



Connekting Youth for  
Continental Transformation

8 - 10 October 2018 | Kigali | Rwanda

# REPORT

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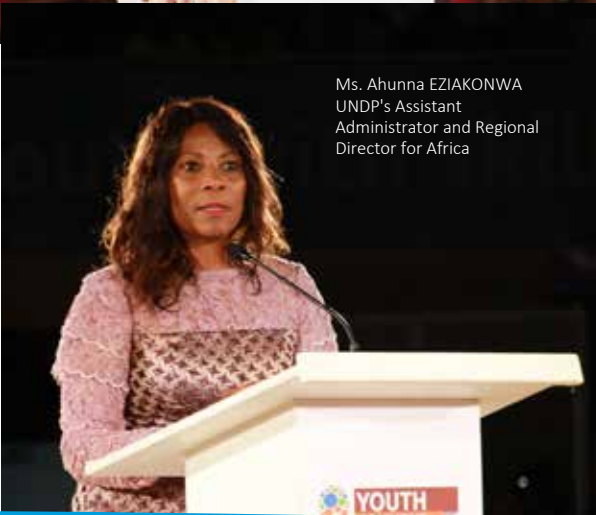
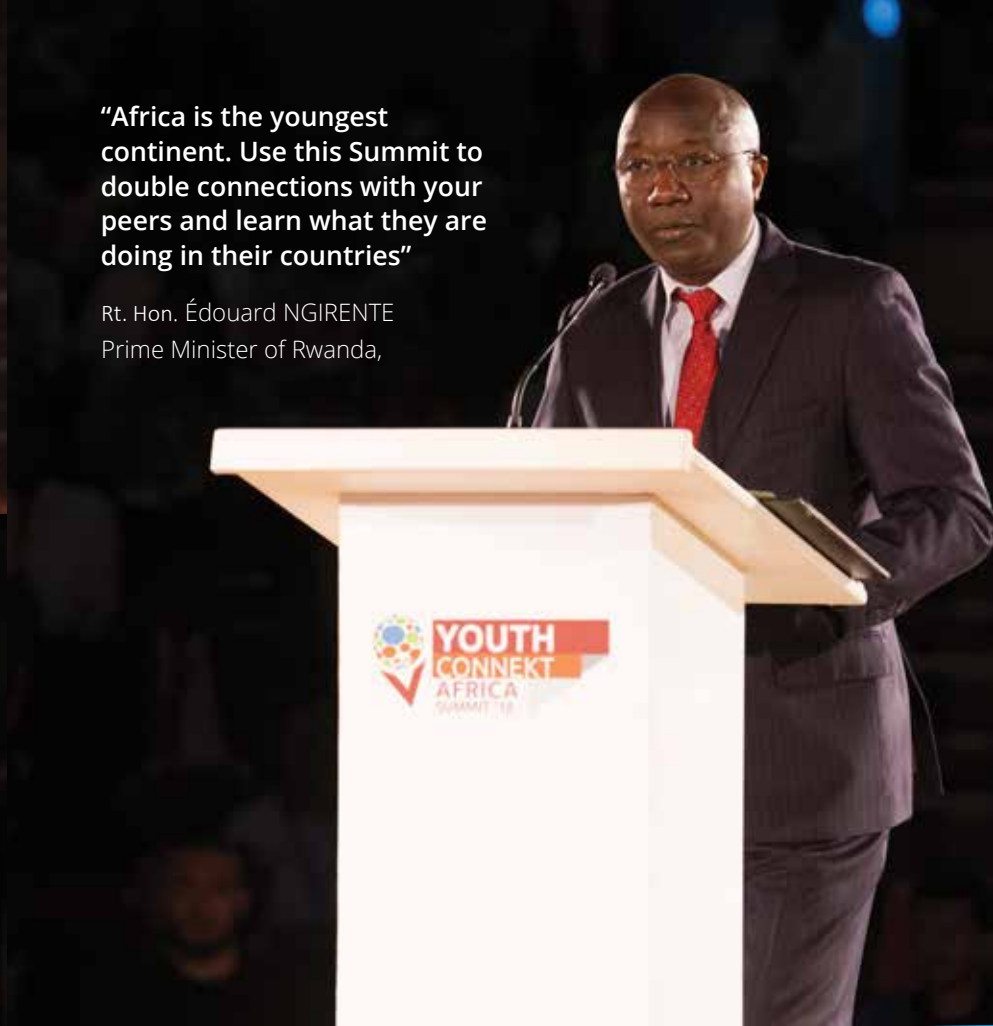






