4th Africa - Europe Youth Summit

Abidjan Youth Declaration

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AU-EU Youth Plug-In Initiative

Youth Agenda

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4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit

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The Abidjan Declaration

9-11 October 2017, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

We, representatives of the youth organisations from Africa, Europe, and the Diaspora gathered in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire for the 4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit, commit to build on the legacy of our existing cooperation and pave the way for its sustainable future.

The 4th edition of the Africa-Europe Youth Summit was organised by youth platforms in Africa and Europe (the Pan-African Youth Union, the European Youth Forum and the Network of International Youth Organisations in Africa) as well as organisations of diaspora youth (ADYNE, ADYFE and ACP-YPN), with input from the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe.

We wish to express our gratitude to H.E. President Alassane Ouattara and the people of Côte d'Ivoire for their genuine hospitality and hosting of the Youth Summit. We also recognise with appreciation the financial and institutional support from the EU, in partnership with the AU.

This Declaration, which we address to Heads of States and governments and the institutions gathering at the 5th AU-EU Summit, is the fruit of active discussions among the 120 youth representatives participating in the Youth Summit.

It builds on the past decade of Africa-Europe Youth Cooperation, within the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership, during which three Youth Summits presented recommendations to AU and EU governments and institutions. In this context we recognise all that has been achieved1, but we regret the lack of implementation of many of these recommendations.

Welcoming the decision to focus the 5th AU-EU Summit on "investing in youth", an overdue decision in which we foresee the potential to review the Africa-EU Partnership's shortcomings in relation to youth, re-establish a long-term Africa-Europe Youth Cooperation framework and put in place a plan of action to support the recommendations presented here.

Investing in youth is a prerequisite for building a sustainable future. To achieve this we must collectively work to overcome the issues preventing progress within our interconnected societies. It requires support to and the advancement of education, skills development, mobility and access to markets, youth participation and young people's access to rights. Investing in youth means providing the right environment for young people to reach our fullest potential and positively impact our societies.

We wish to highlight the vital role youth organisations in Africa and Europe, including those representing the Diaspora, play in the development of young people in our continents. Governments and institutions must increase investment in, facilitation of and support to our multiple roles and contributions to society, including as a bridge between the State and young people.

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1 *Such as the support to the creation and consolidation of the Africa-Europe Youth Platform, Africa-Europe Training Course for Youth Organisations, the African Diaspora Youth Network in Europe, the African Diaspora Youth Forum in Europe on "Entrepreneurship, Employability and Civic Engagement", the African Union Youth Development Fund and the support rendered to our cooperation.*

To support investing in youth for a sustainable future, we present the following general and theme-specific recommendations :

- Building on their commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, AU and EU governments must work together towards sustainable development as the overarching objective of national policies and the Africa-EU Partnership, focusing attention on the needs of future generations.
- Implement a cross-sectoral and participatory approach to youth policy, ensuring structures for effective coordination and mainstreaming of youth in all policies, and creation of, or support to, existing mechanisms that guarantee extended and improved youth participation in policy making processes.
- Leverage the unique potential of the Diaspora Youth to inspire and channel positive change and effective cooperation between Africa and Europe.

Education and Skills

1. We call upon AU and EU Member States to create and incorporate a framework for the recognition and validation of competences gained through non-formal education, including that provided through youth organisations, to ensure life-long learning and skills development.
2. We call for further collaboration under the Africa-EU Partnership to accelerate the implementation of the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative and urge a move towards mutual recognition of evaluation systems and formal education diplomas between African and EU countries to enhance mobility of students and young professionals.
3. We call on AU and EU Member States to guarantee universal access to quality and inclusive education, recognising the importance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Business, Job Creation and Entrepreneurship

1. We strongly urge AU and EU Member States to work closely with economic actors and other relevant stakeholders to create a conducive business environment that boosts investment and makes it easier for young people to establish and operate enterprises within and across both continents.
2. We call upon AU and EU Member States to facilitate programmes that enhance sustainable access to finance, ensuring that young people from all backgrounds are enabled to access enterprise funding.
3. We urge the Africa-EU Partnership to create a framework that provides comprehensive and continuous capacity building programmes to enhance young people's employability and the ability of young entrepreneurs to run sustainable business.

Governance, Political and Democratic Inclusion, and Activism

1. We call upon AU and EU Member States to invest in citizenship and human rights education providers and foster and financially support spaces for exchange and learning between them, to support the enhancement of the meaningful participation of all young people, including vulnerable groups, in society.
2. We call on African and European leaders to bring the age of candidacy in line with the voting age, as it is only rational that young people who are eligible to vote should be equally eligible to stand for election.
3. We call on governments and institutions to work with youth organisations towards the creation of a European Youth Charter, taking inspiration from the African Youth Charter and, in the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership, to define mechanisms for monitoring young people's access to rights on both continents.

Peace and Security, including Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation

1. We call upon AU and EU Member States to urgently implement UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security, securing the necessary financial and other resources, and developing long-term national action plans, with the involvement of young people and youth organisations in their design, implementation and evaluation.
2. We call upon Member States in Africa and Europe to involve young people, including young migrants and the Diaspora, in the conflict prevention process in addition to supporting local initiatives such as awareness-raising campaigns and capacity building to curb forced migration, including internal displacement.
3. We call upon the EU and AU to support the participatory development and implementation of national strategies by the relevant institutions, civil society and youth at local and national level, to tackle racism and discrimination in all its forms, including that based on gender, ethnicity, religion, culture and geographical location.

Environmental Preservation and Climate Change

1. To counterbalance existing tendencies and interests that work against the environment, AU and EU Member States must support youth-led initiatives, while establishing strong institutions and clear regulatory frameworks for environmental accountability.
2. We call upon the AU and EU to facilitate the implementation of sustainable agricultural programmes that promote technology transfer, sharing of good practices and provide subsidy programmes to promote organic farming, especially among young people.
3. We urge AU and EU Member States to develop incentives to move towards more environmentally friendly economies, based on the Paris Agreement and recognising common but differentiated responsibilities, by financing sustainable production and investing in renewable energy while enhancing environmental education.

Culture and Arts

1. We call upon AU and EU Member States to put in place policies and action plans to support and promote emerging and innovative arts and cultural production, while promoting and preserving all art forms in their respective societies.
2. Within the Africa-EU Partnership, we call on AU and EU institutions to facilitate increased accessibility to funding for arts and culture, including support to an Africa-EU Programme on Culture and Creativity.
3. We call on AU and EU Member States to support young people working in creative industries, through local structures, investment in training, leadership, management, production and promotion of culture for young people.

To guarantee the successful implementation of these recommendations we stress the undeniable need for :

- The establishment of a participatory mechanism to monitor and evaluate the progress of the Africa-EU Partnership, which ensures cross-sectoral collaboration between governments, CSOs, diaspora and youth organisations.
- The dedication of funding from the AU and EU institutions within the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership and Erasmus+ programme, as well as innovative mobilisation of additional resources to advance this Africa-Europe Youth Cooperation, to further boost opportunities for real partnership and exchange and to support the implementation of these recommendations.

AU-EU Youth Plug-In Initiative

29 October - 29 November 2017, Addis Ababa, Brussels, Abidjan

Introduction

Fresh Ideas from Youth on Six Key Topics

The overarching theme for the 5th AU-EU Summit ***"Investing in Youth for a Sustainable Future"***, the Summit slogan ***"Together for Youth, With Youth"*** and the African Union 2017 theme of the year, ***"Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth"***, has laid the foundation for a strengthened and meaningful inclusion of youth in the Africa-EU partnership. Young Africans, Europeans and Diaspora have therefore been actively involved in the preparations for the 5th AU-EU Summit through the 4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit (Abidjan, 9-11 October 2017) and the unprecedented AU-EU Youth Plug-In Initiative (Addis Ababa, Brussels and Abidjan, 29 October to 29 November 2017).

The 4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit, organised by the representative bodies of youth on both continents, brought together 120 participants from both continents, selected through an open call with more than 7500 applicants. The main outcome of this Youth Summit is the Abidjan Youth Declaration, capturing the key political recommendations addressing the concerns of young people in both continents.

In accordance with the aim for the Summit of bringing concrete deliverables to the table for the Africa-EU partnership in the years to come, **36 amongst the** Youth Summit participants (AU-EU fellows) have continued the work in clusters on **6 priority thematics**: Business, Job Creation and Entrepreneurship; Education and Skills; Peace and Security; Governance and Political Inclusion; Climate and Environmental Preservation; and Culture, Sports and Arts), including 3 cross-cutting issues (gender equality, migration and digitalisation).

In an intense 5-week period, The Abidjan Youth Declaration is the political chapeau of the Youth Agenda, and the discussions and conceiving of the deliverables in the Youth Agenda have taken a starting point in the recommendations of the Declaration as well as the discussions on the 6 thematics undertaken amongst the 120 participants during the Youth Summit.

The AU-EU Fellows have been tasked to i) present the role of youth within each thematic, ii) provide youth perspectives on existing and planned initiatives, and most importantly to iii) develop new and innovative proposals for concrete deliverables, presented here in the Youth Agenda. These deliverables together with the recommendations from the Youth Summit will provide inspiration and hopefully direction for the Africa-EU partnership in the years to come.

Executive Summaries

Education & Skills

I. Role of Youth in the sector

Investing in education and skills development is key to sustainable development, as it affects all sectors and levels of our society. It is a basis towards enabling active citizenship, sustainable human development, employment and entrepreneurship, in addition to good governance, peace and security. Main areas of work identified in the Abidjan Declaration and taken as priorities for further work are:

- Addressing access to **quality education and skills development** programmes for all, including in rural, remote and disadvantaged areas;
- Enhancing and supporting **intra- and intercontinental learning mobility schemes** for students, young professionals and civil society organizations;
- **Promoting innovation in the education sector** at all levels, including development of digital and entrepreneurship skills and lifelong learning competences;
- **Advancing non-formal education opportunities and lifelong learning,** recognizing and validating non formal learning outcomes.

II. View of Youth to adapt ongoing or planned initiatives

Current initiatives in Africa and Europe play a crucial role in fostering cooperation, active citizenship and equipping youth to understand the complexity of global dynamics. Intercultural dialogue and intra- and intercontinental mobility, should be a priority in order to address the challenges of today and tomorrow. A joint umbrella initiative called the **"Nyerere-Erasmus Programme"**, a multi-track exchange programme, should emerge to bring well-established and recognized existing frameworks closer:

- Enhance mobility between Africa & Europe by easing the recognition of academic records and learning experiences through an **"AU-EU Education Passport"**, to be piloted in a network of Universities;
- Promote civic education and lifelong learning through **"Civil society and active citizenship exchanges"**, to foster mutual capacity building and volunteer exchanges between international & local youth organizations and by linking AU and EU volunteer schemes;
- **Adapt the "Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges"** to the context of Africa to increase the accessibility of both in-person and virtual exchanges.

III. New ideas to address the topic

- **AU-EU Rural Education Action Program (REAP)**
  REAP is a proposed, multipurpose and incentive-based pilot intercontinental program to facilitate access to and the completion of primary and secondary education for children, particularly in rural areas. It focuses on integrating schools in remote and hard-to-reach zones to attract and retain students, especially girls, in schools. Starting on pilot areas, it maps hard-to-reach areas and develops "toolkits" (equipment and training, from gender to schoolfarming). REAP draws from initiatives currently supported by a global coalition of actors, bringing in a new intercontinental dimension that combines the different elements.
- **AU-EU Network of Digital Hubs for Primary and Secondary Education**
  An initiative, implemented through a public-private intercontinental partnership with major IT companies, aimed at promoting digital skills and digital connectivity at the earliest stages of education, to unleash the potential of digital technology in the community through education, training and support youth programmes. Centers assigned with the elaboration and implementation of specific programmes, located both in Africa and Europe, should be developed and equipped with appropriate infrastructure.

Business, Job Creation & Entrepreneurship

I. Role of Youth in the sector

Sub-Saharan Africa will need to create 18 million new jobs a year up to 2035 . Now only 3 million jobs are being created annually. Thus, African and European Youth are uniquely positioned to stimulate innovation, create social capital and reshape the existing political discourse. However, we need models based on human and environmental principles to achieve the common goals and to ensure a sustainable integrated approach to development and inclusive growth. Young people must be empowered to have equal participation in shaping our shared future and to work closely in partnership with the private sector (large and small), local communities, CSO and the public sectors to ensure the following:

- **Larger corporations and businesses** are generators of employment and investments and need to be both encouraged and better regulated and managed, so that their practices continue to benefit all, and remain sustainable while offering adequate professional training.
- **Business enablers, Business Angels, start-ups, local SME's**, and local economies need to be supported to encourage quality employment and inclusive growth
- **Invest in resources and infrastructure**, for affordable and easy access to digital technologies, internet, renewable energy and agro-ecology especially in rural and marginalized areas.
- **Education** at all levels should be geared to enable hard and soft skills (entrepreneurial mind-set, innovation, ability to partner, financial and ICT literacy, etc.).
- **Provide support** from AU-EU public and private sources for employee skills development (ensuring internships, technical and soft skills and internships) enhancing youth employability.

II. View of Youth to adapt ongoing or planned initiatives

Making business more efficient and sustainable requires an enhanced business climate for jobs and entrepreneurship, including investing in youth, developing their skills, enabling access to finance, platforms and to the appropriate infrastructure and links to the market, while ensuring the key principles above.

- Include a **Youth Investment Window inside the European External Investment Plan** giving young entrepreneurs access to grants for feasibility studies, investment collateral and micro-credit. This should include a "Connectivity Fund" to ensure critical ICT support of small businesses, especially in rural areas.
- **Harness the job creation potential in 2 key sectors across the AU & EU: agriculture and renewable energy. 1)** Agroecology Centre of Excellence, investing in innovative, sustainable agriculture and agribusiness schemes, spreading agro-ecology techniques, enhancing productivity and sustainability. **2)** Renewable energy pilot project promoting a new approach of green energy in rural sub-Saharan Africa (from sources such as solar panels, windmills, etc.) with capacity building, vocational training and funding.

III. New ideas to address the topic

We propose to boost the cooperation between European and African youth' entrepreneurs and business owners, and their potential to create innovative business ideas, share best practices, find joint solutions, while creating significant social, environmental and economic change. It will link to the EIP to enhance its success. It will link national with local and rural sectors, other sectors and enable livelihood, wellbeing and the decrease of migration, meeting the needs of both continents.

An **AU-EU Think Do-Tank**: a networking & empowerment Centre to build a successful joint business ecosystem, facilitating access to the proposed EIP Youth Investment Window, focussing on solutions and opportunities for start-ups and Youth employment. The think-Do Tank has 2 main pillars:

- **High-Level experts group:** including key stakeholders, business, institutional, CSO and youth experts, will frame the vision, strategy and activities, develop new ideas and innovative projects, play a consultative role and be accountable for effective implementation of the initiatives listed above.
- **Joint incubation centre:** an evidence-based lab testing technical urban and rural solutions in both continents to turn theory and strategy into practical innovative solutions.

Governance & Political Inclusion

I. Role of Youth in the sector

Youth are often excluded from policy-making or confined to youth policies. Their inclusion in decentralizing governance, exchanging good practices, resource mobilization and oversight of public bodies will increase the integrity of governance systems on both continents.

- **Local governance agenda-setting**, in particular to progress on decentralization and territoriality, should include young people's input;
- Web tools, such as **interactive platforms**, should be used to monitor governmental actions;
- **Structured Dialogues should be expanded to enhance Youth cooperation** with governmental authorities and monitor the implementation of development actions;

II. View of Youth to adapt ongoing or planned initiatives

Youth is a vital actor to achieve good governance, improved taxation and reinvestment of private capital gains in development and societal goals. We propose building on efforts of systematic youth engagement with AU-EU authorities, and building on the EU Structured Dialogue with a recognised role, regular dialog and participation in policy processes. This will require the strengthening of existing mechanisms and funding, building on emerging initiatives and linking with key networks , for the inclusion of youth in active oversight, mutual learning and engagement in decentralized cooperation in and between both continents, thus fostering a culture of inclusivity, participation, improved effectiveness and integrity.

- **AU-EU city twinning must be adapted** to create joint decentralised cooperation between young people and local authorities;
- The **EIB and DEVCO programs should support AU and EU Youth** in participatory oversight, agenda-setting and resource mobilization networks;
- The **AU-EU effort to address overpriced remittances transfer fees** should become concrete and effective, providing alternatives in line with the SDGs (objective 10c);
- **Increased use of e-governance tools** will enable youth to monitor and engage with local governments to foster the delivery of effective services.

III. New ideas to address the topic

An expanded concept of city twinning can bring cities and societies of both continents closer. Digital engagement of Youth can strengthen mutual accountability. Resolute AU and EU action should be undertaken to harness the full potential of remittances. Finally, the External Investment Plan can and should be a vector for enhanced Corporate Social Responsibility.

- **CityShapers** – expanding city twinning to include joint youth learning and initiatives on concrete urban social, ecological and governance challenges. PILOT: Local authorities, schools and universities in Nairobi and Tallinn co-create solutions around "digital transition" for sustainable cities and follow up with blending facilities (EIB, AfDB and private capital);
- **E-NcludeMe** - an e-tool to hold local governments accountable and include young people from Africa and Europe in structured dialogues with their local governments.
- **AU-EU Remittances Transfer Platform** – PILOT: initiative on both continents to effectively lower transactions costs of remittances through a PPP. Part of the profit would be directed towards investments in Youth projects, strengthening employment and inclusion;
- **Corporate Social Responsibility** - legal requirements for MNCs to increase their CSR activities within EIB finance investments; and facilitation of structured dialogue to align corporate CSR to development agendas.

[1] *Such as City Twinning experiences in and between continents, the UCLG and REFELA networks, AU High Council of Local Authorities & African Peer Review Mechanism, International Aid Transparency Initiative, EU's "Collect more, spend less" approach, & citizen movements*

Peace & Security

I. Role of Youth in the sector

Peace and security are top priorities of the AU-EU cooperation agenda. Youth can and should play a major role as committed to the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 and requested by the Abidjan Youth Declaration. Their inclusion at all stages of policies and implementation would enable them to be actors to shape effective solutions, and increase the equality and efficiency of efforts in Peace, Security and Stabilisation. Ambitious political will and policy support are needed for the following priorities:

- Youth Councils as well as involving **youth representatives in the early warning**, early response and peace dialogue mechanisms (including the New Deal) must be ensured.
- **National Action Plans, using youth as a vector**, to tackle specific forms of racism and social exclusion of ethnical and religious groups should be promoted.
- **Digital tools** should be applied to bolster international stabilisation and post-conflict efforts.
- **Access to quality education**, both formal & non-formal, with a focus on rural and marginalised areas, should be increased to prevent social erosion and conflicts.
- A shared, **evidence-based vision of migration & mobility** is key to enhance intelligent solutions to the migration crisis, youth brain drains and labour mobility.
- An **integrated and focused approach from policy to plans to actions** (e.g. emigration and transit hotspots, improvement of education and jobs) should be ensured to prevent forced migration.

