leadership development program that aims to provide young African women with the skills and knowledge to lead in the fields of Politics and Governance, Business, Trade and Entrepreneurship, and Peace and Security. The Fellowship is co-implemented by Plan International, YouLead Africa and the Youth Envoy; targeting young women up to 25 years old, who are passionate about leadership, social justice, and community development, and with a keen interest in providing their contribution towards the "Africa We Want". This platform has been used to amplify various African Union youth activities, through knowledge impartation and training, serving as a means to engage further with the fellows' communities. Launched in 2022 and with 3 cohorts so far, the fellowship has trained about 100 young women and girls and mentored over 300 young people through events, regional conferences such as the YouLead Summits, and international conferences such the 2023 Women Deliver Conference held in Kigali, Rwanda. More than 10 fellows have received funding to advance their entrepreneurial activities and community empowerment projects which are meaningfully changing lives and advancing a youth-led Africa as stipulated in Agenda 2063.

Youth Engagement during a Listening Tour in Abuja, Nigeria

4. Platforms of Engagement

Listening Tours

The Listening Tours Initiative was a flagship project of OYE, designed to amplify the voices of young people across Africa and to strengthen their participation in shaping the continent's development agenda. The Youth Envoy focused on promoting solution-focused engagements and creating platforms for dialogue with young people. Rolled out in 2022, through a 60 Days Listening Tour Campaign and the AU Youth Survey, which sought to provide young people an opportunity to contribute and highlight their challenges and priority areas; the Listening Tours became a strategic component of the Youth Envoy's engagement platforms. Listening Tours were held in about 20 countries both in Africa-across the 5 regions-and in the Diaspora, with more than 33 000 young people reached through this platform, both physically and virtually.

Debrief meeting with Hon. Mustapha Ussif, Ghana's Minister of Youth and Sports

Youth Town Halls

High-Level Town Halls: Amplifying Youth Voices at the AU Summit

High-Level Town Halls were instrumental in engaging young people in strategic and policy interventions. The inaugural town hall took place during the 36th AU Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February 2023, bringing together over 500 young people from across the continent and diaspora. These town halls provided a unique space for youth to directly engage with AU leadership, including heads of state, commissioners, and policymakers to discuss pressing issues such as governance, peace and security, education, and employment.

Having become a critical mechanism for integration of youth voices into the AU's agenda-setting processes, these gatherings have notably become instrumental to strategic direction. Notably, the submission of recommendations from the inaugural town hall informed the development of the AU's youth-focused initiatives under Agenda 2063, particularly in areas such as digital transformation and climate action. Furthermore, these town halls also serve as a platform for accountability, where young people can hold leaders accountable to commitments made towards youth development

Presentation of Instruments of Ratification of the African Youth Charter by the President of the Republic of Burundi, H.E Evariste Ndayishimiye to the Chairperson of the AU Commission, H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat at the Youth TownHall Meeting on the margins of the 36th AU Summit of Heads of State at the African Union Commission, Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia

SHAPE AFRICA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

SHAPE Africa Summit

The SHAPE Africa Summit was held from the 14 to the 16th of November 2024, at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The Summit was a novel collaboration between the Youth Envoy and the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Community, establishing a new paradigm for youth engagement in Africa. This gathering was an opportunity to bring young people closer to the African Union, under the theme Upskilling for Africa's Development. The summit brought together over 200 young leaders from 40 countries to strategically address four critical areas affecting African youth: climate action, civic responsibility, digital skills and technology, and mental health. This was a strategic space for engagement and a capacity building platform; where the young leaders were brought closer to policy-making and interactions with global leaders and Ministers of Youth.

Furthermore, on the 16th of November 2024, the Panel of the Future convened a High-Level Ministerial Youth Town Hall titled: "Multilateral Governance: Reigniting Youth Leadership for Today and the Future." The Town Hall spotlighted the Panel of the Future to emphasize the need to transform multilateralism, placing youth leadership at the core. The theme inculcated the urgent need to include and integrate youth voices in global governance, if true and lasting solutions are to be realized, hence a focus on youth leadership.

Leading Africa into the Future : Town Hall-Summit of the Future

Beyond national and regional engagements, the Youth Envoy convened the 1st ever African Youth Town Hall to close off the 79th United Nations General Assembly High Level Week. In collaboration with the United Nations Communications Department and BBC News Africa, the Youth Envoy co-hosted an Africa Youth Town Hall titled "Leading Africa into the Future." The Town Hall spotlighted the Panel of the Future and other prominent young Africans; to proffer solutions to various youth and governance priorities across Africa. This session was co-hosted with the United Nations executives such as Ms Amina J Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations who emphasized that "We really need to get to the root cause of this and much of that is about leadership and governance-what you are supposed to do for people and much of that is the reality that we are in a situation of humanitarian crises...it is all linked" Ms. Chido Cleopatra Mpemba, emphasized the role of leaders and remarked that, "our governments in Africa can also do more in making sure their mainstream delegations have young people within the main meetings as well and contributing equally towards their national strategies on how they are going to implement and execute on the Pact of the Future."

The Town Hall was physically attended by about 100 people and broadcasted on **BBC Focus on Africa** News therefore reaching tens of thousands more young people.

We really need to get to the root cause of this and much of that is about leadership and governance-what you are supposed to do for people and much of that is the reality that we are in a situation of humanitarian crises... It is all linked.

Ms Amina J Mohammed
UN Deputy Secretary General

Our governments in Africa can also do more in making sure their mainstream delegations have young people within the main meetings as well and contributing equally towards their national strategies on how they are going to implement and execute on the Pact of the Future.

Ms Chido Cleopatra Mpemba
African Union Chairperson's Youth Envoy

Taking Engagement to the Grassroots through Community Town Halls

To ensure that no youth is left behind, the Youth Envoy conducted National Town Halls as part of the Listening Tours, which were designed to take engagement directly to the grassroots. By meeting young people in their communities, the Youth Envoy ensures that marginalized groups, including rural youth, young women, and persons with disabilities, are represented in continental conversations. The insights gathered from these tours have been instrumental in shaping the AU's youth policies, including the development of the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace, and Security. A notable Town Hall took place in Ghana in 2022, hosted in partnership with the UNFPA Ghana Country Office. The forum provided an opportunity for direct interaction with over 100 young leaders representing student leaders, youth in politics and youth advocates in various sectors including community groups. The town hall concluded with a Twitter Chat on World Population Day in Ghana, engaging young people virtually on the theme: "Towards a Resilient Future: Harnessing Opportunities and Ensuring Rights and Choices for All." As part of the community engagement, the AU Youth Envoy also visited the Agbogbloshie Market to meet over 60 young women working as kayayei (head porters). Led by Purim Africa Youth Development Platform (PAYDP) and UNFPA, the visit highlighted interventions aimed at reducing gender-based violence and improving financial literacy for vulnerable young women. These aspects were included in the Youth Envoy's advocacy efforts, in interactions with policy makers and leaders such as Ministers of Youth.

