

Pan-African Youth Network on the Culture of Peace

Youth Statement during the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) Regional Education Conference – Kigali, Rwanda – 9-11 February 2015

Thank you Madame Chair, Dear Ministers, the African Union Commission, United Nations agencies, Youth and distinguished delegates,

We, the youth present at the Sub Saharan Africa Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post 2015, extend our sincere gratitude to the government and people of Rwanda for their warm hospitality and thank UNESCO and all relevant stakeholders for engaging youth as key actors in shaping Africa's sustainable education agenda for the future we want.

Representing the Pan-African Youth Network on the Culture of Peace, we are a constituency actively engaged in championing the education agenda among our peers, despite the fact that we face enormous challenges including exclusion, under-representation where strategic decisions are taken and implemented. As you all can see, honorable ministers, we are concerned that our fellow youth are not represented within all the national delegations present here and neither are they part of the AU Commission's delegation. We kindly implore you: please do not have dialogue about us, without us.

Africa's youth has gained continuous recognition and support from the African Union and the United Nations system-wide action plans for youth. We appreciate the ratification of the African Youth Charter and call upon governments that have not ratified it to do so, and for the 34 Member states that have ratified it to further develop a costed domestication program so that we can translate the policies into projects. We welcome the fact that youth were consulted in the development of the Common African Position on Post 2015 and the recognition therein of our role as a motivating force for the progressive transformation of society and the skills to sustain and grow Africa's development:

We are the daily recipients and practitioners of education and we feel that youth could be more mainstreamed within the dialogue and education discourse, given more opportunities to meaningfully engage, ask questions and to have our voices heard in national, regional and global fora.

This statement highlights the key priorities for youth within the policy and practice of education development and transformation.

We call upon our governments and all relevant stakeholders to urgently address and take action on:

1. Education for resilience, conflict resolution and post conflict reconstruction, including a focus on Peace Education, investment to engender a critical mass of peace volunteers and support the socio-

- economic inclusion of refugees and displaced persons through entrepreneurship education and life skills development;
2. Quality education beyond primary school, renewed, stronger emphasis on equitable, free, compulsory secondary education and provision for scholarships for higher-education, especially to disadvantaged, marginalized groups, and youth living with disabilities, Romas and travellers.
 3. Rebranding and repackaging of the teaching profession by emphasizing the need to foster mobility and transfer of knowledge between teachers and learners.
 4. Education that embraces innovation, use of new media, ICTs to maintain relevance and practicality in a rapidly globalizing world. Ensuring the information and curriculum equip learners with skills for employability, entrepreneurial values, and creativity to be ready and competitive within the labor market.
 5. Education that closes the gender gap, addresses the patriarchal system and harmful cultural practices that discriminate access to education for all, especially girls, and promotes equity and equality.
 6. Education that promotes global citizenship, with a focus on non-formal learning processes which are essential to create space for values, youth empowerment, deepening citizenship agency and civil liberties for the role of youth in transformation of their society, region and world at large.

In conclusion, we are honored to participate in the region's preparation for the post-2015 education agenda towards the world education forum and the special summit on sustainable development. We, the PAYNCoP, commit to applying Africa's education priority areas in our work. We call upon UNESCO & the African Union Commission to consider our recommendations on education and to enhance youth engagement in future fora and consultations. We further call upon member states to truly integrate and finance our priorities within Africa's education and development agenda;

We the YOUTH, We CREATE, We SHARE, We INNOVATE. We will SUSTAIN and GROW AFRICA. We ARE AFRICA!!!!