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ORANGE YOUTH FESTIVAL & AFRICA WE WANT SYMPOSIUM

Innovating for Sovereignty: African Youth as Architects of Agenda 2063

THE ACCRA YOUTH COMMUNIQUÉ

VENUE OF ADOPTION: Valley View University, Accra

August, 2026

Accra, Ghana

PREAMBLE

We, the youth delegates, innovators, policy architects, civil society leaders, and young diplomats representing nations across West and East Africa alongside representatives of the African Diaspora gathered at Valley View University in Accra, Ghana, the cradle of African liberty, from August 19 to 23, 2026, for the **Orange Youth Festival** and the **Africa We Want Symposium**;

CONVENED under the visionary theme *"Innovating for Sovereignty: African Youth as Architects of Agenda 2063"*, hosted by Youth Arise Organization (YAO) in strategic partnership with the National Youth Authority of Ghana and aligned with the strategic priorities of the African Union Directorate of Women, Gender and Youth (AU-WGYD), AUDA-NEPAD, the AfCFTA Secretariat, and the ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre (EYSDC);

REPRESENTING over 500 accredited delegates from 6 African Union Member States, uniting diverse voices across youth-led enterprises, civil society, grassroots movements, academic institutions, creative industries, and public policy frameworks;

RECOGNIZING that the realization of the African Union's **Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want** requires a decisive shift from passive advocacy to active execution, and affirming that true sovereignty in the 21st century rests upon economic self-reliance, technological ownership, cross-border integration, and youth-led governance;

REAFFIRMING our commitment to the foundational principles of the African Youth Charter, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security;

We, the young people of Africa, hereby **ADOPT** this Communiqué on this 22nd day of August, 2026, and call upon African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the private sector, civil society, and international partners to uphold and execute its resolutions:

We, the youth delegates, innovators, policy architects, and young diplomats representing nations across West, East, Central, Southern, and North Africa, gathered in Accra, Ghana the cradle of African liberty do hereby solemnly declare our shared commitment to the self-determination, integration, and sustainable prosperity of our continent.

Recognizing that the realization of the African Union's Agenda 2063 requires moving from passive advocacy to active execution, and affirming that true sovereignty in the 21st century rests upon economic autonomy, technological ownership, and youth-led governance;

We, the young people of Africa hereby **ADOPT** this Communiqué and call upon all stakeholders to uphold its contents:

SECTION I: CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

1.1 The Orange Youth Festival

The Orange Youth Festival brought together youth leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and creatives from across the African continent. Through the Innovation Expo, SEN Innovation Challenge, Masterclass Series, Arts Showcase, and Cultural Evenings, delegates demonstrated the creative and entrepreneurial potential of African youth.

1.2 The Africa We Want Symposium

The Symposium convened high-level policy dialogue structured around the 7 Aspirations of Agenda 2063. Delegates participated in seven concurrent Policy Labs, producing resolutions that form the substantive core of this Communiqué.

1.3 Process of Development

The Africa We Want Symposium turned out successfully by significantly having:

- Seven concurrent Policy Labs (one per Aspiration of Agenda 2063)
- Plenary presentations and technical inputs from AU experts and resource persons
- Youth Policy Panel: "Our Voices, Our Solutions"
- Collective review and adoption at the Closing Plenary

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

Institutional & Governance Bodies

- **AU / AUC:** African Union / African Union Commission
- **AUDA-NEPAD:** African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa’s Development
- **AU-WGYD:** African Union Directorate of Women, Gender and Youth
- **ECOWAS:** Economic Community of West African States
- **EYSDC:** ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre
- **REC:** Regional Economic Community (*e.g., ECOWAS, EAC, SADC, ECCAS*)
- **YAO:** Youth Arise Organization (*Lead Convening Secretariat*)

Policy Frameworks & Continental Treaties

- **ACDEG:** African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
- **AfCFTA:** Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area
- **Agenda 2063:** The African Union’s 50-Year Master Plan for Continental Transformation
- **AYC:** African Youth Charter
- **PIDA:** Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
- **UNSCR 2250:** United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security

Economic, Technical & Specialized Terms

- **GBV:** Gender-Based Violence
- **IP / IPR:** Intellectual Property / Intellectual Property Rights
- **M&E:** Monitoring and Evaluation
- **PAPSS:** Pan-African Payment and Settlement System

- **PWDs:** Persons with Disabilities
- **SMEs / MSMEs:** Small and Medium Enterprises / Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
- **SRHR:** Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- **STEM:** Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

SECTION II: RESOLUTIONS — THE 7 ASPIRATIONS OF AGENDA 2063

2.1 Lab 1 — A Prosperous Africa (Aspiration 1)

Focus: Inclusive growth, poverty eradication, and economic transformation through the AfCFTA.

Agenda 2063 Aspiration 1 envisions “**A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development**” and commits the continent to eradicating poverty in one generation and building shared prosperity through social and economic transformation. Its priorities include decent jobs and incomes, poverty and inequality reduction, science, technology and innovation, economic diversification, industrialisation and value addition, and the transformation of agriculture.