**"Africa is the youngest continent. Use this Summit to double connections with your peers and learn what they are doing in their countries"**

Rt. Hon. Édouard NGIRENTE  
Prime Minister of Rwanda,



Ms. Ahunna EZIAKONWA  
UNDP's Assistant  
Administrator and Regional  
Director for Africa

# Connekting youth for continental transformation





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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AU-YVC</b>	African Union Youth Volunteer Corps
<b>AUC</b>	African Union Commission
<b>CFTA</b>	Continental Free Trade Area
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>MINIYOUTH</b>	Ministry of Youth





# Introduction

## Background

Africa's greatest resource is arguably its nearly 420 million youth. Yet, this tremendous asset is relatively untapped. This is largely due to limited access to education, mentorship, finance, employment opportunities and health required to meaningfully participate in the continent's socio-economic transformation and realize the economic dividend.

The YouthConnekt program is a multifaceted youth empowerment model Initiated in Rwanda in 2012 to focus and leverage the youth employability, entrepreneurship and civic engagement through innovation. Building on its positive impact in Rwanda, the programme has been embraced as a high-impact solution for African countries to realize the demographic dividend. To date, seven countries have already launched YouthConnekt and many others are in the process of implementing the model under the YouthConnekt Africa umbrella. YouthConnekt Africa is set to empower at least 1.2 million African youth entrepreneurs and leaders annually.

The YouthConnekt Africa Summit is an annual convening that connects youth from across the continent with policy influencers, program leaders, private sector, and non-governmental institutions to formulate youth empowerment implementation strategy through strategic partnerships.

# The 2017 YouthConnekt Africa Summit

The inaugural YouthConnekt Africa Summit, took place from 19 -21 July 2017 in Kigali Rwanda and hosted by His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda. It brought together international government leaders, multinational business executives, youth entrepreneurs, artists and youth opinion leaders to tap into Africa enormous potential by connecting youth with the skills, education and opportunities needed towards becoming a new generation of problem solvers. The Summit resulted in the following three key recommendations:

1. Scaling up of the YouthConnekt initiative to the regional level beyond the current 6 countries.
2. The establishment of a YouthConnekt Africa Hub based in Kigali-Rwanda and offering regional support to national youth programs.
3. The establishment of a YouthConnekt Empowerment Fund, geared towards financing youth empowerment initiatives across the continent.





# The 2018 YouthConnekt Africa Summit

Hosted by the Government of Rwanda, specifically the Ministry of Youth, in partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Union Commission, the 2018 YouthConnekt Africa Summit took place from 8 – 10 October 2018 at the Kigali Convention Centre and concluded with listed achievements:

1. Transform the potential of youth in Africa into prosperity.
2. Empower the youth by connecting them to social and economic transformation – through technology, opportunities, knowledge, and capital, which will empower them towards transforming the continent.
3. Officiate the launch of the YouthConnekt Africa Hub.

The summit marked the official launch of the YouthConnekt Africa Hub that will serve as a coordination entity to connect and promote existing youth empowerment initiatives at the continental level, nurture and strengthen the existing network as well share expertise from the different member countries .

The Summit also provided a platform for all partners involved in youth development to synergize around policies, programs and partnerships to connect youth for continental transformation.



# Methodology

The Summit which took the form of Parallel, Panel, and Plenary Sessions including Ted-Talk style approaches, networking, as well as a Field Trip that led the conference to be referred as highly interactive; in attendance were over 2800 delegates, including leaders from various African governments, business executives, academia, as well as members of the civil society. Discussions focused on various issues affecting the youth in Africa and approaches on how best they can be empowered to industrialize Africa's economy. Also employed in the Summit were the following innovative activities:

