

YOUTH

**INNOVATING A
BORDERLESS
AFRICAN
RENAISSANCE**



**YOUTH
CONNEKT**
AFRICA
SUMMIT '23
KENYA 

www.youthconnektafrica.org

AGENDA 2063

SPORTS ECOSYSTEMS

Free Movement of People

Leadership

TALANTA HELA

INNOVATION

INCLUSION

PEACE

AFCFTA

Dignified and Fulfilling work

Innovation Hackathons

HUSTLER'S BAZAAR

ENTREPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Aspirations

AFRICA COMEDY NIGHT

YOUTH VOICES

Action

BORDERLESS AFRICA

Trade

ACCESS

CREATIVE ECONOMY

JOBS

AFRICA

YOUTH

SKILLS

Renaissance

AGRICULTURE

PRODUCTIVITY

Workforce Development

DIGITAL ECONOMY

Mental Health

EQUITY

YOUNG WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

Investments

Connectivity

SUSTAINABILITY

Podcasts

TIMBUKTOO

Immigration

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Policy Hackathons

GREEN ARMY

PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP

EXTRAVAGANZA

CAREER FAIR

1 MILLION NEXT LEVEL INITIATIVE

YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA 2030



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FOREWORD



As I reflect on the journey that brought us to the 6th edition of the YouthConnekt Africa Summit, held with pride and purpose in Nairobi, Kenya, my heart swells with gratitude for the collective efforts that have defined this monumental four days event.

It is with a sense of fulfillment that I share this foreword, a chronicle of our shared dedication to shaping a brighter future for the youth of Africa.

In alignment with the visionary path set by the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy, and Sports, we embarked on a transformative mission — a mission to empower the young minds of our continent.

The ethos of our work lies in the belief that by enriching their knowledge, experiences, and skills and by investing in their ideas and innovations, we are not just unlocking potential; we are unleashing a force that will define the very fabric of Africa's destiny.

As we gathered from across the 32 Member States, the theme "Youth Innovating a Borderless African Renaissance" echoed in our deliberations, underscoring the need for collaborative efforts and shared visions. The summit was a convergence of Africa's emerging youth innovators, entrepreneurs, leaders, and a diverse array of stakeholders. Heads of State, policymakers, business leaders, development partners, and civil society came together in a harmonious symphony, illustrating the power of unity.

I extend profound gratitude to the Government of Kenya led by His Excellency President Dr. William Samoei Ruto C.G.H, Deputy President His Excellency Hon. Rigathi Gachagua, our esteemed partners, and the dedicated team behind the scenes from the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports. Your unwavering commitment has propelled YouthConnekt Africa to new heights, making it a beacon of inspiration for youth empowerment initiatives globally.

The mission we embarked upon is not just an event; it is a movement, a collective pursuit of a borderless African renaissance driven by the innovative spirit of our youth. With 20,000 young voices resonating in unison, we explored, deliberated, and envisioned implementable solutions that will undoubtedly shape the destiny of young Africans.

In the spirit of gratitude and anticipation, we welcomed you all to a summit that not only reflected our journey but set the stage for the transformative impact that awaits. Together, we are architects of change, builders of dreams, and stewards of a future where the youth of Africa stand tall, empowered, and united.

Hon. Ababu Namwamba EGH, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports.

YOUTH INNOVATING A BORDERLESS AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

At the 2023 YouthConnekt Africa Summit, hosted by H.E. William Samoei Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya, an estimated 20,000 youth, from 24 nationalities convened over four colorful days in December 2023.

The YouthConnekt Africa Hub was pleased to partner with the Mastercard Foundation in curating and delivering meaningful engagements of youth, which included an intergenerational dialogue, a policy hackathon, the participation of creatives, and the a marketplace for youth entrepreneurs.

Placing youth at the centre of Africa's development, the annual convening of the YouthConnekt Africa seeks to draw on the agency, talent and collective energy of Africa's youth to recentre the investments and policy decisions from a youth lens.

At the YouthConnekt Africa Summit, leaders from different industries, public and private, meet and engage youth to explore emerging thinking, and to chart new pathways.

