



**#YOUTH2030**

# **7<sup>th</sup> Economic and Social Council Youth Forum CONCEPT NOTE**

## **Regional Breakout Session**

### **“Africa”**

#### **On the theme:**

## **“The Role of African Youth in Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Resilient Urban and Rural Communities”**

**31 January 2018**

**10:00 am – 11:30 am**

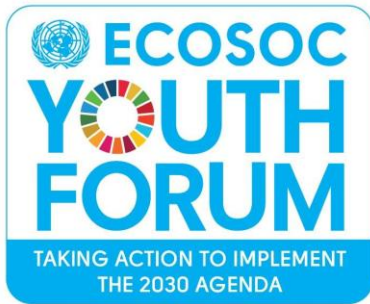
**Room 5**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York**

### **1. Background and Context**

The 2018 ECOSOC Youth Forum has dedicated its overall theme to the role of youth in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities. This theme is of significant importance to the youth of Africa owing to their sheer size as a percentage of the continent’s overall population. With 60 per cent of the population under the age of 35, there are currently 420 million youth aged 15-35, and this segment of the population is expected to double to 840 million by 2040. The demographic shift in Africa towards youth goes in tandem with ensuring sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities since young people shall compose the majority of dwellers in both urban and rural communities in the decades to come. Moreover, the Sustainable Development Goals’ mantra of “Leaving no one behind” makes it indispensable to fully garner the participation and inclusivity of Africa’s youth.

While Africa’s youth population presents immense opportunities for the continent, the current socioeconomic conditions in Africa hinder the progress of Africa’s youth. Unemployment or underemployment, and lack of social security, business capital and



educational opportunities, are some of the challenges the youth are facing. Policy makers warn that a youth population without opportunity can lead to political instability or even conflict. Large urban centres, the destination for many youth from rural areas looking for opportunities, face increasing difficulties in managing the growing mega slums. Furthermore, social stresses such as unemployment can make the youth easy prey to extremist ideology. The employment prospects of many young people across the continent are hampered by corruption, and they do not access all the necessary basic services they need because of it.<sup>1</sup>

At the ECOSOC Youth Forum Breakout Session on Africa in 2017, young people crafted recommendations<sup>2</sup> on ways to afford the continent's youth enhanced economic and social opportunities through the implementation of the African Union (AU)'s Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>3</sup> The 2018 ECOSOC Youth Forum Breakout Session on Africa will build on the previous year's recommendations while focusing more narrowly on ways to fight corruption as one of the means to build a sustainable path to resilient urban and rural communities in Africa.

This methodology is in line with the African Union's declaration of 2018 as the "African Anti-Corruption Year". The Assembly of the AU designated the year's theme "*Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation*". The AU, which has a responsibility for continental norm-setting, has instruments to fight corruption. So far, 37 of the African Union's members have ratified the AU's Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC), which was adopted in Maputo in 2003 and entered into force in 2006.

The need to stop the hemorrhaging of Africa's scarce resources is crucial. Combatting corruption frees the resources necessary to address the challenges facing the sustainable development of both urban and rural communities. Fighting this type of corruption will enhance the development of people-centred urban and human settlements, allow for the effective implementation of the recommendations of the New Urban Agenda Habitat III, and enable African Governments to effectively invest in youth to ensure a youth dividend.

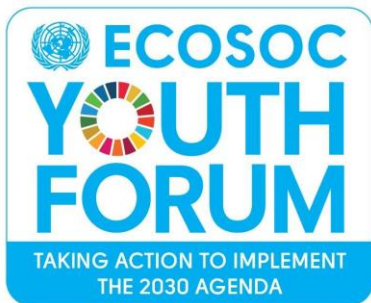
Significant and inclusive economic transformation will be vital to achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063's vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. This transformation will require investing in young people and women, resilient infrastructure,

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<sup>1</sup> Corruption Watch Report (2014)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/events/2017/youthforum.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> SDG11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities is aligned to Agenda 2063 Goals 1, 7, 10 and 12.



sustainable agriculture, sustainable and green energy, boosting the blue economy, and the creation of decent and productive jobs for the 10 to 12 million young people who enter the labour markets annually.