For African youth, achieving this aspiration requires an economic environment in which young people can participate meaningfully in productive sectors, access markets and finance, acquire relevant skills, develop enterprises and benefit from Africa's expanding digital and regional markets. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Agenda 2063, the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), and the African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030) provide existing continental frameworks through which these priorities can be advanced.

The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030), for example, identifies digital infrastructure, digital skills and human capacity, digital innovation and entrepreneurship, digital trade and financial services, and digital agriculture among the foundations and priority sectors for Africa's digital transformation.

The implementation record also demonstrates the need for stronger delivery. The African Union's Second Continental Progress Report recorded 37% progress for Aspiration 1 against the 2021 targets, compared with an overall continental score of 51% across the aspirations. The report associated the relatively low Aspiration 1 performance with declining GDP per capita, employment challenges and the effects of COVID-19.

African youth therefore see inclusive trade, affordable finance, digital transformation, productive agriculture, local value addition and youth entrepreneurship as interconnected pathways towards the economic transformation envisaged under Agenda 2063.

Top Policy Barriers/ Challenges Discussed

- **Barriers to Intra-African Trade** — African enterprises, particularly youth-led and small businesses, continue to encounter barriers that restrict their ability to access markets across borders. These include regulatory and procedural barriers, limited connectivity, high transaction costs and inadequate trade-support infrastructure.
- **Limited Access to Finance** — Access to appropriate and affordable finance remains an important constraint for young entrepreneurs and small businesses. Limited access to start-up capital, growth finance and suitable financial products can prevent viable youth-led businesses from moving from ideas and informal activities into sustainable enterprises.
- **Digital and Creative Innovation Gaps** — Digital technologies present opportunities for entrepreneurship, creative industries, digital trade, financial inclusion and access to continental and global markets. However, unequal access

to digital infrastructure, skills, appropriate technologies and innovation ecosystems can prevent young people from benefiting fully from these opportunities.

- **Weak Agricultural Value Chains** — African agriculture provides significant opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship, but opportunities are often concentrated at the production level while gaps remain in processing, storage, transportation, marketing, technology and access to markets.
- **Limited Local Value Addition** — Africa's economic transformation requires greater productive capacity, industrialisation, diversification and value addition. Agenda 2063 explicitly identifies transformed economies, manufacturing, industrialisation, value addition, diversification and resilience among the priorities of Aspiration 1.

Resolutions & Calls to Action:

1. **Reduce Non-Tariff Barriers** — Governments and regional institutions should remove unnecessary restrictions that hinder the movement of goods and services across African borders.
2. **Improve Transport and Trade Infrastructure** — African governments should accelerate PIDA projects, particularly railways, bridges, energy systems and other infrastructure that facilitate regional trade.
3. **Strengthen Regional Financial Integration** — African institutions should promote the effective implementation and wider adoption of PAPSS while advancing discussions on stronger monetary integration within regional blocs.
4. **Expand Access to Finance** — Governments and financial institutions should create accessible and affordable financing opportunities for young entrepreneurs and small-scale businesses.
5. **Promote African Products** — Young people and consumers should deliberately patronise, promote and market African-made products to strengthen local industries and intra-African trade.
6. **Accelerate Digital Transformation** — The African Union and member states should strengthen implementation of the AU Digital Transformation Strategy and create opportunities for young people to participate in the digital economy.

Youth Lead Commitment:

1. **Patronise and Promote African Products** — we commit to deliberately purchasing, promoting and advocating for locally made African products to strengthen local industries and reduce dependence on imported goods.

2. **Embrace Digital Innovation and Marketing** — We commit to using digital platforms, online marketing and technology to promote African businesses, products and creative enterprises while improving digital literacy within their communities.
3. **Develop Practical Skills and Pursue Innovation** — we commit to actively participating in STEM, technical and skills-development opportunities and transforming what they learn into practical solutions rather than limiting themselves to theoretical knowledge.
4. **Participate Actively in Agriculture and Agribusiness** — we commit to becoming more involved in farming and agribusiness, supporting the transportation of agricultural products and exploring opportunities across the agricultural value chain.
5. **Promote Technology in Agribusiness** — we commit to learning and applying technology in agribusiness and other productive sectors, supporting local processing and value addition, and developing entrepreneurial initiatives that contribute to Africa's economic transformation.

2.2 Lab 2 — an Integrated Africa (Aspiration 2)

Focus: Political unity, world-class infrastructure, and seamless borderless movement for youth.

Aspiration 2 of Agenda 2063 envisions “An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance.”

It seeks to accelerate continental unity and integration through stronger economic and political cooperation, increased trade and exchanges of goods and services, free movement of people and capital, and improved physical, digital and energy connectivity across Africa.

An integrated Africa is particularly important for young people because education, employment, entrepreneurship, professional development, innovation and cultural exchange increasingly operate across national boundaries. Young Africans should be able to study, work, build enterprises, participate in regional markets and collaborate across borders without unnecessary administrative and institutional barriers.