Diaspora Engagements: Strengthening Ties with African Youth Abroad

In alignment with Article 21 of the African Youth Charter, which calls for the engagement of African youth in the diaspora, the Youth Envoy has also prioritized diaspora engagements. Various consultative efforts culminated in the inaugural **Africa-Canada Youth Symposium** in September 2024, which brought together over 300 young Africans from the diaspora and the continent to discuss issues such as education, entrepreneurship, and cultural exchange. The symposium resulted in the adoption of a joint declaration outlining actionable recommendations for strengthening diaspora engagement in Africa's development.

Additional diaspora engagements over the years included the following:

- Africa-United States (USA)
- Africa-United Kingdom (UK)
- Africa-Europe
- Africa-Asia

The Youth Envoy's diaspora engagements have also included partnerships with diaspora organizations and governments to create opportunities for skills transfer, investment, and collaboration. These efforts have not only strengthened ties between the continent and its diaspora but also ensured that the perspectives of diaspora youth are integrated into the AU's policymaking processes.

African Union
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AFRICA YOUTH LED

together we are IGNITED

Humanitarian Youth Forum: Building a Youth-Centric Humanitarian Architecture

In partnership with the AU Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development (HHS), the Youth Envoy inaugurated the Annual Humanitarian Youth Forum in May 2022. This platform brings together over 300 young people annually to develop a youth-centric humanitarian architecture that addresses the unique challenges faced by young people in conflict and crisis situations and in addition make critical recommendations for the establishment of the African Humanitarian Agency which the Republic of Uganda won the bid to host at the 45th Session of the African Union Executive Council held in Accra, Ghana. The forum has been instrumental in advancing the implementation of the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, particularly in ensuring that young people are included in discussions on migration, displacement, and humanitarian response.

1st Humanitarian Youth Forum, Nairobi, Kenya

The Humanitarian Youth Forum has also served as a platform for capacity building, equipping young people with the skills and knowledge needed to lead humanitarian efforts in their communities. Through this initiative, the Youth Envoy has demonstrated the critical role of youth in driving sustainable solutions to Africa's humanitarian challenges.

Advancing the role of women's leadership in the implementation of Agenda 2063 side event in Accra, Ghana

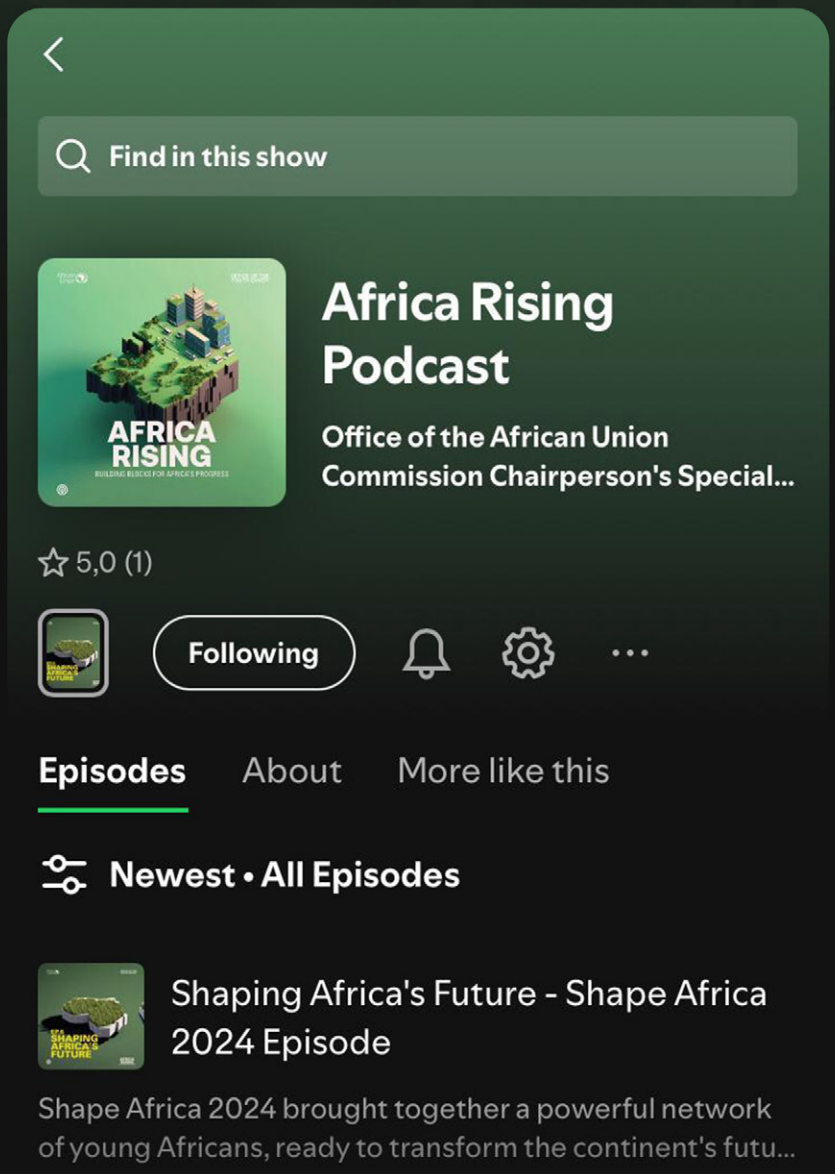
AfCFTA Youth Symposium: Empowering Youth in Trade and Economic Integration

Recognizing the importance of economic empowerment for youth, the Youth Envoy played a key role in conceptualizing the Annual AfCFTA Youth Symposium. This platform gathers over 1,500 young entrepreneurs, policymakers, and stakeholders annually to discuss the implementation of the AfCFTA and its impact on youth. The symposium has been pivotal in ensuring that youth perspectives are integrated into the AfCFTA's implementation, culminating in the adoption of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade, adopted during the 37th Ordinary Session of African Union-which the Youth Envoy was instrumental in contributing to and advocating.

The AfCFTA Youth Symposium has also provided a platform for young entrepreneurs to showcase their innovations and connect with investors, creating opportunities for economic growth and job creation. By focusing on trade and economic integration, the Youth Envoy has demonstrated the potential of youth to drive Africa's economic transformation.

