



A Strategic Framework for A NEPAD Youth Programme

Toward the African Youth Decade

2005-2015

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Preface

For years Africa has been the recipient of a heightened tragedy translated in the displacement of its people to foreign lands, self servicing economic policies of the first world, and the persistent malevolent disposition that has characterized many of its liberation movement leaders.

The longevity of these practices has manifested into a culture that has seen an uncontrollable depletion of Africa's economic resources.

The African Union (AU) proposes noble ideas that confront the anomalies that continue to plague the continent. The creation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) spells out the journey to overcome such anomalies and see a new birth of social and economic revival of the continent. Right in the middle of initiatives such as NEPAD lies a resource that is in abundance and not effectively utilised, the Youth of the Africa.

Africa is called a youthful continent as its majority is characterized by the Youth. The African Union (AU) acknowledges the imperative of empowering and prioritizing this group of people as their role in attaining and sustaining a free and liberated Africa is paramount.

The youth face challenges of an economic, political, cultural and moral nature. It is however the conviction of the African Union that if youth are organized and well represented in the AU structures then they will be well positioned to influence decision making processes, a concept they have been estranged from.

The Strategic Framework of the Nepad Youth Programme sets out the tone as to how this can be achieved. It identifies the challenges that continue to undermine the African Youth's Development. The framework continues to suggest probable representative structures within the African Union and its support committees, that will amplify the voice of the Youth.

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The African Union through the Nepad Youth Programme urges society at large in all its translations, to support the youth programme, as the Youth are the continent's most valued resource.

The first stage of this process is to urge young people to formally organize themselves as fundamental agents and catalysts for change in the continent. This document serves as a point of reference that underpins that noble process of "organization".j

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Youth

VIII

Foreword

There have never been as many young Africans as there are now. Young people between the ages of 12 – 35 make up the majority of the continent's population, it is therefore not idle to say that they are Africa's most invaluable commodity.

NEPAD acknowledges that young women and men in Africa are resourceful and valuable assets for Africa. Young people are not a sectoral concern; neither are they an object tailed at the end of programmes of regional revival and socio-economic integration. Instead, young people are integral to the process of development across all sectors and fields of interest.

It is for this reason that the African Union, through NEPAD, is taking the initiative to establish a Strategic Framework for the NEPAD Youth Programme. The framework provides a coordinated continental approach to youth empowerment, encouraging the creation of an environment that is conducive to young people's empowerment and development, while drawing on the support of academics, development partners, and Africans living both in Africa and outside the continent.

The framework provides for the development of a NEPAD Youth Programme along with mechanisms for the inclusion of young Africans in AU/NEPAD decision-making processes. It emphasises the significance of involving young people in the socio-economic development and advancement of Africa and mainstreams youth issues into the full range of AU/NEPAD's work.

To commence the process of implementing the Strategic Framework, NEPAD will convene an All African Youth Summit in June 2005. Representatives of youth leaders and youth development agencies from civil society, business and

academia will come together to comment on the Strategic Framework and the NEPAD Youth Programme. Flagship Projects will also be designed to respond to the immediate challenges young people face in Africa. An All Africa Youth Ministerial Conference will be held in November 2005 to garner strategic inputs, ministerial declaration and endorsement of the Strategic Framework and the NEPAD Youth Programme. The final draft of the NEPAD Youth Programme and the Framework endorsed by the ministers, will be presented to Heads of States and Governments Implementing Committee and the African Union for endorsement and declaration.

Your comments on this document are important to AU/NEPAD. We urge you to help us find ways to improve this document so that it reflects and acknowledges the existing youth efforts and initiatives.

Professor Wiseman L. Nkuhlu

Chairman: NEPAD Steering Committee

Executive Head: NEPAD Secretariat

1 Introduction

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme is a statement on the importance of young people in Africa's development. It is a call to action for NEPAD and its partners to ensure that young people of Africa are given every opportunity and full support to participate in the decision-making processes and development programmes of AU/NEPAD.

The Strategic Framework provides a rationale for NEPAD's involvement in youth empowerment and development, identifying priorities for involving young women and men in Africa's development and establishing guiding principles for supporting young people at continental, regional and national levels. The framework presents specific strategies and programmes aimed at helping all stakeholders to work together in a consistent and integrated manner.

Young women and men across Africa are like young people everywhere in the world. They possess the energy, dynamism and enthusiasm of youth. Yet like young people in Asia, Latin America, Europe and North America, they are also vastly different from one another. They represent a diverse group that is anything but homogeneous, varying in class, race, gender, political orientation, interests and so on. Whilst work with young people is guided by a set of internationally recognised principles and approaches, AU/NEPAD understands that a single one-size-fits-all approach to youth empowerment in Africa is inappropriate. Thus, in designing and implementing policies and programmes that promote youth empowerment it is important that young people participate at all levels, bringing their perspectives and solutions to the table.

NEPAD's support for social, economic and political transformation includes helping Regional Economic Communities, Member States, and civil society

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respond to the priorities for Africa's development. In the context of youth

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empowerment and development, NEPAD has a key role to play in forging partnerships between key stakeholders. NEPAD is not a funding agency for youth policies, programmes and services; its function is to add value to the work of youth development actors in Africa and facilitate linkages between these actors and with external development partners.

The Strategic Framework is not intended to be prescriptive. Instead it creates a continental focus on young men and women that can be used to inform, guide and support youth affairs. It articulates the ways in which young women and men can engage NEPAD structures and programmes not only as stakeholders and beneficiaries, but also as full and equal partners.

The Strategic Framework provides policy guidelines for NEPAD to mobilize public and private sector support for youth empowerment; it describes the relationship NEPAD will foster with Regional Economic Communities, Members States and continental and regional youth formations with respect to issues affecting young men and women. The framework aims to halt the marginalisation of young people in socio-economic development and encourages the integration of youth issues into decision-making processes and structures. Furthermore, the Strategic Framework establishes institutional arrangements that allow young people to have a voice in the African Union and NEPAD.

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme adds value to the work of a wide range of agencies. The following stakeholders in particular will benefit from the framework:

- The AU/NEPAD and Regional Economic Communities: The Strategic

Framework guides AU/NEPAD in its response to the concerns of young women and men in Africa, while establishing procedures for NEPAD's support to the Regional Economic Communities in this field.

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- **Member States and civil society organizations:** Member States are a key constituent of AU/NEPAD; they hold the responsibility for youth empowerment in their countries and are required to work with civil society and other development partners to this end. The Strategic Framework recognises the complementary role Member States and civil society organizations play in youth empowerment. It supports the sharing of information and experiences, and advocates for the creation of coordinated policies and programmes toward an integrated continental approach to the development of all young people in Africa.
- **International development agencies:** Multilateral and bilateral development and donor organizations, as well as civil society bodies, can use the Strategic Framework as a guide for aligning their programmes within the context of African partnerships for development.
- **Young men and women committed to youth empowerment:** There are a wide variety of groups of young people who can make use of the Strategic Framework. This includes local, national, regional, and continental youth formations as well as young people from the African Diaspora. These groups will better understand the NEPAD mandate, position and strategy on African youth empowerment. They will know how to liaise with NEPAD and how they can contribute to the socio-economic development of Africa.