II. View of Youth to adapt ongoing or planned initiatives

Through the years, the Africa-Europe cooperation on peace and security has given birth to several initiatives aiming to bring stability to fragile areas. Alas, the fragilities and challenges usually remain, despite major political attention and major funding. Youth views and inclusion in all stages of key related policy and implementation could help remedy this. We therefore propose that:

- Local youth groups should be included in analysing roots of fragility (feeding the Continental Early Warning System), rapid response and peacebuilding processes.
- Youth groups especially peace builders and the national and regional organisation of youth groups into networks should be supported, for consensus building and effective legitimate representation in de-radicalisation, PVE and peace building processes.

III. New ideas to address the topic

Youth suggest fresh solutions to old problems of key priorities listed above. On migration, the AU-EU continental dialogue should be improved with several key changes in the overall intercontinental approach.

- On stabilisation, a **'Brand New Deal'** is proposed to bridge the gap between political intentions and realities on the ground in fragile areas by means of a map-based platform linked to political dialogue. Support the creation and implementation of **"PeaceHub"**, an online map-based collaborative tool, to enable a better analysis of local fragile contexts, enhance donor coordination, enable impact-visualisation of stabilisation efforts, and involve local communities (including Youth) in post-conflict efforts on the basis of clear timelines. A first pilot application is to be ran for the Lake Chad Basin Region, which should be the first pilot case of the AU-EU-UN collaborative platform for post-conflict.
- For migration and mobility: Expand information collection and build an **integrated data system** for profiling migrants and mapping migration routes across countries in both continents, in order to inform balanced policy responses. Provide an AU-EU solution to implement SDG objective on remittance transfer fees.

Culture, Sports & Arts

I. Role of Youth in the sector

Whether it is radicalization, where Culture, Arts and Sports (CAS) are strong means to ensure a sense of belonging and identity, or youth unemployment, where the creative industries show a promising potential for job creation, CAS are prime ways for youth to counter many of the major challenges they face. Young people are essential actors and main drivers within CAS and should be recognized as such. Young people working in the creative industries should thus be actively supported through local structures, investment in training, leadership, management, production and promotion of culture, as recognized in the Abidjan Youth Declaration. Empowering youth also means increasing their involvement in development processes involving sports and arts, literature, music, science, economy and beyond.

- **Culture, Arts and Sports are essential vectors** for reaching sustainable socio-economic stability.
- **Accreditation of youth as essential actor** in the implementation of cultural and overall cooperation between the two continents and their respective institutions.
- **Intercultural and intergenerational dialogue through culture, art and sports** is a powerful tool to address social tensions among young people, conflict and radicalization.
- Culture must be recognized as an essential part of intercontinental cooperation and sustainable development on both continents.

II. New ideas to address the topic

With the intention to strengthen the cultural cooperation between Africa and Europe, based on respect, equity and youth participation, we propose the following initiatives:

- The creation of **a cross-continental African-European Youth-led Cultural Institute** to bolster Afro-European/Euro-African cultural cooperation. The Institute will support concrete CAS projects presented by Youth and with a bi-continental dimension, will develop best practices on the professionalization of the Arts, and will have a focus on cultural heritage, including the development of platforms to encourage youth-led archiving. Key initiatives include: pathways to professional arts and peer to peer exchanges; African and European events in arts, dance, music crafts, and sports as well as broadcasting events through digital media platforms and the creation of 'Rooted Buses' creative outreach programmes bringing training programmes and exhibitis to rural areas. The institute will also put a special emphasis should be given to by female coaches to encourage young girls to do sports. Finally, it will aim to diffuse culture in under- privileged areas.

- The creation of the **European-African Sports Tournament.** This tournament would be an occasion to reveal traditional African sports on an international level in expansion to Europe and assess progress made on developing female athletic teams. The tournament could also potentially, on a longer-term basis, pave the way for holding the Olympics in Africa by 2050.

Environment & Climate Change

I. Role of Youth in the sector

Every day, we move closer to the environmental apocalypse to the detriment of all of us, particularly marginalized groups. **Youth inclusion** is key to ensure environmental preservation and address climate change; it is up to our generation to change the course. As is stated in the Abidjan Youth Declaration, youth-led initiatives must be supported to counterbalance existing tendencies and interests that work against the environment. African and European youth share the same concerns about biodiversity, desertification, coastal erosion, and unsustainable resource management. As the first generation to bear the brunt of climate change and environmental disruption, we must urgently work together on common challenges. It is crucial that we find inclusive, fair and sustainable ways to govern natural resources both locally, and globally.

- **Environmental justice**, both in its geographic and inter-generational sense, must be the basis on which to build global policies.
- Youth must be given the opportunity to innovate and promote future-oriented environmental policies, particularly by building on digital opportunities and skills.
- Indigenous and locally anchored solutions must be considered to tackle our common but distinct challenges at all levels, to inspire joint approaches and an innovative AU-EU narrative.

II. View of Youth to adapt ongoing or planned initiatives

Several relevant projects and initiatives already exist or are in the pipeline, including the EU-AU Charter on the Sustainable management of Natural Resources and the African Great Green Wall initiative. Regarding already ongoing and planned initiatives, we therefore propose to:

- Involve youth actively in – **"youthing-up"** - the design and implementation of the future **EU-AU Charter on the Sustainable management of Natural Resources** for an environmentally sustainable use of raw materials in our technological devices.
- **Strengthen the existing African Great Green Wall initiative**, backed by AU & EU, to include mapping and gaps identification, funding mechanism, an innovative network of knowledge exchange and citizen involvement through an online campaign, and a special focus on agroforestry to counter deforestation, desertification while helping local farmer income generation. Coastal erosion to be taken up as the next challenge with the same model, towards a network of Green and Blue Frontline Communities.

III. New ideas to address the topic

New challenges call for new solutions. We therefore propose two fresh, innovative ideas on pivotal topics, taking a starting point the unprecedented connectivity between African and European Youth, inspiring and positive environmental action on both continents, as well as already existing projects focusing on innovative use of mobile technologies to help farmers:

- **Mobilising youth to monitor infrastructure development projects**, while guaranteeing the efficacy of impact assessments, through a new AU-EU Youth Initiative on Sustainable Infrastructural Development - **GREEN ID**.
- **Introduce a Youth-led project** which expands across the EU & AU the use of transparent **mobile direct-payment methods to ecosystem services** for biodiversity conservation, natural resource management initiatives and risk compensation.

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Education & Skills

I. Role of the Youth in the sector

By 2030, Africa and Europe are projected to be the continents with the largest increase in youth population[1]. By 2050 Africa's population will be made up predominantly of youth, with 2 in 5 children worldwide who will be Africans[2]. These dynamics will influence the partnership between Africa and Europe. Education and skills are seen as foundational to both socieities and will impact future generations on both continents at all levels of society, "central to development and to the improvement of the lives of young people"[3]. Quality formal education and innovation in education are steps towards attaining the SDGs. Partnerships are important to address critical issues related to education on both continents.

Since 2000, 164 governments have committed to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults through a global movement to achieve "Education for All". Moreover, in 2009, the Council of the European Union adopted a resolution on renewed framework for long-term cooperation in the field of youth to promote active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity"[4]. This strategy serves to guide EU Member States to improve the lives of youth. The Strategic Framework "Education and Training 2020"[5] served to guide EU Member States to improve the lives of youth addressing global competition, skills shortages and technological developments.[6]

Equally, the African Youth Charter recognises the right to basic and good quality education of every young person and recommends measures to prepare the young people for the world of work.[7] The AU considers education vital in achieving the "Africa we want" or the Agenda 2063. This strategic framework, that builds on previous initiatives[9] calls Africa to action to "[c]atalyse education and skills revolution and actively promote science, technology, research and innovation, to build knowledge, human capital, capabilities and skills to drive innovations and for the African century"[10]. Agenda 2063 also calls for a people-driven development: with respect to education and mobility, includes the Africa Virtual and E-University, the African Passport and free movement of people processes.[11]

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[1] *UN DESA, 2015, Population 2030: 18 (http://bit.ly/1la8wdX)*

[2] *UNICEF, 2014, Generation 2030|Africa. Child demographics in Africa, http://uni.cf/2lU3vKI*

[3] *UNESCO, UNDESA, 2013, Youth and education, fact sheet, http://bit.ly/1BBk3uC*

[4] *Council of the European Union, 2009, Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the field of youth (2010-2018), http://bit.ly/2scqm4q*

[5] *Council of the European Union, 2009, Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the field of youth (2010-2018), http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219(01)*

[6] *European Commission, 2017, Strategic framework – Education and training 2020, http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework_en*

[7] *African Union, 2006, African Youth Charter, http://bit.ly/2A5yOJJ*

[8] *African Union Commission, 2016, AU Roadmap on harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth, http://bit.ly/2BjiB1X*

[9] *Such as the Lagos Plan of Action, The Abuja Treaty, The Minimum Integration Programme, the Programme for Infrastructural Development in Africa (PIDA), the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), The New partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as well national and regional plans of member states.*

[10] *AU, 2015, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want: 14 (http://bit.ly/2zAeVuL)*

[11] *African Union, 2007, About Agenda 2063, https://au.int/agenda2063/about*

Skills' training is critical to meet the employment needs of youth. In addition, it is widely acknowledged in the EU and AU that civic education is necessary to encourages full participation of social groups in democracy and development processes[12, 13]. In the EU, to ensure adequate skills for the future, there is a call for the recognition and validation of non-formal education for lifelong learning are initiatives and initiatives to improve the quality and relevance of skills and training[14]. The recent Continental Education Strategy for Africa[15] connects education and training to the skills and labour needed on the continent in line with Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, which aim to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (Goal 4)[16].

In the Abidjan Declaration, Youth of the EU and AU called for "support to and the advancement of education, skills development, mobility and access to markets, youth participation and young people's access to rights" towards achieving a more sustainable future. This can be achieved through: the recognition and validation of competences gained through non-formal education; the implementation of the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative; the support for mutual recognition of evaluation systems and formal education diplomas between African and EU countries to enhance mobility; and the guarantee of universal access to quality and inclusive education, recognizing the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training[17].

Priority areas

The world is now globalized and interconnected with young people better informed and equipped to understand the complexity of global dynamics and challenges Intercultural dialogue thus becomes an essential aspect of a stronger partnership between our two continents. Young people and their youth organizations play a crucial role in enabling youth to become the drivers of change, through different forms of education and skills development, both locally and globally.

Education must be strengthened, with a balance between two equally important priorities:

1) ensuring all young people can access quality early childhood, primary and secondary education, and
2) expanding opportunities for vocational and higher education, and for life-long learning.

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[12] *African Union, 2007, About Agenda 2063, https://au.int/agenda2063/about*

[13] *European Parliament, European Council, 2006, Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2006/962/oj*

[14] *European Commission, 2016, A New Skills Agenda for Europe, http://bit.ly/2d3Sykt*

[15] *African Union, 2015, Continental education strategy for Africa 2016-2025, http://bit.ly/2iOGUNM*

[16] *UNGA, 2015, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E*

[17] *4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit, 2017, The Abidjan Declaration, http://bit.ly/2yw1BWJ*

Education is important in eradicating poverty and hunger and in promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development. Thus, increased efforts towards education accessibility, quality and affordability are central to global development efforts. Resilient education systems are also needed, given the destructive impact of conflict on education[18] , to ensure the continuity of education in crisis situations, contributing towards equity, inclusion and accessibility to all.

The "NEET" group[19] is estimated to be 10% of the youth population and a there are many youth with a low level of education in developed economies[20]. This indicates the need for innovative approaches to ensure the education of youth. Education and training are essential for them to acquire the skills to successfully enter the future labour market. Education is a shield against unemployment, as shown by a strong correlation between educational attainment and employment outcomes[21].

Four main areas require action:

- Addressing access to quality education and skills development programmes for all, including in rural, remote and disadvantaged areas;
- Promoting innovation in the education sector at all levels, including development of digital and entrepreneurship skills and lifelong learning competences;
- Enhancing and supporting intra- and intercontinental mobility schemes for students, young professionals, young entrepreneurs and civil society organizations, including learning mobilities, volunteering schemes, and programmes to exchange experience such as job shadowing and joint skills development programmes;
- Advancing non-formal education opportunities and lifelong learning, recognizing and validating non-formal learning outcomes.

Addressing these needs will require focused policies and cooperation between the two continental bodies for implementation, as it is a key aspect to addressing an ever-changing and rapidly digitalising world, environmental sustainability, financial and physical mobility, as well as political inclusion and the future of employment.

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[18] *UNICEF, 2017, Destructive impact of conflict on education highlighted in four-country African youth survey, http://uni.cf/2zD9pqX*

[19] *Not currently engaged in Employment, Education or Training»*

[20] *ILO, 2012, Global employment trends, http://bit.ly/1eWJV2m*

[21] *Ibidem*

II. View of Youth to adapt ongoing or planned initiatives

In the effort of reshaping the intercontinental dialogue between Europe and Africa, we see mobility as an essential pillar. Renewing the impetus of the Africa-EU Partnership goes hand in hand with developing cross-cultural skills among youth; and such skills are more likely to be developed through intra- and intercontinental learning mobility schemes, both in-person and online, that enable young people to understand global and regional challenges and exchange on good practices and bring back solutions to their communities. Europe's 30 year long experience with the Erasmus programme is a great example of how successful such an effort could be in building bridges between different countries and different cultures, but also enhancing employability[22].

In imagining a conjunct African-European effort in this direction we need to recognize the crucial role that youth organizations from both our continents have. Therefore, we recognize the strong need to develop a structured dialogue between actors and capacity building targeting youth organizations and, more generally, actors active in the field of youth work as emphasised in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, in the Council Conclusions on a renewed impetus for the Africa-EU Partnership, and in the Joint Communication for a renewed impetus for the Africa-EU Partnership[23, 24, 25].
Such effort should include teachers and academics as their contribution is crucial in promoting non-formal education as complementary to formal educational systems. This dialogue should promote mutual exchange and learning, where both global and local organizations are able to enrich one another and develop global-local approaches.

Emphasizing the importance of education in promoting intercultural dialogue and awareness, we recognize its role in fostering active citizenship within and across both continents. We strongly believe that physical exchanges should be complemented by virtual exchanges. Online learning opportunities can play a crucial role in fostering cultural awareness, while at the same time providing soft skills that in a long-term perspective contribute to more inclusive societies.

We suggest the creation of a joint, multi-track exchange programme to strengthen both formal and non-formal education and intercultural dialogue, and in order to enable young people to develop intercultural skills and competences by creating opportunities for learning mobility both online and offline. This programme will complement formal education systems and may be used for continuous, lifelong learning.
Given the existence of such programs on both continents, we want to build on these well-established and recognized programmes and expand their scope into a joint Nyerere-Erasmus Programme. Such new joint programme should be provided with a specific joint governance that

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[22] *European Commission, 2014, The Erasmus Impact Study, http://bit.ly/2hcZqQ0*

[23] *African Union, European Union, 2007, The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. A Joint Africa-EU Strategy, http://bit.ly/2hNTJXt*

[24] *Council of the European Union, 2017, Council conclusions on renewed impetus for the Africa-EU Partnership, http://bit.ly/2A5bPik*

[25] *European Commission, European External Action Service, 2017, Joint communication for a renewed impetus of the Africa-EU Partnership, http://bit.ly/2i1cxWW*

reinforces the AU-EU partnership in the field of education by strongly focusing on mobility. The following three components are suggested, while not limiting the programme for further extension in the future:

Increased mobility between Europe & Africa through pilot mutual recognition: the AU-EU Education Passport

The Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme currently supports formal tertiary education cooperation between African states, run through collaborative efforts between the African Union Commission and the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission[26].

The renewed cooperation in the field of education should address the issue of recognition of educational backgrounds. In this sense it is important to combine and adapt ongoing processes such as the Harmonisation and Tuning Initiative[27] and the Harmonisation, Quality and Accreditation[28], as well as the EU Electronic Student Card initiative, currently developed by the European Commission, aiming at enabling secure exchange of data (e.g. student records, academic attributes) and access to services (e.g. course materials, enrolment services, online libraries) in hosting institutions/countries.

The proposed AU-EU Education Passport builds on this initiative, being an electronic card, easing the recognition of degrees between institutions and facilitating students and teachers mobility both intra- and inter-continental.The processes of recognition could be taken up by educational institutions and would ultimately enhance mobility, while at the same time providing the basis for skills recognition for future job-seekers, easing access to the labour market and enhancing employability.

We suggest the creation of a network of universities spanning across both continents, where institutional and political agreements can ease the process of recognition in the first place. Building on the currently existing networks of high level educational institutions participating in programs such as the Erasmus Mundus Association, Tempus, or the PAN-African University, we identify the need to create an official **"AU-EU Network of Universities"**, directly linked with both the **AU** and the **EU** in the framework of the proposed **Nyerere-Erasmus Programme**.

We recognize the dissemination of the **"AU-EU Education Passport"** as stepping ground for the solidification of such network, while promoting inter-institutional recognition between African and European Universities. The network would tackle the urgency to significantly boost harmonisation efforts of higher education programmes both on an inter- and intra-continental level. Specific efforts need to be undertaken in the digitalisation of curricula as we identify this as a major issue within higher education systems. Further, the network would structurally enhance current efforts in top-quality mobility, expanding them to general mobility of African and European students, scholars, researchers, with a specific focus on staff mobility and capacity building and digitalisation.

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[26] *EACEA, 2017, Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme, https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/intra-africa_en*

[27] *Tuning Africa, 2016, http://tuningafrica.org/*

[28] *HAQAA, 2017, Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative, https://haqaa.aau.org/*

Civil society and active citizenship exchanges between AU & EU Youth

To facilitate and enable capacity building for international youth organisations as well as local civil society organisations, we suggest study visits, workshops as well as sessions of creative thinking and joint contributions, among international non-governmental youth organization active in different fields with local youth organizations in their respective countries. Building on the existing practice of partnership building activities and study visits of the Erasmus+ Programme, this could enable international non-governmental youth organizations to build partnerships aimed at developing branches in countries where they are are not yet present, while supporting capacity building of local organisations, providing opportunities for mutual exchange and learning for all sides involved. The proposed exchanges can include:

- **Workshops** to exchange ideas, **good practices** and development of targeted policies and common strategies to tackle youth related issues;
- **Moments of creative thinking and generating ideas**, facilitated by a specific co-creation methodology[29] that allows different actors to generate new approaches and strategies to tackle youth related issues. Such moments would include a wide range of different actors and representatives from civil society (global and local), business community representatives (global and local), academia and the government.
- **Study visits** that could be further embedded into a **larger volunteering scheme**, whereby volunteers from international non-governmental youth organisations join local organisations, and local volunteers go into existing structures of the former in another country, **both intra- and intercontinental**. This could be built on existing volunteering schemes of both institutions, such as for example the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps.

The study visits should be supported and facilitated by the continental international organizations in close cooperation with local governments. Outcomes and results of workshops and co-creations moments could be taken into account by facilitating institutions at different levels of governance.