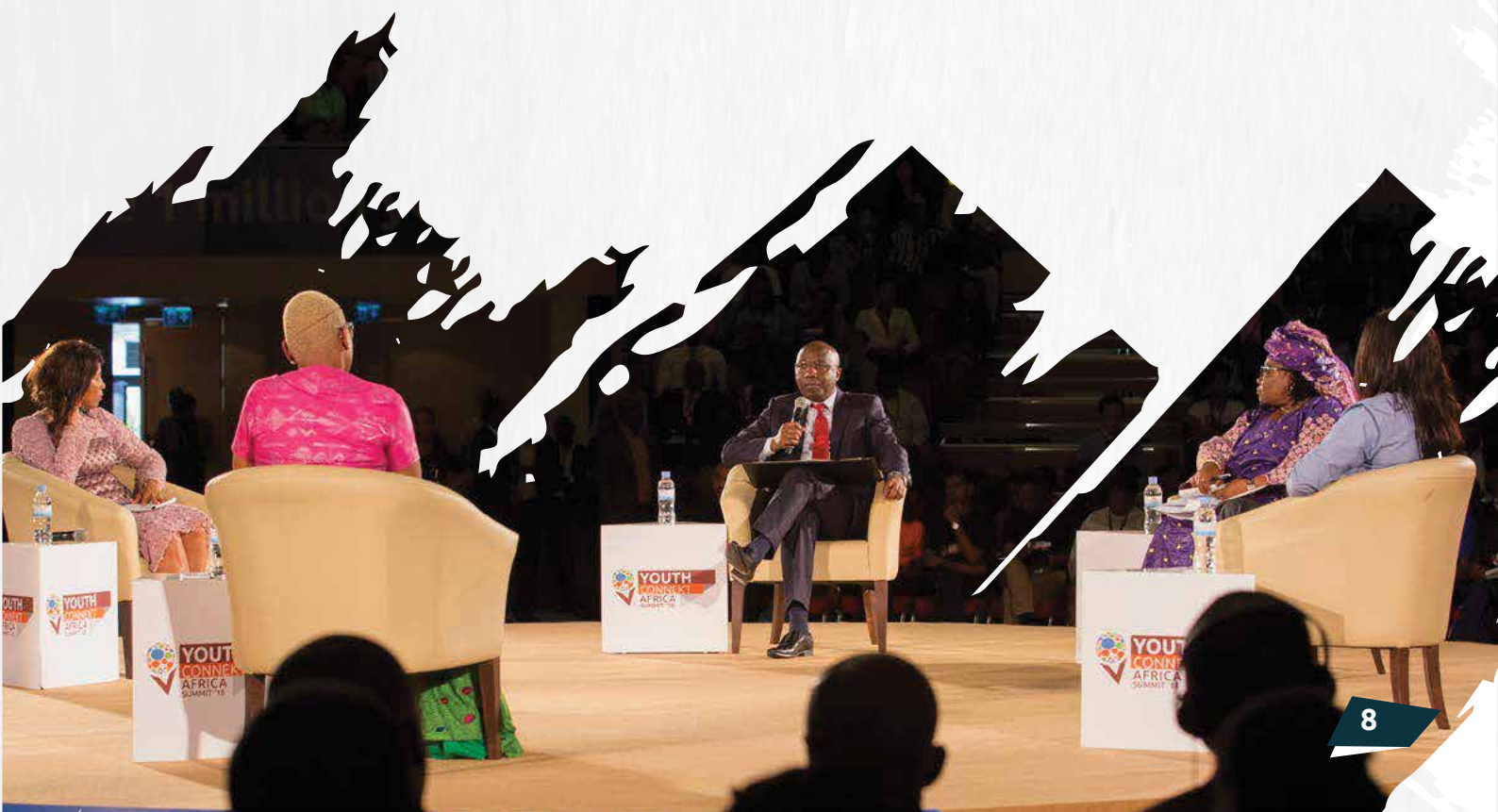
- 1.** Face the gorillas which is a platform that provided opportunities for a select group of african entrepreneurs and young innovators to make a 5-minute pitch to a panel of angel investors to access capital for their businesses, get partnership or mentorship in front of a live audience.
- 2.** YouthConnekt Africa Awards: Acted as an inspiration to upcoming social entrepreneurs and is a continental competition of innovation projects. Selected winners spend 3 days with diferent mentors and attended intensive courses to improve their business models to scale. The following four categories were awarded each with a cash award of US\$5000 and a certifcate.
  - Social Innovation Award (sponsored by the African Development Bank)
  - Pioneers for Prosperity Award (sponsored by UNDP)
  - Green Growth Innovation Award (sponsored by Ministry of Environment-Rwanda, Global Green Growth Institute and FONERWA)
  - Digital Inclusion Award (sponsored by Digital Opportunity Trust)
- 3.** Field Trips across the city of Kigali.
- 4.** Graduation of the 9th batch of African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC).
- 5.** YouthConnekt Africa Innovative Race