## 2. Innovative and Alternative Resources to Fight Corruption

Both the SDGs and Agenda 2063 have very significant resource implications for Africa. Studies have revealed that between US\$ 600 billion and US\$ 1.2 trillion are needed annually to implement the SDGs, with infrastructure alone costing about US\$ 93 billion per year with a chronic funding gap of US\$ 50 billion each year. An amount of US\$ 32-40 billion is required each year to mitigate the challenges in the agricultural sector.<sup>4</sup>

Although considerable progress has been made globally in recent years to combat corruption, it continues to impede development while also undermining democracy and the rule of law. The estimated cost of corruption in Africa is much higher than the total combined amount of development aid it receives: over US\$ 150 billion lost annually (AfDB). Corruption remains one of the biggest barriers to Africa’s development as it negatively affects the delivery of basic social services and economic activities and hinders the investments in youth. Corruption slows down the industrialization process on the continent, thereby barricading job creation in both urban and rural communities, which would stand to benefit the youth.

To meet its financial needs Africa must navigate beyond traditional means of financing development, including ensuring a wider fiscal base, leveraging pension funds and sovereign wealth funds, attracting private sector finances, curbing corruption and tackling illicit financial flows, which alone account for US\$ 50-60 billion each year and outweigh Official Development Assistance.

Recognizing the detrimental impact of corruption on sustainable development and in an effort to address the growing scourge, countries signed up to the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) – the first international legal instrument against corruption that came into force in 2005. With 170 state parties as of 3 October 2017, UNCAC has been influential in enabling state parties to adopt national legal instruments against corruption, including anti-corruption laws and strategies, and establishment of anti-corruption institutions. The Convention aims to counter corruption in the areas of development, the environment, in the private sector, during major public events, match-fixing, asset recovery and in many other areas of human lives. Nonetheless, despite the ongoing implementation

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<sup>4</sup> UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa



of anti-corruption programmes across the continent at regional, subregional and national levels, much more still needs to be done to combat corruption.

### 3. The Role of African Youth in Fighting Corruption

In the spirit of leaving no one behind, African youth can combat corruption in diverse ways using various means including exercising their civic and political rights in electing the right officials in office and holding them accountable, training as anti-corruption practitioners, forming integrity camps, and increasing political participation and the use of petitions. Young people must elevate to more leadership roles locally, regionally and internationally and continue to advocate for transparency and accountability. The youth can help communities to document cases of corruption by developing reporting platforms on the web or through mobile apps. Social media, in particular, is an effective way to address corruption in real-time. According to Transparency International, through sport and creativity – from running against corruption to scoring a goal for transparency – youth can raise their communities’ anti-corruption awareness.

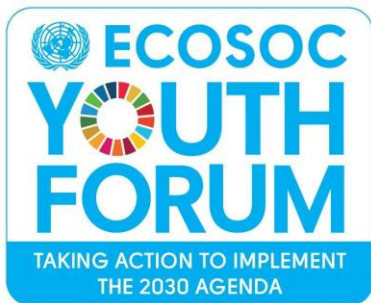
Recognizing the youth as a key ingredient in the fight against corruption is paramount given the role they play in changing attitudes and instilling cultural accountability. Since youth represent a significant part of the population and are generally more open to social change and political transformation, it could be surmised that they would have less interest in maintaining the status quo. Furthermore, engaging the youth is also paramount as this sector of the population tends to be more exposed to bribery and therefore particularly vulnerable to corruption; this is because they are involved in almost every aspect of society – as students, pupils, workers, customers and citizens (Transparency International 2009).

As noted above, there are a number of conventions, policies, strategies and institutional frameworks to fight corruption in Africa. In order to win the fight against corruption there is the need for:

- Re-orientation of the youth to fight for social justice, equity and societal transformation;
- Youth organizing for change and linkage with other agents of change in society;
- Youth advocacy for the Freedom of Information Act and Whistle Blowers Act;
- Organizing to ensure that leaders match word with action;
- Social movement for change; and
- Organizing for transformation of society.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Youth and The War Against Corruption In Africa: Roles And Policy Options, Otive Igbuzor, PhD (2005)



## 4. Objectives

The Regional Breakout Session on Africa aims to craft recommendations on the roles of African youth in the fight against corruption and how combatting corruption and freeing up resources can be a means of implementing the SDGs in Africa and ensuring resilient urban and rural communities. Specifically, the session will garner input from the African youth to inform the work of the 2018 ECOSOC Youth Forum and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. In addition, the discussion aims to:

- Understand why young people are increasingly emphasized as agents of change in the anti-corruption discourse;
- Discuss how to enhance the role the youth can play with existing actors in anti-corruption, namely government, non-governmental organizations, anti-corruption agencies, the private sector, the media, including social media, and gender organizations, among others;
- Identify concrete policies that can foster youth's role in combating corruption;
- Link the fight against corruption to the ultimate objective of resilient communities; and
- Promote networking and exchanges among young people with regard to fighting corruption in Africa.