Virtual exchanges

Looking at the current project "Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges" (implemented between EU & the Mediterranean), we suggest the adaptation to the African continent. The platform aims at creating links for young people from both continents, including youth workers and organisations, to establish contact and ensure intercultural dialogue.

Components are both online courses and webinars as well as in-person exchanges and seminars. Technology enhances accessibility, especially in the case of women and girls who may be bound by household duties. This also allows young people living in hard to reach areas to participate in such learning experiences. These exchanges should foster discussions around topics relevant to young people, with the objective of having a spillover effect within the recipients' communities.

Further, we suggest the piloting of a center where young people can come and participate in virtual exchanges, and then take the discussion offline back to their communities. This enables access for

[29] *Artway of Thinking, 2017, Co-creation methdology summary, http://bit.ly/2AtD2Mi*

people with different backgrounds. The infrastructural adjustments and coverage of connectivity could be done jointly with actors from the business community, specifically from the ITC sector.

III. **New ideas to address the topic**

New fresh ideas in rural education and digital learning

AU-EU Rural Education Action Program (REAP)

REAP is a proposed, multipurpose intercontinental program to facilitate access to and completion of primary and secondary education for children particularly but not limited to rural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. It is an incentive-based pilot project, integrated with gender and girls' rights practices, that will identify and support schools in remote and hard-to-reach areas making efforts to attract and retain students, especially girls, in schools. REAP draws from initiatives currently implemented such as "Education Cannot Wait" supported by a global coalition of humanitarian and development actors, bringing in a new intercontinental dimension that combines different elements as infrastructure development, education and food security in schools and gender dynamics to meet special education needs of rural areas.

Background and rationale

The Africa Learning Barometer illustrates the urgent need to accelerate education progress and improve equity in learning outcomes[30]. Girls face multiple barriers to access the education system with half of them falling out of school before their 18st birthday[31]. In Europe, in 2015, 119 million European citizens, representing more than 23% of the population, were at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Rural poverty is linked to the specific disadvantages of rural areas such as limited access to education and remoteness[32]. The low income regions of Europe, that suffer from several structural problems that will need to be addressed, cover parts of Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Romania[33]. REAP is developed for this part of Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa.

REAP proposes:

- Selecting pilot areas and mapping schools.
- Infrastructure development in qualified schools (formal and vocational) such as building library, sanitation and hygiene facilities, ICT infrastructure and improving school management structures;
- A combination of education, food security and sustainability practices supported by the latest indoor farming technologies (e.g. vertical farming) as well as outdoor farming, so that pupils participate in harvesting food while consuming it in school canteens. This will encourage retention of pupils in schools since they learn best when not hungry but well fed.
- Teacher capacity building, including training and pedagogy, improving related teaching infrastructure and policies;
- Gender mainstreaming into education processes through non-formal settings to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and including harmful practices like female genital mutilation (FGM).

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[30] *The Brookings Institution, 2012, Africa Learning Barometer, http://brook.gs/2c7pwBg*
[31] *ONE, 2017, The toughest places for a girl to get an education, http://bit.ly/2BiQpfF*
[32] *Eurostat, 2015, People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, http://bit.ly/1B6nS7r*
[33] *European Commission, 2017, Economic challenges of lagging regions – final report, http://bit.ly/2zzx2lr*

Mechanism of Implementation

REAP is envisaged to be implemented by multiple stakeholders: AU-EU institutions, donors and civil society organizations in partnership with national governments. The Program Coordination Committee will develop criteria for qualifying countries, schools and implementation partners as well as call for proposals, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes. The committee shall be international in composition and technical in operation.

A survey will be conducted in both continents whose findings will be matched with existing data from institutions like the UN on access to education and obstacles faced by girls to access education such as child marriages and FGM among others. Two countries will be selected, one from each continent, for the pilot of 5 years. The lessons learned and best practices from the pilot will feed into the next phase of the project.

Alignment with AU-EU priorities

REAP is aligned with the strategic AU-EU priorities. In the Agenda 2063, Africa envisions to «catalyse education and skills revolution and actively promote science, technology, research and innovation" while the EU proposes boosting its efforts to support quality education at all levels by increasing joint efforts to facilitate access to and completion of primary and secondary education for all children, especially girls and addressing gender and education, including gender-based violence, under an EU Gender Equality Initiative. The EU also commits to support Vocational Education and Training and Entrepreneurship by supporting capacity-building projects that promote women and young people's active participation in society and the economy, notably through improving non-formal learning and enhancing synergies between education systems and the labour market . In addition, the 2014-2017 Roadmap, approved at the 4th EU-Africa Summit in 2014, also identifies the issue of food and nutrition security as a key element of intercontinental cooperation.[35]

AU-EU Network of Digital Hubs for Primary and Secondary Education

An initiative aimed to **promote digital skills at the earliest stages of education**, focused on primary and secondary education, to unleash the potential of digital technology in the community through education, training and support programmes for youth, including investments in digital connectivity, and to promote intercontinental dialogue on digitalization in education, involving both public and private actors. To achieve the aims of this proposal, centers assigned with the elaboration and implementation of specific programmes, located both in Africa and Europe, should be developed and equipped with appropriate infrastructure.

Description of the initiative

Under the joint leadership of the African Union and of the European Union, the "AU-EU Network of Digital Hubs for Primary and Secondary Education" propose, at an intercontinental scale, the development of a network of digital hubs focused on hard to reach and underprivileged areas,

[35] *4th EU-Africa Summit, 2014, Roadmap 2014-2017, http://bit.ly/2iufops*

targeting the primary and secondary education systems and connecting them with start-ups, businesses and other public and private stakeholders involved in the field of education.

The proposed digital hubs will:

- Provide digital skills development programmes to primary and secondary education children and students, including coding skills;
- Support schools and other education providers at local and regional level in developing and designing and providing digital skills development training to primary and secondary level students;
- Map opportunities to provide digital skills training to disadvantaged communities at local and regional level, including rural and remote areas;
- Reach out to the rural communities at local and regional level through mobile caravans, providing both expertise and technology solutions to schools and education providers;
- Collaborate with public and private stakeholders in developing joint initiatives aimed at improving digital literacy, digital skills and use of the digital environment by people and businesses, as well as expanding the network with other developed hubs;
- Create and provide open and accessible online courses on social and economic use of digital technologies and data;
- Promote virtual exchange of good practices within the network and joint communication and exchanges between hubs and beneficiaries of the programmes within and between continents;
- Support development of youth-led start-ups in education for primary and secondary through training and financing schemes.

Means of implementation

The initiative could be implemented through investments in the infrastructure development of the network of centres, including equipment of the required hardware and software technologies, acknowledging adequate solutions necessary to reach fragile, rural and remote contexts, investments in human capital development, and technical assistance to help beneficiaries to develop mature and sustainable projects.

The proposal should be piloted in small and medium-size cities in Africa and in Europe, after launching a **call for proposals**, funded through the EU, AU, and member state contributions or existing funds. The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and the European Development Fund (EDF) or the newly-proposed European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) could play a role in leveraging private investment both in Africa and Europe. Both public and private investments could play a role in financing this initiative through **public-private partnership** and blended finance instruments. **Evidence-based research** and pilot initiatives are required before full launch.

To achieve intercontinental dimensions, consortiums applying to develop hubs should propose at least the development of one hub in Africa and one in Europe, involving organizations on both continents.

Role of youth in the initiative

The proposal has as main beneficiaries the children and youth, aiming to equip them with the necessary digital skills for the working environment of today and tomorrow.
We envisage the following opportunities to engage the young people in the initiative:

- In the monitoring of the programme and of the hubs' activity: implementation and impact reports should be elaborated by independent youth organizations;
- In the implementation of the initiative: youth organizations and youth businesses could be involved in the consortiums applying to develop projects under this scheme;
- In the management of the programme: following an open and transparent procedure, representatives from the youth non-governmental sector could have a co-management role in programme.

Alignment with the AU-EU priorities

Digital skills are a prerequisite in the digital economy and society, therefore filling the digital gap in this sector of education and skills development will provide young people with better employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. From smart agriculture and manufacturing to administration, the impact of digitalization is visible.

The European Commission recognizes both the shortage of ICT professionals and the digital skills needs of its citizens, more than 40% of EU citizens lacking basic digital skills. Digital skills and expertise constitutes a priority under the Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe , initiatives as the "Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition" being set out under the New Skills Agenda for Europe .

The First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 outlines a strategic dimension of digital literacy promotion and of the policies necessary for a digital economy, affordable access to internet being considered a basic service . A vision focused on skilled citizens within a knowledge economy and a call to action emphasizing the education and skills revolution and active promotion of science, technology, research and innovation are set out in Agenda 2063

[36] *European Commission, 2015, A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe, http://bit.ly/24eS8yi*

[37] *European Commission, 2016, A New Skills Agenda for Europe, http://bit.ly/2d3Sykt*

[38] *African Union Commission, 2015, First Ten-Year Implementation Plan 2014-2023, http://www.nepad.org/resource/agenda-2063-first-ten-year-implementation-plan-2014-2023*

[39] *African Union Commission, 2015, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, http://bit.ly/2v6GkPw*

Concise notes — **Education & Skills**

Business, Job Creation & Entrepreneurship

I. **Role of the Youth in the sector**

Youth as key factor in fostering job creation

Africa is changing rapidly, most evident in the livelihood of its youth population, whose rates are expected to swell to around 830 million by 2050. Looking beyond the complexities of this growth, leaders should tap into their incredible talent potential, by focusing on means of empowering young people to maintain their livelihoods through increased access to reliable employment and support. This will help countries overcome crippling issues such as mass migration, rapid urbanization and radicalisation, through the effects of the wellbeing and social participation of newly- employed and engaged young people. Thus it is crucial that youth be involved in the creation of adapted solutions to this effect.

Sub-Saharan Africa will need to create 18 million new jobs a year up to 2035[1]. Now only 3 million jobs are being created annually. Thus African and European Youth are uniquely positioned to stimulate innovation, create social capital and reshape the existing political discourse. However, we need models based on human and environmental principles to achieve the common goals and to ensure a sustainable integrated approach to development and inclusive growth. We need a long term inclusive economic vision and strategy to respond to the market challenges while protecting people, planet and future. Young people must be empowered to have equal participation in shaping our shared future and to work closely in partnership with the private sector (large and small), local communities, CSO and the public sector.

Many key factors have already been recognized as critical to make businesses more **efficient and sustainable** such as to develop core competencies and make them more competitive and to access affordable investment and finance to respond to the labour market needs.

We suggest the following key recommendations to be taken into consideration from a Youth perspective:

- Prioritise Youth: It is now necessary to scale up the support for youth employment and entrepreneurs and to put youth at the centre of innovations and system changes. This implies giving access to youth to finance, partnerships and business platforms which will enable the establishment or growth of their businesses, and to access to the appropriate infrastructure, connectivity and links to the market. Young people must be empowered to have equal participation in shaping our shared future. Youth have particular needs and face additional barriers that must be resolved.
- Public Private Partnerships including Youth: It is known that partnerships are important and can catalyse positive change. Young people also need to be part of the equation, to work closely in partnership and collaboration with the private sector (large and small), local communities, CSO and the public sector. African Governments should take greater responsibility in partnership and collaboration with the private sector to include Youth Networks because of the youth's uniqueness and their particular advantage of understanding, more than any generation, multiple cultural and social norms, distinct business cultures, and local languages, which can help them tap into opportunities for social and economic development. Including Youth in key partnerships would be a great tool to add value and boost unemployment and job creation.

[1]*According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projections*

- Building the bridge between the two continents and linking young entrepreneurs and business owners through youth Platforms could induce significant positive changes and contribute to social and economic development by stimulating the exchange of best practices and know-how transfer. On the one hand, African countries may exhibit difficulties in attracting Youth business development or involvement because of political instabilities, financial and administrative obstacles, or social challenges and dynamics deterring investors and entrepreneurs from pursuing their economic activities or innovations. On the other hand, entrepreneurs, including youth entrepreneurs, need more information on support structures and services that exist, on new skills and capacities that are key to engage in entrepreneurship and to form viable business partnerships. They may find it difficult to get the necessary backing from a support network within and outside their countries.

- Enabling Environment: It is necessary to reinforce the local ecosystem for positive change through entrepreneurship and job creation to take root in each country. The enabling environment needs to be reinforced, the circumstances for youth entrepreneurship enhanced and the weaknesses addressed. Only when the ecosystem, which includes stakeholders from governments, academia and the private sector (including the financial sector), is conducive of youth entrepreneurship, can enterprise creation and development be successful and contribute to social and economic development. Reinforcing the local ecosystem will also imply ensuring that the businesses created through the partnerships between Youth in Africa and in Europe can be integrated into the existing local market without risk.

Thus, it requires ensuring the **entrepreneurial culture** is enhanced in a way that local markets in countries of origin recognize the value of such enterprises to contribute to social and economic development. Activities such as Pitch competitions, B2B-B2G linkages, Business clustering, Data collecting value chain development, job and career fairs, development and mindset programs/reflexion sessions must be on the top of our priorities in collaboration with investors, philanthropists and business angels.

Therefore, we call on strengthening and enhancing a favourable, friendly and conducive business environment and climate including: security and justice, infrastructure and connectivity, access to financing, a transparent, equitable, fair and well implemented taxation system, as incentives to attract more young investors and business owners.

- Capacity Building for youth entrepreneurship as agents of change to drive social and economic development, has gotten attention. The challenges faced in the provision of training are however many; youth entrepreneurs suffer from uneven capacity building support, institutions and formal structures do not cater to entrepreneurs, the knowledge and potential of youth is often not efficiently valued, and they lack access to skill development opportunities. It is important to build on existing initiatives of TVET and others training options, expanding the offer, quality and effectiveness. Capacity building should be linked with effective enterprises and incubators, to enable a wider offer and a step to employment (internships, job offers). We call on government political will and strong support of TVET for skill development, mutual learning, and expanding the effectiveness, quality and offer, providing these institutions with additional resources and inputs.

II. **View of youth to adapt ongoing or planned initiatives**

Making business more efficient and sustainable requires an enhanced business climate for youth jobs and entrepreneurship, including developing the skills of young people, investing in them, enabling access to finance, to business platforms and to the appropriate resources, inputs and links, while ensuring the key principles above.

Access to Finance for youth with support of the EIP: To support enterprise creation and development in countries, adequate access to finance needs to be ensured.

Hence we request the creation of an investment window inside the European External Investment Plan. **The Youth window under the EIP** will be dedicated to youth initiatives, to give the possibility to young people to have direct access to grants and credits. It would be designed to be flexible and fit the context of young entrepreneurs helping them overcome barriers rather than restricting access. We recommend this Investment Window to cover activities and initiatives of young entrepreneurs, incubators, and projects described here: micro-credit for implementation, grants for feasibility studies, specific funds for youth connectivity, collateral for investment partnering with other sources such as the private sector (assets, capital, and other risk management resources without which it is impossible to obtain financing). This Fund would enable smaller and remote communities to access business, health and education services, and create better conditions for the development of the local economy, access to information and communication, crowdfunding as well as facilitating adding value in the Fintech sector, IT sectors and Incubation centres.

Promote Youth Entrepreneurship broadly in rural areas establishing Youth Connectivity Fund
This fund will support enterprise creation, development and scaling up, in African countries, especially in rural areas. It builds on our understanding of the critical importance of affordable access to internet connectivity, digital tools and equipment, for the success of start-ups, entrepreneurs and employed youth.

Harness the job creation potential in two key sectors across the EU and AU
1) Agriculture
Context, Challenges and Recommendations

To respond to the opportunities of the demographic dividend, key development actors such as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), call for the next 'Green Revolution' to come to Africa. This so-called revolution is a model to boost food production via high value external inputs, genetically improved seeds, chemical fertilisers and improved technology. However, through extensive review of the implementation' successes and difficulties in Asia and South America, vital learning has emerged. The worst cases led to indebted farmers, an increased reliance on expensive technological outputs and chemical fertilizers, and greater environmental risks such as increased carbon emissions, loss of biodiversity and land deterioration, which all increase the risk of climate-related disasters such as flooding.

The African continent faces disadvantages in its participation in agricultural global trade. Key policies are often focused on large scale production of cash crops and raw materials. The small-scale African farmer have been left at a disadvantage and are unable to compete in the global market, especially in the face of public subsidies and large corporations' monopolies of markets. There is especially additional risk and danger to women and marginalized communities. A significant proportion of households in developing countries continue to depend on agriculture for their livelihood, with typically low yields and high losses, and vulnerability to pests, disasters and other risks. They are also often affected by poor nutrition, in part due to a lack of diversity within the crops.

Agroecology methods enable the optimization of interactions between plants, animals, humans, communities and the environment for a sustainable and fair food system. Synergies ensure production, food security and nutrition whilst restoring the ecosystem and biodiversity, essential for sustainable agriculture, resilience and climate change adaptation. Moving towards sustainability simultaneously enables food security, job creation and climate mitigation.

Subsistence farming is no longer popular for youth. As small farming is still a large proportion of the economy, it is critical for jobs and income generation. All small farmers need to increase their income to meet their basic needs and increase their resilience to shocks. Therefore, it is vital to investing in agribusiness and value chain' development in the rural areas. This involves a range of options from ensuring reliable and sustainable markets, fair trade, transformation or making use of digital tools, etc.. Ensuring the development of small-scale rural businesses and creating entrepreneurial opportunities for young people and women is also a solution for peace building, preventing disasters, and to avoid urban migration and reduce poverty.

We propose the following steps in a pilot implementation and learning opportunity, to ensure sustainable livelihood with agro-ecology, improve yields and reduce losses, increase quality and/or bring added-value with product transformation and the development of an effective value-chain.

Enabling the effective agro-ecology and agri-business development, requires support for the exploration of solutions, experimentation, knowledge exchange, technological assistance and expertise sharing. States can provide valuable support in enacting policies, promotion, and enabling resources and a conducive environment. Involving youth and small-holder farmers in participatory research and the dissemination of knowledge will catalyse change. Public support is necessary, for example through public procurement, credit, farmers' markets, and creating a supportive trade and macroeconomic framework. International support is requested: 1) to fund regional and national knowledge platforms and 2) to field research to gather and disseminate best practices and increase understanding of the impacts of various practices on incomes and livelihoods as well as the impact of policies and scaling-up strategies on production, wellbeing, sustainability and economic strength.

Proposal: Set up an AU EU Agroecology Centre of Excellence (AU-EU ACE)

The Centre, to be piloted in East Africa, will build on previous initiatives and gather the support and expertise of key organisations and programmes: African development bank - Youth in Africa Initiative , the European Investment Bank (boost jobs + Agriculture, food and rural development),

The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the European Development Fund, the EU The Agenda for Change, the EU External Investment Plan, G20 Africa Partnership, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nation. To support rural economic growth in rural areas, we count on the expertise of the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA) in the agri-business development.

