



**A YOUTH SUMMIT CONCEPT PAPER PREPARED BY THE NETWORK OF AFRICAN YOUTHS
FOR DEVELOPMENT AUGUST 2012**

**ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL
CONSERVATION**

MISSION STATEMENT:

“To Create a Roadmap for Youth-led Sustainable Development in Africa”

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Introduction

Working towards sustainable development requires a concerted, deliberate and timely effort if the challenges of our times are to be met. Ensuring the environment around us is able to sustain economic and social activities and most importantly, life, is more critical now than ever before. The combination of climate change, poor management of natural resources and unsustainable activities over many decades is devastating communities and livelihoods and urgent global political consensus and action is now required to begin the commitments and investments to address the challenges at hand.

Unfortunately recurring failures of leadership at different levels have set expectations several steps back. The majority of African governments lack the political drive to pursue a common position on such issues. This has left international negotiations fragmented and yielding few positive results. After the failures of the climate change talks in Durban (COP 17) and Rio+20 (UN Conference on Sustainable Development), the World's future was left with no agreed roadmap for sustainability. This obviously has serious implications to youth and their future.

This Concept Paper outlines an initiative conceived by the young people of the African continent to address the gaps and grey areas in African-led efforts in the realization of sustainable development.

Network of African Youths for Development

As the immediate heirs to poor leadership and therefore to this unsustainable future, Africa's current youth population has an urgent responsibility to ensure that its communities, countries and the continent at large act as frontrunners for a safe, sustainable and productive future for them and their children. The Network of African Youths for Development (NAYD) is a group of thousands of like-minded, dynamic, and self-driven young individuals holding hands from across the continent and beyond eager to see real sustainable development and youth in action in Africa and is therefore well positioned to organise this summit. Sustainability is one of the key components of the African Youth Charter and the Youth Decade Plan of Action. The concept of this plan is to bring together the best of NAYD members to discuss the challenges facing the youth in Africa, and to fashion out the best way forward towards a sustainable and inclusive future. Networking and collaboration are key elements of NAYD's operation; hence NAYD will partner with like-minded youth-led initiatives both in Africa and beyond to make this groundbreaking summit happen.

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Situation Analysis

Africa is endowed with rich natural resources. The question is “are the vast resources being protected for the future and for Africa’s benefit?” Whilst the North and Eastern African countries are engulfed with droughts and famine we know there are massive underground water resources and water storage potential. The Sahara region through solar energy and the Highlands of Ethiopia through Hydro Electric Power could power the whole of Africa. As much as we think large, we also need to think small; about the promotion of beehives, of sustainable forest use, of micro water storage and power generation schemes and the many other community level activities.

Africa has numerous socio-economic development challenges which include, but not limited to: poor infrastructure; bad governance; a lack of partnerships among African governments, agencies and organizations; the conglomeration of NGO’s doing activities their own way without reproach and recourse to a continental roadmap; lack of coherent and realistic continental policy on sustainable development; skewed overseas interest in the exploitation of its natural resources; the increase in population; lack of resources for strategic growth and development. Other factors include the complex and deeply rooted cultural systems, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other tropical diseases, political instability due to moribund institutions, tax evasion as a result of lack of transparent accounting systems. In retrospect, Africa is ill-placed in the development of strong continent-wide sustainable development policies.

The Summit

The Summit will be a platform for the discussion and reflection on what the continent has done to improve youth development and sustainable development. It shall address the needs of both the African Youth and the continent at large, with emphasis on its vast natural resources and potentials. It will culminate into formulation of key recommendations for various implementation agencies and stakeholders, which once adhered to, would result into a better continent for the future generation of Africans. This Summit will provide members with an excellent opportunity to meet face to face and do something positive for Youth, the Continent and to plot the way forward for the coming decades.

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Summit Mission

To create a roadmap for youth-led sustainable development in Africa.

Summit Main Objective

To provide a platform for discussion in order to address the problems faced by African Youth and to deliver recommendations for sustainable development on the continent.

Summit Goals

- i. To mobilize and create a pool of African youth ready to steer the continent towards a smart, sustainable and inclusive future.
- ii. To provide a stimulating environment for stakeholders to discuss the potential of Africa and to showcase the innovations and entrepreneurial potentials.
- iii. To discuss and formulate key recommendations to be adopted by Development Agencies, Youth Initiatives and Organizations, NGO's and Governments across Africa
- iv. To empower the less privileged members of the continent – through down-to-earth opportunities for personal, professional and economic growth and development.
- v. To provide participants with the opportunity to expand their skills and knowledge of the continent for the advancement of opportunities and solutions to conflicts and challenges in the continent.
- vi. To network with youth and other professional participants, and to learn from each other and share experiences.