The African Union has already established important continental frameworks to advance this objective. The **Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (2018)** provides for the progressive implementation of free movement, including the right of entry, right of residence and right of establishment. The Protocol specifically envisages a phased approach to implementation.

Agenda 2063 also identifies **world-class infrastructure that criss-crosses Africa** as a core goal of Aspiration 2, including improved connectivity through road, rail, sea and air transport, regional and continental power pools, and ICT infrastructure.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) further provides an important institutional foundation for continental economic integration. The AU's Second Continental Progress Report recorded **84% progress for Aspiration 2 against the 2021 targets**, with the strong performance attributed principally to progress in AfCFTA signature and ratification, the operationalisation of the AfCFTA Secretariat, and improvements in areas including air transport, electricity generation and ICT penetration.

However, strong progress at the continental level does not mean that integration is complete. The experience of young people continues to be shaped by visa restrictions, differences in education and qualification systems, language barriers, uneven digital infrastructure, weak cross-border social protection and limited opportunities for youth to influence integration processes.

The Orange Youth Festival therefore seeks to strengthen the implementation of existing continental commitments and place **young Africans at the centre of the next stage of African integration**, with progress to be reviewed at the **2028 Orange Youth Festival**.

Top Policy Barriers/ Challenges Discussed:

- **Restricted and uneven Free Movement** — Although continental and regional frameworks increasingly support free movement, implementation remains uneven across Africa. Visa requirements, differing immigration procedures, border-management systems and national regulatory requirements can create practical barriers to young people seeking to study, work, establish businesses or participate in opportunities across borders.
- **Governance, Corruption and Administrative Barriers** — Young people seeking to study, work, trade or establish enterprises across borders can encounter complex administrative procedures and governance challenges. Where border and public-service systems are not transparent, predictable and accountable, the cost of mobility and participation increases.
- **Non-Harmonized Education and Professional Qualification Systems** — Differences in education systems, curricula, qualifications and professional licensing requirements can restrict the movement of African students, graduates and professionals.
- **Language and Cultural Barriers** — Africa's linguistic diversity is an important part of the continent's cultural wealth, but language differences can create practical barriers to education, employment, entrepreneurship and cross-border collaboration when appropriate language-support systems are unavailable.
- **Digital Connectivity Gaps** — Poor network infrastructure, limited digital connectivity, high internet costs, and inadequate investment hinder continental digital integration.
- **Weak Cross-Border Social Protection** — Young Africans who study, work or establish businesses across borders may face difficulties in maintaining access to

social protection and related services because systems are primarily organised at national level and not on Regional level.

- **Limited Youth Participation in Continental Integration** — Young people are among the principal users and potential beneficiaries of continental integration, yet their participation in policy design, implementation and monitoring needs to be strengthened.

Resolutions & Calls to Action:

1. **Promote Free Movement** — African governments should strengthen policies that facilitate the movement of people, particularly young people, across African borders.
2. **Reduce Trade Barriers** — Member states should reduce taxes, tariffs, and other barriers affecting the movement of African goods and services.
3. **Advance Economic Integration** — African countries should strengthen monetary and economic cooperation, including continued efforts towards greater monetary integration.
4. **Harmonize Educational Standards** — Member states should work towards common curricula and systems for recognizing academic and professional qualifications across borders.
5. **Strengthen Language Education** — Educational institutions should improve language teaching and employ qualified language teachers to promote effective communication across Africa.
6. **Establish Cross-Border Social Protection** — African institutions should develop an integrated or interoperable social security system that protects Africans living and working across borders.
7. **Invest in Digital Infrastructure** — Governments should improve physical and digital infrastructure, expand connectivity, and make internet access more affordable.
8. **Improve Infrastructure Accountability** — Governments should adopt stronger budgeting, transparency, accountability, and maintenance systems to ensure sustainable infrastructure development.
9. **Empower Youth Entrepreneurship** — Young Africans should be supported to build businesses, patronize African-made products, and contribute to intra-African trade and economic development.
10. **Strengthen Youth Advocacy and Leadership** — Young people should take up leadership roles, educate their peers, and use social media and public

engagement to promote awareness of AU Agenda 2063 and the vision of an integrated Africa.

Youth-Led Commitment

1. **Promote Youth Entrepreneurship and Intra-African Trade** — we commit to pursue entrepreneurship, support African-owned businesses, and consciously patronize locally made African goods and services to strengthen the continental economy.
2. **Champion Peer Education and Public Awareness** — Educate their peers and communities on the benefits of African integration, free movement, youth mobility, and the objectives of AU Agenda 2063.
3. **Strengthen Youth Leadership and Civic Participation** — Develop leadership skills, take up meaningful leadership roles, and use their voices responsibly to influence policies and decisions affecting continental integration.
4. **Leverage Digital Platforms for Advocacy** — Use social media and other digital platforms to raise awareness, challenge negative perceptions about Africa, promote regional cooperation, and amplify the vision of an integrated continent.
5. **Promote Accountability and Responsible Stewardship** — Advocate for transparency, accountability, and responsible management of public resources and digital infrastructure to ensure that investments made for African development are sustainable and beneficial to future generations.