- Specialists from within the FAO Agroecology Knowledge Hub will train key young farmers in agro-ecological practices. These young farmers will transfer this knowledge within their local communities, and across the country.
- AU-EU ACE will develop participatory research in the area of agro-ecology, co-designed and led both by farmers and experts, sharing best practices and informing the national agricultural policies to ensure benefit to the local farmer.
- This centre will additionally develop seed banks and archives of best practice.
- The centre will facilitate specialised agro-business support, businesses development, and protected geographic or organic labelling
- Capacity building with various methods (mentors, workshops, learning by doing, etc.)
- Supporting innovations with special attention to value chains
- Youth friendly start-up resources, support and link with investors and markets
- Support research and regional mapping of existing agro-ecology and agri-businesses along the whole-chain including producers, transporters, distributors, experts, business communities present in the eco-system in rural areas.
- Financial and technical resources must be invested in order to boost the creation of a green value-chain in Africa and in Europe.

EU-AU Renewable Energy Project for Jobs creation and sustainable development in rural Sub Sahara Africa

Context, challenges and recommendations

Access for all to electricity is a fundamental and universal human right because it enables access to other fundamental rights and public services (such as water, health, education, security, electricity, employment, entrepreneurship and agri-business). It facilitates territorial balance. In short, without light there is nothing. Despite efforts by all, including African leaders, an additional 10 million Africans a year do not have access to energy. Nearly one in 5 of the world's population does not have access to electricity with the biggest share of this population being in Sub Sahara Africa where 635 million people are still lacking access.

Renewable energies with the right support and business models have the potential to bring clean energy access to poor households in rural communities and also create almost 4 million direct jobs globally. The development of electrification would offer new opportunities for African businesses, which would in turn benefit the European and global economies. Keep in mind that if growth in African countries goes from 5% to 15% a year, it is expected to increase European growth by 2%. Africa is, for Europe in particular, a formidable source of growth.

We therefore propose to establish a **Centre of technology transfer, training and assembly of solar power lighting systems** in order to provide energy in rural and remote communities, tackle digital economy profits and enable startups, micro and small businesses in the assembly and distribution of household solar systems. It will improve access to clean, reliable, modern and sustainable energy and enable a substantial increase in the independence of energy. It will provide affordable low cost energy, which will reduce household expenditures and create local employment and income generating activities. Through the project, we can measure the impact of green energy and its potential to create jobs in rural communities.

This new approach to AU EU renewable energy would include in its pilot phase:

- Capacity building & vocational training, training local technicians on assembling solar lighting systems in order to ensure technology transfer so that assembly and installation businesses can function effectively, and train a team of local technicians for equipment maintenance. For capacity building, partnership with vocational training centres is key to set up solar equipment local assembly points to increase the fundamental creative capacity for this pilot and its sustainability.
- Funding to develop local solutions for rural sub-Saharan Africa (including solar panels, green energy, windmills and other sources of energy)
- Stimulate the local economy and create young business and employment opportunities;
- Promote resilience in rural communities and empower women and head families;
- Promote Energy Efficient Intensive Consumers (like Hotels);
- This pilot project will require the partnership with European renewable energy distribution companies to distribute solar equipment inputs
- Inputs will be distributed to small business in specific rural communities to facilitate their establishment of local African assembly factories for solar products and thus generate income. By adopting a "pay as you go business model" (PAYG) our target segment would be young entrepreneurs from rural communities whose greatest barrier to setting up a shop is access to energy starting with 50 young entrepreneurs identified prior to the project who face the challenge of energy access.
- The project would involve a pilot project in either Nigeria, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo where rural electrification is among the lowest.
- Ensure the distribution of solar panels in rural communities
- Potential funding partners for the project: By working in partnership with the European Investment Bank, the African Union and the European Union, ECREE (Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency), the European Fund for Sustainable Development and tapping into the EIP who all have renewable energy on the top of investment priority agenda, we could access funding and tap into the EIP technical assistance on how to best run the project. Through their renewable energy project we could measure the impact of green energy and its potential of creating new jobs and enhancing already existing businesses in rural communities.

III. **New ideas to address the topic**

Creation of a Think do-tank: a high level experts group and an AU-EU joint incubation centre

Context, challenges and recommendations

We propose to boost the cooperation between European and African youth' entrepreneurs and business owners, and their potential to create innovative business ideas, share best practices, find joint solutions, while creating significant social, environmental and economic change. It will link to the EIP to enhance its success. It will link national with local and rural areas, other sectors[1] and enable livelihood, wellbeing and the decrease of migration, meeting the needs of both continents. We propose the creation of a Think do-tank which we would pilot in a first phase:

The Think Do-Tank is a networking & empowerment centre for AU-EU start-up incubation projects. It has as objective to help maximize opportunities and overcome challenges of African and European contexts and challenges and to build a successful continental business ecosystem for the African emerging market, linking it to the European eco-system.

This will enable and support more innovations and act as a multiplier of quality job' creation. Project partners will be helpful in setting a joint strategy that will enable a pilot of this project at the intercontinental level, while also already insuring the involvement of regional, national and local partners on each country in a partnership consortium for future expansion.

At the local level, we aim to foster the cooperation between the two continents, TVET, educational organizations and public institutions, local authorities, and NGOs active with youth and youth originations, business and emerging incubators. We will foster an environment that is open to cooperation between different actors for the development of more entrepreneurial, active and engaged citizens and more effective start-ups.

The Think Do-Tank will have two pillars: a high-level experts group and an AU-EU joint incubation centre:

Pillar 1

It will be centred around the implementation of a high-level experts group: The experts group will be in charge of framing the vision and the activities of the Think Do-Tank. They will help develop the strategy for a strong, stable and prosperous Africa, where African and European ambitions meet as well to develop new ideas and innovative projects to incubate.

- They will be accountable for the transparent implementation of the ongoing and new joint AU-EU Programs.
- Their role will be consultative. The Think Do-Tank Expert Group will mobilise Youth CEOs, Incubation centres – Training centres - LABS- youth Entrepreneurs Start-ups- SMIs/ SME – Diaspora Entrepreneurs - Institutions- Agencies- Governments - trainers and Agencies in entrepreneurship field- experts, Youth in general (Rural and Urban) – Youth representations, diaspora, private sector, incubators, CSOs, Independent Experts, AU and EU representatives.

- Develop and implement a detailed plan of action
- Research skills, businesses and good practices. The experts' group will develop and set up a Research programme on Skills, Businesses and good practices of entrepreneurship, incubation, start-ups and job creation in Africa and in Europe.
- Encouraging collaboration for development in Africa and in Europe as an avenue for continuous dialogue on emerging youth initiatives (in person and virtual). The expert's group will serve as a joint platform for dialogue on good practices and necessary framework conditions for education and skills development for employment and entrepreneurship.
- Serve as a joint platform for dialogue about best practices and necessary framework conditions for education and skills development, for employment and entrepreneurship.
- A Training/competencies development
  It is critical to strengthen skills development through scaled up investments, making funding available for pitch-competitions through grants, seed capital. This pillar will establish a pool of high-quality regional and inter-continental network of TVET and other centres across Africa and Europe.
- Crowd-coaching platform:
  Skills development and capacity building for Youth must be enhanced. The project foresees the development of a **crowd-coaching platform**, which will be available to Youth, and to Mentors, experts and coaches, on an online and offline basis. The platform aims to facilitate a matching between the skills needed by youth entrepreneurs based on a comprehensive analysis of skills needed for effective and successful social entrepreneurship, with appropriate trainers/coaches/mentors who exhibit these skills. Youth need to engage with Mentors, experts and coaches, business Angels in a dynamic manner to ensure that coaching and mentoring is adaptable to the specific needs of the entrepreneurs, given the array of skills they may already exhibit based on the different educational, cultural, and entrepreneurial backgrounds they may have. The offline dimension of crowd-coaching will allow for a face-to-face engagement between the two counterparts to build on the online interface. Dynamism of skills development and capacity building is ensured through the crowd-coaching platform given that it allows for an exchange of knowledge and skills; participants in the crowd-coaching platform can both transfer knowledge and skills to their peers, and equally be recipients of such transfer for skills they may still lack to be successful social entrepreneurs, particularly in the countries of origin. The platform will additionally allow diaspora entrepreneurs to get in touch with their potential markets and their potential business partners, and to learn about market and business trends in their countries.

Pillar2:

With the support of the **Youth Investment Window under the EIP, the Think do-Tank** will facilitate, support and strengthen national and intercontinental innovation hubs and incubation centres to create jobs and opportunities for young people across the continents.

- This AU-EU joint incubation centre will include working labs – using an evidence-based approach – to develop solutions to be implemented in both urban and rural areas in start-ups, micro and small businesses.
- Collect and disseminate data for monitoring and tracking of good practices.

- The Labs implement the core activities and the development of Technical solutions for the Think Do-Tank. The will help to turn the theoretical approach and strategy of the high-level experts group into innovative Solutions that can be used in the areas of need for economic development in Africa and in Europe.
- Investment access and capacity building
- Business Clustering for collaboration, exchange of lessons learned and good practices sharing
- Innovation and technology Management,
- Innovative support and technology transfer for TVET Institutions to increase their effectiveness (linking with private sector, technical fiches, etc.)
- The Think Do-Tank innovation labs will prioritise creating start-ups and businesses and supporting entrepreneurs in key economic sectors that fill gaps, have a high potential for growth and jobs, and fit within the principles stated.
  - Agro-ecology and Agri-business
  - Green energy
  - Tourism, arts and culture,
  - The digital economy, connectivity and ICT

Governance & Political Inclusion

I. Role of the Youth in the sector

Improving accountability and reducing corruption is at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ambitious targets set by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. Aid transparency and effective allocation have been recognised as critical for the attainment of the SDGs. Corruption continues to plague many States and hamper human development, enriching an elite to the detriment of many.

We propose policies and concrete initiatives to make financial transactions for development and continental partnerships more open to the public, from conception to implementation. In particular, e-governance tools can be powerful means to tackle illicit financial flows and ensure the accountability of public and private actors in order to harness their gains in a healthy way. Real oversight mechanisms based on Youth participation can help diminish illicit financial flows of public and business actors, counter the lack of transparency in aid disbursement as well as ineffective implementations of political commitments, budgets and service provision.

Linking transparency with local governance, we think there is great potential for equal cooperation in the expansion of the already existing city twinning practise. By linking AU cities with each other and with EU cities, one creates a relationship based on getting closer to the citizens, equal exchange, technical cooperation and good practises.

Youth, in these endeavours, has a key role to play: the growing percentage of youth is not mere demographics, but a dividend that requires increased consideration and has already demonstrated its ability to be part of solutions.

In this vein, and **based on the Abidjan Youth Declaration**, key recommendations are:

To Heads of State:

- Commit to include Youth in political parties, create Youth ambassadorial positions for all major dialogues, in cluding the post-Cotonou negotiations;
- Foster a culture of inclusivity and participation, including of women and youth, through education and trainings.
- Strengthen tax collection, tackle tax evasion and engage in voluntary country-to-country reporting schemes;

To the African Union and the European Union:

- Include Youth in policy-making and oversight at all levels;
- Enhance or improve the collection of own resources (e.g. taxes, trade duties, returns on investments, services from infrastructure projects, etc.) to progress towards financial self-sustainability of both Unions;
- Build decentralized capacities to implement solutions, partner, and successfully access and manage funding, investing in training of local state and non-state actors;

- Operationalize political agendas (e.g. Abidjan Declaration, the present Youth Agenda, Habitat III "New Urban Agenda") through multi-level governance networks and partnerships for sustainable development.
- Finance (through EU's External Investment Fund & other means) structured dialogues between Youth & local authorities to set priorities for urban development and align corporate social responsibility to these through structured dialogues with business;
- Create blending facilities by multiple international financial institutions, CSR and private equity to accelerate the transition to sustainable and inclusive cities.

To Local Authorities and NGOs:

- Expand city networks between Africa and Europe by building on pilot projects (Athens-Johannesburg) on sectoral cooperation, with the inclusion of youth as stakeholders (deciding cities and priorities, implementing and ensuring accountability), sharing best practices and implementation through blending of investments and private capital;
- Enhance integrated approaches to foster transparency and engage the youth from Africa and Europe in political dialogue with local authorities.

I. **View of Youth to adapt ongoing or planned initiatives**

The present note thus presents Euro-African/Afro-European proposals on three key topics: decentralisation and local governance; domestic resource mobilisation; and accountability.

Decentralisation and local governance

To date, Youth inclusion remains a challenge on both continents. Though there are numerous platforms for dialogue to engage Youth and mainstream them within governance structures, most of them are reduced to tokenism or limited to very few "youth-related" topics, with inadequate structural reform or transformational results. **There is a great opportunity within local governance for Youth to be drivers of the development of sustainable cities**, whilst also forging intercontinental partnerships, contributing to redefine the donor-recipient relationship between the EU and Africa. To this effect, youth must be included in agenda setting, exchange of good practice, context analysis, policy processes, resource mobilisation and oversight.

Cities should be a place of potential and not a problem for the future. It is estimated that "as many as 60% of all urban dwellers will be under the age of 18 by 2030"[2]. Clearly, young people have a key and critical role to play in ensuring urbanization is the engine that propels the world towards sustainable prosperity in the 21st century. However, there is no mention of Youth integration, participation or ownership in major local governance and decentralisation agendas, as well as with special regards to tackling the issues faced by youth in cities.

Given the major urbanisation trend, as outlined by the "EU Urban Agenda", "Habitat III" and SDG 11 ("Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"), there are clear challenges being faced by both AU and EU cities, and both have made commitments to address them.

New Approaches to existing initiatives and policies

The New Urban Agenda and the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities have been explicitly recognised by both AU & EU States, who committed to make the most of the growth potential of cities. Local governance is key to achieving various SDGs (urban food systems, water and electricity delivery, urban planning, infrastructure, access to education, inclusion of vulnerable groups). We need to harmonise and consolidate efforts, creating multi-stakeholder solutions that create value and impact for all.

The 5th AU-EU Summit includes a forum of regional and local authorities, where United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA), the Network of Elected Women of Africa (REFELA), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the Platforma coalition will push for local participatory mechanisms, and further projects aimed at mobilizing investment for the development priorities within the JAES[3].

A key way to put the spotlight on local governance within the AU-EU partnership is through Twinning of regions or cities.

City Twinning focuses on establishing voluntary collaborative relations and structures between the citizenry and local authorities of two cities, for awareness raising and exchange of experiences and culture. Town twinning started after World War II mostly between Germany and Eastern Europe, as well as later between French and ECOWAS cities. Today it is implemented in the EU and in its neighbourhood., with the wider objective to increase the feeling of ownership of EU policies[4]. Other city to city links have emerged for solidarity or development cooperation.

The **territorial approach to local governance** has been identified by the AU & the EU as the best way to bring together in strategic regions, cities and surrounding local communities to enhance their potential for development by ensuring sustainable and mutually beneficiary links[5]. These processes must be further strengthened by integrating Youth as drivers and establishing robust financing mechanisms[6] to ensure the sustainability of projects and the usefulness and integrity of the equal partnership between the AU and the EU territories.

The technical cooperation, which we are seeking to establish (e.g. in environmental preservation, climate change, democratic inclusion, governance, civil protection, education, culture, agriculture, industry, research, transport, and issues of the urban agenda) would aim to bring the application of twinning practises to scale and deeper intensity in the Afro-European context.

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[3] *To be adopted in Abidjan on the 27.11.2017, draft declaration provided by Platforma.*

[4] *EACEA, Europe for Citizens Programme – Town Twinning, 2014, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/action1_measure1_en.php*

[5] *EUDevDays.eu, Towards a territorial approach to economic development, 2017, https://eudevdays.eu/sessions/towards-territorial-approach-economic-development*

[6] *The European Investment Bank (EIB) has already worked on the idea of establishing circular cities in Belgium and plans to expand this action through the External Investment Fund, an opportunity to use its available expertise to replicate this practice.*

II & III. **Building on existing ideas; new ideas to address the topic**

Awareness-raising within the population about the SDG goals and ongoing activities will increase motivation and desire for effective results (for one's own and one's community wellbeing and rights and for cooperation and support for others). However, further strategic activities are necessary to ensure effective implementation. Innovative social accountability and social auditing methods based on participatory democracy have shown to be effective, transforming the role of community representatives and especially youth to become monitoring bodies and to engage with local authorities for solutions.

Best practices in urban planning and effective integrated or territorial management[7] facilitated by technical cooperation and mutual learning, can create jobs, help overcome the ostracism of vulnerable groups, and enhance urban culture, The creation of bidirectional policy-making mechanism between the local citizenry and the administration would also ensure the legitimacy of proposed actions, as well as its accountability and thus typically its quality and ease of access. Thus, city twinning can solve various dimensions of the global development agenda.

To this end, we propose:

1. Creating the initiative "City Shapers - AU and EU youth building cities and building bridges", will enable youth and wider citizenry of twinned cities to participate in setting local and regional priorities. Issues could be around youth needs and trends involving youth, such as to enhance participatory urban revitalization, to overcome regional inequalities, and to strengthen the financial and climate resilience of the urban habitat.

2. Creating blending facilities (e.g. mixed loans from EIB and other international financial institutions and co-funding from private equity) to strengthen the follow-up to the ideas generated by City Shapers, improving the investment climate through inclusive good governance, and enhancement of local capacities to mobilize investment and aid, especially in underdeveloped conflict affected regions.

"CityShapers" (see more detailed project in Annex at the end of the present note):

- Is a digital platform that enables value creation and synergies between authorities, experts and students in Africa and Europe, as well as sharing of good practices in order to turn urban challenges into opportunities for the future;
- builds on the UCLG, City Twinning and Habitat III "New Urban Agenda" (NUA) to enhance solutions and ensure implementation;
- twinning can also include activities between classes at high school and university levels;
- cities will be encouraged to come together on one sectoral issue outlined in the NUA.

[13] *For example integrated urban transportation systems, provision of clean water, tackling different forms of pollution, supporting food security and sustainability of cities through the creation of urban gardening, etc.*

Domestic resource mobilisation

Domestic resource mobilisation is essential for States to be able to deliver proper services, but it is constrained by low per capita income, a large informal sector, small manufacturing and illicit financial flows[8] among other structural factors. Africa loses more than $50 billion annually in illicit financial flows[9].

While domestic resource mobilisation gives resources to States, **remittances** are external resources mobilised for citizens, which have an important impact on GDP and job creation. Those transactions can also be used to mitigate intra-migration within the African continent and inter-migration through investment in local companies fostering job creation.

In 2016, the funds sent to Sub-Saharan Africa from Diaspora were around 34 billion euros. However, the cost of transferring money remains high and the alternatives poor[10]. The average total cost of sending money from the EU to Africa and within Africa remained stable at 9.05% for the past year, a high percentage which is hampering remittances to deliver their full potential and increasing tendency for senders to use illegal, untraceable ways of sending money (e.g.: in cash). These costs prevent the use of those funds for Youth related projects or investments, or to target the most fragile categories of both continents.

Remittances is a key theme for both Europe and Africa: as such, both continental institutions should cooperate to play a clear role for more efficiency, less costs and greater transparency.