2 Context for AU/NEPAD's support for African youth

In 1990, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere gave a speech in which he said:

Ten years before we enter the 21st century, for hundreds of millions of individuals in the South hunger is a living reality, and basic education and health care are beyond reach. While the developed

North talks in terms of the new 'post-industrial era', in the underdeveloped South even the industrial era has, for the most part, hardly begun.

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Today, the 21st century is upon us and Nyerere's words ring true for many young people who grew up in the new 'post-industrial era' of which he spoke. Yet, Nyerere was not an Afro-pessimist. He was a believer in the potential of Africa to overcome the ills that plagued it. In that speech, as in so many before it, he turned around the situation arguing that:

Change leading towards an end to poverty is now possible. The world has the resources and the knowledge to eliminate malnutrition and hunger, preventable disease, ignorance, and hopelessness. There is no excuse for the indignity of absolute poverty existing in 'tomorrow's world'.

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme seeks to engage with young people not only about 'tomorrow's world', but also about the world they live in today. There can be no doubt that it is a profoundly unjust world, one in which many young women and men are denied access to their fundamental human rights.

Yet it is also a world that is remarkably different from that in which their parents grew up. Today, Africa is a continent that is free from colonialism; a continent that is largely at peace, where new institutions flourish and cultures that have withstood centuries of oppression thrive.

For young people, 'tomorrow' holds both promise of a better future and the fear of failure. Through the Strategic Framework, NEPAD strives to enhance young people's capacity to rise to the challenges that threaten these promises.

2.1 Challenge of relevant, accessible and quality education and training

The future holds the promise of education and training. Many African countries are close to attaining universal access to education for primary school children. Yet for too many there is the fear of being left behind. In many countries in Africa

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there are a significant barriers to education and training. These include the high costs of school fees, uniforms and textbooks, the need for families to put children to work to earn income, and discrimination against girls and young women. Those young people who are excluded from the education system are more likely to be unemployed, face health problems and participate in criminal activities than their peers.

While getting young people into schools is a challenge, so too is the quality and relevance of what they learn. Governments have recognised the need to both diversify and vocationally orient the curriculum taught in education and training institutions so that young people are provided with knowledge and skills that can assist them in dealing with the demands of adult life and increase their potential for gaining employment. A good education lays the foundation for youth empowerment and development.

NEPAD affirms the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals¹ referring to education and training, along with the various international declarations of the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programme², the Braga Youth Action

1 United Nation's Millennium Development Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education. Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women. Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015.

2 World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, Lisbon, Portugal, August 1998

Plan³, and the Dakar Education for All Forum⁴; each of which encourage governments to design new strategies to overcome the problems that exclude young people from the education and training they require and allocate resources to education and training systems that correspond to economic, social and entrepreneurial realities based on identified needs and technological advancements. Indeed, NEPAD has given great emphasis to the education and training needs of the continent and the Strategic Framework ensures that the perspectives of young people regarding education and training will not be lost.⁵

2.2 Challenge of decent and productive employment

The promise of decent and productive employment is within the grasp of a new generation of Africans. Africa's economies are growing faster than they have in two decades. Yet joblessness remains a reality for too many young people. Armed with tertiary degrees and wide-eyed hopes for better futures, they search for jobs with which to feed and clothe their families.

Unemployment is one of the greatest problems facing young people Africa. In most African countries, unemployment amongst young people is considerably higher than the general population and young women are far more disadvantaged in this regard than young men. Responding effectively to this challenge requires

3 World Youth Forum, Braga, Portugal, August 1998

4 Education for All Forum, Dakar, Senegal, April 2001

5 NEPAD has identified six priority focus areas for education over the next three years: (1) meeting the Millennium Development Goals on basic education and improving the quality of education; (2) promoting gender equality; (3) school feeding and nutritional programmes; (4) addressing HIV/AIDS; (5) distance education and open learning; and (6) centres of educational excellence.

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integrated efforts that recognise the links between youth unemployment and economic growth and changing trends in the labour market.

Youth employment is often insecure and poorly paid. While this may be normal for new entrants to the labour market, informal employment and limited job opportunities mean that there are few opportunities for career advancement.

The need to promote decent and productive employment for young people is a Millennium Development Goal⁶ and is also the goal of the Youth Employment Network--a global alliance of the United Nations, World Bank and International Labour Organization. Similarly the International Labour Organization's Global Employment Agenda and the Jobs for Africa Programme is concerned with youth employment and foresees the creation of a number of alliances and partnerships at global and regional levels as a means of implementation.⁷

The Strategic Framework supports the call made by the United Nations for governments to encourage youth enterprise and employment programmes, while promoting links with the business community.⁸ The NEPAD Business Group and other continental, regional and national agencies (e.g., chambers and councils of business) are called upon to support the creation of more and better jobs for young people. Special attention should also be given to those young people who are most disadvantaged in the labour market (e.g., young women, young people with disabilities, and young people from indigenous minorities).

6 Millennium Development Goal, Target 16: In co-operation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

7 *Review of the core elements of the Global Employment Agenda*, International Labour Conference, March 2003, Geneva

8 *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, 13 March 1996, 50/81.

2.3 Challenges that result from globalisation and migration

Globalisation offers immense opportunities for young people in Africa--the promise of cultural exchange, new technologies, and a chance to leapfrog into the future. Yet it brings with it formidable challenges that have contributed to under-development in Africa. The cultures that have protected our youth for centuries are seen by some as too old to compete. Similarly, the oral traditions of our foremothers and foremothers face extinction in the face of a 'satellite generation'.

Young people in Africa are more closely connected to the international community than ever before. Some may have friends and relatives in the Diaspora, others choose to study abroad, or seek work opportunities overseas. However, as the World Youth Report indicates, the vast majority of young people are 'not fully integrated members of the global culture'; too many are 'economically and socially' excluded from the benefits of globalisation.⁹ While a good number of people in developed countries have regular access to information and communication technologies, the vast majority of Africa's youth have no access to new modes of communication. Indeed, the World Youth Forum and NEPAD have both highlighted the need for young people to be empowered to overcome the 'digital divide' through information and communication technology. The rapid growth of the knowledge economy highlights the importance of enhancing the capacity of young people in Africa to compete in this arena.

Globalisation has also created conditions for increased levels of migration. Migration has become an important issue throughout Africa. Young people are often required to travel in search of employment, a better life, or to avoid conflict and dangerous conditions. Uprooted from their homes and communities they find

9 United Nations Commission for Social Development (2003) *World Youth Report*, p. 303

themselves in unfamiliar conditions without social safety nets to support them. As foreigners they are easily exploited and can suffer the pain of xenophobia and racism while often excluded from fully participating in social and economic life.

The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation encourages States and regional inter-governmental organizations such as NEPAD to become an instrument for development and a stronger voice in the governance of globalisation.¹⁰ The Strategic Framework takes this challenge further by providing young people in Africa with a mechanism to contribute to these debates. Furthermore, NEPAD's support for regional and continental integration will recognise and respond to the experiences of young people.