Africa Rising Podcast

Platforming Youth Voices for Continental Transformation-The Africa Rising Podcast is a key communications tool of the Office of the African Union Chairperson's Special Envoy on Youth. The podcast contributes to the broader movement of embedding youth leadership into the African Union's broader structures and processes; platforming African youth experts across business, agriculture, policy, activism, amongst other sectors through episodes on key youth priorities in line with the AU and the Youth Envoy's Mandate. The podcast amplifies youth expertise and perspectives on critical issues, and providing a platform for discussions of policies, initiatives (such as the M.A.D Initiative, the Youth Town Hall, and the #ICanSurvive Mental Health Toolkit), and rights (such as the African Youth Charter), the podcast serves as a touchpoint for awareness and engagement. Episodes such as "Cultivating the Continent", "Shaping Africa's Future - Shape Africa 2024 Episode" and "Voices Rising" actively highlight and engage with current youth-led thought and efforts on a broad range of topics across the continent, increasing their visibility and influence within the AU and beyond, and encouraging African youth to participate in and engage with these structures.



Impact and Reach: A Model for Inclusive Youth Engagement

Through these platforms and initiatives, the Youth Envoy has reached thousands of young people directly and millions more through digital and media outreaches. Her model of engagement has not only amplified the voices of African youth but also ensured that their perspectives are integrated into the AU's policymaking processes. This model therefore serves as a blueprint for meaningful youth inclusion, not only in Africa but globally, and underscores the importance of investing in youth as key drivers of sustainable development.

By bridging the gap between grassroots realities and high-level decision-making, the Youth Envoy has demonstrated the transformative power of inclusive and participatory youth engagement.

SECTION B

Africa's Rising Priorities

Governance, Peace & Security

African Union | OFFICE OF THE YOUTH ENVOY

The Legacy
2022 - 2025

5. Governance, Peace and Security

Youth constitute a significant demographic in Africa, yet a considerable proportion of young people between the age of 15 and 29, live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts across the globe. Furthermore, they remain underrepresented in governance, peace, and security processes and often excluded from decision-making tables where their futures are shaped. This exclusion persists despite the recognition of youth as critical agents of change in continental frameworks such as the African Youth Charter (AYC), which provides a comprehensive framework for youth empowerment and participation. Article 11 of the AYC emphasizes the right of youth to participate in all spheres of society, including governance, while Article 17 underscores their role in promoting peace and security.

The African Union (AU), in alignment with Africa's blueprint for development, Agenda 2063 has made significant strides in addressing these challenges through frameworks such as the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace, and Security (CFYPS) and the Bujumbura Declaration on Youth, Peace, and Security, adopted in 2022 which represents a landmark commitment by AU member states to prioritize youth inclusion in peace and security processes. These frameworks recognize the roles of youth as key contributors to peacebuilding. Yet, the implementation of these commitments remains uneven across member states, highlighting the need for sustained advocacy, capacity building, and institutional support to translate policy into practice.

Aligned with her mandate to champion the African Youth Charter and Agenda 2063, particularly Aspiration 6, the Youth Envoy has been instrumental in driving the implementation of continental frameworks on youth, governance, peace, and security. By focusing on advocacy, engagement and political lobbying, the Youth Envoy has amplified youth voices and strengthened their participation in governance and peacebuilding, including the institutional mechanisms for youth participation and leadership in peace and security processes.

Championing Youth Inclusion in Governance, Peace & Security

One of the Youth Envoy's key achievements has been the relentless advocacy for the ratification and domestication of the African Youth Charter. In 2023, these efforts culminated into Burundi's ratification of the African Youth Charter during the 36th AU Summit. Burundi's ratification was championed by HE President Evariste Ndiashimiye, who reaffirmed Burundi's commitment to youth peace and security through this act. During the same summit, President Ndiashimiye was appointed as the 1st AU Champion for Youth, Peace, and Security, underscoring the importance of high-level leadership in advancing the youth agenda in governance, peace and security.

Parallel to the Youth Envoy's advocacy for the ratification of the African Youth Charter, the Youth Envoy has been actively involved in advancing the Bujumbura Declaration on Youth, Peace, and Security, which represents a landmark commitment by AU member states to prioritize youth inclusion in peace and security processes. The Youth Envoy has worked closely with the African Union Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAPS) who played a critical role in the consultations and eventual drafting of the Bujumbura process, to ensure that the commitments of the declaration were translated into actionable initiatives. The Bujumbura Declaration emphasizes the need for youth participation in conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding, aligning with the African Youth Charter's Article 17 on peace and security. The Youth Envoy's engagement and collaboration with the various departments of the AU has been instrumental in operationalizing the declaration, mainly through the establishment of the Wise Youth Network in 2024.

Governance and Electoral Processes

The Youth Envoy's advocacy has extended to governance and electoral processes, where she has championed youth inclusion in decision-making spaces. In 2024, her efforts led to a significant milestone when she successfully lobbied the AU's Political Affairs, Peace, and Security (PAPS) department to adopt a 40% youth quota for all election observation missions. This achievement was particularly impactful in a year dubbed the "biggest election year globally," with more than 15 African countries holding elections. Notably, the inaugural youth delegation of election observers, an all-women team, was deployed to observe the presidential elections in Namibia, additionally, through the Youth Envoy's initiatives, like the Youth Reference Committee (YRC), which advocated for inclusion and increased participation of young people in governance and policy making. A notable example is Nigeria's adoption of the 30% youth quota in 2024, a policy mandating the inclusion of young people and women in all government appointments.