Existing initiatives

On the European side, "Collect more, spend better" reunites contributions around the 3rd Finance for Development Conference in Addis Ababa. Furthermore, the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation represents a cornerstone encouraging effective utilisation of domestic resources and mutual cooperation.

On the AU side, the African Institute of Remittances (AIR)[11] launched in 2014, supported by the EU, is a technical office using remittances for the economic and social development of the African continent. The main objectives of this institute consist in strengthening member States' capacity on statistics and remittances, in enhancing significant changes in the remittances frameworks to reduce fee transfers, in maximizing the impact of remittances on member States' economic and social development and financial inclusion.
The AIR launched a database ("Send Money Africa") highlighting the cost of money transactions to increase transparency of transfers, route per route showing who the players on the market were. Unfortunately, it did not lead to a drop in fees applied by the agencies: the public sector has a hard time convincing companies to make less profits, **in spite of the SDG 10c aiming at reducing inequality within and among countries by decreasing to less than 3% the transaction costs of**

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[8] *United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Domestic Resource Mobilization in Africa: a Focus on Government Revenue, 2016, http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Domestic-Resource-Mobilization-in-Africa_ECA_IATF-Issue-Brief.pdf*

[9] *Report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, 2014*

[10] *Cirasino, M., We need to fix the leaks in remittance transfer systems around the world, The Guardian, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/feb/08/lowering-remittance-costs-world-bank*

[11] *AIR, African Institute for Remittances, 2017, http://au-air.org/fr/a-propos-de-air/etablissement/*

[12] *UN, Sustainable Development Goals, 2015, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg10*

remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%[12]. Some companies in this sector however offer positive examples on cheaper transactions and guaranteeing exchange rates, so far not applied significantly for Europe-Africa transactions.

The AU-EU Remittance Transfer Platform : improving governance of the remittance sector

The tool would be a payment service platform piloted on both continents in order to maximise the potential of remittance flows between the EU and the AU. The continental organizations would partner with a company, through a public-private partnership, to set up a remittance transfer platform enforcing immediately the SDG 10 objective in terms of costs.
On average, commercial banks charge up to 11% of the amount remitted compared to 6% for post offices and money transfer operators, however it still remains above the **3% target**.

A more efficient mechanism would be to partner with a company already proposing commission-free transfers within Western countries. The AU-EU PPP would allow expanding solutions to the African continent. The 3% would cover costs and could even be partly mobilised by AU and EU to support Youth projects and local businesses in under-privileged areas in the remittance destination countries.
The AU-EU Remittance Transfer Platform would use mobile solutions to reach rural areas, bearing low infrastructure costs, and ensuring broader coverage. It would be easily useable by women who tend have less access to formal financial institutions[13]. It would help tracking the financial flows between the two continents, and constitute a very tangible result of the AU-EU cooperation, unlocking great potential for more domestic resources to reach the countries.

Make use of the EU External Investment Plan to foster CSR

One of the priorities of the EU External Investment Plan is the support of structured dialogues with local businesses that can be used to align their activities towards the development agendas of the AU-EU cooperation. Local and national authorities can also use EIP funding perspectives to communicate with multinational companies.

This relationship deserves to be framed. One proposed example is to embed binding legal requirements for systems for reinvestment of a percentage of the profit into social projects, urban revitalization and infrastructure. Additionally, converging priorities could result by aligning those to the ones created through structured dialogues with citizens, the proposed CityShapers platform and regional development agendas. The EIP therefore would enable an opportunity to redefine and implement structured dialogues with business.

[13] *Mashayekhi, M., Remmitances and financial inclusion, 2015, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/coordination/13/documents/presentations/13CM_Mina_MASHAYEKHI.pdf*

Strengthening transparency and accountability through e-Governance

Large amounts of financial flows take place between Africa and the EU under the form of private sector transactions, development assistance funding or remittances; part of them also vanish, however, in corrupt exchanges and capital flight. There is an evident lack of transparency or accountability mechanisms in place to regulate and balance these flows to ensure beneficiaries – amongst which young people - are reached.

SDG 16 is promoting peaceful and inclusive societies with an access to justice for all, and advocating for effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. It is also targeting anti-corruption, aiming to achieve transparent, accountable institutions and ensure inclusive participatory decision-making. Tools that reinforce transparency and accountability enable responsible lending from private donors, responsible investment and tax paying, as well as the accountability of extractive industries to local communities. Access and communication of understandable usage guidelines and statistics are vital to increase participation in the processes, its verification, as well as the effective use of resources spent on projects.

In the earlier section on "Decentralisation and local governance: New Ideas and Proposals" the importance of social accountability and social auditing was described. Given their strategic nature and effectiveness, these innovative accountability tools and methods should be promoted and facilitated broadly for a variety of topics of interest. Research shows that accountability methods work best when they associate the systematic data collection, monitoring and/or feedback method for citizens, capacity building (on data collection, analysis, budget analysis, commitment tracking, and engaging with authorities), a method or session to aggregate data and understand trends, and a way to engage with authorities to discuss the results and seek solutions together.

E-tools can meet several simultaneous purposes, raising the consciousness of various actors notably Youth, facilitating monitoring, aggregation and analysis, strengthening oversight functions and roles, and enabling participants to better understand the decisions taken and to better engage with authorities. E-tools can also be a powerful vector for actors to share their opinions and ideas as well as to participate in concrete proposals. By creating integrated e-tools, misuse of funds can be mitigated and urban territories shaped together with local authorities. These processes enable a full cycle of inclusion in local policy-making and accountability. Therefore, it is critical that such processes include youth.

Existing initiatives

The African Governance Architecture (AGA) aims to "enhance the capacity of the African Union organs, institutions and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to support Member States to strengthen governance and consolidate democracy"[14], guided by the principle of "promotion of transparency and fairness in the management of public affairs"[15]. Moreover, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) strives to consolidate democratic and participatory governance. ACDEG urges AU Member States to implement the African Peer Review Mechanism to reinforce standards of governance.
At the EU level, the **Structured Dialogues** enable discussions between policy-makers and either

[14] *AGA Framework, p.3*
[15] *Ibid, p.4*

young people, or civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in development or Peace Building, on themes decided jointly, at the European level and by stakeholders. The EU has supported and promoted the implementation of Structured Dialogs in key countries external to the EU, including in Africa. These processes involve a regular, strategic, planned and participatory way of engaging with authorities by legitimate representatives of CSO sectors or youth, with a recognised role.

The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) was launched in 2010 and focuses on the improvement of the transparency of aid, development, and humanitarian resources. It is designed for governments to generate budgets and national plans on the resources coming from different directions, for civil society organizations to foster better monitoring of development aid and to hold governments accountable, and for media and journalists to investigate on how development resources are being managed. The Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) provides information about extractive industries used by reformers, policymakers, investors, government, and CSO actors to suggest reforms in order to strengthen transparency and accountability in the sector. Other NGOs are actively working on making the governments accountable such as Global Finance Integrity & Transparency International, or emerging tax monitoring and procurement tracking.

Business Principles for Countering Bribery for the private sector, Integrity Pacts and Corruption Fighters' Toolkits have been initiated and used by CSO. Various local organisations and international NGOs have started using social accountability and/or social budgeting processes, achieving great successes in short periods of time, such as Citizen Voice in Action.

New ideas and proposals: «E-Nclude-Me»

Based on the existing mechanisms and tools to enhance transparency and accountability on a local level and to involve young people in fostering change, we propose the **"E-Nclude-Me"** approach, based on a digital tool. This will be piloted within a country with solid legislation and standards referring to privacy and e-protection. This system would have the advantage of diminishing paper-work, bureaucracy and transactions. It would help reduce corruption, weak governance, tax avoidance and illicit flows while improving inclusiveness and even creating jobs to handle the e-tool and to train local communities.

The **"E-Nclude-Me"** approach works on three steps:

1. **Training of local communities:** The training should focus on financial literacy, budgeting and other processes to make build capacity within the local communities on resources and on financial jargon. Rights-based trainings are relevant for them to acknowledge the framework and basis for their expectations of rights, or services they wish to address. It would also include trainings on the use of the digital tool to ensure its efficient and effective use.
2. **Youth-friendly digital tool:** digital solutions must be used to strengthen citizen involvement in governance. Based on geolocalisation and with filters per sectors, the interactive platform could be a means to gather information on the ongoing initiatives targeting the communities, on the use of domestic public finance, and on access and quality of public services or their sustainability. It would foster mutual accountability and share good practices on both continents.
3. **Structured dialogues:** Building up on the EU's Structured Dialogue to enhance youth inclusion in decision-making processes with authorities, this approach will work on action plans to tackle the issue and to monitor the implementation of the plans and facilitated regular dialog with decision-makers and authorities to find evidence-based solutions.

The **"E-Nclude-Me"** approach could be **piloted in two municipalities from both the African and the European continents**, using the 3-pronged method described. The tool would then be used on each continent to strengthen the management of domestic resources and services. Once the municipalities "match", identify a common issue, and gather data on the situation, they can start the dialogue with their local governments to make concrete proposals and action plans and share practices to help the local authorities deliver effective public services.

Annex:
Detail: "CityShapers - AU & EU youth building cities & building bridges"

The **vantage** of the proposed solution of extended active city twinning with CityShapers is that there are many convergent issues that the AU and EU share. Particularly, the issues highlighted in SDG11 and the new urban agenda, speak to both continents. By bringing young people together to focus on these prioritised areas, we address urgent issues which could help us get to the tipping point of sustainable cities and youth inclusion in local governance. They are often related to sustainability of transport, social cohesion, people-centred urbanization and more.

The inclusion of Youth and other age groups into a participatory mechanism of decentralised local governance, will not only foster cultural and societal integration, but also begin to mobilise more partnerships and constructive efforts towards youth inclusion and sustainable cities on both continents. Furthermore, CityShapers will foster a range of enabling skills that will enhance the dynamics in communities and increase the potential for youth empowerment.

The CityShapers Platform will ultimately bring the AU & the EU Youth together to build their cities and foster bridges between them. It takes the form of a digital platform that works in conjunction with the efforts of UCLG, EU City Twinning Programme and The African Union Charter on Decentralisation and Local Governance.

The partnership with the UCLG and other regional authorities will guarantee the adoption of the solutions proposed by the platform. City Shapers will enable young people to tackle the same gaps and challenges, while ideas for solutions will be facilitated based on open co-creation. Knowledge generation tools such as world cafe and design thinking can be used locally to create the recommendations and solutions.

The platform is also a perfect way to engage youth in generating comprehensive solutions, which are guided, for example by the aims to fulfil the social and ecological function of the city, promote civic engagement, create an inclusive economy and spatial development strategies of the Habitat III New Urban Agenda. In case the platform is expanded also into rural areas, it would also provide a response to the idea of urban-rural interactions through connectivity.

The major **point of entry** for participants in the platform will be the schools and the universities, as they offer optimum Youth interaction possibilities. This approach can break stereotypes and build relationships and partnerships that can undo negative rhetoric between the continents which have in many cases led to the rise of extreme right movements. Thus, by connecting young people in universities in both continents, we create a space for knowledge sharing and the possibility of the co-creation of actionable solutions.

The "city matchmaking" will be on specific issues and areas identified in the urban agenda, such as sustainable land use, climate adaption, circular economy, inclusion of migrants and refugees, public procurement, urban mobility, jobs and skills, housing, energy transition, digital transition, urban poverty, air quality.

Concise notes — **Governance & Political Inclusion**

Peace & Security

I. **Role of Youth in the sector**

YOUTH INCLUSION AS A VECTOR TO PREVENT RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM
Including Youth to bring stability

Views from the African and European Youth Fellows involved in this sector have focused on three key themes:

- Youth inclusion, in particular in preventing and countering radicalisation, and participation in warning, response and dialogues.
- A renewed approach to stabilisation efforts (the Brand New Deal).
- The added value of a shared, intercontinental vision of migration and strategic solutions to challenges between Africa and Europe.

According to the UN World Population Prospect, in 2050 the population of Africa will reach 2.5 billion, with 40% representing young people aged 15-34[2]. Youth is facing prejudices and is often underestimated as peacebuilding and peacekeeping actors into local communities.

In December 2015, the United Nation Security Council adopted the **UNSC Resolution 2250** on **Youth, Peace & Security**[3]: a key tool to recognise the essential role of young people as important actors for conflict prevention, peace-building and peacekeeping. The Resolution calls upon Member States to increase young people's representation in decision-making processes at all levels (local, national, international). It must be further implemented by the members States on both continents to involve youth in conflict prevention, countering violent extremism efforts, fighting against disengagement and discrimination in societies.

Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), preventing conflict and enabling early response and peace building has to target Youth and involve Youth. Meaningful Youth participation is especially important in conflict-affected and marginalised areas. Youth voices can be helpful, weighing in favour of stability in the society. This requires their consultation and participation at all levels from villages to youth councils, formal bodies who advise decision makers[4], to participation in national peace dialogs. Member States should support the independence of youth organisations and youth Councils from governments. They should also ensure engage with youth and ensure active youth inclusion in assessment, policy, decision-making and monitoring processes with recognised roles. Research highlights the **risks of implementing a securitisation approach to counter violent extremism** – an erroneous application can lead to discriminatory measures impacting minorities including Muslims, or persons perceived as such[5,6], thereby raising tensions instead of calming them.

Radicalisation, like violent extremism, is a **symptom**. The lack of higher education is indeed a common feature among youth joining violent groups. They are generally in a transitional stage in their life: they are students, immigrants or in precarious situations. Also, youth having left or about to leave their native family are more subjected to the call of violent groups.[7] Most did not receive a

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[1] *UN DESA (2017), World Population Prospect, New York, United Nations, 53 pages.*
[2] *https://blogs.unicef.org/fr/blog/lafrique-en-2050-jeune-et-optimiste-avec-une-reserve/*
[3] *United Nations Security Council, S/Res/2250 (2015)*
[4] *The Forum for Youth Investment (2007), Building effective Youth Councils, 76 pages.*
[5,6] *https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/01/eu-orwellian-counter-terrorism-laws-stripping-rights-under-guise-of-defending-them/*
[7,8] *http://blogs.plos.org/neuroanthropology/2015/04/25/scott-atran-on-youth-violent-extremism-and-promoting-peace/*

traditional religious education and it is likely that the shift to violence is done when they are expelled from their place of worship for expressing radical political beliefs[8].

The role of Youth in Counter Violent Extremism

On both continents, hate speech is a growing issue, having a negative impact on social cohesion and on the targeted communities. Immigrants, women, Muslims and Roma are among the most affected groups in Europe[9], but also young people on both continents are affected by hate speech and soft violence – especially online.

Some frameworks have already been created in Africa and Europe to maintain peace and global security, to fight against radicalisation, and to raise awareness among citizens, such as:

- EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2005)/the EU Counter-Terrorism Policy,
- African Union Counter-Terrorism Framework,
- Adoption of the AU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (2002),
- African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT, 2004).

However, the existing projects on developing counter-narratives don't reach the marginalised youth. At the same time, social media provide them with a space to express their frustration and grievances that they don't have anywhere else in the society.

The negative narrative of youth being responsible for troubles and conflicts should be inverted. Young people already have showcased in both continents their capacity and willingness to be constructive in their society and to be effective for PVE and peace building. Youth from both continents can and should collaborate to reach mutual goals, as demonstrated by the **Youth Plug-In Initiative Fellows**, involved in a common initiative to bring concrete and shared solutions for both continents.

Recommendations, which can address radicalisation, PVE as well as conflict prevention and peace building, fall into two main categories, fostering youth inclusion and involving youth in efforts to counter deradicalization, PVE and to build peace. These recommendations can be addressed to policy makers and key stakeholders, or involve new proposed activities in which youth can be involved, building on existing initiatives:

Recommendations to stakeholders:

Foster Youth inclusion:

- Recognition by AU and EU member states of their UNSC Resolution 2250 commitments, use its provisions as key check-lists for inclusion of youth in society, and ensure its full implementation at the national level.
- Support the development of both formal & non-formal education in marginalised areas.

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[9] *http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/survey-result.*

- Recognition by AU and EU member states of youth and minorities rights.
- Support local actors and youth organisations, especially those already engaged in peace building and deradicalization.
- Ensure the active inclusion of youth through their involvement in independent youth Councils and ensure the Councils are recognised and given a legitimate role to engage with authorities.
- Reduce the age limit to vote and the age limit to run for elections and implement educational tools promoting political participation within under-represented groups.

Involve Youth in efforts to Prevent/Counter Violent Extremism and Build Peace:

- Include youth and Human Rights NGOs in the adoption of EU & AU comprehensive Action Plans against racism and xenophobia towards ethnic and religious minorities.
- Include Youth organisations in supporting the implementation of existing guidelines for police services to tackle discriminatory issues, such as ethnic profiling, gender and religion, as well as in data collection on investigating Islamophobic crimes.
- Involve young people in the policy-making and implementation of prevention and early response and peace building processes: from assessment, conception and planning, to implementation and evaluation.

II. **View of youth to adapt ongoing or planned initiatives**

- Allocation of specific funds for youth inclusion, assigned to youth organisations and movements to ensure and enhance the participation of youth.
- Support the effective organisation of youth CBO and groups at the national and regional level in networks (for example in platforms or Councils in countries where they do not exist and between AU and EU networks), for consensus on key priorities and for democratic, representative and legitimate representation in wider PVE and peace-building processes. The AU & EU should support exchanges between African and European local youth organisations involved in PVE/CVE to share practices and increase inefficiency.
- Map civil society and youth organisations from Europe and Africa involved in peacebuilding/ conflict prevention projects in order to enhance coordination of actions with AU, EU, national authorities and other local actors on specific hotspots
- Include young people at the local level in the process of early warning and finding solutions, through a system of detection, data collection and signalisation via the use of mobile phones.

III. **New ideas to address the topic**

Bringing stability to fragile areas

Africa-Europe cooperation has been focused on peace and security and bringing stability to fragile states for many years[10]. A lot of energies, human and financial resources have been invested on

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[10] *Joint Africa-Europe Strategy recognizes peace and security as part of the priorities of Africa-Europe cooperation and this was further incorporated into the AU-EU 2014-2017 Roadmap. Accessed on 22/11/2017 from https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news-and-events/proposal-renewed-impetus-africa-eu-partnership_en*

[11] *European Commission (4 May, 2017). EU proposes enhanced partnership with Africa on peace and security, and job creation for youth (IP/17/1189). Accessed on 24/12/2017 from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1189_en.pdf*

peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstructions - about 2 bn € have been invested since 2004[11]. While the military cooperation of the two continents have yielded significant results, the strengthening and operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), including humanitarian support,[12] still faces a **gap between political intentions and the reality on ground in many fragile areas.**

Some areas remain fragile for several years despite huge political and financial commitments received both at national and international level.[13] For instance, the **Lake Chad Basin region**, which has been under siege of Boko Haram insurgency for about a decade, has attracted the highest level of political intentions and yet, no lasting stability is foreseen at the moment in the region, foreshadowing a collective failure. Thus, it is imperative to bridge the gap between political decisions and actions on the ground, and link local and national processes, in order to bring lasting stability to the fragile regions.