NAYD has developed the themes of this Summit from the common problems that affect Africa in general and more specifically African Youth. The thematic concern of the Summit shall address;

- Drug Abuse, Cancer, HIV/AIDs Pandemic.
- Sustainable Development and Climate Change
- Good governance
- Conflict management and resolution
- Unemployment; innovations and entrepreneurship.
- Youth leadership and peer education.
- Career and development.

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Expected Participants

This Summit shall bring together a total of 600 youths drawn from all the African Countries and a few from other continents with emphasis on those whose governments have adopted and Ratified the African Youth Charter, and other Youth Conventions and those who have joined NAYD. It is prudent for emphasis to be placed on the African Youth as they are the pillars of transformation and progress in our societies. A few of the participants shall comprise of professionals, leading politicians and opinion shapers, journalists and other relevant stakeholders especially those dealing with youth and other marginalized persons in various areas as the Summit Organizing Committee shall deem necessary.

Methodology

The Summit will be conducted on participatory lines with short plenary inputs, speakers' presentations, reports discussions, committee meetings and followed by general and small group discussions. It would also include video shows (*documentary slides on Africa*), establishment of a "follow-up committee" to see the implementation of the recommendations. There would be a Talk Show at the end of the Summit based on the Theme to see how participants' mindset on Africa had transformed through the Summit.

The culmination of the Summit will be a day-long excursion and community service within the host country to appreciate the African Culture and to enhance social networking and bonding. This Summit will be conducted in a manner that promotes social interaction, learning and appreciation of one another.

Date and Venue of the Summit

The Summit would be held in 2013 at a date, month and country to be decided. Host country considerations would include accessible to airlines, central to majority of the participants, those who have advanced youth activities especially with regard to the African Youth Charter, and the willingness of the country to contribute to the success of the summit. Once the date of the event has been agreed upon, NAYD's Summit Committee shall

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invite, through an online advertisement, countries ready to host the Summit to send letters of intent. That shall be followed by a fair selection and follow-ups on the suitability of the venue.

Coordination

The Summit shall be coordinated by a Secretariat made up of volunteers from NAYD and partnering organizations. However, the Secretariat shall work hand in hand with the various committees that shall be formed to oversee the preparation and realization of the summit.

The Committees shall comprise, but not limited to:

- 1) Communication and Publicity
- 2) Logistics and organization
- 3) Financial
- 4) Legal and Administration

Partnership

We believe that it is better to collaborate than to compete. Synergy and cooperation are essential for positive and enduring changes on the African continent. By collaborating, we can turn off the tide of indifference and inaction in Africa. The changes that are happening in Africa and across the world call for a large number of organisations and young visionaries to get involved to work together and help create a new vision to put us on a path towards a sustainable and inclusive future. Thus, the NAYD Summit Secretariat is open to organizations and individuals willing to join in the journey to see a liberated and empowered African youth. The levels of support required include:

- i. **Technical support;** individuals and institutions with expertise and experience in running events and providing technical support such as: event facilitation, coordination, marketing, promotion, team building and entertainment among others are welcome to partner with us.

- ii. **Specialized services:** the Summit Committee shall require specialized services, including but not limited to:

- 1) Hotels and accommodation

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- 2) Transport
- 3) Catering
- 4) Media and publicity

iii. Funding

The Secretariat shall request for funding from co-operatives, organizations and government institutions. A funding proposal and a request for sponsorship letter shall be developed and submitted to selected organizations. It will be the general intention of the Summit Secretariat to make the event as cost-effective as possible. To this end, therefore, NAYD Executive shall also avail a specific number of full sponsorship and partial sponsorship to some members/ participants who ordinarily would not be able to participate in the Summit because of their current financial background.

Expected outcomes

NAYD envisages achieving the following;

- An upsurge in youth participation in sustainable development and other societal issues in Africa
- A better understanding of the concept of sustainability and the roles of the youth in the future society
- A clearly defined roadmap for sustainable development in Africa
- Strengthened network of youths and organizations dealing with youths in Africa
- A re-energized youth ready to take head-on the challenges of our society

Conclusion

The main challenge will be funding. However, we are convinced that the realization of the African Dream remains with youth and its natural resources, and that this summit is key to its future. NAYD is committed to the attainment of real sustainable development and hereby calls on likeminded individuals and organizations to join hands in the realization of this dream.

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