2.3 Lab 3 — Good Governance & Democracy (Aspiration 3)

Focus: Strengthening justice, rule of law, and youth participation in anti-corruption leadership.

Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063 envisions “An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.” It seeks to entrench democratic values and practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law, while strengthening capable institutions and transformative leadership at all levels.

Agenda 2063 further envisages a continent in which citizens enjoy affordable and timely access to independent justice, institutions serve the people, public institutions are competent and accountable, and citizens actively participate in social, economic and political development. The framework also identifies the elimination of corruption and impunity, respect for freedom of expression and association, and effective institutions as important components of this aspiration.

For African youth, good governance is not an abstract institutional principle. It directly affects access to education, employment, justice, public services, entrepreneurship, political participation and opportunities to shape decisions that affect their lives.

Young people constitute a significant part of Africa's population, yet their participation in political and institutional decision-making does not always correspond to their demographic importance. Traditional assumptions about age, experience and leadership can restrict young people's participation in public institutions and decision-making processes.

The African Union has established a range of continental instruments relevant to this agenda, including the **African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)**, the **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)**, the **African Youth Charter**, and the **African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)**. These instruments provide existing policy foundations for democratic governance, human rights, participation, accountability and institutional development.

The Orange Youth Festival therefore seeks to strengthen implementation of existing continental commitments while positioning young people as **active participants, accountability partners and emerging leaders** in Africa's governance and democratic development.

According to the AU's Second Continental Progress Report on Agenda 2063, Aspiration 3 recorded an overall performance of **42% against the relevant targets** at the close of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan evaluation cycle. This indicates the continuing need to accelerate implementation of commitments relating to democratic governance, human rights, justice and institutional effectiveness.

Key Issues Discussed:

- **Political Exclusion and Limited Youth Participation** — Young people continue to face barriers to participation in formal political and decision-making processes. Age-based assumptions about leadership and experience can limit opportunities for young people to contribute to public institutions, political processes and policy development.
- **Corruption, Nepotism & Misuse of Public Power** — Corruption, nepotism, conflicts of interest and misuse of public authority can weaken institutional integrity, reduce public confidence and undermine equal access to public opportunities and services.
- **Barriers to Affordable and Timely Justice** — Legal and justice systems can be difficult for citizens to navigate when legal information is inaccessible, procedures are complex, services are costly or institutions are physically difficult to reach.
- **Shrinking Civic and Media** — Freedom of expression, association and access to information are essential to accountable governance. A responsible and vibrant media environment enables citizens to understand public issues, scrutinise institutions and participate meaningfully in public life.
- **Information & Civic Literacy Gap** — Young people and communities may find national and continental policy issues difficult to understand when information is highly technical, unavailable in accessible formats or not communicated through channels commonly used by young people.

Resolutions & Calls to Action:

1. **Mandate Youth Representation** — Enforce youth quotas and representation in national decision-making bodies and local governance structures.
2. **Strengthen Legal & Anti-Corruption Laws** — Empower independent institutions to enforce strict checks and balances, the rule of law, and anti-corruption frameworks.
3. **Reform & Restructure Education** — Overhaul the educational system to include rigorous public and civic education regarding constitutional rights.
4. **Protect Media & Civic Actors** — Urge the African Union and regional blocs to compel member states to protect journalists and human rights defenders.
5. **Enhance Government Transparency** — Ensure effective supervision of public projects and translate national policy issues into accessible local languages

Youth-Led Commitment:

1. **Continuous Civic Learning** — committing to continuous self-education on national goals, hard skills, and soft skills to support development.
2. **Peer-to-Peer Education** — raising awareness among fellow youths to help them understand their freedoms, rights, and the importance of governance.
3. **Active Political Engagement** — engaging directly in voting activities and participating actively within constitutional and community frameworks.
4. **Digital Information Sharing** — leveraging social media platforms to spread verified information, bridge knowledge gaps, and combat apathy.
5. **Speaking out & Reporting** — actively demonstrating ethical leadership by speaking out against corruption and reporting crimes within communities.

2.4 Lab 4 — A Peaceful & Secure Africa (Aspiration 4)

Focus: Youth-led conflict resolution and advancing the "Silencing the Guns" initiative.

Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063 envisions a peaceful and secure continent by fully eliminating inter-state, intra-state, and community-level conflicts. It prioritizes silencing all guns, preventing crime and terrorism, and embedding a permanent culture of peace through comprehensive peace education. The framework establishes robust conflict resolution structures alongside cooperative mechanisms like the African Arrest Warrant System to combat transnational crimes. Additionally, it calls for a continentally funded African Peace and Security Architecture featuring integrated land, air, and naval defense capacities under civilian control. Ultimately, achieving this secure environment serves as a fundamental precondition for Africa's broader democratic and economic transformation. According to official performance tracking by AU and AUDA-NEPAD, overall progress on **Aspiration 4** achieved an aggregate score of **63% of its target** at the close of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan evaluation cycle.