2.4 Challenge of hunger and poverty

Young people see the promise of better health and prosperity in new infrastructure projects and economic developments. Yet sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world where hunger is increasing. This increase is largely driven by the AIDS pandemic which threatens food security. One in three Africans is under-nourished, one in seven dies before her or his fifth birthday, and half of these deaths are due to malnutrition.¹¹ The World Bank estimates that per capita GNP in Africa (excluding South Africa) is \$323, and overall per capita consumption stands at \$281--less than one dollar a day.¹²

Young people require multifaceted and comprehensive approaches to poverty and hunger, including social safety nets, which can reduce their vulnerability to

10 World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (2004) *Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization*, Geneva, ILO

11 Bread for the World website, *Africa: Hunger to Harvest*.
<http://www.bread.org/issues/backgroundpapers/200101.html>

12 From *Africa Recovery*, Vol.16 No.1, April 2002, page 6

poverty. At the same time, promoting sustainable livelihoods is essential. This will require partnership between governments, business, civil society young people and international partners.

NEPAD's Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme and Action Plan brings into focus NEPAD's commitment to ending hunger. Moreover, NEPAD supports the Millennium Development Goal that calls for the eradication of extreme hunger by 2015.¹³ The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme places a high priority on this issue, and will work with the UN and other international development agencies to facilitate programmes that target young people who are hungry and poor.

2.5 Challenge of peace and security

Many young Africans cherish the sweet promise of peace. In the last fifteen years civil wars in Somalia, Angola, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Liberia have ended and peace accords are underway in DRC, Sudan and Burundi. In South Africa and Namibia, apartheid is dead. Yet the fear of war lingers. For young women and men who have known the pain of landmines and the heartache of losing loved ones to war, the scars run deep.

Young people are extremely vulnerable in situations of conflict and instability. Not only are they the primary victims of war, they are also drawn into conflict. Despite the existence of stringent international laws prohibiting the use of children as combatants, there are an estimated 120,000 child soldiers reported in Africa.¹⁴

13 The first Millennium Development Goal is a call to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day. Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

14 Amnesty International

Peace building and conflict prevention are important elements of youth empowerment and development. The Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes affirms the role young people play in promoting peace and non-violence and recommends the adoption of national and international policies and laws that prevent youth participation in all kinds of violence, and in particular to prevent the involvement and recruitment of young people in armed conflicts.

Abdou Diouf, the former President of the Republic of Senegal, has said that ‘despite the hardships Africa faces, there is good reason to trust our youth, who will be able to draw lessons from the past in order to build a space where peace, and solidarity prevails’. Peace today lays the foundation for stability and prosperity.

Conflict prevention and resolution is a major priority for NEPAD. The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme will draw attention to the impact these issues have on young people, and will create channels for dialogue that empower young people to participate in the process of peace-building and conflict resolution.

2.6 Environmental degradation challenges

The environment that has allowed us to till the land and yield crops for hundreds of years is under threat from polluted clouds that Africans did not create. Our young people have inherited an environment that is under threat. Whether in rural or urban areas, the quality of water and air--now and in the future--is a major concern. Thus, sustainable development is a prerequisite for youth empowerment. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, African Ministers stated that:

We recognize that participation by young people in sustainable development is the foundation of the success of a strategy to secure the future of Africa. There is a need in the framework of sustainable

*human development to ensure strengthening the skills of young people in all areas.*¹⁵

The NEPAD Environment Action Plan presents a framework for partnership programmes that foster sustainable development. Synergies between these programmes are promoted by the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme to ensure that young people participate in and benefit from these efforts. To this end, the recommendations of the United Nations Commission for Social Development are supported through environmental awareness and education programmes for young people.¹⁶

2.7 Challenge of participation, rights and youth leadership

The exclusion of young women and men from mainstream policies, programmes and governance structures is a major concern. A key requirement for youth empowerment is the need to ensure that young people are fully engaged in decision-making processes and structures that affect their wellbeing. Young people are our leaders of the future, but there are also young leaders among us. Indeed, nurturing and recognising young leaders and engaging them in national, regional and continental structures is a critical youth empowerment agenda. So too is the promotion of political awareness among young people. While young people were the driving force behind many independence movements, the political involvement of young people in post-Colonial Africa has waned. Political transformation in Africa, like economic and social transformation, requires young people who are politically aware and active.

15 African Ministerial Statement to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002

16 UN Commission for Social Development, *World Youth Report*, 2003 (Also promoted by the *United National Declaration on Youth; Problems and Potentials*, 1991)

The World Youth Report states that ‘many politicians, community leaders and others are far from convinced that harnessing the active involvement of youth represents an effective strategy for achieving better outcomes’ and provides ways to address this. Furthermore, the World Youth Forum rightfully claims that the fundamental element of youth empowerment is young people’s access to policy-making bodies at local, national and international levels; the rights of young people to participate in these domains should be fully endorsed by Member States.

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme affirms the importance of participation by young people in policy-making, programme design, and governance structures that affect not only young people, but also society at large. As the Secretary General of the United Nations says ‘empowerment ... involves young people as active agents for change and development, instead of ... passive targets of externally initiated programmes’.¹⁷

2.8 Challenges to young people’s health

There is the promise too of good health. Progress to eradicating polio continues apace and in all but a few countries the disease has been undetected for several years. Similarly, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reports that vitamin A and iodine deficiencies, which are major causes of blindness and mental retardation in children, have been greatly reduced in the last ten years. Yet 90 per cent of annual malaria deaths occur in Africa,¹⁸ and sexually transmitted infections strike young people in their prime.

17 United Nations, *Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*: report of the Secretary-General (12 July 2001) (A/56/180), p. 3

18 Remarks by E. Dr. E. Anne Petersen, Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development's Bureau for Global Health

In general, young women and men represent one of the healthiest groups in Africa; we are often healthiest during the time of our youth. However, young people also experience major threats to their health as a result of an interconnected range of behavioural factors. These factors include the risks associated with risk-taking, either in matters related to sexuality (i.e., reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, and pregnancy among young women) or alcohol and substance abuse.

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme endorses the recommendation of the World Youth Forum in Dakar, Senegal that governments commit themselves to implementing policies that ensure equitable access to health information, education and services.¹⁹ The NEPAD Health Strategy strengthens the commitment of African governments to addressing the heavy burden of disease, while the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme highlights and mainstreams youth health issues within this broad agenda.

2.9 Challenge of HIV and AIDS

Twenty years ago HIV and AIDS were virtually unheard of in Africa. Today, they threaten the wellbeing and economic livelihoods of many young people and their families. Yet all African countries have taken concrete measures to stem the tide through education campaigns. Research indicates that the messages are being heard; although they are most vulnerable, young people are also the most willing to change their behaviour. Yet progress towards providing prevention, care and support and treatment to those who need it, is still painfully slow.

19 *Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy*; Resolutions from the Fourth Session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, hosted by the Government of Senegal in cooperation with the United Nations and held in Dakar, 6-10 August 2001.

African health systems, already weak, are struggling to cope with dramatically increased mortality and morbidity in the general population as well as amongst health workers.