## 5. Format

The event will be structured as an interactive session, featuring youth representatives from Africa and beyond and co-moderated by a prominent African youth representative. The event is open to all and especially encourages the participation of African youth. It will be webcast to allow a wide range of participants to follow, in particular youth in Africa.

**The Regional Breakout Session on Africa will be co-organized** by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (UN-OSAA) and UNESCO, with additional co-organization from the Pan-African Youth Union; the African Union Youth Division; the NEPAD Agency; the African Peer Review Mechanism Secretariat; the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa; and the African Development Bank.

## 6. Guiding Questions



In order to maximize the contribution of all participants in the Regional Breakout Session on Africa during the 2018 ECOSOC Youth Forum, participants are encouraged to consider the following guiding discussion questions:

- How can the youth explicitly link the fight against corruption with ensuring resilient urban and rural communities in Africa?
- How can curbing corruption help to create new and decent jobs for youth?
- How can youth hold Governments accountable in a bid to curb corruption?
- How can youth engagement in governance and societal reform be strengthened?
- How can the push and pull factors of rural-to-urban exodus be addressed, with the interests of the youth at the fore?

## **7. Expected Outcomes**

The breakout session will provide a platform to discuss the challenges and roles regarding youth involvement in fighting corruption at all levels, including concretizing the explicit linkage between fighting corruption and ensuring resilient communities. It is expected that concrete policy recommendations will be agreed upon, and these will be used to engage African decision makers for further action.

Furthermore, the deliberations and inputs from young people will contribute to the yearlong series of events around the African Union's theme for 2018, "*Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation*".

The key messages of the event will be published and communications materials will be developed to highlight the role of African youth in winning the fight against corruption, in light of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063. The outcomes of the breakout session will also inform the engagement of partner organizations with Member States regarding the 2018 African Union theme, with particular focus on young people's roles.

## **8. Participants**

Participants in the event will include a wide range of youth representatives, key stakeholders, including Ministers and other senior Government officials, and senior officials of United Nations system entities, the private sector, civil society and academia.

## 9. Suggested Reading Materials

### Frameworks

- The African Youth Charter  
[http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/african\\_youth\\_charter\\_2006.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/african_youth_charter_2006.pdf)
- The African Youth Decade Plan of Action 2009-2018  
[http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/african\\_youth\\_decade\\_2009-2018.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/african_youth_decade_2009-2018.pdf)
- The African Union Agenda 2063  
<http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063.pdf>
- United Nations Convention Against Corruption (2004)  
[https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/Publications/Convention/08-50026\\_E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/Publications/Convention/08-50026_E.pdf)
- African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003)  
[https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7786-treaty-0028\\_-\\_african\\_union\\_convention\\_on\\_preventing\\_and\\_combating\\_corruption\\_e.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7786-treaty-0028_-_african_union_convention_on_preventing_and_combating_corruption_e.pdf)
- African Continental Framework on Youth Development (2015)  
<http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/nepad/youth-development-framework-2015.pdf>
- Sustainable urbanization strategy – UNDP  
[http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Sustainable%20Development/Urbanization/UNDP\\_Urban-Strategy.pdf?download](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Sustainable%20Development/Urbanization/UNDP_Urban-Strategy.pdf?download)

### Reports

- UNESCO Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development  
[http://www.unesco.org/culture/culture-for-sustainable-urban-development/pdf-open/global-Report\\_en.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/culture/culture-for-sustainable-urban-development/pdf-open/global-Report_en.pdf)
- Investing in young rural people for sustainable and equitable development - IFAD  
<https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/15b7d693-89b0-4c5d-ae50-80ad0d74b898>
- Making Youths the Engine for Rural Diversification and Structural Transformation  
[http://unctad.org/meetings/es/Presentation/dtl\\_eweek2016\\_ALazarteHoyle\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/meetings/es/Presentation/dtl_eweek2016_ALazarteHoyle_en.pdf)
- Fostering economic opportunities for youth in Africa: a comprehensive approach  
<http://www.developmentbookshelf.com/doi/full/10.3362/1755-1986.2015.017>
- African Economic Outlook 2016: Sustainable Cities and Structural Transformation, AfDB, OECD, UNDP  
<http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/theme/sustainable-cities-and-structural-transformation>