

• Programme

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Potsdam Spring Dialogues 2017 **Future Prospects for Africa's Youth:** **Regional and international strategies**

NH Hotel, Potsdam

6-7 April 2017

Conference languages

German/English (simultaneous interpretation)

Cooperating Partner

giz

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#Potsdam17

BACKGROUND

Africa is the youngest of all continents: 62 per cent of its people are below the age of 25. While the youth share of the population is declining in other world regions, it is growing in Africa. It is projected that by 2100, more than one third of the world's young people will live in sub-Saharan Africa. This presents an immense challenge but also offers major development potential.

Africa already has the highest rate of youth unemployment worldwide – on a rising trend. For many people employed in low-skilled jobs, living conditions remain precarious. Africa also lacks adequate vocational training programmes at basic and advanced level; those which do exist often do not build practical workplace skills. This has led to a severe shortage of skilled workers. Wide social inequalities, discrimination, marginalisation and a lack of opportunities for political participation are other factors which undermine young Africans' prospects for the future, increasing the risk that growing numbers of young people – particularly the better educated – will leave their home regions or the continent itself. There is also a risk of radicalisation by extremist groups.

One of the major challenges facing African policy-makers, therefore, is to establish conditions that unlock young people's development potential. The sheer numbers of young Africans but also their energy, dynamism and innovation capacities are a significant resource in this context. Africa's youth population should play a major role in shaping the future.

Youth development offers numerous cross-linkages with other policy fields. A "joined-up" approach to youth policy is therefore required, based on coherence with education, labour market, social policy and measures to encourage participation. With the African Youth Charter (2006) and the African Youth Decade 2009-2018 Plan of Action, the African Union has marked out the cornerstones of its policies for young people. Furthermore, the regional economic communities (RECs) and many countries have adopted youth strategies which aim to achieve coherence with these policy areas. However, not enough is being done to fill these strategies with life. What's more, many of them fail to engage with the realities of young people's lives and are not integrated into national development plans. This is one of the starting points for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), with its focus on practical training and skills for the young generation.

The Potsdam Spring Dialogues 2017 will critically analyse international and regional strategies which aim to improve the future prospects of Africa's young people. Working together, African and European participants will then identify and discuss priorities and fields of action. The Potsdam Spring Dialogues will thus contribute to discussions in the context of the German G20 Presidency, which prioritises the partnership with Africa, and the 2017 EU-Africa Summit, which will focus on youth.

Key issues

- How do participants at the Potsdam Spring Dialogues rate the youth policies adopted by the African Union, the RECs and African countries? To what extent are these policies already being implemented? Where do policy gaps exist?
- What are the demands of youth organisations? To what extent are young people themselves involved in developing and implementing these strategies? What action can be taken to increase their participation?
- What is the contribution of the private sector?
- How can synergies be created between EU and AU youth policy? How can more intensive Europe-Africa youth exchange make a contribution?
- What are the African partners' expectations of Europe? What can the EU and other international actors do to improve young Africans' future prospects? How can successful knowledge-sharing between German, European and African institutions be achieved?

: Thursday, 6 April 2017

9.30 hrs	Registration
10.00 hrs	Welcome Anne Quart State Secretary Ministry for Justice, Europe and Consumer Protection of the Federal State of Brandenburg, Potsdam Professor Raimund Krämer Editor in chief of the journal WeltTrends, Potsdam Member of the Advisory Board of the Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

SESSION I KEYNOTES

SHAPING YOUTH POLICY AT THE INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

Development and sustainability policy must always be youth policy as well. To what extent does the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development generate fresh momentum for international and regional youth policy? Which regional strategies and policies in Africa are likely to improve young people's prospects for the future? Which policy fields are especially important in this context, and where do the greatest challenges lie? What can be the added value of German and European cooperation?

10.30 hrs	H.E. Dr Martial De-Paul Ikounga Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology African Union Commission, Addis Ababa Dr Stefan Oswald (tbc) Head Directorate Sub-Saharan Africa Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Berlin/Bonn
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followed by Q & A

PREVENTING RADICALISATION

Chronic poverty, inequality and unemployment are causing profound discontent among many young Africans. If people feel left behind by policy-makers and marginalised by society, they run the risk of being radicalised – or radicalising themselves. Radicalisation of young people is a complex phenomenon in which political economic, social and individual factors come into play. Prevention policies must therefore address all these factors.

Which young people are most at risk? What action can be taken to prevent their radicalisation? What lessons can be learned from prevention programmes in various regions? And what role can international actors play?