Themed: "Innovating a borderless African Renaissance." the 2023 YouthConnekt Africa made a clarion call for an Open Africa - where citizens can move easily and trade more.

The summit covered seven thematic areas:

1. *Sustainable Green Livelihood, Climate Adaptation and Resilience*
2. *The Renaissance of the African Dream*
3. *Leveraging Innovation and the Digital Era*
4. *Sustainable Peace, Security, and Reconciliation*
5. *Enterprise Development: The Future of Africa's Borderless Commerce*
6. *Vulnerabilities around Mental, Sexual and Reproductive Health*
7. *Reimagining Business for Africa's Creative Industry, Sports and Culture*

The Summit with intention focused on showcasing youth talent, innovation and entrepreneurial ventures through the various youth-led conversations, and the hustler's bazaar - a marketplace for African entrepreneurs.

The Summit is a platform for deliberation and rich conversation on how young people in Africa can be empowered to become drivers of the aspirations spelled out in Agenda 2063 – "The Africa We Want".

This report presents key highlights of the 2023 YouthConnekt Africa Summit, and lessons learnt.

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I have listened to the youth of Africa imagine a borderless Africa. They have imagined an Africa where they have a central role to play. An Africa that respects the mantra of “For Youth, by Youth and of Youth.”

I have listened to the youth of Africa imagine a borderless Africa. A continent that allows free movement of people, of goods, of services and ideas. Where you can be in Turkana and trade with someone in Timbuktoo. You can be in Port Elisabeth and trade with someone in Casablanca. You can imagine an idea in Mauritania and see the idea come to life in Central Africa Republic.

That is the kind of Africa that these great young people have imagined.

Hon. Ababu Terrah Namwamba
Cabinet Secretary, Youth, Sports and Creative Economy
Republic of Kenya

THE YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA INITIATIVE

YouthConnekt Africa is a continental initiative with the mission to empower young people by enhancing their knowledge, experiences, and skills while investing in their ideas, innovations, and initiatives to harness Africa's demographic dividend.

Over the years, the YouthConnekt Africa has grown to become one of the largest policy and business convener, which tables forward thinking discussions on the socio-economic development of African youth which cuts across industries.

Inspired by the visionary leadership of H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, who sought to create a Government led platform for young people to contribute to policy dialogues, co-designing and informing decisions on the investments and programs aimed at empowering them. In 2012, for the first time, YouthConnekt platform convened young people, civil society, development partners, private sector to deliver a nationwide innovation and entrepreneurship challenge, and a *Meet the President Dialogue*, both efforts which since birthed many new initiatives co-created by young people and various stakeholders.

In 2017, the Government of Rwanda, in partnership with UNDP and UNCTAD, organized the first YouthConnekt Africa Summit which was hosted by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda.

Alongside this inaugural summit, the first Ministers of Youth Roundtable convened and deliberated on the following:

- 1. Scaling up of the YouthConnekt initiative to the regional level beyond the six initial countries (Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Uganda);*
- 2. The establishment of a YouthConnekt Africa Hub and offering regional support to national youth programs, and*
- 3. The establishment of a YouthConnekt Empowerment Fund, which would seek to finance youth empowerment initiatives across the continent.*

Following this, the African Union Executive Council, in February 2019, endorsed the YouthConnekt Africa as a model initiative to be scaled and supported by the establishment of the YouthConnekt Africa Hub, an independent secretariat to support the scaling of the YouthConnekt Africa initiative. Subsequent summits were held in Kigali and Accra, Ghana. *To date YouthConnekt Africa counts 32 member states and has impacted over 12 Million Youth across Africa.*

Summit Editions					
Theme	REALIZING AFRICA'S YOUTH POTENTIAL	CONNECTING YOUTH FOR CONTINENTAL TRANSFORMATION	I TAKE THE LEAD	AFRICA BEYOND AID	RESILIENT YOUTH, RESILIENT AFRICA
	Host: Rwanda	Host: Rwanda	Host: Rwanda	Host: Ghana	Host: Rwanda
Key stats	3,000 Delegates 89% Youth 40% F, 60% M 25 Nationalities	8,450 Delegates 80% Youth 41% F, 59% M 69 Nationalities	12,655 Delegates 90% Youth 41% F, 59% M 91 Nationalities	4,400 Delegates 89% Youth 39% F, 61% M 66 Nationalities	9,000 Delegates 90% Youth 42% F, 58% M 80 Nationalities
Year	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022



AN INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE

Each year, the YouthConnekt Africa Summits convenes a one-of-a-kind intergenerational dialogue between Africa's youth, Heads of State, and leaders from government, development partners and the private sector. As a highlight of the summit, the intergenerational dialogue tackles questions of essence to the development of Africa, considering youth as partners in Africa's transformation.

