

Title of Side event: Our World, Our Future: African Youth and the Summit of the Future “Transforming Africa with Youth-Driven solutions”

The Event was co-organized by some AU members led by Malawi, the current Chair of the Bureau of the AU Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Youth, supported by Nigeria, a member of the AU STC on Youth, The Pan African Youth Union, the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Department of Global Communication and the United Nations Development Programme.

1. Background on the Event:

By 2030, African youth will comprise 42% of the world’s youth population, becoming a pivotal force in the global economy. Despite this, they face challenges like poverty, inequality, and unemployment. This demographic shift underscored the necessity of centering African youth at the Summit of the Future. The side event aimed to amplify their voices, ensuring their perspectives shaped the Summit’s outcomes and drove empowerment solutions. It aligned these outcomes with the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 (STYIP) and explored transforming youth potential into actionable solutions for sustainable development. The Youth Side Event at the Summit of the Future aimed to amplify African youth voices and ensure their priorities were reflected in global decision-making.

2. Key Issues Discussed:

A key focus was the African Youth Declaration on the Summit of the Future, developed in April 2024 at the sideline of the African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development.

The High-Level Intergenerational Panel and round-table discussions emphasized youth-driven solutions in sustainable development, peace, digital transformation, and global governance. Interregional collaboration was highlighted as critical for amplifying youth contributions, with participants urging greater accountability from global, regional, and national stakeholders to support youth aspirations.

Following the event, a debriefing meeting reviewed the Summit of the Future Outcome Documents. Participants endorsed the Youth Side Event outcome document and developed a roadmap to translate its recommendations into action across Africa. This follow-up plan focused on integrating youth perspectives into future global agreements and national policies, fostering sustainable development across the continent.

3. Key Recommendations:

1. **Invest in Youth-Centric Education and Skills Development:** Enhance foundational education, vocational training, and digital skills while fostering partnerships with the private sector and creating mentorship programs to equip youth for a globalized world.
2. **Create a Conducive Environment for Youth Entrepreneurship:** Provide financial support, mentorship, regulatory reform, incubators, and promote a culture of innovation to support young entrepreneurs.
3. **Prioritize Sustainable Development and Climate Action:** Promote green jobs, support youth-led climate initiatives, invest in sustainable infrastructure, integrate climate education, and fund climate-related youth projects.
4. **Strengthen Regional Integration and Intra-African Trade:** Implement AfCFTA, develop regional value chains, facilitate youth participation, encourage cross-border collaboration, and establish youth trade platforms.
5. **Enhance Youth Participation in Governance:** Establish youth councils, promote civic education, ensure youth representation, and support youth-led advocacy for greater policy influence.
6. **Address Youth Unemployment and Underemployment:** Invest in agriculture, support the informal sector, promote entrepreneurship, and provide vocational training to combat youth unemployment.
7. **Promote Gender Equality and Youth Empowerment:** Address gender-based discrimination, promote equality in education and leadership, and support youth-led gender initiatives.
8. **Foster Peace and Security:** Invest in youth peacebuilding, promote dialogue, address root causes of conflict, and support youth-led reconciliation efforts.
9. **Enhance Health and Well-being:** Improve healthcare access, address mental health, promote healthy lifestyles, and combat sexually transmitted infections.
10. **Strengthen International Cooperation:** Mobilize global support for youth development, promote partnerships, advocate for youth programs, and enhance South-South cooperation.
11. **Summit of the Future:** Develop action plans for global agreements, emphasizing youth involvement in decision-making and prioritizing youth-led solutions to climate change, education, and economic development.

4. Webpage to Find Further Information:

- <https://www.uneca.org/>
- <https://www.un.org/osaa/>
- <https://au.int/en/youthenvoyoffice>
- <https://au.int/en/commission>
- <https://panafricanyouthunion.org/en/>

Summit of the Future Action Days Side Event

- <https://www.undp.org/africa/regional-service-centre-africa>