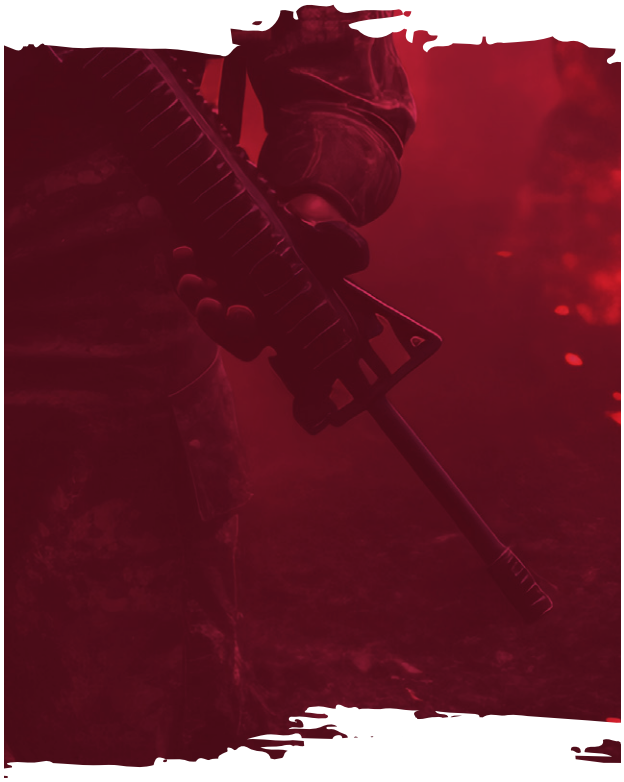
Youth Reference Committee at Austrian Federal Chancellery

Shaping Global Governance Frameworks

The Youth Envoy's efforts have stretched beyond the continent, ensuring that African youth perspectives shape global governance frameworks. In November 2023, in partnership with the Austrian National Youth Council (BJV), the Youth Envoy organized a high-level Dialogue with youth and policy makers in Vienna, Austria. The conference convened over 100 young leaders from Africa and Europe. It resulted in joint policy recommendations that were formally presented to Austria's State Secretary for Youth, and considered for inclusion in Austria's Africa Strategy. Additionally, the youth envoy's engagement with the German Federal Foreign Office, through the German Africa Foundation (DAS), ensured that the priorities of African youth were formally recognized in Germany's newly published Africa Policy Guidelines. Similarly, the Youth Envoy played a key role in integrating youth perspectives into the Netherlands-Africa Strategy (2023-2032). These initiatives align with Article 12 of the African Youth Charter, which mandates youth participation in national and international policymaking. Through these engagements, the AU-OYE has set a global precedent for meaningful youth inclusion in governance, demonstrating how African youth can move beyond consultation to active policy influence at the highest levels.

Youth Reference Committee at Dialogue Conference in Vienna, Austria

Peace and Security Networks



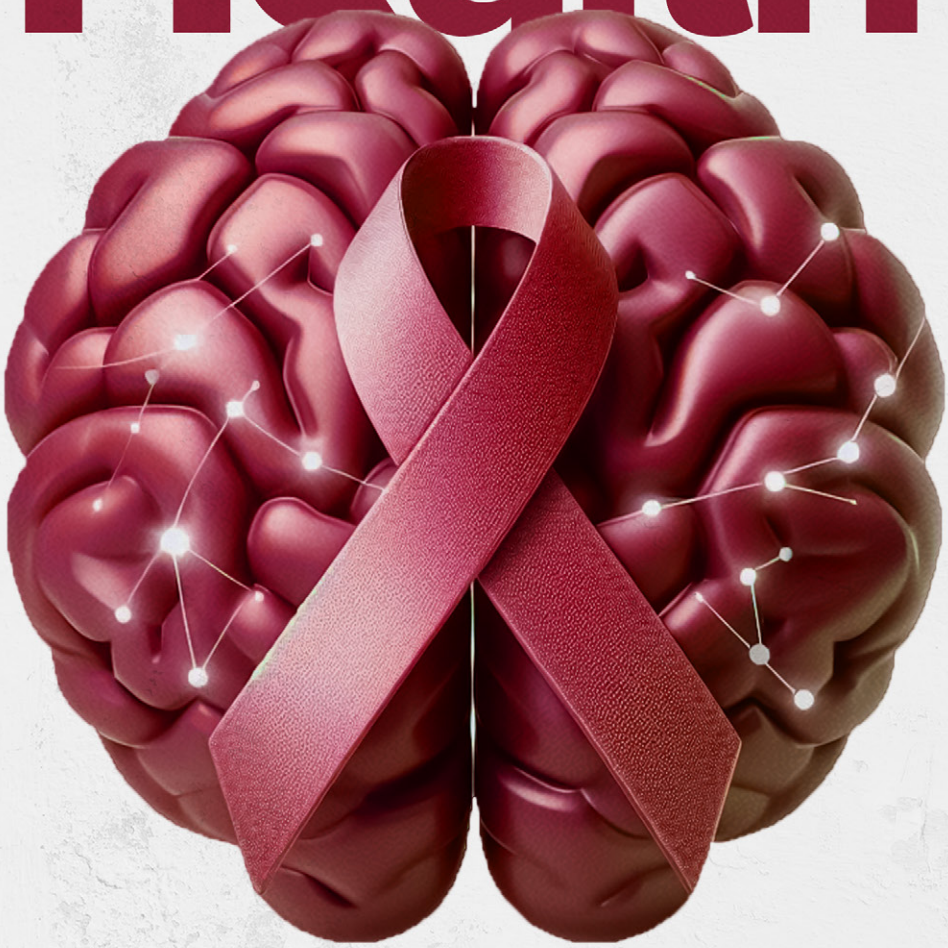
The Youth Envoy has also focused on building networks that empower youth in governance, peace and security. In 2022, on the sidelines of the Emerging Security Sector Leaders Seminar at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, she met with military forces and security sector representatives from over 35 African countries in Washington. This engagement aimed to sensitize stakeholders on the AU Youth Charter and build a support network for youth empowerment. In turn, the Youth Envoy called for the security sector to be demystified for youth and to listen to young people's perspectives to strengthen the continent's peacebuilding. Furthermore, emphasis was placed on the importance of youth inclusion in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, advocating for their meaningful engagement as assets for sustainable peace.

In May 2023, the AU Youth Envoy stood in solidarity and assisted to find support solutions for young people in Sudan. This took place in 2 solidarity missions:

i) The Youth envoy joined the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace, and Security, H.E. Bineta Diop, in a high-level convening to express solidarity with women and girls affected by the conflict in Sudan. This mission was part of the follow-up mechanisms to the efforts of the AUC Chairperson, H.E. Moussa Faki, to address the ongoing crisis in Sudan. The meeting produced a comprehensive roadmap to support the critical role of women and young girls in fostering lasting peace and security in the region.

ii) The Youth Envoy reaffirmed her solidarity with the Sudan youth, engaging directly with the Sudanese National Youth Council and youth representatives to amplify their voices, provide and mobilize support and advocate for their inclusion in the peacebuilding processes.