The Intergenerational Dialogue at the 2023, was graciously hosted by H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya, who hosted H.E. Sam Matekane, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, H.E. Rigathi Gachagua, Vice President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of the AfCFTA, H.E. Nardos Thomas, AUDA NEPAD Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Chido Mpemba, the AU Youth Envoy, Ms. Julie Gichuru, Chief of Public Affairs of the Mastercard Foundation, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director - Regional Bureau for Africa.

This Dialogue addressed the summit theme Innovating a Borderless African Renaissance, reflecting on Africa's coming together, the advantage of having a youth dividend, and call to a borderless Africa.



“It is our intention, as leaders of this continent, to convert our borders into bridges for our people to connect; that we convert our borders into stepping stones for our young people to live in a borderless and wireless continent.

H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto
President of the Republic of Kenya



“ —

In this fourth industrial revolution, we cannot ignore the power of technology. The youth should innovate and come up with modern solutions that make us one continent that trades better and easier with itself.

H.E. Sam Matekane
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho



“ —

The Africa we want is the Africa the world needs. This goes beyond Africa. We are here influencing what happens next in our world today.

Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa
UNDP Assistant Administrator
Director, Regional Bureau for Africa



“ —

We're looking at agriculture and seeing that this continent will be the breadbasket of the world. We will feed ourselves and we will feed the world. We have heard of the reserves of natural resources. It is you who will unlock these doors, it is you who will innovate - the young people of this continent. You are doing it everyday.

Ms. Julie Gichuru
Chief Public Affairs and Communications Officer.
Mastercard Foundation



“ —

Earlier this year, we made a plea, as young people, to have the AU Youth Charter revised to meet the current realities that young people face. We are truly honored that this request was granted to see how added mechanisms can be made to the Youth Charter.

Ms. Chido Mpemba
AU Youth Envoy

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To grow fast, we must deliberately focus on innovation to create fresh opportunities through the creation of new products, models and partnerships.

The Hustler Fund has enabled more than 21.7 million Kenyans access resources to establish and progress their enterprises especially those at the lowest echelons of the socio-economic ladder.

H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto
President of the Republic of Kenya

POLICY DIALOGUE: DIGNIFIED AND FULFILLING WORK FOR YOUTH IN AFRICA

The YouthConnekt Africa Summit featured a Policy Dialogue on Dignified and Fulfilling Work for Youth in Africa. With this discussion, we sought to bring to the table, the discussion and definition of Dignified and Fulfilling Work.

The session was organised in the format of a panel discussion which featured the following speakers:

- Hon. Carlos Do Canto Monteiro – Deputy Minister, Youth & Sports, Cabo Verde
- Christopher Seagatong – Chairperson, Botswana Job for Youth, Botswana
- Hosea Munene Mugeru – Manager, Toolkit, Kenya
- Lesley Marange – CEO, Glytime, Zimbabwe
- Phillip Pande – Policy Analyst, Kenya