Key Issues Discussed:

- Limited youth participation in decision-making, peacebuilding, and peace and security processes.
- Intolerance, discrimination, and inequality, which undermine social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.
- Misinformation and misuse of digital platforms, including the spread of false information and harmful content.
- Weak governance and local conflict-resolution mechanisms, alongside poor management of national resources and limited community trust in security and justice institutions.
- Youth vulnerability and exclusion, including unemployment, limited opportunities, and inadequate systems for preventing violent extremism and emerging security threats.

Resolutions & Calls to Action:

1. Increase meaningful youth participation in decision-making, peace and security processes, with representation from communities and districts.
2. Strengthen community peacebuilding mechanisms, including mediation, early-warning and early-response systems, and community-based conflict resolution.
3. Create opportunities for vulnerable and at-risk youth, particularly through employment, skills development, and inclusive economic opportunities.
4. Promote tolerance, fairness, equality, and justice while strengthening trust between communities and security and justice institutions.
5. Strengthen digital governance and public education by promoting responsible use of digital platforms, combating misinformation, and improving people's ability to distinguish fact from fiction.

Youth-Led Commitments:

1. We commit to becoming active mediators and peacebuilders, promoting dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution in our communities.
2. We commit to tolerance, fairness, equality, and respect for diverse views, regardless of differences.
3. We commit to educating and sensitizing our communities on peace, security, responsible citizenship, and the prevention of violent extremism.
4. We commit to responsible digital citizenship by verifying information before screening, spreading, or supporting it, and reporting harmful or misleading content.
5. We commit to active participation in governance and policymaking, upholding good moral values, patriotism, justice, impartiality, and service to our communities.

2.5 Lab 5 — African Cultural Identity & Heritage (Aspiration 5)

Focus: Leveraging creative arts and history to build a strong pan-African identity.

Aspiration 5 of Agenda 2063 looks forward to an Africa anchored in a strong cultural identity, shared heritage, values, and Pan-African consciousness. It focuses on entrenching Pan-African ideals within school curricula, integrating the global diaspora,

and elevating the creative arts to contribute significantly to continental development and GDP. Additionally, it prioritizes a cultural renaissance by preserving African languages, heritage, and history, promoting family and community ethics, and opposing all forms of religious extremism. Africa, as the Aspiration 5 is concerned, has a moderate score of 45% of achieving its target at the close of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan evaluation cycle, according to official reports from AUDA-NEPAD

Key Issues Discussed:

- **Declining Patronage of African Creative Products** — Low patronage, high prices and strong preference for foreign goods continue to undermine locally produced African goods and the livelihoods of artists and creators.
- **Weak Protection and Support for Creators** — Artists and content creators face challenges with intellectual property protection, fair compensation, marketing and access to opportunities.
- **Inadequate Heritage Preservation and Cultural Resources** — limited funding, materials, training and institutional support affect the preservation of Africa's tangible and intangible heritage.
- **Erosion of Indigenous Culture and Languages** — foreign cultural influences, weak primary socialization and broken intergenerational knowledge transfer are contributing to declining use of indigenous languages and traditional practices.
- **Limited Youth Engagement in Cultural Development** — Young people are insufficiently involved in heritage preservation, cultural policymaking and the production and promotion of African cultural content.

Resolutions & Calls to Action:

1. **Modernize Made-in-Africa Products** — improve the quality, innovation, packaging and competitiveness of locally produced goods to make them more attractive to consumers.
2. **Promote Patronage of African Products and Creative Works** — Encourage Africans, particularly young people, to consciously support and purchase locally made products and services.
3. **Strengthen Intellectual Property Protection** — Improve copyright and intellectual property systems to protect artists, creators, cultural practitioners and their works.

4. **Ensure Justice and Fair Compensation for Creators** — Establish mechanisms that ensure artists and content creators receive proper recognition, protection and remuneration for their work.
5. **Invest in Heritage Preservation** — Provide adequate financial, material and institutional resources for the preservation of Africa's tangible and intangible heritage.
6. **Leverage Digital Technology to preserve and Promote Culture** — Use social media, digital archives, film and other technologies to document, preserve and share African history, traditions and cultural expressions.
7. **Strengthen Indigenous Language Promotion** — Develop programmes and digital tools, including AI-assisted translation, to promote the learning, use, preservation and accessibility of African languages.
8. **Expand Cultural Education and Skills Training** — Introduce educational and training programmes that expose young people to traditional skills, cultural practices, intellectual property and creative entrepreneurship.

Youth-Led Commitment:

1. Develop and promote African creative skills by learning new skills, participating in educational programmes, and actively engaging in creative and cultural opportunities.
2. Patronize and promote African products and creativity by supporting locally made goods, African artists, cultural entrepreneurs and youth-led creative initiatives.
3. Preserve and promote indigenous languages and cultural heritage by learning, speaking and teaching indigenous languages, while actively participating in traditional cultural practices and festivals.
4. Tell and amplify African stories by creating films, digital content, literature and other creative works that reflect African history, identity, languages and heritage.
5. Build a connected and proud Pan-African youth community by supporting fellow African youth, collaborating on cultural initiatives, embracing Africa's diversity, and using digital platforms to create positive cultural trends and promote African identity globally.