11.45 hrs	Ilwad Elman Director of Programs and Development Elman Peace and Human Rights Center, Mogadishu
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followed by Q & A

12.30 hrs Lunch

SESSION II

IMPROVING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Through online newspapers and social media, young people in Africa – and across the world – are better informed about politics than ever before. Social media can be a tool for political activism and can be used to hold politicians to account, demand transparency and challenge injustices. However, the new media are often also a vehicle for politicisation, driven by discontent. Boosting young people’s participation in politics, listening to their views and, ideally, working with them to implement their demands must therefore be key components of effective youth policy.

Do young people in Africa feel that politicians take them seriously and make enough effort to engage them? Do African countries and regions involve young people in policy-making? How can young people be encouraged to participate in politics? Which demands are being voiced by youth organisations vis-à-vis national governments, the regions and the AU? And how can European-African youth exchange make a contribution?

14.00 hrs	Round-table discussion Kisten Aigro Board Member European Youth Forum, Brussels Job Shipululo Amupanda Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Economics & Management Science University of Namibia, Windhoek Seun Ologun William President ECOWAS Youth Council, Abuja
followed by	Plenary discussion
15.30 hrs	Coffee Break

SESSION III
NARROWING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

Young Africans' future prospects will crucially depend on how policy-makers deal with social inequality. Even countries with sufficient resources are plagued by unequal distribution. Persistent inequalities obstruct development by denying people access to services such as education or basic healthcare. In many African countries, the social safety nets are unable to provide a "soft landing" for the disadvantaged members of society. Many regional organisations pursue their own specific approaches to social policy, and many youth policy packages include a social policy component.

How effective are national and regional social policy packages in safeguarding equal opportunities for young people? What can be done to prevent existing inequalities from being handed down to the next generation? How can the marginalisation of vulnerable groups be overcome? Are there any best practice examples of innovative social policy? How can a transfer of knowledge between Africa and Europe be improved?

16.00 hrs Round-table discussion
Charles Vincent Dan (tbc)
Special Representative on Youth and Social Inclusion
International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva
Quraysha Ismail-Sooliman
PhD Candidate
University of Pretoria
Mamusa Siyunyi
Social Affairs Officer, Social Development Policy Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Addis Ababa

followed by Plenary discussion

until 17.30 hrs

18.00 HRS CULTURAL PROGRAMME
19.30 HRS RECEPTION AT THE INVITATION OF THE MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF FEDERAL STATE OF BRANDENBURG

: Friday, 7 April 2017

SESSION IV

SKILLING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE JOB MARKET

Africa's high rate of youth unemployment stands in sharp contrast to its severe skills shortage. Many African countries have launched national training initiatives at both basic and advanced level. Similarly, all regions have built skills development into their youth policies. However, training programmes often lack practical relevance, making the transition to the labour market difficult, even for young people who have attended vocational colleges. A new approach is needed – one which sees training as a shared responsibility for the government and the business community.

How can young people gain skills and qualifications that are in demand in the labour market? What can be done to enhance the appeal of the training professions? How can businesses be encouraged to engage as partners in youth training delivery? And what measures should be taken to facilitate dialogue about European and African training programmes?

- 9.30 hrs Round-table discussion
- Per Börjegen**
Project Manager Skills Initiative for Africa
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Johannesburg
- Samuel A. Jabanyite MP (tbc)**
Board Chairman
Youth Employment Agency Ghana, Accra
- Faneva Raharimanantsoa**
GoTeach Coordinator – Indian Ocean
Deutsche Post DHL Group, Antananarivo
- Misan Rewane**
Chief Executive Officer / Co-Founder
West Africa Vocational Education (WAVE), Lagos
- followed by Plenary discussion
- 11.00 hrs Coffee Break with Snacks

SESSION V

MOTIVATING YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

In addition to labour market and training policy, it is important to create a more enabling environment for investment and business start-ups in Africa. Young Africans - like young people everywhere - have an affinity for technology and are well-networked. They are willing to take risks, and many are keen to free themselves from existing dependencies, setting up their own businesses instead of waiting for an often saturated labour market to provide them with employment. But they do not just see themselves as business people. Many want to create employment opportunities for their peers, add value to society and build better communities.

How can more effective support and encouragement be provided for young entrepreneurs? What conditions must be in place to ensure their long-term success? Are there any innovative examples of business start-ups with social policy relevance?

11.30 hrs Round-table discussion
Anna Dominick Lyimo
Director
National Economic Empowerment Council Tanzania, Dar es Salaam
Barbara Nitsche
Head of Division
Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) Potsdam
Kennedy Odede (tbc)
Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Shining Hope for Communities, Nairobi

followed by Plenary discussion

SESSION VI

OUTLOOK – PROSPECTS FOR AFRICAN YOUTH

13.00 hrs **Francine Muyumba (tbc)**
President
Pan-African Youth Union, Khartoum

13.20 hrs Farewell by the organisers