



AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION

APU

R.131/34/11

RESOLUTION

on

« Participation of population, particularly the youth, in national development with a view to combating poverty, putting an end to exclusion and promoting equity »

The African Parliamentary Union, meeting at its 34th Conference of Speakers of National Parliamentary Assemblies in Khartoum (Sudan) on 30th November and 1st December 2011,

Taking note of the 2011 Human Development Report of the United Nations titled « Sustainability and Equity : A Better Future for All »

Recalling the resolution 50/81 of 14 December 1995 of the General Assembly of the United Nations by which it adopted the World Programme Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, and the resolution 60/210 of 22 December 2005 of the General Assembly of the United Nations as well as all the resolutions on the integration of women in development,

Emphasising the Millennium Declaration which affirms that equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured and that gender equality and the empowerment of women must be promoted as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and stimulate development that is truly sustainable,

Recalling that the African Union Summit of January 2006 underscored the need to restore hope and confidence to African youth and defined the conditions that will enable them to play a greater role in African development,

Noting the new African Youth Charter adopted in July 2006 by the African Union Summit in Banjul, which has been opened for signature and ratification,

Recalling the African Youth Decade 2009-2018 Plan of Action adopted by the African Union in Malabo in July 2011,

Recalling the resolution on « the youth participation in the democratic process » adopted by the 122nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Bangkok on April 1st, 2011,

Knowing that youth issues must be treated through a cross-cutting approach in accordance with the African youth 2009-2018 Plan of Action. In this respect, it must include the objectives of development, secondary and tertiary education, youth employment, climate change, gender factor, health, HIV/AIDS prevention, poverty alleviation, globalization and other development objectives specific to the New Partnership for Africa (NEPAD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Considering that Africa is a continent of young people with more than 60 percent of its population under 25 years of age,

Noting that African youth are forecast to be 75 percent of the population by 2015 given the high birth rate that underlies the demography dynamics,

Affirming that, as a major factor, this young population must be taken into consideration in any genuine social, political, economic development policy in order to foster social progress, reduce political tension and optimize economic performances,

Noting the shortcomings of policies regarding the fight against rural exodus, promoting young people and their participation in the development of the continent,

Noting that youth is usually marginalized in national economic, social and political structures and *asserting* that young people, as social, political and economic active players, must be adequately involved in Africa development processes,

Deeply concerned by the serious situation of the populations in Africa, especially the youth, marked by high rates of unemployment and underemployment, limited access to quality education, HIV /AIDS threat, conflicts and post conflict problems, social, political and economic exclusion, migration to other continents, brain drain, involvement in violent political and social conflicts, organised crime, poverty, etc.; a situation that requires a strategic action at the regional and national levels.

Convinced that peace and human security are preconditions for socio economic development and that the young people can play a major role in the promotion of the culture of peace, reconciliation and post conflict rehabilitation,

Noting that most of the young people, especially in the rural areas, are not interested in politics simply because of indifference and mistrust,

Convinced that there can be no human development without appropriation by the people of national development plans, social equity, proactive policy to reduce the disparities, promotion of the woman, civic engagement and therefore without democracy,

Reaffirming that gender equality is of fundamental importance to achieve sustained growth and development and eradicate poverty,

Reaffirming the need to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education as fast as possible, and at all levels by 2015, and reaffirming the necessity of equal access to education and training at all levels, in particular in business, trade, administration, information and communication technologies and other new technologies, and also the importance to eliminate gender inequalities at all levels, in order to insure the empowerment of women and poverty eradication and allow women to completely contribute to development and to benefit in equality,

Convinced that the participation of young people in the decision-making process and their commitment to poverty reduction strategies will make them more likely, as citizens, to contribute to national development and the realisation of a better life for their societies,

Aware that young Africans must be given material resources, competences and intergenerational synergies to help them contribute fully in the democratic development of their continent, based on peace, the respect of human rights, good governance and the rule of law, without any discrimination, especially of race, sex, language and religion,

Considering that a significant number of girls and women are increasingly exposed to the effects of poverty and that the phenomenon of feminisation of poverty is growing,

Emphasizing the importance of a fair globalization and the need to make full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and youth, the core objective of the relevant national and international policies as well as national development strategies, such as poverty reduction strategies, within the framework of the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals,