2.6 Lab 6 — People-Driven Development (Aspiration 6)

Focus: Championing gender equality and ensuring youth-led development leaves no one behind.

Aspiration 6 of the framework envisions a people-driven continent that fully relies the potential of African people, particularly women and youth, while nurturing and protecting children. It sets a standard for full gender parity, eliminating all forms of gender-based violence and social or economic discrimination, and securing 50% representation for women in political and managerial leadership. Additionally, it targets the complete elimination of youth unemployment and child exploitation, positioning young Africans as

the primary innovators and drivers of the continent's transformation. According to official evaluation tracking by AUDA-NEPAD, overall progress on **Aspiration 6** reached a continental score of **67% of its target** at the close of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan evaluation cycle. Having the African Youth Chapter adoption, reduction in sexual and physical violence, and moderate gender political leadership and parliamentary representation.

Key Issues Discussed:

- **Gender inequality, discrimination and protection gaps** — Men's mental health is often overlooked, while women and other vulnerable groups face discrimination, victim-blaming and inadequate protection from abuse.
- **Child and early marriage** — Early marriage continues to affect both boys and girls and threatens their rights, wellbeing and opportunities.
- **Gaps in sexual and reproductive health education and healthcare** — Young people lack adequate Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Rights (SRHR) education, while maternal healthcare services and menstrual hygiene support remain insufficient.
- **Weak parenting and declining social support systems** — Inactive or absent parenting contributes to challenges affecting young people, including poor reproductive health awareness and responsible decision-making.
- **Exclusion of marginalized groups** — Unequal distribution of national resources, discrimination against persons with disabilities and refugees, and limited confidence and opportunities for rural youth hinder inclusive development.

Resolutions & Calls to Action:

1. **Strengthen laws and justice systems** — Enforce laws against child marriage and physical abuse while ensuring fair and impartial treatment and trials for all genders.
2. **Promote gender-responsive support systems** — Establish and strengthen institutions that address the mental health, protection and welfare needs of both men and women.
3. **Improve youth-friendly SRHR and maternal healthcare** — Increase funding for hospitals, improve maternal healthcare, remove taxes that raise the cost of sanitary pads, and expand accessible SRHR education.
4. **Promote responsible parenting and public education** — Develop policies and programmes that strengthen parenting and use traditional and digital media to provide accessible public education.

5. **Advance inclusive development** — Promote equitable distribution of national resources, refugee inclusion, disability representation, and targeted empowerment and incentives for rural youth.

Youth-Led Commitment:

1. **Promote respect, dignity and responsible relationships** — Respect everyone's rights and boundaries while encouraging clear, honest and respectful communication.
2. **Support families and communities** — Assist parents with household and parenting responsibilities where needed and promote responsible sexual behaviour and abstinence within communities.
3. **Volunteer and serve vulnerable communities** — Support maternal and mental healthcare initiatives in public hospitals and participate in activities that empower marginalized groups.
4. **Lead youth advocacy and inclusion campaigns** — Form youth pressure groups to demand policy implementation and organize public education and empowerment activities against discrimination, while promoting the inclusion of refugees, persons with disabilities and rural youth.
5. **Use digital platforms for advocacy** - Create and share responsible social media content, including on platforms such as TikTok, to raise awareness on rights, gender equality, SRHR and inclusion.

2.7 Lab 7 – Africa as a Strong and Influential Global Player and Partner (Aspiration 7)

Focus: Establish Africa as A strong, united, resilient, and influential global player and partner.

Aspiration 7 of the African Union's Agenda 2063 establishes the strategic framework for the continent to assume its rightful position as a major, influential force in international affairs. Moving away from a history of fragmented external dependencies, this pillar focuses on projecting a unified African voice, achieving financial independence, and establishing equitable global partnerships. By championing pan-African solidarity and common positions on climate, trade, and security, the continent aims to actively shape global governance, reform international institutions, and fully fund its own development agenda.

Key Issues Discussed

- **Limited industrial capacity and underutilization of African resources** - Africa continues to export raw materials rather than adding value locally, partly due to inadequate skilled personnel, weak industries, and limited technological capacity.

- **Weak confidence in African products, identity and potential** - Low patronage of locally produced goods, preference for foreign products, lack of trust, and declining confidence in Africa's own capabilities were identified as major challenges.
- **Inadequate education, skills and opportunities for young people** - Limited access to relevant training, including diplomatic and professional development, restricts young people's ability to contribute effectively to Africa's global influence.
- **Brain drain and limited youth participation in leadership and diplomacy** - The migration of skilled Africans, unwillingness or limited opportunities for youth participation, and inadequate pathways into decision-making weaken Africa's ability to retain and utilize its talent.
- **Fragmentation and barriers to African unity** - Language and cultural differences, divided interests, weak trust, and insufficient collaboration across borders make it difficult for Africans to act collectively on the global stage.