## Summary of Opening Session

Hon Rosemary Mbabazi, Minister of Youth, Republic of Rwanda, in her Opening Remarks affirmed that indeed Africa needs to accelerate its efforts to close its youth empowerment gap in order to remain relevant in a competitive global economy, increasingly developed and driven by rapid technological advancements. On her part Mrs. Ahunna Eziakonwa, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa, stated that UNDP remains committed to continue supporting the scaling up of YouthConnekt across Africa. She further declared that YouthConnekt is a practical, concrete and most effective way to tackle the current unemployment situation on the continent as it empowers the youth to be the potent actors and driving vectors in the implementation of the 2030 agenda.

The Key Note Address was delivered by Dr Edouard Ngirente, Prime Minister, Republic of Rwanda. He called on the youth of Africa to proactively use their skills, networks and resources to build “The Africa We Want”. He further challenged them to engage their policy makers towards nation building and to effectively design the scale-up model, facilitate national, regional, and continental YouthConnekt events, as well as lobby for more coherent and inclusive youth empowerment policies and programmes.



# Summary of Key Outcomes per Session

The following is a summary of the key outcomes from the various Sessions:

## *Session 1: Discussion with Leaders : Youth at the Center of Africa's Transformation*

This Session was a discussion among panelists, who included, i) Dr Edourd Ngirente, Rt. Honorable Prime Minister of Rwanda, ii) Ahunna Eziakonwa, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa, iii) Sarah Anyang Agbor, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology-African Union Commission (AUC) and iv) Nicola Grace Hove, CEO, Uhuru Gold Mining, Global Shaper. This Session sought to determine the role of young people in Africa's transformation; the following were the key outcomes:

### **Emerging Issues**

- To see real commitments made by development partners, governments as well as the private sector on key issues facing Africa, for example creation of jobs, and financing business start-ups.
- Member states not walking the talk (implementation and execution of policies).

### **Recommendations:**

- Governments and partners should change the approach of doing programmes for youth towards doing programmes with youth.
- Need for youth participation in the process of innovation, job creation as well as other avenues that can lead to Africa's prosperity.
- Replicate the YouthConnekt programme in all African countries.

## *Session 2: Youth Spotlight on AU and AfDB (Panel Session)*

The Session sought to address the critical investments in human capital, particularly in youth entrepreneurial skills and in-demand workplace skills towards facilitating the transition to higher-productivity modern sectors and for shared prosperity.

### **Emerging Issues**

- The lack of information on where and how youth can access funding opportunities for their business.

### **Recommendations**

- Agriculture should be made more attractive to the youth by creating incentives to change their negative attitudes towards it.
- African leaders should work towards removing trade barriers that limit partnership trading with other countries on the continent.



# Summary of Key Outcomes per Session

## **Session 3:** **Connekted Girls - Health (Parallel Session)**

Through a Panel Discussion format, the session focused on young people's access to sexual and reproductive health information and services as a prerequisite and one of the drivers of harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Africa.

### **Approaches to alleviating teenage pregnancies in Africa:**

- Changing the attitude of society on teen pregnancy as well as the rules of engagement between boys and girls.
- Discussions on sex through multi-dimensional approaches that involve the community, parents, religious leaders, decisions makers as well as the youth.
- Institutionalizing sexual education into the school curriculum.

### **Innovative approaches to tackling SRHR**

- The UNFPA Innovation Accelerator seeks to develop approaches on how to tackle SRHR challenges while creating job opportunities for young people and have their potential fulfilled. It does this by supporting young people develop social enterprises that in turn create a social impact to the community.

### **Recommendations:**

- Expanding access to youth friendly health information and services in addressing teenage pregnancy.
- Develop policy actions to effectively address the social, cultural and economic challenges many young mothers face.

## **Session 4:** **Connekted Innovators (Parallel Session)**

The panelists in this Session sought to determine the key challenges/barriers that hamper innovation in Africa and how they can be overcome. Below are the key outcomes of the discussions:

### **Barriers to innovation in Africa**

- Not putting the youth at the centre of innovative interventions and solutions.
- Not engaging the youth and seeking their input in the programs and policies that are prepared for them.
- Lack of basic research facilities in Africa, including data for innovators to do basic research and come out with more innovative ideas.