NEPAD endorses the United Nation's Declaration of Commitment, in which States are required to extend access to prevention information and services (i.e., voluntary counselling and testing, HIV and AIDS education) by 2005, and recognises that thus far only 20 per cent of all Africans have access to such services.²⁰ The recommendations of the Seven Global Youth Organizations to empower Africa's young people to counter the HIV and AIDS pandemic is also recognised; in particular the proposals to scale-up existing programmes, expand care and access to health services, and build on good practices already found in Africa.²¹

2.10 Challenges facing young women

Young women in Africa have never had as many opportunities as they do today. More girls are enrolled in primary education than ever before and women's participation in economic and political life has increased dramatically since the UN Decade for Women ended in 1980. Yet girls and young continue to lag behind their male peers in all aspects to social and economic life. Sadly, the only social indicator in which women have reached gender parity with men is HIV infection – 60 per cent of those living with the virus in Africa are women.

20 United Nations (2001) *United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV and AIDS Declaration of Commitment*, New York

21 *The Empowering Africa's Young People Initiative; a holistic approach to countering the HIV/AIDS pandemic*; a concept paper from the Seven Global Youth Organizations, 18 March 2003

Most African countries are signatories to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which commits states to eradicating laws and customs that are harmful to women. Yet today's young women face enormous challenges. Girls are more likely to drop out of school than boys, more likely to be married early, and less likely to own and inherit land than their brothers. NEPAD supports the ratification of CEDAW by those countries that have not yet done so, and reinforces the 50/50 policy position taken by the African Union. The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme takes these initiatives further by ensuring that special attention is given to young women in development policies and programmes. Furthermore, it will be key that young women participate fully in the youth structures established by the Strategic Framework.

2.11 Challenge of indigenous knowledge and traditional heritage

For centuries tradition and culture have been at the centre of African development. Yet today the forces of globalisation are eroding pride and an appreciation of Africa's multiple cultures and heritages. Media images, foods, clothing styles, and ways of speaking are rapidly shifting to reflect non-African realities.

There is a need to help young people connect not only with their own cultures and traditions, but also with those of other Africans. This will help young Africans to relate to the world, and teach an appreciation of the value and history of Africa that is a critical element in the project of African Renaissance. As Bankie notes, 'for the youth, the need to create awareness around Pan Africanism, the African nation and culture should be kept constantly in view and review, in the schools, at the universities and within the learning process in general'.²²

22 Bankie, B.F. (2001) *Globalising Africans: Towards the 7th Pan-African Congress* CASAS Book Series No 14 Cape Town, South Africa

Globally, indigenous knowledge from Africa has played a critical role in diverse fields. Africans have identified herbs that are now used in medicines, invented the drum that is at the core of music, and taught philosophy in ancient Egypt. It is important for young people to know and understand this history.

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme promotes pride in African heritage and recognises the significant role indigenous knowledge can and has played in human development.

2.12 Challenge of special groups of young people

Young people living in rural areas, indigenous youth, young people with disabilities, those who are not enrolled in school, and those who are in conflict with the law are particularly vulnerable to harm. NEPAD affirms the practice of paying special attention to the needs of those young people who live in poor communities or who do not have access to resources and are part of socially excluded groups by designing targeted initiatives that specifically address their social and emotional needs.

2.13 Challenges of the African youth diaspora

Many young Africans find themselves far away from their African homes and disconnected from their culture and family networks. For some, Africa is a place they have only heard about, while for others it holds distant memories. Young people from Africa can find themselves without roots in foreign lands. They face the challenge of living in different cultures, without fully knowing their own. They can suffer the indignity of xenophobia and are themselves influenced by inaccurate media representations of their homeland as they search for an identity they can be proud of. Research has shown that many young Africans of the diaspora long for a closer connection to home and look for opportunities to become practically involved in supporting the further development of Africa-- either by returning to make their contribution or by supporting development

efforts from where they are.²³ Others recognise that as Africans they can choose to live anywhere in the world; indeed young Africans are also global citizens who have much to offer other countries and the world as a whole.

AU/NEPAD recognises the challenges of young people of the diaspora in the hope these young women and men can be proud of their culture and heritage and the continent they come from. The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme will bridge the divide between the young women and men living in Africa and those living elsewhere. It will provide information and guidance to young people of the diaspora to facilitate their support of African youth empowerment and development. Regardless of where they live, African youth are encouraged to be proud of their African identities and values.

2.14 Institutional challenges

Despite their great number, young people are poorly represented in the political, economic and social institutions of Africa. While many Member States have established ministries of youth and supported the work of national youth councils in an effort to ensure young people contribute to national development, there is more to be done, both within countries and at regional and continental levels. Regional Economic Communities have often acknowledged the importance of young people and their representation in civil society, but young voices are rarely heard in these decision-making structures. There is a significant generation gap in this regard. While AU/NEPAD is committed to the development of young women and men across Africa, people who are well beyond their youth run its institutions.

Young people are often excluded from participating in high-level structures because of their age and perceived inexperience. Youth empowerment requires a

23 *Africa 21: Shaping Africa's future; Do young Africans in the diaspora share the dreams of NEPAD/AU?*

commitment to building the capacity of institutions that provide young people with a voice and the opportunity to contribute to development nationally, regionally and across the continent. Youth leadership, dialogue and representation can only be achieved through institutional frameworks that are focussed on these goals. AU/NEPAD recognises the importance of ensuring young people are represented in its structures and programmes and the Strategic

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Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme establishes mechanisms for ensuring this. However, it is also understood that there are times when specific youth-owned and managed institutions are required. While these kinds of arrangements face the danger of further marginalizing young people into organizations that are viewed as irrelevant, they can create opportunities for nurturing young leaders and can broaden youth participation on issues affecting Africa's development.

Thus, the challenge of youth empowerment requires a commitment to building institutions that are open to young people's participation at all levels.

Summary

Sector policy and programme responses are not enough to help young women and men in Africa face these challenges. While further research is required a greater commitment to youth empowerment and development is essential. Young people are not a development sector; they are a priority for development in Africa.

As the section above has illustrated, many Declarations have been drafted that seek to address the challenges facing Africa's youth. The pronouncements of leaders have been rich in their analysis of the problems; yet young people continue to grapple with the most fundamental challenges of survival. The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme underscores the excellent

commitments that have by Member States, and seeks to act on them. The Strategic Framework will support through a set of specific actions, the aspirations of the young women and men of this continent.

There is an old Swahili proverb that says:

Wapiganapo tembo nyasi huumia

‘When elephants fight the grass gets hurt’

When adults have arguments, it is often young people--those without power--who are hurt. Young people did not create this world--they inherited it. Without clear strategies that promote and protect the rights of young Africans,

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that create a world that is better for them than it was for those who leave it behind, their tomorrow will be bleak. The Strategic Framework exists for the young people of Africa. With sound plans and the highest political commitment, as Mwalimu Nyerere pointed out so many years ago, there is no reason why NEPAD cannot speak to the promise in their tomorrow.

3 Who is the young African?

The place of young people in society is influenced by social, cultural and economic conditions. These conditions affect the roles, responsibilities and capacity of young people in their society. Gender, race, class, socio-economic status, and location all affect the experience of being a young person in Africa. A 16 year-old girl growing up in a rural community in Niger will face many different needs and opportunities when compared with a young 23 year-old man in urban Nairobi. Similarly, a young 19 year-old man living in rural Botswana who moves to Gaborone in search of employment will have different priorities when compared with a 24 year-old woman who works in her family’s business in Fayoun, Egypt. There are tremendous local and national variations found throughout Africa and national governments are required to respond to the challenges and needs facing their young people.