Mental Health



#ICanSurvive

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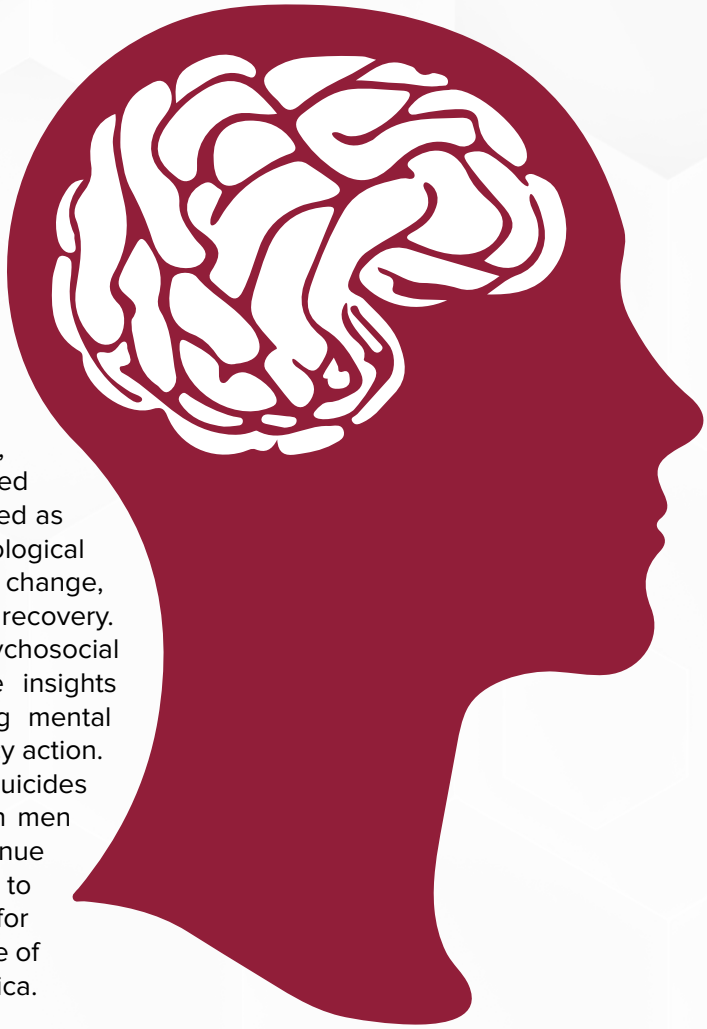
6. #ICanSurvive Toolkit:

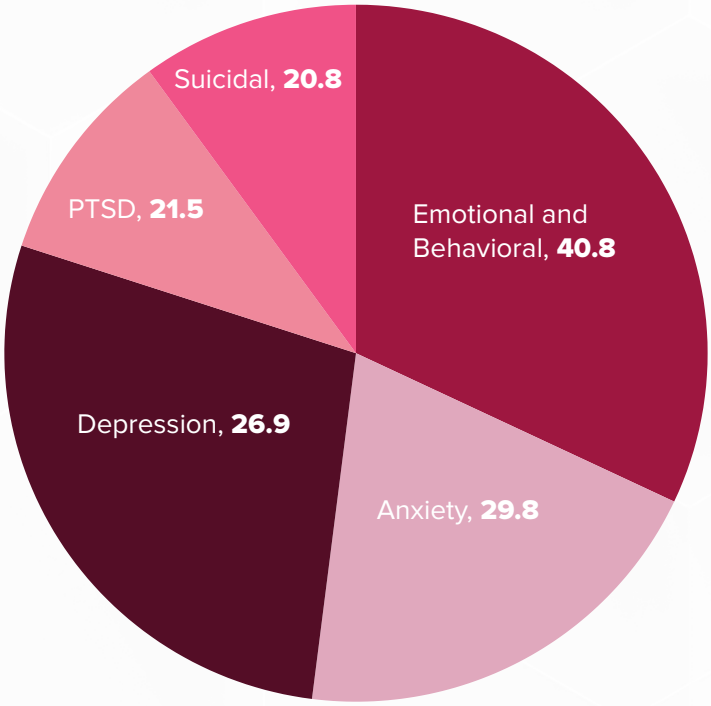
A Legacy of Empowering Africa's Youth for Mental Health Resilience



In 2022, we conducted an extensive Listening Tours, engaging over 50,000 young people across Africa through in-person dialogues, virtual consultations, and community engagements. Youth from diverse backgrounds-urban and rural areas, conflict zones, and marginalized communities-shared their most pressing challenges. Mental health emerged as a top concern. Young people highlighted the psychological toll of unemployment, economic instability, climate change, academic pressure, digital stress, and post-pandemic recovery. Many voiced frustrations over stigma, limited psychosocial support, and a lack of accessible services.These insights shaped the Youth Envoy's commitment to making mental health a priority, driving youth-led advocacy and policy action. The urgency of this issue is evident-in Malawi, suicides rose by 20% in early 2024 compared to 2023, with men disproportionately affected. Across Africa, youth continue to struggle with worsening mental health due to economic and social pressures, reinforcing the need for immediate action. The following shows the prevalence of mental health challenges among young people in Africa.

Prevalence of Mental Health challenges among African Youth

Against this backdrop, the Youth Envoy launched the #ICanSurvive Youth Mental Health Toolkit on 5 Emerging Issues in Africa in February 2024 during the AU Heads of State Summit. This multi-functional resource equips young Africans with tools to advocate for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), ensuring youth voices remain central in shaping Africa's mental health agenda.



GOALS OF THE #ICanSurvive TOOLKIT

Thematic Focus Areas:- Shaped by the Listening Tours

01 Mental Health and Climate Change

02 Mental Health and Digital Spaces

03 Mental Health and Education

04 Mental Health and Social Isolation

05 Mental Health and Economic Development

Launch of the Toolkit

Impact and Reach

- Youth-Led Baraza Sessions

- Safe spaces for dialogue, coping strategies, and community building, held across Africa and the Diaspora.
- A landmark baraza session took place during the Shape Africa Summit in Addis Ababa (November 2024) showcased resilience and collective action.

Impact

- Utilized by youth organizations, schools, and community groups to drive awareness campaigns and workshops.
- Thousands of young Africans advocating for better mental health policies at local and national levels.
- Mental Health Champions were selected from all regions of Africa (Southern, Northern, Eastern, Central and West Africa). These champions embody the toolkit's mission.

Meet the Mental Health Champions: Voices of Resilience from Across Africa.

Climate Change

Building Resilience, Restoring Ecosystems

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7. Climate Change and Migration:
Advancing Resilience and Sustainability in Africa

Climate change poses a significant threat to Africa, with young people bearing the brunt of its impacts. Recognizing their potential as agents of change, we championed youth-led climate action to build resilience, restore ecosystems, and amplify African voices in global climate discussions.