Resolutions and Call to Action

1. **Invest in African skills, industries and value addition** - Governments and institutions should strengthen technical and professional training and develop industries capable of transforming Africa's raw materials into competitive finished products.
2. **Strengthen governance, law enforcement and institutional systems** - Effective governance, stronger institutions and enforcement of laws should be prioritized to create an environment that supports development, investment and African leadership.
3. **Create meaningful pathways for youth participation and diplomatic training** - Young people should have access to diplomatic training, decision-making spaces, consultations and equal opportunities to participate in national, regional and international affairs.
4. **Promote African culture, identity and locally produced goods** - Greater investment should be made in arts, culture and African creative industries, while citizens should be encouraged to appreciate and patronize African products and heritage.
5. **Build a unified African development vision and global voice** - African countries should strengthen cross-border cooperation and develop a common development blueprint so that Africa can speak with greater unity and influence in global affairs.

Youth-Led Commitment

1. **Develop skills and leadership capacity** - We will actively pursue skills development, in areas like diplomacy, technology, entrepreneurship and other competencies needed to contribute to Africa's transformation.
2. **Promote African identity, culture and products** - We will champion African culture, support locally produced goods and use technology and creative platforms to showcase Africa positively.

3. **Build networks and strengthen cross-border collaboration** - We will connect with peers across African countries, establish networks and pursue collaborations that promote continental unity and shared development.
4. **Innovate and use technology to solve African challenges** – We will leverage on technology, creativity and innovation to develop solutions that address African challenges and increase the continent's competitiveness.
5. **Adopt a positive mindset and actively participate in Africa's development** - We will challenge negative perceptions about Africa, build confidence in the continent's potential, join empowerment initiatives and take active roles in shaping Africa's future.

SECTION III: CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Out of the issues deliberated, these pressing demands emerged across multiple policy labs and are not confined to one aspiration:

1. Youth-Led Governance & Inclusive Peacebuilding

- **Mandatory Quotas:** Legislation establishing a 30% youth quota within local councils, national parliaments, and regional peace committees.
- **Community Peace Cadres:** Institutional funding for youth-led early-warning, mediation, and dispute resolution networks at the district level.
- **Civic Education Mandate:** Nationwide overhaul of school curricula to introduce mandatory, graded constitutional rights and civic responsibility courses.

2. Digital Transformation & Information Integrity

- **Digital Public Square Safety:** Public-private literacy programs to combat misinformation and train citizens in digital verification and media literacy.
- **AI-Driven Language Localization:** Subsidies for tech firms developing AI translation tools to offer public services in indigenous African languages.

- **Universal Connectivity Infrastructure:** Telecommunications tax rebates tied directly to expanding low-cost broadband and electricity into rural trading hubs.

3. Economic Integration, Agribusiness & Value Addition

- **Fast-Track Border Corridors:** Implementation of digitized, tariff-free border clearance lanes specifically for youth-owned enterprises and agricultural perishables.
- **Strategic Local Processing Subsidies:** Tax exemptions and grant facilities for local factories that process raw African materials before export.
- **Pan-African Payment System (PAPSS) Mandate:** Enforce mandatory inclusion of local commercial banks, digital wallets, and microfinance institutions into regional clearinghouses, allowing youth entrepreneurs to buy and sell goods across African borders using their domestic currencies without relying on US Dollars or Euros.

4. Creative Economy, Cultural Identity & IP Protection

- **Fast-Track IP Tribunals:** Specialized digital courts providing rapid, low-cost resolution for copyright theft and intellectual property claims by creators.
- **Creative Sector Credit Facilities:** State-backed micro-loan and venture capital funds dedicated exclusively to young creative entrepreneurs and filmmakers.
- **Heritage Preservation Grants:** Direct public funding for universities and community hubs to digitally archive indigenous history, festivals, and artisanal skills.

5. Institutional Accountability & Infrastructure Oversight

- **Open-Contracting Portals:** Publicly accessible digital dashboards tracking the bidding, budgets, and real-time execution of all public infrastructure works.
- **Independent Anti-Corruption Tribunals:** Ring-fenced judicial bodies with total operational autonomy to investigate and prosecute public asset mismanagement.
- **Cross-Border Social Security Networks:** Interoperable digital social protection registries ensuring mobile workers maintain healthcare and pension benefits across state lines.