### **Recommendations**

- Set up a youth innovation fund for idea translation into reality.
- Create youth networks and talents to build teams to drive transformative innovation in Africa.
- Giving the youth the opportunity to lead the innovation movement in Africa that will help towards bringing about transformation in development as well as economic sustainability of Africa.

# Summary of Key Outcomes per Session



## *Session 5: Youth Driving SDGs (Plenary Session)*

The SDGs are universal, comprehensive and inclusive goals, which apply to all countries. The youth are in the mainstream of SDGs and YouthConnekt is one of the approaches to their realization. The role of the private sector to their realization is also critical.



## *Session 6: Connekted Girls*

Using a tech-talk panel approach, this Session focused on experiences by women in the male dominated field of technology, the challenges encountered as well as how they overcame them.

### **Emerging Issues:**

- In some African countries, policies have been developed that spur young girls into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); their numbers have been steadily rising, however this does not hold true in institutions of higher learning. This can be attributed to a number of issues, including, lack of scholarship opportunities, social barriers, stereotyping, cultures that hamper individual development (especially for girls), not feeling confident enough in a male dominated field (social barriers), stereotyping as well as individual mindset where girls believe they are not able to succeed in a space that is ideally for men.

### **Recommendations:**

- Towards breaking this barriers, African governments need to put in place conducive frameworks to encourage women pursue STEM subjects.
- The need for women to have a mindset shift in their career pursuits, and not let it be determined by social or cultural norms. This can be achieved by walking with role models, women who have gone ahead and succeed in their career pursuits.
- Develop policy actions to effectively address the social, cultural and economic challenges many youth face, around health matters.



# Summary of Key Outcomes per Session



## *Session 7: Connekted Innovators (Parallel Session)*

The session was to enable the youth/participants to meet with potential financiers and partners in innovation and development to answer their questions, create partnerships, connect with, exchange information and learn. The idea was to, i) help participants (youth) to meet with already established mentors in the field of innovation, hear their experiences, share their ideas with them, ask questions as well as learn from them, ii) help bridge the gap on opportunities for mentorship for innovators, business people and career (mentorship for personal development).

### ***Outcomes:***

- This session therefore served as a platform to link young innovators with correspondent mentors to expand their innovations and projects to the continental level.



## *Session 8: Urban YouthConnekt (Plenary Session)*

Through a Panel Discussion format, the session focused on innovation, policy, partnership and financing among the youth.

### ***Emerging Issues:***

- There is a big gap between Africa youth and people living with disability who feel they have no voice. There is need for a system on how to empower them and involve them in activities such as the YouthConnekt that would help them come out of poverty and enable them change society.

### ***Innovative approaches being to harness the potential of young people:***

- UN-Habitat: Developing approaches on how best to harness the potential of young people and funding through various crowd sourcing approaches e.g. Kickstarter which is a crowd sourcing website.
- Nairobitts Trust through its The Beats Model reaches out to young people who are unreachable in the informal settlements and have little access to ICT, specifically to those who have not been to tertiary learning and empowering them to gain employability skills.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Establish more youth resource centres to offer relevant skills to the youth in line with urbanization and technology advancement. Training offered should be geared towards mentoring the youth to become self-reliant, self-sustained, creative and innovative.
- Positive use of social media in advocating for youth rights in matters related to healthcare, education, poverty reduction, employment creation, budgeting, leadership and governance. Use the same channel to keep the government in check by tracking development progress and giving opinion on issues affecting youth.

# Summary of Key Outcomes per Session

## *Session 9: Connekted Girls (Plenary Session)*

- This interactive session saw women entrepreneurs and individuals from the plenary give their input towards women empowerment, the challenges that stand in the way, and the approaches towards making it successful and all inclusive.

### **Emerging Issues**

- Women in the grassroots still have the mindsets, ingrained in them since childhood, that do not give them the impetus to advance as individuals, in their education, careers as well as in their position in society.
- Women, who have suffered rape, sexual violence, assault, need to speak openly about it and overcome the trauma, so as to build themselves a new future.

### **Recommendations**

- Need for governments to invest in menstruation for education – apart for school books provided for both boys and girls, sanitary pads is also a requirement for girls, to keep them in school.
- With 80% of women being found in the rural areas, there is need for more YouthConnekt conversation taking place in rural areas as well as provide them with opportunities to learn various skills as well as grow in self-knowledge around e.g. sexual and reproductive health.
- Some laws and policies are un-accommodative and disenfranchise women, e.g. career growth. These laws need to be changed to make them accommodative to both men and women, including those living with disabilities.