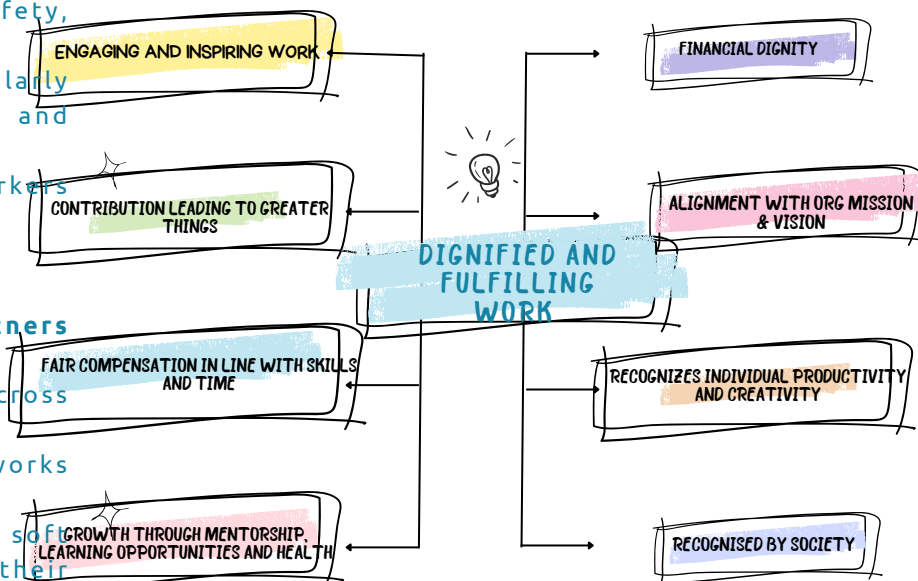
Interesting insights emerged from the discussion.

Dignified and Fulfilling work is work where there is:

- Protection of youth workers through firm policies that support worker safety, including insurance covers.
- A fair minimum wage covered, and regularly negotiated by employer unions and governments.
- Continued training offered to workers including for the digital transition.
- Protection against sexual harassments.

Further to this, governments and partners should:

- Ensure fair minimum wage is met across sectors
- Certification of informal sector works adding value to the Jua Kalis
- Support youth to gain market relevant soft skills “people skills” to support their transition to work.
- Increase job shadowing opportunities





PATH TO PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP

YOUTHCONNEKT FELLOWS MASTERCLASS

The YouthConnekt Africa since its establishment in 2017 is working to deliver on a vision of a connected African Youth for socio-economic transformation. We do this by empowering young people through enhancing their knowledge, experiences and skills while investing in their ideas, innovations and initiatives so that Africa makes progress in harnessing its demographic dividends by 2030.

In 2019, the YouthConnekt Africa received a mandate, from the African Union Executive Council, to build a network of African Youth Leaders. To deliver on this, the YouthConnekt Africa creates annual opportunities for young leaders attending the YouthConnekt Africa Summit to convene, learn and exchange. Further to this, the YouthConnekt seeks to embed key values of responsible and ethical leadership through the YouthConnekt Africa Fellows.

Through its network of national chapters and partners, the YouthConnekt Africa identifies and brings together outstanding, up coming young leaders in governance, social entrepreneurship, digital innovation, civil society and public service across the continent aged between 21 – 35 years. The YouthConnekt Fellowship will offer practical skill building for social change, leadership coaching, discussion of critical issues, and small group support. YouthConnekt Fellows will also participate in various virtual engagements, including one-on-one conversations with experienced leaders in the YouthConnekt Africa's network.

Programme Objectives

1. Build responsible leaders within Africa's crop of emerging champions;
2. Connect these emerging leaders to community projects and to national engagement to further impact other young persons;
3. Build a large network of emerging capable young African leaders who are engaged with the development of the continent.

In collaboration with UNICEF and NIA DELTA, 91 young leaders participated in a full day masterclass on Purposeful Leadership.

The Leadership masterclass was centered on the iKigai framework which led the leaders to reflect on how they can leverage their strengths in charting their leadership journeys. The young leaders developed SMART trajectory maps, and held group coaching discussions.

The session was graced with the highlight engagement with Ms. Rania Dagash, Deputy Regional Director at UNICEF, who shared her personal leadership journey and experiences.

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We live in an age where borders are becoming more and more irrelevant; thus technology allows us to connect and collaborate across countries and continents.

This presents a unique opportunity for the youth of Africa to rise to the occasion, to be designers of our shared future. The challenges we face are vast and complex, from climate change and unemployment, to poverty and inequality, among others. But within these challenges lie opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship and social change.

Your generation is armed with creativity, passion and advanced technology. You are well equipped to tackle these challenges and build a better tomorrow. Take your rightful place in innovation in all sectors and spheres of leadership.