Key Initiatives and Achievements:
1. Tree-Planting Campaigns: Reforesting and Revitalizing Communities

- **Kenya:** The AU Youth Envoy mobilized youth leaders and initiated a tree planting activity in Kibera, Nairobi, planting over 100 fruit trees, enhancing urban green cover, food security and youth engagement in environmental stewardship.

- **Ethiopia:** Supported the Green **Legacy Initiative**, combating desertification and promoting sustainable land management through afforestation.
- **South Africa:** Spearheaded a tree planting initiative supported by IFRC to engage with youth in communities and collectively planted 50 fruit trees.

- **Zimbabwe:** Convened a continental youth symposium, leading to community work in climate education and tree planting at Mawaba Primary School, fostering hands on environmental learning and community involvement.

4. Global Climate Advocacy: COP27 and COP28

COP27 (Egypt, 2022):

- **Climate Mobility Fellows Program:** Partnered with **UNICEF, IOM**, and **ACMI (Africa Climate Mobility Initiative)** to launch the **Climate Mobility Fellows Program.** This initiative trained and empowered young leaders to address climate-induced migration and displacement, integrating their voices into policy frameworks.
- African Youth Declaration for Climate Mobility: Launched at COP27, this declaration outlined key policy recommendations from young Africans on adapting to and mitigating climate mobility challenges.
- **Youth Engagement in Climate Finance:** Advocated for increased funding for youth-led climate initiatives, securing commitments such as €100,000 from **Bosch Stiftung** and the establishment of **Youth Investment Banks** by the AfDB.
- **African Youth Pavilion:** Supported the creation of a dedicated space for young climate leaders to present innovative solutions and engage policymakers.

COP28 (UAE, 2023):

- **Global Stocktake Engagement:** Contributed to discussions on the first-ever Global Stocktake, ensuring youth priorities like green jobs and just transitions were reflected in policy outcomes.
- **Youth-Led Climate Solutions Exhibition:** Partnered with African innovators to showcase climate-smart technologies, including sustainable agriculture and renewable energy solutions.
- **Negotiation Influence:** Worked closely with African negotiators to integrate youth priorities into policy frameworks.

Impact of Global Advocacy:

- Increased funding for youth-led climate projects.
- Strengthened youth networks and policy influence at continental and global levels.
- Elevated African youth voices in global climate discussions, particularly on climate mobility and adaptation.

5. Africa Youth for Migration Initiative Program (AYMP)

- **Launch:** In July 2023, the African Union Youth Envoy partnered with IOM to launch the African Youth for Migration Programme (AYMP), aligning with Agenda 2063, the African Youth Charter, and the UN SDGs

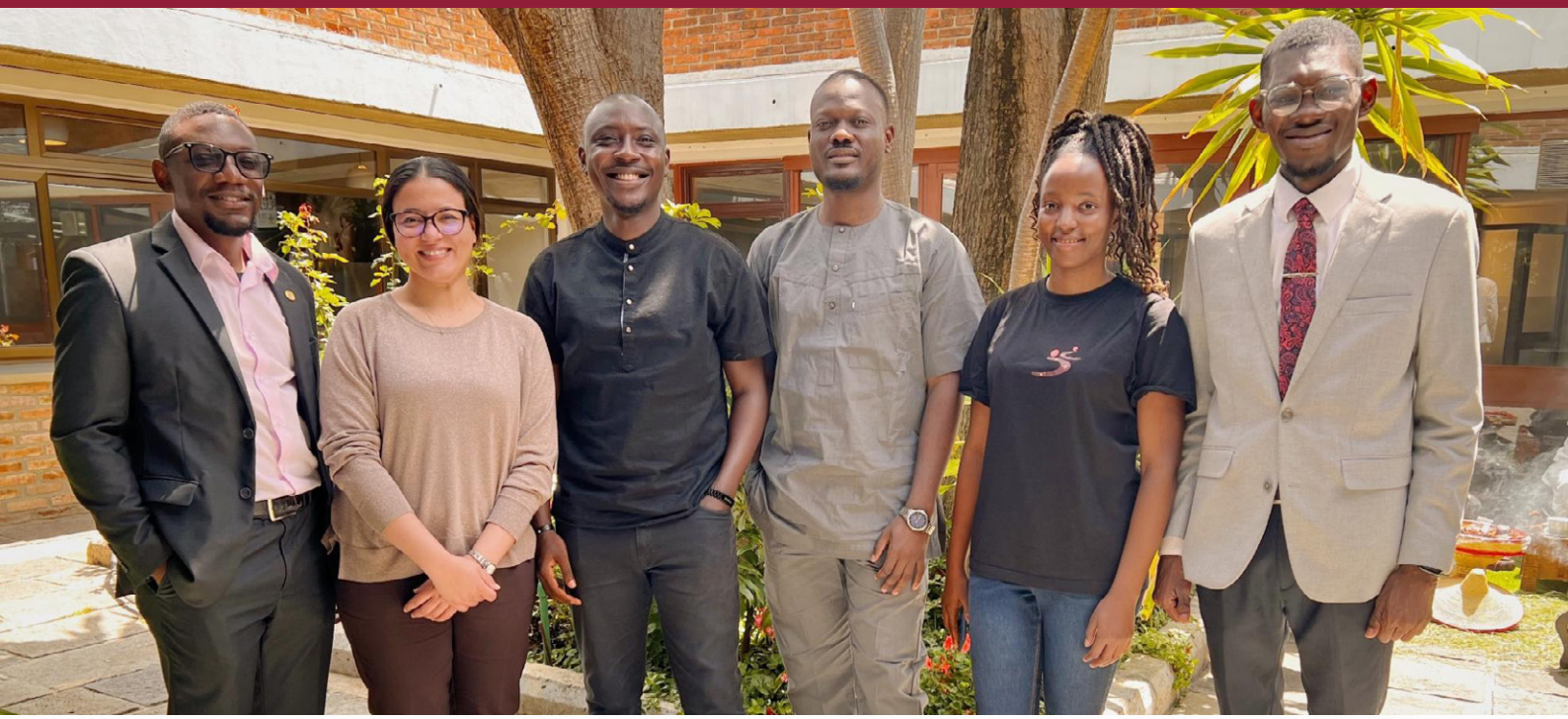
In collaboration with AU Women Gender and Youth Department and IOM the Office played key role at the Inaugural Continental Youth Consultation on Migration (Kigali, Rwanda – August 2023):

- Brought together 75+ young leaders from across Africa to discuss migration, human mobility, and development.
- Focused on thematic areas like climate change, AfCFTA, health, labor, and diaspora engagement.
- Launched the Youth Declaration on Migration in Africa, influencing AU and IOM policy frameworks.