SECTION IV: CALLS TO ACTION

4.1 WE URGE MEMBER STATES TO:

1. Reduce tariffs on cross border trading
2. Establish and invest in industries with potential to engage in cross border trades
3. Transition away from foreign reserve currencies in intra-African commerce by adopting digital local-currency settlement mechanisms, incentivizing central bank integration into PAPSS, and working toward long-term regional monetary convergence under RECs (such as ECOWAS).
4. Encourage the use of local products (farm produce)
5. Invest in mechanized farming
6. Invest in skills training & technology for its youth in agribusiness
7. To provide an innovative and technological system that is universal
8. To make STEM activities compulsory in schools and improve digital literacy
9. To strengthen policies that facilitates the movement of people particular young people across African borders

10. Work towards curricular and systems for recognizing academic and professional qualification across borders
11. To empower independent institutions to enforce strict checks and balances, the rule of law and anti-corruption frameworks
12. Increase meaningful youth participation in decision-making, peace and security processes.
13. Improve the quality, innovation, packaging and competitiveness of locally produced goods; making them more attractive to consumers and highly increase their value on the market

4.2 WE CALL UPON the AU Commission, AfCFTA Secretariat, and private sector partners to:

1. Mandate full operational interoperability between local commercial banks, fintech platforms, mobile money networks, and the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) to eliminate the estimated \$5 billion spent annually on currency conversion fees in intra-African trade.
2. Invest in PIDA to commit to the construction of railways, bridges and energy systems
3. Finance and invest in SME's and agro processing
4. Finance and invest in youth in digital trade
5. Collaborate with member states to reduce taxes, tariffs and other barriers affecting the movement of African goods and services.
6. Support central banks in establishing currency swap arrangements and digital payment rails rather than forcing immediate physical currency unification, ensuring sovereign monetary stability while fostering frictionless trade.
7. Compare member states to protect journalist and human rights defenders.
8. Strengthen digital governance and public education by promoting responsible use of digital platforms and combat misinformation that leads chaos in member states
9. Use social media, digital archives, film and other technologies to document, preserve and share African history, traditions and cultural expression
10. Ensure member states promote equitable distribution of national resources, refugee inclusion, disability representation and targeted empowerment and incentives for young people in rural communities.

4.3 WE COMMIT as young African to

1. Encourage backyard farming with digital trainings, promotions and competitions
2. Improve and patronize local products
3. Encourage STEM education from the basic level i.e. including it in school curricula
4. Encourage online or digital marketing

5. Advocate for transparency, accountability and responsible management of public resources and final digital infrastructure to ensure that investments are sustainable and beneficial to African future generations.
6. Continuous self-education on national goals, hard skills and soft skills to support development.
7. Actively participate in governance and policy making, upholding good moral values, patriotism, justice, fairness and service to our communities and continent.
8. Patronise and promote African products and creativity by supporting locally made goods, African artists, cultural entrepreneurs and youth-led creative initiatives.
9. Form youth pressure groups that will demand policy implementation and spearhead public education and empowerment rallies
10. Use digital platforms for advocacy and share responsible social media contents to raise awareness on rights, gender equality, SRHR and inclusion

SECTION V: IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

5.1 Dissemination & Diplomatic Advocacy

- **Executive Transmittal:** The Communiqué will be officially transmitted to the African Union Commission (AU-WGYD), the AfCFTA Secretariat, and Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS, EAC, SADC, ECCAS, UMA) by Youth Arise Organization (YAO).
- **National Delivery:** Designated Orange Ambassadors will hand-deliver physical copies to Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Youth Affairs across the 6 participating Member States within 90 days of adoption.
- **Open Access:** Published on official digital channels, www.orangeyouthfestival.com and www.youth-arise.org for public scrutiny and civil society tracking.

5.2 Monitoring, Evaluation & Review Roadmap (2026–2028)

- **Annual M&E Tracker (August 2027):** YAO, in collaboration with partner civil society organizations, will publish the **First-Year Implementation Scorecard** evaluating:

- Policy adoption of youth quotas and tariff reductions by Member States.
- Commercial bank integration into PAPSS within participating regions.
- Progress on youth-led commitments across digital advocacy and agribusiness.
- **2027 Mid-Term Review Benchmark:** A virtual Continental Youth Summit will convene in August 2027 to assess preliminary data, identify non-performing policy areas, and refine advocacy strategies ahead of AU Ministerial meetings.
- **2028 Stocktaking Benchmark (The 2028 Orange Youth Festival):**
 - The **2028 Festival & Symposium** will serve as the official 2-year accountability milestone for **The Accra Youth Communiqué**.
 - A comprehensive **Agenda 2063 Youth Compliance Report** will be presented to AU organ observers, evaluating state progress against the resolutions established in this document.

PLEDGE OF THE DELEGATES

"We leave Valley View University not merely as participants of a symposium, but as active Forgers of our continent's future. The fire lit in Accra shall be carried back to every city, region, and nation we represent."

SIGNATURES OF REGIONAL DELEGATION LEADS

Delegate Name	Country / Organization	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____	
_____	_____	_____	
_____	_____	_____	
_____	_____	_____	
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ADOPTION

This Communiqué was adopted by acclamation, by delegates of the Orange Youth Festival & the Africa We Want Symposium on the 21st day of August 2026, at Valley View University, Accra, Ghana.

Signed on behalf of the delegates:

Mr. Moses Baffour Awuah
Convener, Orange Youth Festival & Africa We Want Symposium.

"Innovating for Sovereignty: African Youth as Architects of Agenda 2063"

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