Youth is a transition period that falls between childhood and adulthood. It is a time of enormous physical, psychological, economic, and social change. Families,

communities and society in general can support young people in this transition, but they can also overlook the struggles of youth. Young women and men can be easily marginalised among a range of competing development priorities. While they are often referred to as ‘tomorrows leaders’, their situation today can be one of disadvantage, alienation and risk.

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While, young people can be defined by their age, countries apply different definitions of ‘youth’. In Sierra Leone, for example, a young person is classified as someone between the ages of 13 to 35 years, while the voting age is 21 years; in Zambia a young person is aged from 16 to 30 years and voting age begins at 18 years.²⁴ Member States are encouraged to establish official definitions of youth that can be consistently applied across all national policies, programmes and agencies. These definitions should be based on the social, cultural and economic context of each society.

The reason young people require special attention stems from the economic, social and cultural status accorded to people of a certain age in many societies. While young women and men have tremendous resources (e.g., time, energy, creativity, passion, commitment), the fact is that they stand at a cross-roads between adolescence and full maturity, between economic dependence on their parents, and financial stability, between the social experience and the ability to command respect. The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme affirms the diversity of young people and commits NEPAD to supporting them in the transition to adulthood and maturity.

24 In contrast, the United Nations define the age of youth from 15 to 24 years and the Commonwealth Youth Programme from 16 to 29 years.

4 NEPAD's vision for young people in Africa

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme endeavours to create the conditions to realise the following vision:

Young women and men in Africa are able to actively participate in socio-economic development and the transformation to a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable society.

This vision is informed by NEPAD's overall mandate. Through the Strategic Framework, NEPAD recognises young people as critical actors in the 'eradication of poverty' and the achievement 'sustainable growth and development', while encouraging them to participate actively 'in the world economy and body politic'.²⁵

Similarly, the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme contributes to the mission of the NEPAD Secretariat by harnessing 'relevant knowledge for informed policy formulation' for youth empowerment and development; it ensures that young people benefit from and participate in the development and implementation of NEPAD.²⁶

5 Aim and strategic objectives

In pursuit of this vision and within the context of NEPAD's support for young women and men in Africa, the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme aims to:

Provide guiding principles, mechanisms and the conditions necessary for coordinating a continental approach to the social, economic and political empowerment of young people in Africa, promoting creativity

25 See the Vision of NEPAD in the *NEPAD 2004-2007 Strategic Plan*, p 9.

26 See the Mission Statement of the NEPAD Secretariat in the *NEPAD 2004-2007 Strategic Plan*, p 9.

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and innovation in youth development while aligning and integrating national and regional policies, programmes and initiatives.

This aim will be achieved through three Strategic Objectives.

Strategic Objective 1:

Establish and maintain mechanisms and procedures that ensure the voice of young people is heard within AU/NEPAD and that youth empowerment and development issues are effectively mainstreamed into all development programmes.

Strategic Objective 2:

Facilitating the creation of development partnerships with governments and relevant organizations and the mobilization and equitable distribution of resources within Africa and beyond to support youth empowerment and development in Africa.

Strategic Objective 3:

Support Regional Economic Communities, Member States, civil society and the private sector in their efforts to promote youth empowerment and development.

Chapter 8 presents the strategies that will be designed and implemented to achieve these strategic objectives.

AU/NEPAD highlights the importance of young women and men in the development of Africa with a ten-year commitment to the implementation of the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme. The decade that begins in 2005 will become the Decade for African Youth. This provides an opportunity for AU/NEPAD to ensure the issues affecting youth empowerment and development are fully identified and mainstreamed into its economic, social and political programmes and structures.

6 Guiding principles for youth empowerment

The aim of the Strategic Framework (described above) refers to the importance of guiding principles that are necessary to achieving a coordinated and integrated approach to youth empowerment and development in Africa. In pursuit of this aim, the following principles are presented. These are drawn from the practices of African states and multilateral institutions, which actively promote youth empowerment and development.

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These principles guide the design, implementation and monitoring of youth policies and programmes in Africa, and provide a framework within which to support young people.

- 6.1 *Young people are responsible for their own development:*** Policies, programmes and services can only support young people in their empowerment and development efforts; they should not remove the responsibility young people have for their own development.
- 6.2 *Young people are an important resource for Africa:*** While young people are our future leaders, they also have energy, skills, and dreams they can contribute to Africa's development today. Young people should be recognised for the contribution they can make to development in Africa and not treated as a group that should passively wait for the future.
- 6.3 *Young people are a priority for development in Africa:*** Explicit efforts must be made to ensuring that development responses give priority to young people through a crosscutting and multi-sectoral strategies.
- 6.4 *Pride and knowledge of African cultures provide an essential foundation to youth empowerment and development:*** Young African women and men are encouraged to know and be proud of themselves and their culture and heritage. They should be encouraged to use indigenous knowledge and experience to participate in the process of African Renaissance and transformation.

6.5 African youth development should draw from good practices in youth development in Africa: Policies and programmes for youth empowerment and development should be guided by good practices elsewhere on the African continent. Linkages and partnerships across regions are essential, both for resource mobilisation purposes and for regular information exchange.

6.6 Young women have a right to equal participation in youth development
Youth empowerment and development policies and programmes should

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recognise and respond to the influence of gender on the needs and aspirations of young people.

6.7 African youth development should be aligned with national, regional and continental development priorities: Every effort should be made to integrate youth empowerment and development into broader development frameworks; young people should not remain marginalised from mainstream development policies and programmes.

6.8 African youth development requires specific national, regional and continental policy and programme initiatives: There will be times when mainstreaming and integrating youth issues into broader development policies and programmes is not enough and specific youth empowerment policies, programmes and services are required.

6.9 Special attention should be given to young people who are socially excluded or who lack resources: Special attention should be given to those young women and men who often miss out of the benefits of development in order that the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged young people can be reduced.

6.10 Young people who are the most vulnerable in society should be protected from all forms of exploitation, abuse and oppression: Governments should ensure the human rights of all young people, while development policies

and programmes should provide decent and humane conditions for youth development.

Regional Economic Communities, governments, civil societies and youth development agencies that apply these principles will be ensuring that their youth empowerment and development efforts are consistent and have a greater potential to harmonise with regional and continental development efforts. AU/NEPAD will promote these principles in all its social, economic and political development programmes.