This requires adapting current methods to ensure better targeting of efforts, better monitoring, and better inclusion of local communities and women in stabilisation efforts, including notably Youth.

Proposal: From the New Deal to the Brand New Deal (BND)

Both the *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States*[14] and the *Joint Communication for a renewed impetus for the Africa-EU Partnership*[15] recognize weaknesses and the need for a change in 'who' is involved, in 'what' is done and 'how', "to support countries' transitions from conflict and fragility" through building of local capacities and systems.[16] However, even though these two frameworks support inclusive country-lead and country-owned transition from fragility, the following elements are missing: **localized and integrated stabilisation strategies for specific, fragile situations**, map-based assessments and coordination of actions among different actors in fragile contexts; and the **inclusion of local communities and women, and in particular of Youth, as active players.**

We thus suggest a 'Brand New Deal' (BND), which could provide a new way to catalyse ongoing efforts and political will on stabilization of fragility, from political dialogues to local actors and processes. Based on **ownership, collaboration, inclusiveness and transparency principles,** the BND could provide a right political direction and clear stabilization strategy that is integrated and community-driven by connecting the political dialogue to the realities on ground in a fragile context. As a first step, AU and EU stakeholders and fragile MS **should ensure a role for youth representatives and legitimate Youth Councils** in the New Deal activities, with an official seat in the multi-stakeholder processes, **recognizing their contributions as active players in the stabilization of fragile areas.**

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[12] *European Commission (20 May, 2015). European Union and Africa:Key Partners. Acccessed 24/11/2017 from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_africa_key_partners_v3.pdf*

[13] *For example, the fragility of Somalia and Mali has received lot of political commitments but the lack of ownership in the coordination of actions on stabilization of the countries lead to a collective failure.*

[14] *Hearn, S. (2016) Independent Review of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States for the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. New York: Center on International Cooperation, New York University*

[15] *Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council for a renewed impetus of the Africa-EU Partnership", European Union, Brussels, 4 May 2017.*

[16] *International Dialogue (2011). A NEW DEAL for engagement in fragile states: INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. Accessed on 24/11/2017 from http://www.pbsbdialogue.org/media/filer_public/07/69/07692de0-3557-494e-918e-18df00e9ef73/the_new_deal.pdf*

Furthermore, youth can be involved, building on their existing local contributions, in the assessment and early response activities. The BND would be supported by a digital tool. Increased technology innovations have turbocharged the development of real-time online tools that serve several emergency needs. Young people have been the main drivers of this development, and thus their important role in leading the PeaceHub platform.

PeaceHub would be an online interactive and collaborative, map-based tool that will:

- Identify on the map the various stabilisation vectors (local peace building youth organisations and activities, governance structures, schools, health centers, etc) by collecting data on a local level, partnering with local stakeholders (local authorities, civil society, youth organisations).
- place on the map all ongoing support activities and resources;
- constitute an ideal monitoring tool, in collaboration with national and local authorities, with AU & EU support, and including young people at the local level through a system of detection and signalisation via mobile phones,
- mobilise active youth to implement a tailored response in order to re-establish stability while ensuring a focus on the inclusion of women & children and facilitate knowledge and resource exchange;

Such tool, coming in support of a stabilisation strategy, would enable a better understanding of the situation on the ground and the impact of stabilisation efforts. It would involve local communities in this international effort. It would reduce the gap between the decision makers and the local actors, between intentions and reality.

In both Europe and Africa, a plethora of digital platforms for early warnings and disaster risks exist[17]. But very few platforms have successfully bridged the gap between the operational level and the political level in fragile areas. In few cases, the data generated on fragile situations reach relevant actors but no further direction as to how and when the data should be used or whether the data have been used to serve the emergency needs.

The Peace-Hub platform aims to overcome these shortfalls by providing interactive, map-based tools that could provide real-time data about fragility as well spaces to track early response. By applying the BND model, the PeaceHub aims to provide real-time information to both enhance the coordination of actions in line with a stabilisation strategy in a given context, and strengthen monitoring of progress made. The hub represents a laboratory for real-time integrated data system and digital platform for analysing and reporting drivers of fragility and thereby, building resilience of the local at risk communities towards early response.

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[17] *Open Data for Disaster Risk, the World Bank digital projects on street mapping in Tanzania and Uganda*

We are proposing to run the first pilot on the Lake Chad Basin (See annex: Make It Happen! 3 years to stabilise the Lake Chad Basin).

Intercontinental efforts to better manage migration and mobility

Although managing migration remains one of the common priorities of the Africa-Europe cooperation, the way migration is perceived on the two continents is different in terms of principles and policies. On the one hand, Europe seeks the containment of illegal and uncontrolled migration along with the refugees flows into Europe, as shown by the launch of the "EU Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of migration". On the other hand, Africa seeks the promotion of legal migration opportunities within the continent and in the EU. Estimations[18] show that African migrants remain mostly within the sub-regional economic communities, and young people, children and women represent a great percentage of them. The bulk of the migration phenomenon is therefore intra-African. The EU can boast of having a successful internal mobility system and has the ability to go further to enhance the cooperation with the AU in this field.

For the purpose of this note, we look at it from the Peace & Security focus, and from an AU-EU perspective.

At a regional level in Africa, two processes have been created. The Khartoum Process aims to promote the dialogue between Europe and Africa on migration focusing on the Horn of Africa. The Rabat Process is a "mechanism of cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination of migrants coming from West and Central Africa"[19]. Intercontinentally, the EU and part of the members of the AU came to an agreement with the Valletta process[20], although 20 AU Member States and 6 Regional Economic Communities weren't invited to the Summit.

All actors need to be gathered in order to carry out an encompassing migration policy. It is time to set up an AU-EU continental platform aiming at the inclusion of existing members states and actors.

At present, different migratory configurations are taking place, essentially translated into internal displacement, labour migration and refugee flows.[21] For the AU-EU Continental Partnership on Migration to be effective in the mitigation of migration and regulation of mobility, we recommend three axis:

- Implement an integrated approach into national migration policy development plans to address all dimensions of migration, which differ according to the location (transit hubs, region of emigration) but should all include a strong education component
- Make remittances cheaper and encourage them to sponsor job creation schemes in high emigration hotspots.

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[18] *Adepoju, A. (2016). Migration Dynamics, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, Academic Impact UN, https://academicimpact.un.org/content/migration-dynamics-refugees-and-internally-displaced-persons-africa. Accessed 20 November 2017.*

[19] *Knoll, A. and de Weijer, F. (2016). Understanding African and European Perspectives on Migration-Towards a better partnership for regional migration governance?, ECDPM, November, http://ecdpm.org/publications/understanding-african-european-perspectives-migration/. Accessed 19 November 2017.*

[20] *Valletta Summit on Migration, 11th & 12th November 2015*

[21] *Adepoju, A. (2016). Migration Dynamics, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, Academic Impact UN, https://academicimpact.un.org/content/migration-dynamics-refugees-and-internally-displaced-persons-africa. Accessed 20 November 2017*

- Compiling existing information collection schemes and building an integrated data system to map migration routes across countries at a continental level;

Promote an integrated approach

Context

Instability, lack of good governance, poverty and climate change are part of the factors leading people to flee their home. Consequently, security shouldn't be the only dimension taken into account to grasp the phenomena. Policy measures on migration have to address the question of inclusion in society to ensure national stability: access to quality education, vocational training, job creation, and political representativity for ethnic and religious minorities, youth and women.

A sustainable solution can only be achieved by taking into account what originally triggered migration flows. Understanding root causes of such migration movements is crucial to deliver a tailored response, informed by clear understanding of the roots and the drivers. Young people are migrating for various reasons that include: conflicts (terrorism, organised crimes, mineral conflicts, electoral violence, ethnic clashes), natural disasters, and a confluence of factors with indirect but broad effects: poverty, unemployment, and a lack of quality education. Thus, the response needs to be in compliance with the triggering element for youth migration. By comprehending the reasons behind migration flows, we can mitigate forced displacement and better regulate free movement.

Recommendations

Better route analysis will enable a better targeting of efforts. Those should differ between transit hubs and regions of high emigration. They should incorporate awareness-raising, but also be targeted to non-migrant populations with concrete and systemic changes: strengthening local good governance and education (formal and non-formal) and ensuring gender and child and youth rights and equity.

An emphasis on **data collection** is fundamental to establish reliable identification and follow up of children and young people's curriculum to ensure social and economic integration. In addition, data collection allows the **monitoring** of education programmes and enables a better adaptation of the curriculum to children and young people's needs. The **recognition and validation of skills** gained through **informal and non-formal processes** will push further the integration process, notably in the case of return migration.
Digitalisation and technology are a valuable and accessible way of including children, women, and youth as well as to boost their competitiveness in the job market. An investment in education e-infrastructures, such as mobile and e-libraries, easily movable within a refugee camp but also from one location to another, would increase the access to quality education for young migrants and refugees.

Tapping into remittances to create job opportunities

Context

Youth unemployment has been identified as a major driver of migration, representing as well a threat to the stability and the security of a region. Many young people don't have access to **education, employment and skills development** and are consequently excluded from society and economy[22]. Without education and jobs, and a space to express their needs allowing them to create opportunities and projects responding to their needs, youth and children are vulnerable targets for violent and terrorist groups.[23]

An estimated 30bn euros a year reach Africa in the form of remittances. Remittances to low and middle income regions will substantially increase in the next years (World Bank Group 2017), however this potential is not sufficiently tapped in and framed. Remittances can be a substantial resource to create systems involving returnees and their families in training and job creation schemes back to their country of origin (or third country).

Proposal

As a cross-cluster approach with the Governance cluster[24], it is proposed for the AU and EU to set up a **Remittance Transfer Platform,** partnering under the form of a PPP with an IT company. This revolution in the remittances sector would be in line with SDG 10, fixing a drastic reduction in transfer fees, which unfortunately is not being applied yet.

Thanks to the gain obtained, funds could be prioritised into under-priviledged or at risk areas with a view to foster job creation.

Collecting data to better tackle migration issues

Context

Parallel policy processes led to a significant fragmentation, confusion and consequently a lack of efficiency in the management of migration flows.[25] Additionally, depending on the development of new migration policies, routes, flows and trends are evolving. For example, Libya used to be a destination country, then it became a transit point for migrants willing to enter Europe. As Europe is carrying out very strict border control around the Mediterranean sea, Libya became de facto an obligatory final destination for many young migrants who are as we write subjected to slave auctions[26].

Migration policies cannot be effectively implemented without detailed information and data : What are the safe routes? Where are the illegal migration channels? Who are the migrants and refugees? What is their status and health condition? Where do they come from and where are they heading to?

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[22] *International Organisation for Migration et al. (2015). Conflict-Induced Migration in Africa : Maximising New Opportunities to Address its Peace, Security and Inclusive Development Dimensions, High Level Expert Group Meeting, 23-24 November, Durban South Africa, https://www.africaportal.org/documents/14782/Durban-EGM-report.pdf. Accessed 20 November 2017.*

[23] *http://blogs.plos.org/neuroanthropology/2015/04/25/scott-atran-on-youth-violent-extremism-and-promoting-peace/*

[24] *See separate YPII Note on Governance*

[25] *Knoll, A. and de Weijer, F. (2016). Understanding African and European Perspectives on Migration-Towards a better partnership for regional migration governance?, ECDPM, November, http://ecdpm.org/publications/understanding-african-european-perspectives-migration/. Accessed 19 November 2017.*

[26] *Said-Moorhouse, L. (2017). Libya opens investigation into slave auctions following CNN report, 17 November, CNN, http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/17/africa/libya-slave-auction-investigation/index.html. Accessed 20 November 2017*

Proposal

A clear mapping of migration flows and transit hubs is needed in order to provide an intelligent response to the different migration configurations. Data collection will help targeting the locations to be prioritised in order to act at a local level. The support of youth, civil society and local actors will be crucial.

Data collection is primordial also in order to allow refugees to seek asylum, go to a third country or return to their country of origin with a reintegration programme taking into consideration their profile (age, sex, religion, ethnic group, occupation, education & skill level).

Annex

Making it Happen! 3 years to bring Stability to the Lake Chad Basin region

Pilot project in Lake Chad region: the PeaceHub Platform

Objective: To create a digital platform for effective coordination of stabilisation actions in the Lake Chad Basin.
Timeline: 2018-2021
Geographical focus: 4 Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) intervention sectors

Context

For over a decade, the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region, intersection of Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria, has been confronted with the security threats of Boko Haram. The security challenges posed by the terrorists have had devastating consequences on livelihoods of the people living in the region. The region is now faced with multiple challenges ranging from **fragile humanitarian situations, poor local governance and public services, high terrorism threats to increased violent extremism and radicalisation, unemployment, education disparities and adverse climate change.** This resulted in the displacement of thousands of people and more than 389 000 refugees, living in severe conditions in overpopulated camps.[28] The stability of the region is primordial for the security and stability of Africa and by extension, that of Europe, which is currently facing a **migration** crisis. Therefore, the region requires a localised and integrated stabilization strategy for the successful transition from fragility, which is the rationale for this pilot project. In support of an ongoing effort from AU and the Lake Chad Basin Commission to define a stabilisation strategy, the **Peace-Hub platform** aims to *provide a real-time digital platform for effective coordination of stabilisation actions* in the Lake Chad Basin.

Besides the Boko Haram insurgency, which is threatening the stability of the region, there are multiple drivers of fragility. These threats represent a danger to the stability of the region and need to be tackled at a local level. **Youth, women and children are the first victims and they represent our target group: the most excluded fringe of the population in fragile areas.** Depending on the nature of the threat, **an inclusive and tailored response** needs to be brought in order to directly impact our target. To bring stability, a lot is already to improve life conditions and local governance, counter violent extremism and radicalisation and strengthen political inclusion of youth, women and minorities ongoing (the EU alone commits more than 700M euros in development efforts for the region). Efforts also aim to provide access to education and SRHR information of refugees, migrants and IDPs to health services. And to create decent jobs and facilitate entrepreneurship through recognition of education. The challenge lies in finding reliable local partners and involving them, notably Youth, in coordinating interventions and in visualising progress on the ground.

The EU and AU, expanding and reinforcing their partnership on Peace & Security, are discussing the creation of a "collaborative platform" for post conflict. The Lake Chad Basin could be the first pilot for a new way of working.

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[28] *Amnesty International (2017). Chad 2016/2017, https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/chad/report-chad/. Accessed 22 November 2017.*

Our Proposal: A renewed implementation of a Lake Chad Basin region

1. Pursue AU and Lake Chad Basin Commission efforts to reach a Stabilisation strategy, owned by local and national authorities, with international backing. An agreement at high-political level is necessary to run such a pilot. AU and regional organisations, in permanent contact with local and national authorities, own the platform which is a single point of entry for all operational efforts. For example, the recent Conferences on the Lake Chad Basin Regional Stabilisation features in the AU-EU-UN platform and provide a space for political dialogue across relevant actors.

2. Under the umbrella of AU Liaison Office in Chad and Lake Chad Basin Commission, set up PeaceHub, a map-based platform placing the various stabilisation vectors (youth peace builders and organisations with positive impact, local governance, schools, health centres, roads, etc). A single point of entry for all operational efforts, based on the agreed timeline for the accomplishment of stabilisation actions, PeaceHub is a tool to better monitor, better coordinate involved actors and better involve local stakeholders who can become monitoring agents and enablers of the stabilisation efforts.

3. In terms of roles:

a. the AULO-LCBC would be the guardian of the stabilisation strategy and of the PeaceHub

b. the EU (already heavily supporting projects with funding), could provide technical assistance for the design of the PeaceHub map-based tool and integration of data collection.

c. the UN agencies could be a welcome aggregator of international and local NGOs involved.

d. the AU, the EU and the UN would have regular high level dialogue, within the collaborative platform, on the progress made.

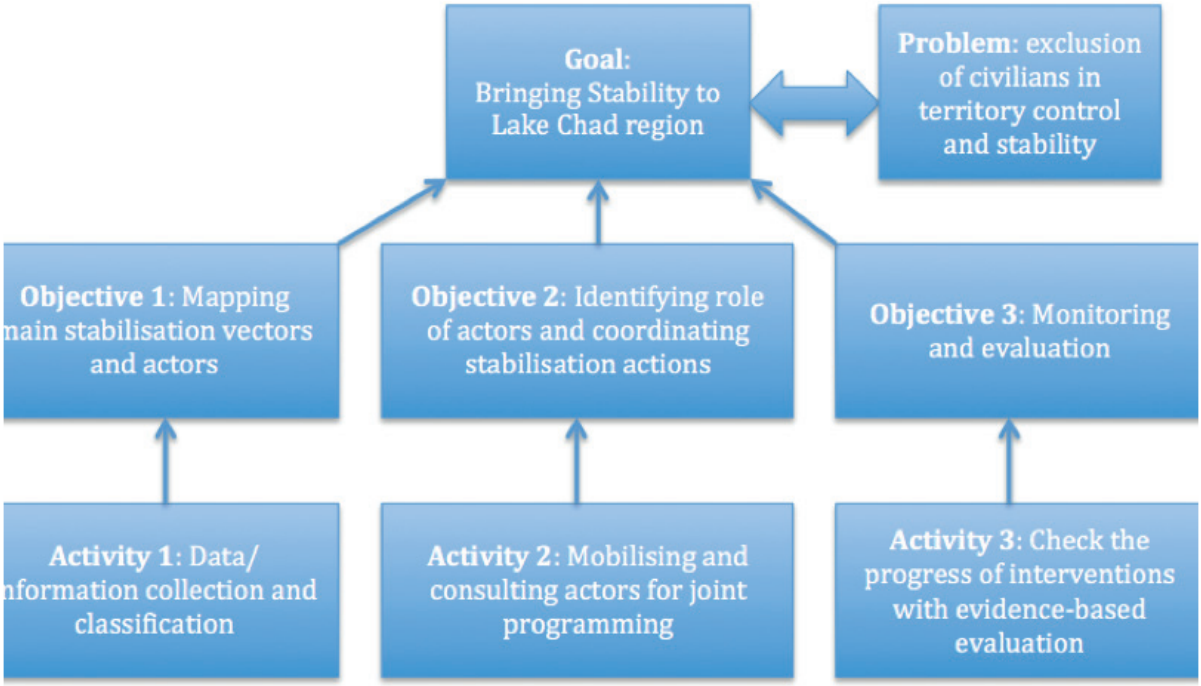
e. local actors: peace builders, CSOs, youth organisations and networks, private companies, schools, and local governance bodies would be active on the ground in their respective sectors but also on the platform to see which funding is supporting their domain, to give feedback on the impact and to contribute to a global monitoring effort towards stabilisation and improvement of the local situation.

4. AU, EU, UN, LCBC, and youth therefore all become active players in the response process with a system of detection and signals via the use of mobile phones and real-time digital platform. They transmit signals and classify them to generate an interactive map online that would localise the different kinds of threats.

5. Local actors, and especially youth organisations and youth peace builders, are mobilised to bring a tailored response in order to establish stability with youth as an active player in the whole process.