## *Session 10: Urban YouthConnekt (Parallel Session)*

The panel discussion revolved around the involvement of youth in policy formulation, and empowerment. Discussed the role of UN-Habitat towards empowering the youth of Africa, specifically through, i) mobilizing resources to implement youth priorities of respective governments, ii) skills development towards employment success of the youth. The session obtained examples of models and initiatives for the youth.

### **Emerging Issues**

- Lack of evidence-based policy making and programming in many African countries, hence the high failure rate of initiatives.
- On youth needing to first determine how best and most effectively they can utilize the spaces that have been open to them.

### **Recommendations**

- Need for an audit to be carried out on existing policies in Africa that concern the youth, determine their relevance and whether they can be actualized.



# Summary of Key Outcomes per Session

## Session 11: Conversation with Business Leaders (Plenary Session)

This Session sought to demystify and unpack the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA); through panel presentations participants were informed that the continental agenda is geared towards creating market access, unlocking the business that is resident in the continent, and building on what has been working with regards to the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). It further seeks to for Africa to get back ownership of its own natural resources and having in place the executions skills to make it happen. The concept of UMBUNTU (I am because we are) should therefore be embraced. To build a sustainable CFTA there is need to begin addressing the existing challenges within the regional economic integration. Towards this end, the youth need to be included at the forefront of the CFTA.

### **Emerging Issues**

- On the free protocol of movement of people within Africa, only half the numbers of countries have signed up. This reflects some unwillingness by governments on free movement.

### **Recommendations**

- The CFTA should be designed to respond to the current market situation, for example, around big data and cold chain technologies with regards to trade and investment support; repositioning entities to remain relevant to the changing dynamics.
- To make CFTA a reality, Africa should consume African products.
- African countries need to draw up policies and structures that support start-ups to grow, with respective countries, before going continental.

## Session 12: Youth Konverse

Through a Ted-Talk style approach, , the Session saw selected youth, who are in business, share out their journeys to success, individual experiences and the key nuggets that helped them succeed.

*Below is the list of the Speakers in YouthKonverse who inspired the youth:*

1. Ato Bentsi-Enchill, Global Shaper, Partner Black Adam Africa, Ghana
2. Liz Muange, Deputy Director Investments, East Africa Trade and Investment, Kenya
3. Dominique Uwase Alonga, Founder of Imagine We Rwanda,
4. Joyce Awosika; entrepreneur, economist and natural skincare expert, Nigeria
5. Ahmed Mohamed Elmurtada Elamin Abdalla, Co-founder Innovation and Entrepreneurship Community Sudan.

# Summary of Key Outcomes per Session

## *Session 13: YouthConnekt Africa Steering Committee*

This Session was on experiencing sharing by countries that have already launched YCA initiatives, highlighting key achievements and the three points guided the discussions of the meeting which includes the proposal for the launch of the YouthConnekt Hub, how to operationalize the YouthConnekt Hub and Identifying its members.

### ***The key resolutions from the meeting are noted below;***

- 1. An element of communication:** Ensure all partners are on the same standing. Need to look at funds that are created at national level and those that are being provided by the AU towards a subsidiary approach to the fund.
- 2. The process:** YouthConnekt Africa Hub, to be endorsed by AU, the meeting recommended Rwanda to work through all required aspects and prepare a solid dossier that will be presented to the AU Technical Committee for endorsement.
- 3. Under the leadership of Rwanda:** Retrieve all documentation and use them to develop a file which will be shared by members of the group and task force.
- 4. The Political will:** The YouthConnekt hub will not change anything but complement national initiatives and play a catalytical role to support what was designed at national level.
- 5. Need a branding:** Need a branding: Develop specific criteria that needs to be discussed in the taskforce.
- 6. To be part of the movement :** interested governments to send an official request that demonstrate their expression of interest to join the YouthConnekt initiative.

## *Session 14: Innovative Volunteerism – The Solution to Africa's Development Challenges (Parallel Session)*

Through a Panel Discussion format, the session provided an overview of youth volunteerism, with reference to the AU Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC) that mobilizes young people, every year, from all 55-member countries of the AU and recruit them to serve in other parts of the continent where they originally do not come from.