H.E. Rigathi Gachagua
Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya

UNFPA INNOVATION HACKLAB

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADOLESCENT
SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE



YOUTH HEALTH HACKLAB

UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office in partnership with YouthConnekt Africa and Afrilabs launched its 2023 edition of the Innovation Hacklab which had a focus on Mental Health and Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

Over 200 applications were received from the East and Southern Africa region, and top 10 were selected to pitch at the YouthConnekt Africa Summit to inspire youth leadership and solutions in the space of mental health.

The winners of the Innovation Hacklab, received a sizeable grant to implement their innovation and will be further supported with capacity building and other enterprise support services for a full year.



THE EGUMENI HUB

The Egumeni Hub was organized by the African Union Commission in partnership with Trace Academy, IOM and UNDP as a platform designed to empower young people across Africa.

The Hub ran a three-day programme offering a variety of sessions and programs. The Key highlights were:

1. Intergenerational Mentorship Panel themed: "Leveraging on Innovation to Accelerate Sustainable Development for Youth in Africa."
2. Training sessions on:
 - Digital Marketing,
 - How to become a DJ,
 - Digital Media Programming,
 - Entrepreneurship and Soft Skills.
 - How to become an influencer
 - Marketing for Creative Entrepreneurs
3. Live Podcast and content recording;
4. Capacity building on Policy Making by and for Youth;





THE HUSTLER'S BAZAAR

In celebration of youth entrepreneurship, and to offer young entrepreneurs from different part of Africa the opportunity to bring their products into a new market and interact with a wider audience, the Hustler's Bazaar was set up at the conference venue.

A total of 290 entrepreneurs, from ten countries participated in the exhibition: Kenya, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Comoros, Malawi, Madagascar, Gambia, Republic of Congo, and Guinea. The images below portray the youth exhibitions.



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YouthConnekt was an idea in 2012. Today, we want to acknowledge the leadership of countries across the continent in nurturing young people.

In 2012, H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda met young people. The young people had many ideas and projects. Out of this engagement YouthConnekt was birthed to connect young people to policymakers, business leaders and to great opportunities. Initiated by a Head of State, YouthConnekt is championed by other Heads of State. Today H.E. Dr. William Ruto hosts the continent of Africa in Nairobi, for this YouthConnekt Intergenerational Dialogue.

We encourage African Youth to keep the dream alive. Let us join efforts to create a borderless Africa with opportunities, to generate lots of innovation to empower our young people.

Hon. Abdallah Utumatwisha
Minister of Youth and Arts
Republic of Rwanda



CREATIVE PERFORMANCES

The 6th Edition of the YouthConnekt Africa Summit, inspired by the Government of Kenya Talanta Hela initiative and the incredible potential of Africa's Creative and Cultural Economy, was a celebration of the diverse and rich artistic talent of the continent.

From theatrical pieces, music and dance, and for the first time ever - an Africa Comedy Night. Young and upcoming artists shared the platform with renown industry names. The images below display some of the presentations. The list of performing artists is annexed.





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"The Youth Connekt Africa Summit holds profound significance as it recognizes Africa's youth as active contributors to shaping solutions for our continent's challenges. Providing them with a meaningful platform for engagement and empowerment is essential for Africa's resilience and prosperity in the years to come."

Mr. Anthony Ngororano
UNDP Kenya, Resident Representative

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To truly empower our youth and unlock the full potential of our continent, we must make their sexual and reproductive health as well as their mental well-being our utmost priority. When the youth are educated, empowered, and healthy, we pave the way for harnessing the demographic dividend and realizing the Africa we envision - prosperous, vibrant, and inclusive.

Mrs. Lydia Zigomo
UNFPA, Regional Director, ESARO



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"Empowering Africa's youth is not just a choice; it is our most strategic imperative to realise The Africa We Want. With their boundless energy, creativity, and determination, Africa's youth are not only the hope for the future but the leaders, innovators, and game changers of today. Through our flagship initiative Energize Africa, AUDA-NEPAD prioritises youth-centred development in all our programmes, including infrastructure development, agricultural productivity, science, technology, and innovation or capacity building of MSMEs. I firmly believe that the millions of African youths are the bedrock to transform our industries, spark innovation, and drive economic growth on the continent."