The symposium led to the selection of Migration Youth Ambassadors:

representing the five Africa's regions:

1. **Central Africa:** Mr. Valery Bobuin (Cameroon)
2. **East Africa:** Ms. Rose Kobusinge (Uganda)
3. **North Africa:** Ms. Sara Hashem Badr (Egypt)
4. **Southern Africa:** Mr. Walter Kasempa (Zambia)
5. **West Africa:** Mr. Damilola Adeniran (Nigeria)



Impact of AYMP:

- Enhanced youth participation in migration governance and decision-making.
- Strengthened cross-sectoral linkages between migration, trade, and development.
- Amplified youth voices in continental and global migration dialogues
- Advocated for the ratification of the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons.

6. Collaboration with UNFCCC Youth4Capacity

The AU Youth Envoy was actively engaged by the UNFCCC Youth4Capacity team in the development of the Becoming a Climate Champion course, a capacity-building initiative aimed at empowering young people in climate action. Her insights, gathered through an in-depth interview, played a key role in shaping the course content, ensuring it addressed the real challenges, needs, and aspirations of African youth in the climate space. This collaboration highlighted the Envoy's influence in mainstreaming youth voices in global climate governance and capacity-building efforts.

Looking Ahead:

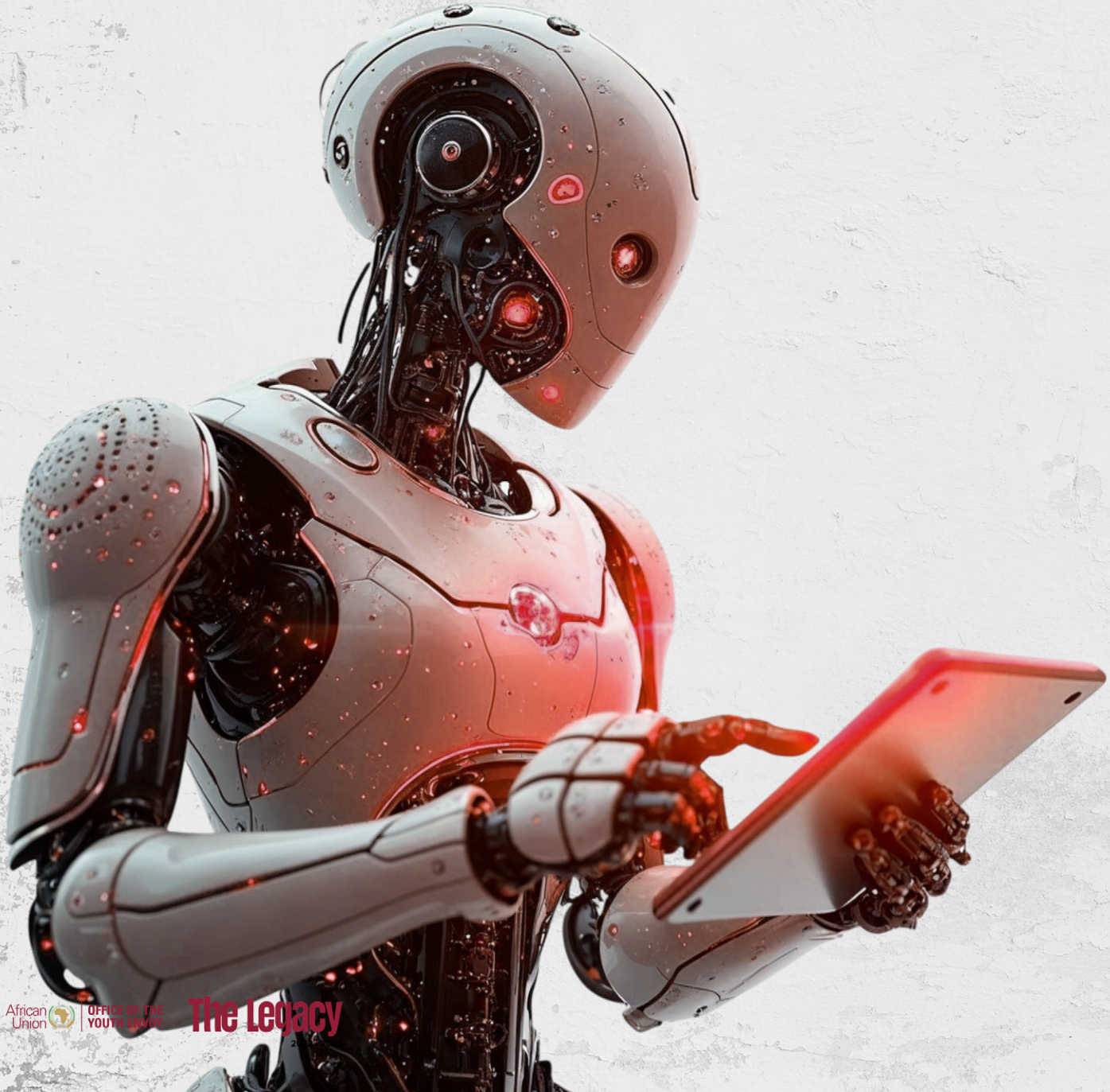
The OYE's initiatives demonstrate the transformative power of youth-led climate action in Africa. By combining advocacy, education, and on-the-ground interventions, these efforts have:

- Restored ecosystems.
- Empowered young leaders.
- Amplified African voices in global climate and mobility discussions.

Sustained investment, policy integration, and multi-sectoral partnerships will be critical to scaling these efforts and securing a resilient, sustainable future for Africa.