### ***Benefits of volunteerism***

- Help develop skills, exercise leadership roles and help build networks.
- Gives one a sense of purpose and pride.
- Provides an opportunity to interact with different people.
- It is the key to unlocking the implementation of the SDGs
- Gives one the flexibility and adaptability to adapt.

### ***Recommendations to the Africa Union***

Have all experiences of community work documented and shared to African countries.



# Summary of Key Outcomes per Session

## *Session 15:*

### *Graduation of African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC)*

The AU Heads of State and Governments have embraced youth volunteerism as a vehicle to empower youth and contribute to Africa's development and Agenda 2063. The Africa Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AUYVC) is a flagship youth leadership and empowerment programme of the AU that recruits and works with young professionals in all 55 AU member states as professional volunteers. The AUYVC training acts as a catalyst for the empowerment of the youth of Africa. In this Session, 90 graduates were awarded with Certificates of completion of the 2018 course.

Benefits of the programme: i) Increases the level of employability of African youth, and ii) Encourages the spirit of service among the youth, in order for them to give back to the community.

## *Session 16:*

### *Connekted Innovators*

Face the Gorillas is a platform that provided opportunities for a selected group of African entrepreneurs and young innovators to make a 5-minute pitch to a panel of Angel investors to access capital for their businesses, get partnership or mentorship in front of a live audience.

The Session had four entrepreneurs from Angola, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Rwanda. The entrepreneurs were engaged by the 'gorillas' on different aspects to get a clear understanding of the health of their businesses. Each 'gorilla' finally gave their verdict on whether they would invest or not in the businesses as well as gave sound advice to the entrepreneurs in the running of their businesses.

## *Session 17:*

### *YouthConnekt Africa Awards*

The YouthConnekt Africa Awards: Acted as an inspiration to upcoming social entrepreneurs and served as a continental competition of innovative projects. In total 365 nominations/applications from 35 Countries were received in the following categories: - (89) Social development; - (97) Environmental Sustainability; (105) - Economic Development: and (74) Digital Inclusion.

A total of nineteen young social innovators from seven countries: Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Liberia, Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria were invited to attend the YCA Awards Bootcamp. Twelve were selected through a competitive online application approach and seven were nominated competitively through their respective Ministries of Youth. Successfully selected participants brought with them innovations that have the potential to scale or are generating income and impacting social economically the community or conserving the environment.

Selected winners spend 3 days with different mentors and attend intensive courses to improve their business models to scale. The following four categories were awarded each with a cash award of US\$5000 and a certificate.

- Social Innovation Award (sponsored by the African Development Bank) The winner of this category Mr. Russell Osah "10,000 Affordable Housing Project.
- Pioneers for Prosperity Award (sponsored by UNDP). The winner of this economic category was Ms. Emmastella Gakuo Pioneers for Prosperity Award "Maziwa Plus Cooling System"
- Green Growth Innovation Award (sponsored by Ministry of Environment-Rwanda, Global Green Growth Institute and FONERWA). Mr. David Kinzuzi won the Green Growth Innovation Award "My Green Home Project".
- Digital Inclusion Award (sponsored by Digital Opportunity Trust). Mr. Charles Umeh won the Digital Inclusion Award "JARACARE" The Session saw four innovators each walk away with a cheque of US\$ 5000.

## Closing Ceremony

In the Closing Session of the 2018 YouthConnekt Africa Summit, Hon. Mohamed Bangura, Minister of Youth Sierra Leone (on behalf of all governments delegates) stated the need for African governments to act collectively to address approaches on how to effectively empower the youth, economically and with the value that sets them apart for success. He gave the following recommendations:

1.The needs of the youth across the African continent are evolving, and the way that they are to be engaged is equally evolving.

2.Ministers:

- To be more connected under the YouthConnekt umbrella.
- Exchange best practices of youth empowerment.
- Support innovators by giving them the platform to grow.
- Ensure that policies and programs prepare the youth for success.

3.Youth:

- Should have the passion to do things differently.
- Should be constantly engaged in all facets of society by their governments.
- Own the development of Africa, working together encouraging more partnership thus intra trade

Hon. Rosemary Mbabazi, Minister of Youth, Republic of Rwanda, on her part, thanked all partners who made the 2018 YouthConnekt a success. She challenged the youth to practice leadership from whichever position they find themselves in, and strive to make a difference in their communities. She further urged them to be drivers and partners in transforming Africa.





# YouthConnekt Africa Summit 2018 Partners



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