1. *Calls on African Governments* to take the following actions in order to facilitate people's participation, especially young people, in sustainable national development :
 - i. Promote, respect and protect all the instruments and conventions on human rights and fundamental liberties ;
 - ii. Promote good governance and the rule of law ;
 - iii. Give priority to education and youth employment to promote their empowerment ;
 - iv. Protect the people, especially the most vulnerable, against social risks and disasters, reduce the disparities and eradicate all forms of exclusion, in particular, by establishing gender equality;
 - v. Adopt the necessary policies aimed at providing an attracting environment for private sector investments targeting employment and youth development ;
 - vi. Adopt strategies centred on wealth creation, increased efforts to promote access to basic social services, social protection, risks and disasters management, good governance, as well as on decentralised and participative development ;
 - vii. Encourage the creation of cultural centres for the youth that allow promoting training and participation in development.
 - viii. Commit the youth and identify its role in the implementation of every development plans such as NEPAD, MDGs, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers process (PRSPs) supported by international financial institutions ;
 - ix. Use information and communication technologies to achieve the MDGs, implement the NEPAD and the African Youth Decade Plan of Action ;
 - x. Fight against the rural exodus by giving priority to development of rural areas where youth unemployment rates are high, by involving them in the creation of the necessary services and infrastructures, especially to facilitate the flow of agricultural products towards the markets;
 - xi. Adopt a strategic action at the regional and national levels aimed at fighting human trafficking and migrant smuggling, social, political and economic exclusion, terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, failure to respect child and teenager rights, gender based discrimination, diseases, poverty and xenophobia ;

- xii. Target marginalized people in youth orientated programmes, especially the young people without qualifications, out of school, unemployed, those living rural areas, infected with HIV/AIDS, the youth with disabilities and those in conflict and post conflict situation;
 - xiii. Adopt measures aimed at preventing the participation of young people and children in conflicts by directing them towards the objectives of peace and national reconciliation ;
 - xiv. Improve youth access to health care and to information on health and diseases;
 - xv. Fight against the brain drain and encourage the participation of Diaspora youth with specific skills in the education process ;
 - xvi. Facilitate access to employment and to creation of business for the young graduates by developing the entrepreneurial culture;
 - xvii. Sign, ratify, adopt and implement all the treaties and conventions on climate change and sustainable environment and promote green employment and renewable energy.
2. *Requests* African states to accelerate the signature, ratification and implementation process of the African Youth Charter ;
 3. *Calls on* the States to give the youth the material resources, the competences and the intergenerational synergies which will help them contribute fully in the democratic development of the continent, based on the absence of gender discrimination, peace and the respect of human rights;
 4. *Urges* African States to incorporate a gender perspective commensurate with gender equality goals, into the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of all national development strategies;
 5. *Urges* Governments to involve youth in the implementation of new projects which are part of national development and strategies and plans to reduce poverty, and also to support initiatives run by youth in the field of development, particularly these aiming at the employment of youth;
 6. *Requests* all the national and international stakeholders interested in youth employment in African countries, to act in favour of young people, especially those with no training nor qualification and who are confronted with unemployment, risky behaviour or social exclusion, by addressing the needs in education, health, training, employment and participation in national development ;
 7. *Calls on* government to adopt programmes aimed at boosting intergenerational dialogue, strengthening and institutionalizing mechanisms for teenager and youth participation in public life, through the family, the education system, local management and socio-economic development, the associative, cultural, sport and political network ;
 8. *Encourages* the setting up of national youth councils or equivalent bodies which are effective channels of cooperation and information exchange between young people, governments and other decision makers and allow young people participation in decision making and in the shaping of the society ;

