

## **Investing in Youth to Enhance Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation for Resilience in Africa**

Commemorative publication in support of the 2017 African Union Theme 'Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth'

### **CONCEPT NOTE & GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTION**

#### **Introduction**

In Africa, the number of youth is growing rapidly. In 2015, 226 million youth aged 15-24 lived in Africa, accounting for 19 percent of the global youth population. By 2030, it is projected that the number of youth will have increased by 42 percent. Africa's youth population is expected to continue to grow throughout the remainder of the 21st century, more than doubling from current levels by 2055<sup>1</sup>.

Youth can be a positive force for development when provided with the knowledge and opportunities they need to thrive. In particular, young people require the education and skills needed to contribute to a productive economy, and need access to a job market that can absorb them into its labour force. Research has revealed that a strong, dynamic and empowered youth is critical in catalysing the social, political, economic and cultural as well as policy transformation of a nation particularly in the developing countries. The Sendai Framework recognizes that children and youth are agents of change and should be given the space and modalities to contribute to disaster risk reduction, in accordance with legislation, national practice and educational curricula.

#### **Harnessing the demographic dividend in Africa**

With a view to accelerating youth development and empowerment, the African Union adopted the 'Declaration on Creating Employment for Accelerating Youth Development and Empowerment' in the African Union Assembly in Malabo in July 2011<sup>2</sup>. To catalyse this agenda further, and in recognition of the vital role played by the youth 'in determining the continent's development trajectory for the next fifty (50) years and drive Agenda 2063', the African Union Assembly adopted the theme of 'Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth' for the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly scheduled for January and June/July 2017, respectively<sup>3</sup>.

As requested in the Decision, the African Union Commission developed the 2017 AU Roadmap on "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth". The roadmap comprises of four pillars: (1) Employment and Entrepreneurship, (2) Education and Skills Development, (3) Health and Wellbeing, and (4) Rights, Governance and Youth Empowerment. Under each pillar, key actions and areas of investments have been defined

<sup>1</sup> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Assembly/AU/Decl.1(XVII)

<sup>3</sup> Assembly/AU/Dec.601(XXVI)

in line with relevant and strategic AU policy instruments and frameworks to position countries towards harnessing the demographic dividend and ensuring the full implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The key priorities and actions set forth by the roadmap are clearly related to the priorities for action identified by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030<sup>4</sup>.

### **Youth engagement in Disaster Risk Reduction**

Globally, the United Nations declared 2010-2011 as the 'International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding'<sup>5</sup>, while the African Union Commission adopted 2009-2018 as the 'African Youth Decade: Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development'<sup>6</sup> with an associated Plan of Action.

UNISDR developed a Youth Engagement Platform<sup>7</sup> during the preparatory phase of the Sendai Framework in close consultation with the UN Major Group on Children and Youth<sup>8</sup>. This Platform allows for continued interaction between youth and UNISDR and facilitates youth's action and engagement in supporting implementation of the Sendai Framework at all levels.

The Sendai Framework encourages the Governments to increasingly engage with children and youth. The Framework recognises children and youth as '...agents of change and should be given the space and modalities to contribute to disaster risk reduction...'

In Africa, UNISDR facilitates the participation of the youth in regional disaster risk reduction events. A representative of the youth is a regular member of the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction. At the Africa Regional Platforms, the youth present their position on a strengthened and inclusive implementation of disaster risk reduction.

The 'Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa'<sup>9</sup> adopted at the Sixth Session of Africa Regional Platform and Fifth High Level Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction (22-25 November 2016, Mauritius<sup>10</sup>), and subsequently endorsed by the African Union Assembly in January 2017, contains strong references to the youth, in particular:

- a. Promotion of youth leadership as a guiding principle;
- b. Highlights the vital role played by youth in determining the continent's development trajectory in pursuit of achieving Agenda 2063;
- c. Adopts the establishment of a 'Youth Advisory Board' in Africa, to coordinate actions concerning disaster risk reduction and youth;
- d. A roadmap with key deliverables and milestones, including on investments in youth, to be achieved during 2016-20 is included in the implementation matrix;
- e. Capacity building of the youth is mentioned as a key activity;
- f. Youth involvement is highlighted as a key measure for all actions to be implemented at the sub-national and local levels.

### **Publication: Call for Contributions**

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>

<sup>5</sup> <https://social.un.org/youthyear>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.au.int/web/youth-division>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.unisdr.org/partners/children-youth>

<sup>8</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups/childrenandyouth>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.preventionweb.net/files/49455\\_poaforsendaiimplementationinafrica.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/49455_poaforsendaiimplementationinafrica.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.unisdr.org/conferences/2016/afpr>

Engagement with the youth in Africa is ensured through various youth groups and networks founded with an aim to address challenges and promote youth voices in various sectors and thematic areas including climate change, water resources, agriculture and food security, and disaster risk reduction. However, little is known about the contribution and achievements of these communities of practice.

UNISDR-Africa seeks to document the good practices and lessons learned from youth engagement and related activities in the field of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The publication, planned to be launched at the International Day for Disaster Reduction<sup>11</sup> (13 October 2017), will include such success stories, and also views and vision of the youth to enhance the level of resilience of Africa, in line with the African Union theme.

Contributions are invited from individuals, organisations and youth networks which have a clear focus on disaster risk reduction and/or climate change adaptation and clearly demonstrate tangible results that have helped to reduce the vulnerability of countries or communities. As much as possible the articles should be relevant to any of the four priorities of the Sendai Framework or the Paris Agreement in Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is envisaged that the publication will help to highlight Africa's youth contribution in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, raise youth's visibility and also create an effective platform to share good practices and innovations. The publication will also help to create dialogue and consultations among the youth through further engagement and follow-up.

The selection and follow-up on the contributions will be done by an editorial board, comprising of selected youth representatives and professional organisations.

Contributions should not exceed **1200 words**. Submissions should be made to (pw page address).

**Deadline for Submission: 31 August 2017**

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.unisdr.org/we/campaign/iddr>