Digital Skills

Make Africa Digital



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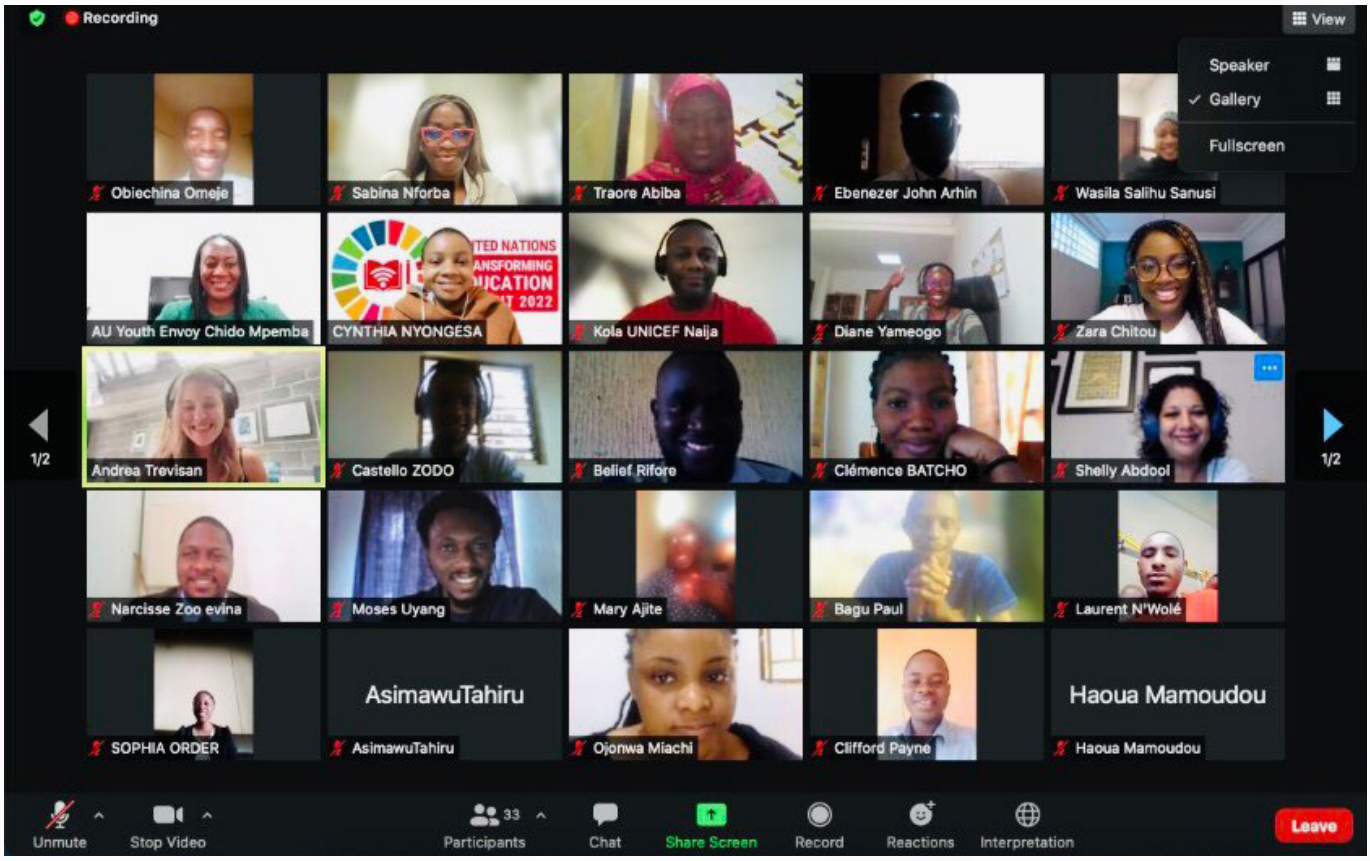
8. Digital Inclusion, Education And Skills Development

1. YOUTH MANIFESTO ON TRANSFORMING EDUCATION IN AFRICA

The Youth Manifesto on Transforming Education presented by the AU Chairperson's Youth Envoy to African Heads of States during the 77th United Nations General Assembly, was a pivotal step in advocating for youth-driven educational reforms. This manifesto emerged from extensive consultations with young people across Africa, reflecting their aspirations, challenges, and proposed solutions for transforming the education landscape. Its core aim was to address systemic barriers such as outdated curricula, limited digital access, and the skills mismatch hindering youth employability. By presenting this manifesto on a global platform, the Youth Envoy amplified African youth voices, emphasizing the urgent need for inclusive, accessible, and future-ready education systems that empower young people to thrive in the digital economy.

The Youth Manifesto played a significant role in contributing to the lobbying for the AU 2024 theme of the year on Education. Overall, the engagement at the UNGA served as a platform to build partnerships, mobilize resources, and ensure that Africa's youth are not only beneficiaries but active contributors to shaping the continent's educational future.

Learn More



2. MAKE AFRICA DIGITAL (MAD) CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

The Make Africa Digital Campaign was an ambitious initiative spearheaded to champion digital inclusion and prepare African youth for the future of work. The campaign was launched in response to the growing digital divide that limits opportunities for young people across the continent and abroad. Through private sector collaborations with Google and the African Import-Export Bank (AFREXIMBANK), The campaign was successfully launched in eight countries — Ethiopia, Ghana, South Sudan, Senegal, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Madagascar — as part of a strategic effort to address country-specific digital challenges and advocate for the digital inclusion of youth people.

To better understand the barriers young people face in accessing and utilizing digital tools, the Make Africa Digital Campaign conducted extensive consultations with youth across the continent. These consultations created a platform for young voices to share their experiences, challenges, and aspirations regarding digital skills development and employment opportunities. For instance, dialogues held in Koforidua, a remote town in Ghana revealed key gaps such as limited access to digital devices, inadequate training in emerging technologies, and a disconnect between educational curricula and industry needs. In South Sudan where the team met with over 800 youth, concerns about the cost of Internet data, the lack of digital infrastructure and the absence of reliable electricity, contribute to the digital divide across the country. Eventually, these led to the publication of a Progress Report to inform policy makers in the advocacy for African youth in this digital age.

A key outcome of the campaign was the development of an AI Policy Brief, which provided strategic guidance on integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into Africa's education, governance, and economic sectors. The policy brief was launched during the 2024 United Nations Summit of the Future on the margins of the 79th United Nations General Assembly in collaboration with the UN Global Compact. Learn More

TESTIMONIALS

1. "Where I am based makes it difficult for entrepreneurs such as myself to connect with other entrepreneurs and get access to investment and other resources."**_Founder of StreamIT, Juba, South Sudan**
2. "It is very important for us, the young people, to get digital skills for the future of work." **_Participant, Antananarivo, Madagascar**

11. Knowledge Products & Publications:

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Sustainable Youth Development in Africa
https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/44080-doc-AI_for_Sustainable_Youth_Development_finalized_copy-1.pdf

2. Youth Mental Health toolkit on 5 Emerging Issues in Africa
https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/43559-doc-43541-other-AU_Youth_Mental_Health_Toolkit_A4.v5.pdf

3. African Youth Declaration for Climate Mobility
https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/43107-doc-African_Youth_Declaration_for_Climate_Mobility_3.pdf

4. Youth Manifesto on Education in Africa
https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/43108-doc-Education_Youth_Manifesto_Chido_Mpemba.pdf

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Our Partners

Thank you

FOR 3 YEARS OF UNPARALLED SUPPORT

Ms Chido Mpemba

African Union

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