9. *Recommends* the development of regional and national strategies that translate youth potentialities into real assets to develop the continent on the basis of democracy, gender equality, peace and respect of human rights, in accordance with the objectives of the African Youth Charter adopted by the African Union, with NEPAD and internationally agreed development goals like the MDGs ;
10. *Requests* African States to include young people and youth organizations if need be, in the development of national policies relating to them, bearing in mind that girls and boys, young ladies and young men all have the same rights ;
11. *Calls on* African States to ensure that national policies and programmes on youth development address the needs of young people who are in distressed circumstances, socially excluded or marginalized, including indigenous, migrant, refugee and displaced youth, young people living in conflict or post conflict situation, those subjected to xenophobia and street children;
12. *Calls on* Governments to increase the budget of national education and to ensure sufficient funding for formal and informal education, including programmes that help the young people learn the skills required ; and also calls on them to make sure that youth development, especially access to food, water, health care, housing, education and employment are explicitly addressed in national policies and programmes and in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), where they exist, as well as in other policy documents aimed at facilitating countries participation in the global economy ;
13. *Exhorts* Governments to provide young people with qualifying courses combined with other programmes designed to address their specific needs in the job market and integrate these trainings in educational planning ;
14. *Invites* governments to take all necessary measures to guaranty young people's right to the best possible standard of health and their access to viable health systems and social services, without discrimination. They should also pay specific attention to the impact of transmissible diseases and sexual and reproductive health, more particularly, to preventive measures against transmissible diseases, like HIV/AIDS, and raise young people's awareness on these issues ;
15. *Also Calls on* Governments to set up or strengthen mechanisms facilitating and popularizing young people active and effective participation in development and in the implementation of global and national initiatives like NEPAD, MDGs, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and country support strategies, by working with Youth National Councils and other youth-led forums ; so doing, local concerns will be better addressed in poverty reduction strategies and this will encourage a broader participation in their implementation ;
16. *Encourages* Governments to set up national strategies to reduce the digital divide in each country and to ensure that the young people acquire the necessary skills to make proper use of information and communication technologies in health, education and employment ;

17. *Calls on* governments and parliaments to take specific measures to promote equal access of young women and young men, in rural and urban areas, to education and vocational training on the one hand, and favour vulnerable young people with a low level of education, on the other hand ; the participation of the private sector is essential to ensure the success of vocational training and on-the-job learning ;
18. *Requests* governments to foster business environment and business development by adopting policies that promote micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including cooperatives and other forms of social, economic or financial business ; improve youth access to microfinance and regulate the informal sector ;
19. *Urges* governments to set up programmes that encourage self employment and youth entrepreneurship by involving governmental agencies, employer organisations, the private sector and non governmental organizations, while ensuring equal access of young women in the job market;
20. *Calls on* governments and the private sector to support the young people committed in the creation of micro agricultural enterprises and invest in agricultural technologies that increase production ;
21. *Requests* member states to continue to improve women representation and participation in decision making in key areas, for women priorities, needs and contributions to be duly taken into account. They should also ensure equal access of women in education and vocational training at all levels to give them a chance to take part in national development and in the global economy ;
22. *Stresses* that violence against women and girls is one of the obstacles to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace and has implications on the economic and social development of communities and States, and consequently *calls upon* States to elaborate and implement plans of action to eliminate violence against women and girls ;
23. *Urges* multilateral donors and requests international financial institutions, within their respective mandates, as well as regional development banks, to review and implement policies to support national efforts aimed at insuring that a higher proportion of the resources reach women, in particular in rural or remote areas;
24. *Requests* all United Nations development agencies to integrate the objective of equality and gender equity in all their programmes and policies for African countries in accordance with national strategies for development ;
25. *Encourages* African States to integrate and protect youth in the global economy, including those who live in poverty, through the provision of policies that give them everywhere a real opportunity to find full and productive employment and decent work, including policies that promote the transition to employment on the basis of equality and non-discrimination ;
26. *Invites* governments in Regional Economic Communities (RECs), given the interlocked nature of these problems which spread far beyond national borders, especially because of youth migration, to consider scale economies as part of a joint regional approach to analyse and draw up youth policies ;

27. *Calls on* governments to promote the intra-African cooperation in all fields, especially in relation to migration of workers, considering the needs of the job market and the demographic trends, fully knowing that migration and development are closely connected and that most of migrants are young people;
28. *Urges* African States, the African Union Commission, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), donors and development partners, within the framework of the African Youth Decade 2009-2018 Plan of Action, to set up the youth empowerment and development fund ;
29. *Supports* African States pledge to include young people in the official delegations of the African Union meetings, UN General Assemblies, and related meetings on social and economic development.