H.E. Nardos Thomas
CEO, AUDA NEPAD

SUMMIT DELIBERATIONS

SUSTAINABLE GREEN LIVELIHOOD, CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

1. Youth should be engaged in the formulation of climate resilience and sustainability policies.
2. Innovative and green Investments should be made to enable youth to make contributions to climate change mitigation and resilience efforts.
3. Youth across Africa should be mobilized, through a multiple-stakeholder approach, to participate in reforestation efforts.
4. Efforts should be made to scale youth skilling for a green and just transition.
5. Comprehensive and technology-based education should apply to enable youth to practice sustainable agriculture practices
6. Integration of technology and innovation in the development of agrifood systems should be supported.
7. To enable, attract and retain more youth in the agrifood sector specific policies and measures should be put in place to support them.

RENAISSANCE OF THE AFRICAN DREAM

1. Foster pride in African Identity among Youth through reflection on African culture and heritage.
2. Engage youth voices in shaping African identity, pride and regional integration.
3. Create opportunities for Youth led innovations and initiative in solving Africa's biggest challenges.

LEVERAGING INNOVATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

1. Strengthen multisector collaboration to enable the development of context-relevant innovations and technologies, and commercialization pathways.
2. Encourage a multisectoral approach to unlock youth digital skills, access to devices and connectivity and access to digital/remote jobs.
3. Scale delivery of relevant, impact-oriented, inclusive youth skilling for the digital economy through ecosystems.
4. Bridge the divide in participation in the digital economy by an inclusive scale of access to accelerators.
5. Academia should adapt and be ahead of the curb in driving and delivering knowledge on tech and digital innovation and possible impact on society.

ENTREPRISE DEVELOPMENT: THE FUTURE OF AFRICA'S BORDERLESS COMMERCE

YOUTH MENTAL, SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

REIMAGINING BUSINESS FOR AFRICA'S CREATIVE ECONOMY, SPORTS AND CULTURE

1. Prioritise investments for the facilitation of youth entrepreneurs in regional trade efforts leveraging digital technologies.
2. Strengthen linkages among African youth entrepreneurs for regional trade.
3. Strengthen national ecosystems to enable youth participation in regional trade.
4. Create opportunities for youth to develop solutions and service that facilitate regional trade.

1. Increase inclusive and youth-friendly service centres to access services and support to GBV victims and teen mothers.
2. Prioritize investments for increased access to adolescent and youth responsive Mental, Sexual and Reproductive health services to young people in least-served communities.
3. Increase access to education and counselling services through peer-to-peer mechanisms at the community level.
4. Increased domestic financing for sustainable response to the rise in STD/HIV infection in Africa
5. Through media and awareness campaigns, reduce the stigma surrounding youth access to mental, sexual and reproductive health.

1. Establish systems to identify, nurture and monetize talent.
2. Re-evaluate legal frameworks and intellectual property rights for cultural, creative and sports industry development.
3. Make investments in the development of spaces of production and distribution of creative work and sports development.
4. Invest in developing the industry side of sports through the professionalization of the different actors and services in the sports industry.
5. Invest in social and cultural exchange programmes.

SUMMIT DELIBERATIONS

The 2023 YouthConnekt Africa summit acknowledged and endorsed the following strategic initiatives:

1. The 1 Million Next Level initiative of the African Union Commission.
2. The Talanta Hela Initiative championed by the Ministry of Youth, Creative Economy and Sports of the Republic of Kenya.
3. The call to action to all African Ministries of Youth to engage youth in a Greening Africa effort by partnering through planting and nurturing of trees in all our communities.
4. The YouthConnekt Africa 2030 Strategy.
5. The Youth in Trade initiatives that will be established through the partnership between the AFCFTA Secretariat, the African Union Commission, the YouthConnekt Africa Hub, partners and African Member States.

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“Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 envisions an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children. However, we can only benefit from Africa’s youth potential if young people are provided with relevant opportunities and equipped with the skills, they need to harness those opportunities.

The theme “Youth Innovating a Borderless African Renaissance”, indeed, recognizes Africa’s youth as key agents to Africa’s sustainable development and their pivotal role in building the Africa We Want.”

Ms. Prudence Ngwenya

**Director of Women, Gender and Youth Directorate
African Union Commission**