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7 Rights and responsibilities of youth empowerment

AU/NEPAD affirms the rights of young women and men as citizens of Africa and advocates for these among the Regional Economic Communities and Member States. These rights include the right of young people to:

- Fully participate in their society and its development
- Take charge of their own development
- Peace and security
- Equality and equal access to services and opportunities
- Exchange their ideas and values freely
- Mutual respect and understanding
- Family life
- Democracy and to be in the vanguard of the defence of freedom of individuals and society
- Their religious, spiritual, moral, and ethical development
- International cooperation

With rights come new responsibilities. Young women and men across Africa should be supported and encouraged to live responsible lives. The responsibilities outlined below should be nurtured amongst young people. In exercising their rights, young men and women are responsible for:

- Contributing to self, family and societal development
- Promoting inter-generational harmony and understanding and promoting gender equality
- Respecting the rule of law and human rights of all peoples
- Promoting appropriate standards of ethical conduct in both individual and social life
- Respecting parents, the family and the aging, especially in the context of the cultural traditions in each country

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- Promoting a balanced state of physical, mental, moral and spiritual health and development
- Participating in social service activities to help society deal with basic problems
- Promoting an honest work ethic and a coherent career development plan involving education, training and employment
- Participating in the democratisation of society and in actions that promote equal opportunities for young men and women
- Protecting the environment and encouraging the conservation of nature

Finally, adults in Africa have a responsibility toward young women and men. Adults have a strong influence on the life circumstances of young people. Young men and women require the adults around them to act in an exemplary manner and put into practice the values and laws upon which their society is based. Adults and local communities should support young people emotionally, psychologically, morally and economically; they should accept young people – not only in respect to their potential to be of service to society, but also with regard to their changing roles.

Development agencies that are run by older people should recognise that young people are an important resource, and not just a category of need. They should partner with youth-led initiatives and find ways to engage young people as staff as well as in management and advisory capacities. Solutions to youth problems should be found through a process of dialogue and participation. Young women and men should be encouraged to take responsibility for the problems they face; they should be provided with guidance and support, rather than told what to do.

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8 Strategies for African youth empowerment and development

AU/NEPAD supports three broad strategies for youth empowerment and development. These have been designed to fulfil the objectives of the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme described in Chapter 5. They are:

- Youth engagement within AU/NEPAD
- Partnerships for youth empowerment and development
- The NEPAD Youth Programme

Each of these strategies is described in details below.

8.1 Youth engagement with AU/NEPAD

8.1.1. Strategic objective for youth engagement

The first objective of the Strategic Framework deals with youth engagement within AU/NEPAD:

Establish and maintain mechanisms and procedures that ensure the voice of young people is heard within AU/NEPAD and that youth empowerment and development issues are effectively mainstreamed into all development programmes.

8.1.2 Mechanisms for delivery

This strategy responds to the institutional challenges young people in Africa face. It recognises that specific structures and processes must be established at continental and regional levels to ensure that youth development issues are fully

integrated into African social, economic and political development. Unlike the other two Strategic Objectives, the first Strategic Objective requires the creation on specific mechanisms for young people's engagement with AU/NEPAD. Thus, this strategy focuses on two essential organs of the African Union: the Pan African Parliament and the African Union Commission.

The Pan African Parliament has been established by the African Union to provide

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a common platform for African peoples and their grassroots organizations to be more involved in discussions and decision-making on the problems and challenges facing the continent. During its first five years, the parliament will be an advisory body, but the ultimate goal is to accord it full legislative powers, with members directly elected. Each country signing and ratifying the protocol has five parliamentary deputies, one of which must be a woman.

The African Union Commission is the key organ playing a central role in the day-to-day management of the African Union. It represents the Union and elaborates, promotes, coordinates and harmonizes the programmes and policies of the Union with those of the Regional Economic Communities, ensuring gender issues are mainstreamed in all programmes and activities of the Union.

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme will establish the following mechanisms to ensure the voice of young people is heard within AU/NEPAD and that youth empowerment and development issues are effectively mainstreamed into all development programmes.

Pan African Youth Ministry

A Youth Ministry within the Pan African Parliament will be established to oversee the issues of youth empowerment and development across Africa. A Youth Minister will account to the Pan African Parliament on the work of the ministry.

The Youth Ministry will lead the processes of establishing a continental approach to youth policies and programmes. It will formulate an African Youth Policy, in

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close consultation and collaboration with the African Youth Commission (see below), Regional Economic Communities²⁷, Member States, civil society organisations, business and youth formations. The African Youth Policy will provide for an integrated approach to youth empowerment and development across the continent. It will describe the roles of key actors in youth empowerment and development and will establish a procedure for the design, implementation and review of regional and national youth policies, ensuring they contribute to the broader efforts of regional and continental integration.

27 There are seven officially recognised Regional Economic Communities: Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS); Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD); Common Market for Eastern and Southern African States (COMESA), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Community of the Sahel Saharian States (CEN-SAD); and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

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The Youth Ministry will liaise closely with other youth organizations (e.g., the African Youth Commission, the Commonwealth Youth Programme in Africa), as well as with the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, the NEPAD Secretariat, and other development partners. The Youth Minister will make regular reports to the Pan African Parliament and the African Union Summit regarding the status of young women and men in Africa.

African Youth Commission

An African Youth Commission will be formed. This commission will be officially recognised by the African Union and will become part of the African Union Commission. The African Youth Commission will comprise representatives of government and civil society. It will represent the seven officially recognised Regional Economic Communities, as well as peak youth formations, while also containing representatives from the economic, social and political structures of the African Union. The Pan African Parliament will appoint African Youth Commissioners for a three-year term.

The African Youth Commission will have a central office and five sub-regional focal points (i.e., Youth Desks) located in Regional Economic Communities. The commission will oversee and coordinate continental and regional responses to youth empowerment and development. It will work with the Youth Ministry and NEPAD to support the establishment of continental and regional youth policies, while also advising on and supporting the implementation of the NEPAD Youth Programme.

8.2 Partnerships for youth empowerment and development

8.2.1. Strategic objective for partnerships

The second objective of the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme deals with the creation of partnerships that support youth empowerment and development:

Facilitating the creation of development partnerships with governments and relevant organizations and the mobilization and equitable distribution of resources within Africa and beyond to support youth empowerment and development in Africa.

The NEPAD Secretariat has a strong role to play in forging partnerships with development agents within and outside Africa. These regional and continental alliances will help youth empowerment programmes find the resources (i.e., information, advice, training, knowledge, skills, funds) they require to operate effectively.

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8.2.2 Priority mechanisms and strategies

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme will establish mechanisms and undertake the following actions to achieve this objective.

Clearinghouse for African youth empowerment and development

NEPAD will oversee the establishment of a continental-wide clearinghouse that contains information and knowledge on youth needs, opportunities and resources, as well as details on ministries of youth and national and regional youth formations. This will eventually be run by an appropriate independent agency that is closely connected to youth development networks in Africa. The clearinghouse will promote good African practices in youth empowerment and development. It will facilitate the exchange of information on youth policies, programmes, services and agencies in Africa. Links to relevant global sources of information will also be established and regularly up-dated.

The exchange of information and knowledge will occur in various forms.

It will include, for example, the production of publications that guide relevant

development partners toward youth empowerment and development programmes that are consistent with the principles of the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme. It will also include the establishment of a Youth Portal.

Youth research

NEPAD will regularly commission strategic research into the issues affecting youth empowerment and development in Africa. This research will fill information and knowledge gaps, while contributing to the design and implementation of NEPAD's priority sector development programmes.