Our approach is to thus to implement a localised, integrated and solution-based stabilisation initiative that thrives on ownership, collectiveness and resilience of local at risk communities, while being linked at highest political level and benefitting from that attention.

Applying the Brand New Deal Process to the Lake Chad Basin



Concise notes — **Peace & Security**

Culture, Sports & Arts

I. Role of Youth in the sector

Whether it is radicalization, where Culture, Arts and Sports (CAS) are strong means to ensure a sense of belonging and identity, or youth unemployment, where the creative industries show a promising potential for job creation, CAS is one of the most important ways for youth to counter many of the major challenges that they face. Young people are essential actors and main drivers within CAS and should be recognized as such. Young people working in the creative industries should thus be actively supported through local structures, investment in training, leadership, management, production and promotion of culture, as recognized in the Abidjan Youth Declaration. Empowering youth also means increasing their involvement in development processes involving sports and arts, literature, music, science, economy and beyond. Culture must be recognized as an essential part of intercontinental cooperation and sustainable development on both continents.

Youth are 'the future today', with development cooperation focused on harnessing the demographic dividends, it is time to see more young people in leadership roles. If we can accept that it's young people's responsibility to partake in governance and decision-making, as well as engage in peer-to-peer education[2] then it is certainly time that youth had the support to create their own institution and have the responsibility of not only management, direction and coordination but to develop this space architecturally and above all have an established mechanism that puts them at the forefront.

Culture, Arts & Sports and socio-economic stability

Culture, Arts and Sports are essential vectors for reaching sustainable socio-economic stability. It is important to recognize the role that culture, arts and sports, inter alia, play in reaching economic and social stability. It is estimated that the cultural and creative industries represent around 7% of global GDP and creates up to 3 Million jobs per year.

Young people are faced with challenges such as limited access to finance and investment, access to knowledge and training, new technology, promotion and protection of intellectual property rights and access to networks that could market their work sustainably. Out of 35 European countries, only 22 supported the development of entrepreneurial skills through culture, and only 21 promoted specialised training for youth workers in 2014[2]. Young practitioners in the arts are at risk of being underpaid by employers and institutions, especially when their work is not valued in the same regard as other sectors and they are often paid a low wage. Many artists are not eligible for social security or decent medical cover, compared to other professions.

There is also a limitation in the appreciation of culture's relevance in education. Culture, Sports and Arts have a stigma of being either inaccessible or purely recreational, so young people are not inspired to explore the potential of this growing sector. The need for greater recognition and inclusion of non-formal learning within education logically follows. Arts, music and sports programmes should be obligatory in schools and in all instances of youth exclusion and marginalisation including youth in need of rehabilitation. We ask the cultural programs to be tailored to the local context: linking schools to neighboring community museums, art centers and sport clubs, as sources of knowledge on culture. Art teachers should also be equipped to build the

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[1] *African Youth Charter Article 26 section d and e*

[2] *http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/youth-report-2015_en.pdf p.129*

capacity of their students and work with experts from both continents, to collaborate on how to revive the local cultural content in schools and develop this program accordingly.

Arts is yet to be recognised for its contribution to the public sector and there is a need for frameworks that ensure the creative sector has access to medical insurance, social security, decent housing and nationally recognised frameworks for a standard wage such as the Minimum Fee Schedule in Canada[3]. Artists should be considered equal to and given the same rights as other members of the public sector.

Cultural relations - intercultural and intergenerational dialogue to address social tensions among the Youth

Intercultural and intergenerational dialogue through culture, art and sports is a powerful tool to address social tensions among young people, conflict and radicalization.

Young people are experiencing Urbanization and Globalisation on both continents, which creates opportunities but also challenges, such as youth unemployment and marginalization. This also has an impact on young people's identity. It's important for youth to feel anchored in a sense of social belonging, and at the same time to have the freedom to break out of stereotypes and negative social norms.

There are many examples, across the world, of the contributions that the young make towards peacebuilding such as the strengthening of community cohesion and reconciliation in South Sudan, and community entrepreneurship and livelihoods programmes in Burundi[5]. Thus, the role of youth in peacebuilding is not to be underestimated[5]: it can be ensured through and expressed via the arts, culture, tourism, sports and education. The innovativeness and creativeness of young people in those areas, could be mobilised effectively by connecting them with wider peacebuilding objectives such as building bridges between divided communities and ensuring a viable process of reconciliation.

This is confirmed by the African Youth Charter which condemns discrimination, promotes rights to social, economic, political and cultural development of all Youth and stresses the importance of inclusion in decision-making. The charter also highlights the importance of mechanisms to promote a culture of peace and tolerance amongst young people through cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, accessible and inclusive culture, and skills and mobility . The UN SDGs , the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 and the European Cultural charter are further in accordance with the Priorities identified above.

Apprenticeship programmes encouraging entrepreneurial attitudes must be implemented in every European and African country. That can be done locally, in community spaces that encourage intergenerational dialogue on the reality of the Arts and Culture industries, allowing older artists to pass on vital wisdom and expertise. This is what creates a greater respect for the contribution of

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[3] *http://www.carfac.ca/tools/fees/*

[4] *UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development Report entitled 'Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding: A Practice Note' presents a number of policy and programme examples from different conflict affected countries that would facilitate such participation more effectively.*

[5] *Oxford 2016 Sustainable security report*

previous generations and supports emerging artists in knowledge of best practices. They should be empowered with necessary skills and tools to transit from job seekers to job-makers.

Finally, growing distance to one's heritage and Youth unemployment (among native-born Youth with immigrant parents is almost 50% higher than among other young people in the EU) furthers the identity crisis we are witnessing. The European Agenda for Culture promotes access to culture in a globalising world. This includes the role of art in young people's lives, as expressed by Yehudi Menuhin, who is quoted in a communication by the Commission: 'It is art that can structure the personalities of young people with a view to open their minds, to instill the respect of others and the desire of peace.'

II. **New ideas to address the topic**

An African-European Youth-led Cultural Institute.

We propose to create the African-European Youth-led Cultural Institute which is a cross-continental initiative for young people to take on the role as custodians of culture and develop a better understanding of traditions, while at the same time looking ahead and putting projects forward. The Institute will have a strong focus on cultural heritage, with the intention to strengthen the cultural cooperation between Africa and Europe based on respect, equity and youth participation. Youth need greater accessibility within heritage spaces such as libraries and museums as well as access to public space, so they can express themselves and feel a sense of belonging in their communities.

In this frame "Rooted Buses" travel as mobile offices and illustrate community spaces since these are increasingly under threat of urbanization and gentrification. Training centers, Youth clubs and accessible spaces for capacity building, are necessary platforms for expression and innovation. we believe it is essential that a collaborative approach be taken to ensure respect for the sensitivity of this heritage. with a mobile educational project that builds capacity of youth in heritage and collects digital archives to develop a collective narrative. We recommend cross-continental initiatives for young people to develop a better understanding of traditions, through a mobile supportive education project: "Rooted Buses"
The institute would develop programmes such as: "Rooted Buses" moving across and between the continents by Africans, Diaspora or Europeans thematizing different cultural aspects like traditions and rituals, heritage protection, health, music, dance, film etc. to reach out to rural as to urban areas.

Globalization translates into a loss of old traditions and rituals. It is essential to encourage young generations to contribute in uncovering and preserving their history in peacebuilding and community building processes. Intangible heritage is neither limited to traditional festivals, oral epics, nor customs. Safeguarding these aspects of culture is the protection of cultural identity and

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[6] *Articles 2; 4; 5; 10; 11; 13; 14; 16; 17; 21 of the African Youth Charter*
[7] *Specifically SDGs 4; 5; 11; 16 and 17*
[8] *OJ C 325, 2.12.2010, p. 1-9.*
[9] *Indicators of immigrant integration - Settling in 2015, joint OECD and European Commission study*

therefore also the protection of the cultural diversity on both continents.
Over the past few years, we have witnessed the development of political initiatives to engage with the narratives Europe and Africa. The "New Narrative for Europe" aims at bringing together the artistic, cultural, scientific and intellectual Youth communities in order to re-imagine the European Narrative. The "Ateliers de la pensées" get African Intellectuals together and challenge them to re-imagine the African Narrative. As Africa and Europe's futures intrinsically linked, the main objective of this Institute is to support and make sure the "re-writing of narratives" are recognised through youth. It is crucial young people from both continents engage with each other, to understand and respect our common past, present and future. As such, The Institute would manifest as a Youth-led building in one European and one African city. We ask for the institute to be built in countries that are accessible without visas, by the inhabitants of the continent and with sufficient structure. In Africa that suggests possible implementation in countries such as Ghana, Rwanda or Senegal. We further consider it a priority in Europe, that the chosen capital comprises of judicial and political frameworks facilitating the release of visas for African Citizens to be able to visit and work within the institute. This could suggest implementation in France, Belgium or Germany.

Key Initiatives
The institute would harbor the following key initiatives:

A) Investing in youth through 'pathway to professional arts' scholarship programmes that link young people, without access to formal arts training, to existing public and private sector institutions.

There are many emerging artists with great potential but much more can be done to nurture them from a young age a with providing them specific training in becoming professional practitioners of the arts. A report by the European Commission titled 'Developing the creative and innovative potential of young people through non-formal learning in ways that are relevant to employability' acknowledges the importance of education in preparing young people for enterprise. Youngsters are often to be found in financial difficulty without access to resources, therefore we propose:

Existing Initiatives:

- Nefiks is a program that promote values of volunteerism and non-formal education in Slovenia for 10 years +
- SAE Institute in cape town South Africa film production scholarship

Expansion: 'Pathways to professional arts' scholarships should be granted from both public and private sector institutions, training young people in specific skills around building professional portfolios, marketing their work and looking at the potential of different roles within the industry

[10] *Unesco 2015 Empowering Youth to build Peace Report http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002341/234140e.pdf*
[11] *https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/new-narrative_en**
[12] *https://www.lesateliersdelapensee.com/*

B) African European Youth Choir Festival to build community and address social tension amongst youth.

The process of choral singing, through hearing different voices to create one harmonised sound, has therapeutic benefits[13] and is a great vehicle to address social tension within Youth.

In Europe, a political framework already exists that supports the development of Youth choirs. The French Ministry of Culture created a policy for every school being obliged to have a choir from 2018 onwards.

Existing initiative:

- The European Youth Choir Festival[14] is an Inter-European festival hosting an African choir for the first time this year[15]; Voix d'Enfant/ Espace Scénique[16] is a "Creative Europe" programme supporting exchanges between European choirs.

Expansion:

- Such potential for future projects in Youth Choirs requires the creation of an African European Youth Choir exchange which would conclude with an African European Youth Choir Festival. Aware of high transport costs, we propose the following Pilot projects: Selecting one choir on each continent; enabling the Heads of Choir to teach and learn from the choir of the opposite continent; keeping a digital track of the exchanges in between the choirs, which leads to each choir creating a piece or an interpretation of a piece, inspired by the exchange. This could provide greater resources for existing Choir Festivals, supporting greater inclusion of African choirs. If the outcomes of the pilot projects are positive, we ask to be given the means to implement the African European Youth Choir Festival before 2027.

C) Modern artistic productions have increasingly drawn on traditional dances in recent years.

Traditional forms are being integrated with new, improvised themes by performing troupes of dancers. This appeals to present and future generations of Africa and Europe, that want the opportunity to experience each other's cultures and living conditions. Such initiatives raise awareness of global interdependencies and provide solutions to social tension and ignorance. Many of these dance companies are sponsored by national government to promote their cultural heritage because dance is understood to be a tool of expression and for forging new identities.

Existing Idea:

- "Flying Feet"[17], UK, creates dance-based visual art and community building projects. Creative activities range from dance workshops with children from Western and Third World urban communities to animations exploring the visual and auditory symbiosis of thoughts and emotions
  - "Liberty Express" is an international dance, film and cultural exchange that brings together children from all over the world

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[13] *https://www.cprcertified.com/health-benefits-of-music-therapy*

[14] *takes place every second year in Bâle https://www.ejcf.ch/*

[15] *The Johannesburg Boys Choir*

[16] *http://www.vdees.eu/en/*

[17] *http://www.flyingfeet.co.uk/*

Expansion:

- Dance improves strength and stamina, whilst increasing physical and psychological well-being. Dance brings together health and sport institutions on both continents for the promotion of a balanced lifestyle. This partnership can also connect to a nation's food culture[18]. Combining young African and European dancers social experiences can bring youth together and create a culture of wellness.

D) Public Arts initiatives need greater capacity to include marginalised Youth.

Inclusive and formative initiatives in relation to community building can provide a space for Youth to express their opinions, free from fear of discrimination and to create a platform in which Youth can be part of decision-making processes.

Existing Initiative:

- The "New Patrons"[19] are an initiative making it possible for all members of society to commission a piece of public art for their community. They are encouraged to expand their activities through Europe and Africa, and develop a youth led commissioning organ.
- As a pilot project we propose to assist Barcelona's Museum of Contemporary Art in developing such an organ. Specifically giving the Youth the means to express themselves and experience group commissioning of a statement -of a piece of art- around the catalonian crisis and
- Private and public stakeholders should be engaged to distribute micro funds in Schools situated in European rural areas to enable Youth to promote the beauty of their communities through commissioning contemporary artists and in a civic education process of common decision making that results in a physical change of the community in question (such as Remy Zaugg's restructuring Lavoir de Blessey[20]).

Existing initiative:

- SUD2017[21] in Douala is the first African International Public art exhibit, it is going to take from 5th to 10th of December 2017. Artists have been commissioned to hold workshops in primary secondary and tertiary education programs around fundamental human rights. Artists have produced art pieces inspired by the outcomes of such workshops, these pieces are going to be exposed all over the city.

Expansion:

- We strongly recommend the realisation of Public Art exhibits revolving around conversations with the youth to develop in other african and european countries, as a means of positively and progressively engaging with heritage and human rights. The European Union, African Union, Individual Member states should themselves comission the next Public Art exhibition in Africa or in Europe, and be sure to engage the community in which the exhibit is held with particular issues. We recommend a youth body be assembled to assess the impact of such an exhibit on the community of Douala.

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[18] *https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/food-medicine/how-does-food-impact-health*
[19] *http://www.nouveauxcommanditaires.eu/en/home//*
[20] *http://www.nouveauxcommanditaires.eu/en/25/214/*
[21] *http://www.salonurbaindedouala.org/*

E) Pilot projects are directed at recovering of sports and dance practices:

Sports Roots Routes: recovering an understanding of certain local sports (still misunderstood by the international community) and ultimately have them added to both continents' sports practices. 32 sports were presented in All-Africa Games history without notice of local African Sports like Ngolo and Capoeira, or Savika.

Dance Roots Routes[22] aiming at preserving and promoting cultural heritage in the country. Upstream of the festival, an in-depth research journey will be conducted on traditional dance and the production of a film and book documenting the values, stories and meaning behind movement. For the development of such initiative in Europe and in Africa, we call upon cooperation partners as the Peace and Sport Organization and European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation Youth (ENGSO) public and private stakeholders.

F) Developing and AU-EU online youth platform of 'Cultural Agents' which will be a network of active youth in the field of culture, equipped with tools to detect and report on cultural trends in their respective countries. These Cultural Ambassadors would be nominated by the country's' network of cultural agents.

- Any Artist is/ can be if he wishes to a cultural agent the moment he produces work engaging with heritage and archiving heritage practices. Such status would encompass networking opportunities, through a digital platform we propose to create (complementing existing platforms such as creative tracks[23]) focused on engaging with different community's heritages and through the African European Cultural Institute
- Cultural Ambassadors and cultural agents are to be given the means to develop cross country and cross continental initiatives such as festivals, concerts and exhibitions
- The ultimate goal would be the creation of a sustainable cooperation between the youth through creative networks while exchanging the knowledge and the best practices. The platform will also offer news, events and grants through regular updates under the format close to that of a news media: an EU AU Radio broadcasting Cultural journalism.

G) Incorporate a Youth led monitoring body that assesses the progress of the African European cultural cooperation after the Youth Plugin-Initiative.

As this link between Africa and Europe stretches back centuries, it implores extensive time and appropriate training in heritage preservation. A youth monitoring unit could develop more detail input for implementation of existing strategies. It is key the youth be directly involved[24] in the rewriting and implementation of the European narrative[25], African narrative. We also propose the development of conferences to ensure both narratives are re imagined in awareness of the other[26]. These conferences gathering European, African and diaspora young intellectuals can further build stronger links between institutions and advise on ways to make public arts and heritage space more accessible to youth. Such conferences would be held in the African European Cultural Institute.

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[22] *Using similar research methods as that of the ADEY Dance Festival, co-funded by the European Union, the Swiss Development Cooperation and other international/ local sponsors*

[23] *http://www.creativetracks.org*

[24] *https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/blog/no-one-has-ever-asked-me*

[25] *Rethinking the European http://europa.eu/youth/new_narrative_for_europe_en*

[26] *https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/thinking-new-rebellion-chloe-osborne/*

H) Achieving fair gender balance within sports, across continents.

Inspired by SCORE[27] we propose for the implementation of a European African Female Coaches exchange to develop female athletic teams in Europe and in Africa. We further ask for the implementation of a "reaching out" program enabling these coaches to:

a) engage with rural areas, inspire girls and women in the practise of their sports;

b) assist the development of local female sports teams in these areas: this entails community investing in necessary sanitary facilities and access to sanitary pads from sports facilities; the development of an app linking different teams and facilitating the organisation of local games and tournaments. Finally, coaches could then recruit players from these tournaments. We ask for Nike to sponsor this project; in accordance with its "Make Yourself"[28] Campaign.

European African Sports Tournament

We propose the **European-African Sports Tournament** paralleling the 2003 Afro-Asian Games. This tournament would be an occasion to reveal traditional African sports on an international level in expansion to Europe and assess progress made on developing female athletic teams. Instead of it being strictly competitive we ask teams to cooperate with the other continent to share practices for example through coach exchanges. Possible partners to realise the African European Games are the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) and the Peace and Sport Organization ENGSO Youth. The tournament could also potentially on a longer-term basis pave the way for holding the Olympics in Africa by 2050.

[27] *Strengthening Coaching Objective Raise Equality http://www.score-coaching.eu/*
[28] *https://news.nike.com/news/nike-make-yourself-team*

Concise notes — **Culture, Sports & Arts**

Environment & Climate Change

I. **Role of Youth in the Sector**

Environmental issues keep gaining relevance due to the deteriorating condition of air, water and land. Climate change is among the greatest challenges which the current and future generations will face: increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are inducing a sharp rise of global temperature, triggering more frequent and intense extreme weather events, threatening food and water security, as well as accelerating desertification and coastal erosion. The unsustainable use of natural resources is further worsening this situation. The resulting decline in biodiversity and ecosystem services on both continents threatens the livelihoods of millions of people. We all depend on functioning and resilient ecosystems as providers of vital services, especially while tackling the adverse effects of climate change.

