Capacity building session: African youth combatting climate change and promoting peace

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Wednesday 28 October 2015, 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

In the context of the 9th UNESCO Youth Forum (26-28 October 2015) to be held one month before the 21st Conference of Parties (COP 21), UNESCO African Department, with the support of the UNESCO Liaison office in Addis Ababa, The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), The Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), The African Union Commission (AUC) and Pan African Youth Network on the Culture of Peace will organize a capacity building session for youth which will be a unique moment, providing youth with a strategic opportunity and a visible platform through which they can consolidate and collectively voice their opinions, which are specific to Africa on climate change + youth + promoting culture of peace in Africa to fed into COP21. The capacity building session is therefore a platform to provide training on how to capitalize on Africa’s youth demographics, providing opportunities to the youth, by strengthening their skills, expertise, knowledge of young people as solution givers to pressing climate issues and peace in Africa at grassroots level.

A lot has been done to position African youth within the continents’ climate change policy, practice and implementation. For example, The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) formed the Clim Dev Youth Platform. Africa’s Youth themselves, has also consequentially embraced the responsibility and engaged as key actors of driving Africa’s climate agenda. The capacity building session is therefore organized against the backdrop of already ongoing initiatives in the continent lending credence to successful youth projects across Africa and the Diaspora that have had impact at a policy and practice level.

Undoubtedly, Africa enjoys a demographic bonus that offers a great opportunity to leverage an intellectual pool of human resource capital empowered to sustain and grow Africa’s development trajectory, achieve and contribute to the implementation of the African Union Agenda 2063, not only by silencing the guns but by also leading Africa’s Renaissance and embodying the aspiration of a Peaceful and Prosperous continent as well as the African Youth Decade, 2009-2018 Plan of Action (DPoA).

With regard to peace, climate change has the possibility of escalating conflict, causing food insecurity, increasing spread of diseases social breakdown and creating widespread poverty; these are affecting youth, and need to be addressed before we lose a generation with all the resources it has. In the face of climate change, young people are even more vulnerable and thus there is need to prepare this generation, not only to address climate change challenges but also other societal challenges they are facing. Therefore, building capacity of youth leaders to become more active and vocal in addressing climate change issues at local and national levels is paramount. Good, accountable, focused and strategic leadership will directly deal with youth unemployment, poverty alleviation, equality, equity, justice, peace and sustainable development.

Led and convened by some youth the session will take an informal youth led approach where a lead trainer (s) on the theme will share and train participants on good practices on how young African women and men, as global citizens, can contribute to building sustainability, in their communities with respect to climate change and peace and security issues in Africa.

In addition the UN CC: Learn Introductory e-Course on Climate Change will be offered online to all interested participants of the youth Forum.

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