Annual forum

An annual forum of regional and continental youth empowerment and development actors (e.g., the Commonwealth Youth Programme in Africa, relevant United Nations agencies, Regional Economic Communities) will be convened to review the priorities for young people in Africa and consider the policy and programme responses of participating agencies. NEPAD will organise this forum in close cooperation the African Youth Commission and the Youth Ministry.

African Youth Development Fund

An African Youth Development Fund will be established to facilitate the mobilization of resources for African youth empowerment and development. This facility will be professionally managed and monitored. It will work with international donor and development agencies, providing an effective conduit for guiding resources toward priority youth empowerment and development programmes.

Policy and programme planning

NEPAD will provide assistance to Regional Economic Communities, Member States, and civil society in the preparation of funding proposals to support

regional and continental policies and programmes for youth empowerment and development. This assistance includes technical advice and support, the provision of information and training, as well as a facilitation service that links policy and programmes to development partners.

Partnering with the African Diaspora

The unique contribution that can be made to African youth empowerment and development by people from the Diaspora is recognised. Because the African Diaspora is one of the main contributors to Africa's development, NEPAD will establish a special mechanism for engaging with Africans in other continents. This mechanism will especially focus on young Africans in the Diaspora and will

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encourage these people to organize into groups that can engage with the policies and programmes initiated by the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme.

8.3 NEPAD Youth Programme

8.3.1 Strategic objective of the NEPAD Youth Programme

The third objective of the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme is as follows:

Support Regional Economic Communities, Member States, civil society and the private sector in their efforts to promote youth empowerment and development.

This objective provides the rationale for the design and implementation of a NEPAD Youth Programme. The NEPAD Youth Programme will be designed in the coming months to reflect the strategic focus and directions of AU/NEPAD while

remaining grounded in the day-to-day realities of young women and men living in Africa. It will avoid duplicating existing initiatives and focus on supporting, encouraging and adding value to the work of these actors.

8.3.2 Priority areas for the NEPAD Youth Programme

Priority areas for youth empowerment vary from one place in Africa to the other. The challenge for the NEPAD Youth Programme is to support the relevant agents in their response to the variety of youth issues. The NEPAD Youth Programme will respond to priorities that are identified in the design phase of the programme through extensive consultations. The Programme will also be guided by the principles and objectives outlined in this Strategic Framework.

NEPAD's strategic advantage is its ability to promote and integrate development

across Africa by working in partnership with other key actors. Thus, while NEPAD may play a role in channelling development assistance to specific youth programmes through the African Youth Fund, its main focus will not be on funding. Instead, the Youth Programme will provide a continent-wide perspective on youth empowerment, and to improve policy-making and programme delivery for youth empowerment and development.

A broad range of strategies could be accommodated within the NEPAD Youth Programme. These include a centrally managed continent-wide youth service run by NEPAD; the coordination of activities performed by NEPAD in relation to youth empowerment programmes; an observatory function for African youth empowerment, and building the capacity of youth ministries and youth development agencies. The NEPAD Youth Programme could also provide technical assistance to youth ministries and youth development agencies.

There are three types of priorities that the NEPAD Youth Programme will address: national, regional and continental.

National priorities for the NEPAD Youth Programme

Many Member States have established ministries of youth or similar structures to oversee the work of the government in this field; some Member States have also introduced other policy and programme initiatives that directly address the concerns of young people outside the ambit of a Youth Ministry or department.

In support of Member States, the NEPAD Youth Programme will support the design, implementation and regular revision of national youth policies. National youth policies are an essential first-step for all Member States to demonstrate

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their commitment to youth empowerment. These policies should be regularly updated and reviewed; young people should be engaged in processes that keep national youth policies alive and relevant. The United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond contains a set of guidelines for youth policies to be carried out by Member States of the United Nations.²⁸ It covers ten priority areas for national youth policies and provides a framework to measure and evaluate achievements.²⁹

28 The ten priorities addressed in the Programme of Action are: (i) education; (ii) employment; (iii) hunger and poverty; (iv) health issues; (v) environment; (vi) drug abuse; (vii) juvenile delinquency; (viii) leisure; (ix) girls and young women; and (x) youth participation (General Assembly resolution 50/81).

29 The World Youth Forum of the United Nations was established to provide a communication channel between non-government youth organizations and the UN system. It also aims to incorporate the interests of young people into the implementation of the World Programme of Action. The World Youth Forum has met four times since 1991, most recently in Dakar in 2001.

In most countries in Africa there is a vibrant non-government youth sector. This includes national youth councils, faith-based organizations, interest groups, organizations affiliated with political parties (e.g., associated with national political parties or with international political movements, such as the International Union of Socialist Youth³⁰), and organizations formed by special groups (e.g., young women, young entrepreneurs, young people with disabilities, young workers). Youth associations are often participatory, involving young women and men both as clients as well as in management and staffing structures. It will be important to for the NEPAD Youth Programme to tap into the experiences and knowledge of these groups, while offering opportunities for them to link up to a broader range of Africa-wide development programmes.

The NEPAD Youth Programme can work with Member States and civil society youth formations to provide tools and advice on the identification of national youth needs, opportunities and challenges so that this information can be used nationally and compared across the continent. The NEPAD Youth Programme might also support Member States and civil society organizations to design, implement and monitor youth empowerment programmes and services that promote common African principles, practices and development objectives. The NEPAD Youth Programme can also promote a review of national legal frameworks and their influence on youth empowerment and development.

Regional priorities for the NEPAD Youth Programme

Regional Economic Communities provide an opportunity for Member States to address regional issues affecting young people and to foster collaboration among neighbouring countries. They can address the major concerns facing young

30 See website: <http://www.iusy.org/>

people in different regions and provide an opportunity for these to inform national youth policies and programmes as well as continental approaches. Moreover, since efforts to promote greater regional integration can have a significant impact on young people (e.g., access to education and employment opportunities within and across regions), the NEPAD Youth Programme can ensure that youth issues are not overlooked within this context.

The NEPAD Youth Programme will support Regional Economic Communities to establish regional policy frameworks for youth empowerment and development. This will help Member States and civil society organizations to address major youth empowerment issues on a broader scale. In addition, the NEPAD Youth Programme could support research and consultation into regional youth issues.

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African priorities for the NEPAD Youth Programme

As the development programme of the African Union, NEPAD has undergone a thorough process of identifying its own priority areas for development. The main objectives of NEPAD programmes and projects are to promote economic, social and cultural development; integrate African economies in order to increase economic self-reliance; and promote a self-sustained development plan.³¹

31 The third strategic objective of NEPAD is to accelerate the preparation and expedite implementation of regional and continental development programmes. The following sector development programmes are currently pursued by NEPAD: (i) infrastructure; (ii) information and communication technology; (iii) health; (iv) education; (v) science and technology; (vi) agriculture; (vii) environment; (viii) tourism; (ix) market access and production; (x) industrialisation programme; (xi) African peer review; and (xii) post-conflict reconstruction and development.

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The NEPAD Secretariat is responsible for the design, implementation, coordination, and monitoring of development programmes and projects. These programmes provide possible priority areas for the NEPAD Youth Programme. It is important to find ways where youth issues and youth empowerment can be mainstreamed into these.