It is beyond doubt that environmental issues and climate change have a stronger impact on already marginalised populations and social groups. Therefore, it is extremely important to pay particular attention to those vulnerable groups to ensure responses and solutions which respect the rights of indigenous people, gender equality and intra- and intergenerational equity. The concept of environmental justice as fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, therefore must be the basis on which to build our environmental policies.

Young people across Africa, Europe and the world share common concerns regarding the global environment, since they are the ones who will live with the consequences of a depleted and deteriorated ecosystem left by the previous generations. Fortunately, youth have a special talent for creating innovative forms of action, enabling more efficient and effective responses to these environmental issues. As leaders of tomorrow, young people are already shifting paradigms to ensure sustainable development and reduce inequalities and injustices.

Young people are a global community of digital natives. However, they need opportunities to effectively drive their societies towards a more sustainable future, by designing and promoting innovative policies, as the ones proposed in this document. Our innovative ideas on how to build a sustainable future should be taken into account more seriously and more often. In addition, youth-led initiatives must be supported to counterbalance existing tendencies and interests that work against the environment as stated in the Abidjan Youth Declaration.

II. **View of youth to adapt ongoing or planned initiatives**

"Youthing-Up" the governance and sustainable management of natural resources

Since the European Union and the African Union are currently in the very early stages of developing a joint Charter on the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, youth has an unprecedented opportunity to become an active part of the negotiations.

Context and challenges

Environmental destruction around extractive industries is often caused by a lack of regulation and effective governance, as much as by our own consumption patterns. Deforestation, erosion and the long-term contamination of water and soil often make the area uninhabitable for decades and hence deprive local people of their livelihood. Furthermore, in such a context, the adverse effects of climate change, conflict and other disruptive events get magnified.

States and governments are responsible for providing an adequate legal framework, that ensures that all resources are extracted in a sustainable manner, and should thus accordingly be held accountable in case of an unsustainable management of natural resources along with the extractive companies.

Consumers are often unaware of their problematic origin of the raw materials in the products they purchase, including in electronic devices such as coltan. Our lives as young people are for example significantly shaped using technological devices, containing raw materials often not sustainably sourced. At the same time, they have the potential power to demand the sustainable sourcing of whatever resources they consume. In the past, we have already seen that consumer demands have led to more attention being paid to the sustainability of resources used by companies. However, more awareness-raising and positive action is still urgently needed.

Moreover, it is proposed from the institutional side to base the Charter on the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources on the ideas of community based management of natural resources and circular economy. Youth, having a major stake in the governance of the resources that will still be needed in the future, must be involved in current negotiations from the beginning.

Proposal

According to the European Union, the process of creating the Charter will provide important opportunities for input from all stakeholders, including youth. It is important to not only hear young voices on case basis: institutionalized, stable and regular inclusion of young people on both ends of the supply chain should be integrated as an important pillar of the entire process. We thus advocate to involve youth actively in the design of and implementation of the EU-AU Charter on the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources for an environmentally sustainable use of raw materials, particularly those used in our electronic devices, as well as to ensure that future generations have the same access to resources as we do. To facilitate this, a two-pronged approach is proposed.

- To increase awareness raising and to propel young people into action, it is crucial to put the two ends of the supply chain in touch with each other: people living in the areas where resources are extracted and the consumers of products containing these resources. Direct links between them will be established through twinning towns and communities, particularly the young populations within these. These partnerships will enable regular exchanges that build the capacity of young people on both sides to engage in the policy making i.e. design and implementation of the Charter. The scope and size of the regular exchanges will be determined in close coordination with all relevant actors. As a result of the regular exchanges and the capacity building preparing

young people to engage in policy making, they are to play an active role in all stages of the creation and implementation of the Charter.

- Alongside making sure that Youth is guaranteed a place in the negotiations, a structured and heavily advertised process of public consultation will be launched across Africa and Europe to ask local youth to provide opinions, data, and policy recommendations related to the Charter, and the context they live in. Support from national and local authorities, schools, cultural institutions, various youth organisations and NGOs is therefore needed to reach the largest possible number of young people in every country.
  Drawing on the connecting power of both dedicated social media and twinning networks established across both continents, youth itself will play an important role in mapping all individuals, organisations, institutions and companies with a stake in the Resource Charter, while developing an instrument to enable further adequate and representative inclusion of youth.

Expansion of the African Great Green Wall initiative

The African led Great Green Wall initiative, is aiming at growing an 8,000km natural wonder of the world across the entire width of Africa. We propose to strengthen the wall - and put young people in the driving seat of this process.

Context and challenges

The advancement of deserts and the acceleration of coastal erosion are threatening the livelihoods of local people, making them overarching concerns for communities of certain regions on both continent, therefore opening opportunities for exchange and cooperation. Aside from a diffused lack of care about environmental issues, there's a lack of acknowledgement that many of the problems related to biodiversity loss are caused by unsustainable land use. Young people living in endangered frontline areas are already along with their communities working to tackle desertification, the loss of biodiversity and coastal erosion, however, more is needed to further strengthen their efforts of preserving the environment and address climate change.

Initiatives such as the African led and institutionally backed Great Green Wall and EU's Switch Africa Green, and the joint AU-EU MESA programme all acknowledge the need to link the protection of biodiversity and cultivable land to concrete improvements to the livelihoods of local communities. Farming methods, which have proved both efficient and effective in protecting the biodiversity and soils in endangered areas, with all related benefits for future generations, are urgently needed.

Currently, many different initiatives are being implemented in the geographical area of the Great Green Wall. However, an overview is missing including where there are gaps in the wall and a need for adding building blocks.

Agroforestry has proven its importance and suitability to address and mitigate some of the most dangerous consequences of climate change and land degradation. This offers unique opportunities to tackle common problems, including desertification, coastal erosion and the loss of biodiversity, while simultaneously promoting sustainable farming techniques. It entails the intentional mixing

of trees and shrubs into crop and animal production systems to create environmental, economic and social benefit. This means the same plot of land can produce cash and food crops, and cattle, alongside timber and non-timber forest products, such as honey. Such schemes allow us to create habitats for a rich and diverse flora and fauna, while providing local farmers with a stable, long-term, independent and sustainable income. The more diverse an ecosystem, the more resilient it is to external shocks, including extreme weather events aggravated by climate change, as well as slow-onset events like desertification and coastal erosion. This holds true across various scenarios, including extreme ones such as droughts, storms and inundations. Agroforestry, as other innovative farming methods, requires a substantial initial investment until the systems are fully operational and start to deliver goods and services. Providing farmers and local communities with the necessary skills and opportunities to access the needed start capital, remains a challenge for as long as they don't have an opportunity to gather and coordinate. Much more work and new approaches are needed to increase the acceptance and understanding of the method, taking into account the numerous indigenous solutions that are already implemented at the local level.

In both Africa and Europe, the number of connected people is steadily growing. Millions of people in Africa and Europe use social media, like Facebook and Twitter. At the same time, being online enables us to share best practices, build capacities at the local level, create new networks and relations and create alternative partnerships and cooperation and cascading behaviour. Young people are usually more inclined to try new tools and instruments as well as to add innovative improvements to existing structures and processes, creating a great potential to apply this tool to improve the Great Green Wall initiative.

Proposal

We propose to strengthen the Great Green Wall initiative, particularly by adding an interactive online platform and creating an innovative and socially engaged network amongst all relevant stakeholders and communities in the initiative, with young people taking a leading role. This will allow for several elements of added value to the initiative and will strengthen its impact. In the longer run, we also propose to expand the scope geographically to the surrounding coastal areas as well, moving towards a network of Green and Blue Frontline Communities and adding a blue element to the wall.

First, a mapping of existing initiatives and gaps identification by local youth in the geographical area covered by the Great Green Wall should be undertaken, adding value to the initiative. The youth actors, including young entrepreneur farmers, will be the drivers of this process via the online platform. Together with their communities, they would also frequently broadcast information and updates. The mapping will result in a visual, virtual and open source map on the online platform of the wall, which will reveal the coverage of initiatives as well as the gaps. It will also determine the environmental state of different areas as well as its development.

The creation of a socially engaged network via the online platform with a strong citizen involvement will equally add value to the initiative, allowing different actors to interact who would not normally interact. The network provides the opportunity to share and upload the solutions, and information about their context - through success stories and best practices sharing in a standardized format:

it will give people the possibility to assess ideas and adapt them to their own reality. It will facilitate the sharing of effective and innovative agroforestry solutions. It will also explore ideas coming from different places across Africa and Europe with young people from both continents sharing best practices and effective solutions involving concerned communities in similar situations. Local communities are given a role in the development and implementation of innovative techniques, including increasing the acceptance and understanding of agroforestry as a simple solution to desertification and coastal erosion. By expanding the knowledge of and use of agroforestry solution, local communities will not only prevent land degradation, but also contribute to the creation of complex, biodiverse ecosystems to provide sustainable income and nutrition, to create new jobs and build resilience to external shocks.

The online platform and network would also enable an innovative financing tool, opening projects in the wall to financing from any citizens or corporate entity who is willing to contribute to nature-friendly initiatives run by local communities and adopted for being ethically and scientifically positive. There is a need to mobilise the necessary financial support to support local farmers and communities in the setting up of agro-forestry projects and contribute to initiatives ensuring environmental preservation - closing the holes in the wall -. Access to start-up capital would be sought at international, national, and regional level through a coordinated approach, always involving young entrepreneur-farmers in relevant decision-making processes through the newly established network. Crowdfunding possibilities will be explored to support the most innovative ideas.

Finally, the network and the online platform would allow for creating visibility and awareness, including an online campaign to address desertification and coastal erosion, the possibility to follow in real time the evolution of a specific area or piece of land and for contributors to follow the progress of projects, visualizing the impact of their contribution.

III. **New Ideas to Address the Topic**

AU-EU Youth Initiative on Sustainable Infrastructural Development - GREEN ID

It is not about getting from point A to B: we also care about what happens in between. African and European institutions are promoting impressive infrastructure development plans for both continents: roads, corridors, railways, energy grids, and energy highways are connecting communities across vast distances and to bring significant benefits to cities and communities.

Context and challenges

The African demographic and economic growth will need to be fuelled by massive investments in energy and transport infrastructures. The Lagos-Abidjan corridor, one of PIDA's flagship projects, is already under construction. IRENA is promoting major cross-border projects related to Clean Energy Corridors in Eastern and Southern Africa, as well as ECOWAS-ECREEE in Western Africa.

Cross-border transport infrastructure projects are being developed in the EU as well. The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) aims at creating Pan-European corridors including urban

nodes, with some projects already under implementation, as for example the Rail Baltic flagship project - a railway linking Tallinn to Warsaw through the Baltic Republics. The EU committed to achieve ambitious emission goals under the 2015 Paris Agreement: locally based renewable energy solutions could help to respond to the energy demand of households and small-medium firms. EU electricity highways could nonetheless represent a crucial development in terms of switching the current infrastructural patterns towards renewable energy on a continental scale, while connecting regions currently isolated from EU energy markets.

Some country-specific data, on both AU and EU side, is already available. The African Infrastructure Development Index developed by the AfDB already evaluates the overall country infrastructure performance, also considering improvements in the access to mobile telephone lines and to the internet. Yet, local communities and Young people need to be involved in the planning and monitoring process.

Potential benefits should not to be limited to urban and peri-urban communities, usually located at the beginning and at the end of the new infrastructure. They should also reach those in between in the rural areas, especially the young populations. For this reason, it is imperative to provide these "transit communities" with the means to influence and sustainably uphold the commitments made in environmental impact assessments. There is a need to turn local communities into stakeholders of the sustainable implementation of environmental impact assessments linked to new infrastructure development plans.

African and European institutions need to involve the voices of young people in any new energy and transport infrastructure development plan. Special attention must be paid to the potential benefits of these plans for people living in future transit areas, as well as to the potential environmental externalities the projects might entail. Moreover, available data on ongoing and future projects need to be better aggregated with other sources, such as overall environmental variables, Youth inclusion, and grassroots data.

Proposal

To realise this, we want to launch a transcontinental, Youth led initiative named the "Green ID", which aims at giving local communities, especially young people, a say from day one in the monitoring and continued supervision of commitments made in infrastructure development plans (and related environmental impact assessments). In other words, we want to mobilise youth to monitor infrastructure development projects, while guaranteeing the efficacy of impact assessments. This approach will promote a fair distribution of long term benefits across the entire extent and throughout the implementation of any particular project through community-based systematic monitoring. It will also enable advocacy for the effective offsetting of environmental externalities.

Centred around an open-source online tool, concerned youth and other local stakeholders (communities, NGOs, and local authorities) will have a space to publicly rate the overall environmental and social performance of infrastructure development plans, projects and programmes. For example, a rating system could be equivalent to the restaurant smiley

performance system. The performance level of all rated projects will be condensed into country-specific "Green ID annual reports" (to be developed together with local actors, NGOs, national universities) showcasing the effectiveness of environmental impact assessments and allowing to hold each project accountable to promises made in the initial pledges. This will focus on environmental aspects (emissions mitigation, land restoration, underground water basins preservation, access to clean energy). However, it also has the potential to be expanded into the social impact part as well, covering issues such as improved access to education, internet access and health. Preliminary capacity building initiatives at a local level, to be funded in a first stage, are perceived as necessary to grant the overall impact and accountability of the monitoring system.

Mobile apps for payments of ecosystem services and risk assessment

Today more than 90% of the global population (Africa, and Europe), has access to mobile phones. This potential could be catalysed for environmental, biodiversity and climate solutions.

Background and challenges

The success of mobile phone banking in many African countries, stimulated countries like Morocco and Nigeria to use mobile phone app for agro-extension services in rural areas. Local farmers and green entrepreneurs can today be directly linked to institutions and organisations that finance their green actions, or compensate their losses. UNEP projects, as the 2010-2013 Hoima and Kibaale PES project in Uganda, already demonstrated the potential and effectiveness of this idea. Albeit nascent, this technology is already proving its effectiveness in addressing current gaps in payments for ecosystem services (PES). It is now time to place young people at the centre to drive this innovation as well as to extend it to both Africa and Europe.

The IUCN, the World Bank Bio-Carbon fund, UNREDD, WWF, REDD+, the EU Biodiversity for Life Flagship Initiatives represent some of the already existing organisations, programmes, and actions currently funding biodiversity conservation and natural resource management initiatives in both Africa, and Europe, including PES. Yet, mobile technology provides room for improvements in terms of effectively and efficiently linking those actions to local communities. Biodiversity loss reduces the degree of efficiency with which ecosystems capture resources, as well as their resilience. The 2010-2013 Hoima and Kibaale Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) in Uganda proved the effectiveness of an efficient direct payment system, with visible effects on the degree of deforestation, and biodiversity loss mitigation. The EU already supports PES schemes from Member States through the CAP, for instance by financing the maintenance and protection of old growth trees, a habitat and nesting ground for bats and owls.

Albeit compensation mechanisms already exist, they often prove inefficient or poorly developed at the grassroots level, getting hindered by intermediary-human bottlenecks, embezzlements, bureaucracy, and inequalities. If the flow of finances targeting individuals and local communities gets affected, the whole process is likely to fail its initial goals. Inefficient payments and lack of compensation can impede rural community development vis-a-vis biodiversity conservation in both continents. Therefore, it is increasingly necessary to have an efficient and monitorable means of PES to ensure grassroots level actors are effectively reached. This will foster bottom-up approach to PES schemes.

Proposal

Mobile phone payment apps would be a way to make PES and risks compensations efficient and transparent.

Private-Public partnerships with local telecommunication service providers could therefore play a pivotal role in building community-based tools, directly reaching local people. Mobile-based PES methods, aimed for example at mitigating the economic effects of natural disasters (flooding, wildlife farm raids and conflicts, wildfire and pest attacks), can build trust and remove unnecessary intermediations. PES solutions will therefore facilitate the implementation of afforestation and reforestation projects in both Africa and Europe by linking local actors to project developers, without further intermediation. Through mobile apps, users will also have access to dedicated online e-learning tools (existing and to be established), with a huge potential for the education of the new, young generation of African and European farmers and green entrepreneurs. At the same time, the app will serve as a tool to document indigenous knowledge for environmental management.

Language barriers will be addressed by translating all the features of the mobile app into local, indigenous languages. Connectivity limitations could be addressed, as well, by linking the system to already existing sim-card based economic transaction methods, which allow users to access those services through a simple mobile phone (not necessarily a smartphone). Young people, usually keen, ready and open in adopting modern technologies, will drive innovation, also by working as e-trainers for their communities at a local level.

Specific resources are therefore necessary on both AU and EU level to link connectivity, digitalisation and training in a long-term sustainable way. International organisations, institutions, private companies, and NGOs could contribute by supporting specific actions and by providing technical assistance, while keeping the focus on a holistic community development approach. The initial investment will be more than compensated by the impacted areas overall economic, social and environmental performance, sustained by grassroots benefits.

Follow-up:

An AU-EU Youth Cooperation Lab?

Through the agreement by AU and EU to focus on "Investing in Youth for a Sustainable Future" as the central theme for the 5th AU-EU Summit, an opportunity for young people from both continents to play a more active role in the revitalized Africa-EU partnership has re-emerged.

The Youth Plug-In Initiative aimed to contribute to the objectives of the Africa-EU Partnership, among them, "to facilitate and promote a broad-based and wide-ranging people-centred partnership, empower non-state actors and create conditions to enable them to play an active role in development, democracy building, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction processes". As a result, and over the course of an intense five weeks, the AU-EU Youth Plug-In Initiative developed the enclosed Youth Agenda.

It encompasses concrete ideas and proposals covering six clusters, with the potential to be implemented in the coming years within the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership. Never in the past had Youth been so involved to work with African and European institutions ahead of a Summit. The Youth has delivered in putting forward fresh solutions to old challenges.

Following the 5th AU-EU Summit, it will be important to ensure implementation of and follow-up to the attention to youth within the Africa-EU Partnership, in the context of the implementation and monitoring of the Africa-EU Partnership as a whole. Many declarations and roadmaps have been elaborated in the framework of Africa-EU Partnership, but implementation and operationalisation are more challenging.

The proposals and ideas from the AU-EU Youth Plug-In Initiative require further development to be implemented on the ground. In order to guarantee the long term impact of the outcomes of the YPII proposals, it will be crucial to ensure linkages with other established processes in the Africa-EU Youth Cooperation, including the Africa-Europe Youth Platform and the Universities of Youth and Development.

To ensure this as well as embedding this follow-up in the broader landscape of the Africa-EU youth cooperation a number of key actors should be invited to form a task force looking into and evaluating the different existing and past cooperation mechanisms between the two continents. These actors should include not only the African Union and European Union, but obviously Youth with expertise in the six thematic clusters: members of the YPII, youth platforms from both continents (including the diaspora), or Youth from civil society.

Following a sufficient period of assessment and evaluation the task force would design a more permanent structure which could be in the form of an AU EU Youth Cooperation Lab. The task force should further develop the task division, the governance structure and mandate of the Youth Lab itself. This Youth Lab can take the form of a permanent platform to, inter alia, enable further development and testing of ideas and proposals, implementation of concrete solutions as well as sharing and crafting of new ideas.

Founders

Partners