From a continental perspective, the NEPAD Youth Programme could promote good practices and skills development in youth empowerment and development across Africa supporting the work of policy makers, programme managers and practitioners in the youth field. The NEPAD Youth Programme would work in collaboration with the NEPAD priority sector programmes to mainstream youth concerns and youth development priorities.

The promotion of youth achievement will be given special attention within the NEPAD Youth Programme. The programme will develop a mechanism to publicly recognise and reward those young people in Africa who are making a difference in their communities and countries. It will highlight the role young people are playing in development, displaying and celebrating the creativity, innovation, energy and initiative of African youth.

Further discussion is required to agree on the specific support the NEPAD Youth Programme could offer from a continental perspective. These discussions will take place within NEPAD, as well as with its partners and those involved youth empowerment and development in Africa.

9 Institutional arrangements

The NEPAD Secretariat will establish a ten-year action plan (2005-2015) for the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme. Based on the consultation process in the latter half of 2004. The NEPAD Secretariat will prepare the action plan, which will describe the details of each strategy and its management and resource requirements. This will include the identification of short-term Flagship

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Projects that provide NEPAD with the opportunity respond quickly to identified immediate youth needs; it will also include the design of medium and short-term targets for the Strategic Framework.

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme requires resources to operate effectively. These include political, technical, financial, and human resources. The NEPAD Secretariat will work with its constituents to ensure that the NEPAD Youth Programme gains the political support required through African Union structures, Regional Economic Communities, and national constituents. The NEPAD Secretariat will also ensure the Strategic Framework and the NEPAD Youth Programme is effectively managed; that the financial resources required

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for effective programme delivery are raised in partnership with its development partners, international donor agencies, and Member States.

NEPAD will implement the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme. A NEPAD Youth Office will be established with a Youth Adviser within the NEPAD Secretariat to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the framework. Specifically, the NEPAD Youth Office will perform the following functions:

- Provide an executive support to the Pan African Youth Ministry and the African Youth Commission
- Liaise with and support the establishment and functions of the Youth Desks located in the Regional Economic Communities
- Advocate for and support Member States and Regional Economic Communities in their efforts to prepare, implement and review national and regional youth policies, while ensuring these are updated regularly
- Support the development of continental and regional youth policies and programmes

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- Support the preparation of the NEPAD Youth Programme and its implementation plan for the period 2005-2015
- Provide an advisory, monitoring and support function for the NEPAD Youth Programme
- Mobilize international development partnerships and support for African youth empowerment and development programmes, including the NEPAD Youth Programme
- Mobilize and strengthen political support for youth empowerment and development programmes within the African Union, the Heads of States and Governments Implementation Committee, Regional Economic Communities, Member States, civil society organizations, and the private sector

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- Ensure the procedures and structures for monitoring and evaluating the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme over the next ten years are in place and operating effectively
- Report to the NEPAD Secretariat on all aspects of the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme

Thus, the NEPAD Youth Office will be focussed on programme development. It will liaise with and complement the work of the Pan African Parliament's Youth Ministry and the African Youth Commission, ensuring that African youth empowerment and development spans the economic, social and political spheres of the African Union.

10 Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

The strategies and programmes outlined will be regularly monitored and assessed to ensure they continue to be aligned with continental and regional development priorities, while remaining responsive to the interests, needs and challenges facing young women and men in Africa.

Specific issues for monitoring and assessment are:

- Youth participation and engagement: Ensuring the participation of youth representatives in economic, social and political structures is consistent, effective and accountable.
- Youth empowerment and development: Assessing the impact that the strategies and programmes have on the capacity of young women and men in the fields of economic, social and political development.

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- Mainstreaming youth empowerment and development: Ensuring youth empowerment and development programmes are effectively mainstreamed in the activities of AU/NEPAD.
- Accountability of priority sector programmes: Accounting for the contribution NEPAD priority sector programmes make to the empowerment and development of young people, and in particular to young women.
- Responsiveness to youth needs and opportunities: Reviewing the strategies and programmes designed to help Member States, Regional Economic Communities, civil society organizations, youth formations, and development partners respond to current youth problems, needs, aspirations and opportunities.

These issues will be addressed through a three-pronged approach to monitoring and evaluation.

Annual State of the African Youth Report

The Youth Ministry (in collaboration with NEPAD) will produce an Annual State of the African Youth Report. This report will be submitted to the African Union Summit and the World Economic Forum for Africa and will contain the latest information on issues affecting African youth in the process of economic, social and political transformation.

Annual audit of NEPAD sector programmes

A formal mechanism will be established to assess the extent to which the issues affecting young women and men in Africa are effectively mainstreamed into

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AU/NEPAD priority sector programmes. This will include an annual, gender sensitive audit of all programme activities and expenditure to assess the degree to which youth issues were addressed.

Monitoring and evaluating the NEPAD Youth Programme

A specific monitoring and evaluation framework will be designed for the NEPAD Youth Programme. This will be based on the core objectives of the programme and will include the formulation of development indicators that can be used to assess the equitable distribution of resources and the impact of development programmes on young women and men. Programme evaluation outcomes will be submitted to the NEPAD Secretariat.

11 Conclusions and recommendations

The Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme imagines a future in which young women and men in Africa are part of peaceful, prosperous and economically viable communities. The Framework lays out a scenario that is within reach, a vision that is in line with and informed by NEPAD's overall

mandate. Through the Strategic Framework young people are recognised as critical actors in Africa's growth and development, both now and in the future.

In pursuit of this vision and within the context of NEPAD's support for young women and men in Africa, the Strategic Framework provides guiding principles, mechanisms and the institutional arrangements necessary for a continental approach to youth empowerment and development. The Framework outlines three key areas of work. Firstly, it suggests actions that NEPAD itself can take. Too often, young people are accused of not speaking up, not articulating their concerns. While some young people need support in order to be able to speak out, too often the fault lies with those who fail to listen.

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The words of fifteen-year-old Rumbidzai Mushangi, a Zimbabwean girl active in the fight against AIDS in her community, highlight this point:³² 'I don't want to die before I turn 25,' she says. 'I refuse to sit down and watch my generation fall to pieces. I am going to make a difference. Will you?'

The first objective of the Strategic Framework addresses head on the challenge of ensuring that the voices of young people are heard within AU/NEPAD. The second objective highlights the need to facilitate partnerships that can support youth empowerment and development in Africa. While the third objective of the Framework speaks to the need to design and implement a NEPAD Youth Programme that supports the work of Regional Economic Communities, Member

32 Cited in UNAIDS (2004) Report of the Secretary General's Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa

A Strategic Framework for A NEPAD Youth Programme

States, civil society and the private sector in promoting youth empowerment and development.

Pursuing the guiding principles and programmes laid out in the Strategic Framework along with the plans of action that follow will mark the beginning of a new phase in NEPAD's support of young people. It will support their visions and energy and tenacity.

Through a ten-year commitment to the implementation of the Strategic Framework for NEPAD Youth Programme the decade that begins in 2005 will become the Decade for African Youth (2005-2015). By the time it ends in 2015, Rumbidzai's question will have been answered. This Framework defines the process by which NEPAD will support her generation of peers to live long, healthy and dynamic lives.