**High Level Youth Policy Dialogue on Sustainable Development Goals**

***Theme: “Prioritizing an Investment in Youth Development in the Post-2015 era”***

**Proposed date and Venue: July 2014 (TBD); UN Complex, Nairobi, Kenya**

**Draft Concept Note**

**CONTEXT**

The UN High Level Panel report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda released on 30 May 2013 calls on the world to ‘leave no one behind’, a critical landmark in youth-led ' campaign to see the world’s new development framework inclusive of young people’s perspectives and aspirations. The Report outlines the importance of ‘**leaving no one behind**’, and in particular calls for creation of decent jobs and improving the livelihood of young people.

Out of the world’s 7 billion people, young people under the age of 30 account for more than half of this number (50.5%). In Africa about 65 % of the total population of Africa below the age of 35 years and in less than three generations 41% of the world’s youth will be African. These young people are particularly challenged and vulnerable as a result of poverty, unemployment, adolescent health issues, including HIV infection, conflicts and lack of participation in decision making processes.

Will less than 2 years to the deadline of MDGs, many developing countries are currently lagging behind in achieving some development targets .The presence of a large numbers of unemployed youth is increasingly becoming a reality and crisis to many national governments. There are both positive and negative factors associated with the growing number of young people in the world. How do we ensure that the world benefits from this imminent demographic dividend?

Youth participation is fundamental post-2015 process as they are the ones that will have to do the heavy lifting in its implementation. Several youth consultations have been held with an aim of gathering the youth priorities and coming up with a set of recommendations that are reflect the values and aspirations of young people. Notably are the youth roundtable meetings in High Level panel meetings, the Global Youth Forum, the African Youth Conference on Post-2015 Agenda among others which all released a declaration or position paper. A UN World Youth Conference is planned in May 2014 in Sri-Lanka to further engage the youth.

The central role of young people in development should be acknowledged and promoted not only through creation of enabling environments for youth participation but further ensuring there is political commitment to prioritize the young people’s needs and have a youth centered goal in the SDGs proposal. A stand-alone goal on youth development and creation of decent job opportunities will create necessary momentum towards investment in young people which can generate significant social and economic returns by providing a roadmap on measures to meaningfully improve young people’s quality of life. To make significant progress in transforming the economic and social realities of our developing the world, national governments must harness the demographic dividend by promoting pro-employment growth policies.

Kenya is a co-chair of the Open Working Group on SDGs and therefore a key player in the negotiations. The 30-member Open Working Group is mandated by the Rio+20 Outcome document to prepare a proposal on SDGs for consideration by the Assembly at its 68th session (Sept. 2013 – Sept. 2014). With a youthful population of 65% been under the age of 35, Kenya can play a major role in championing the youth agenda at the global level particularly in drafting the SDGs proposal and shaping the negotiations in the intergovernmental process to ensure the young people aren’t left behind. It is very important that writings with specific mention of youth appear in the SDGs proposal and outcome with the new goals, targets and indicators which resonate with what is most of value to young people.

Young people need to lobby their government at the highest decision making level to recognize the SDGs as a perfect opportunity to target inclusive and sustainable growth that devotes more attention to higher standards and to outcomes that improve the quality of young people’s lives. The new framework must put young people at the core of the targets and indicators aimed at poverty reduction, enhanced access to clean water and modern energy, quality education, urban development, decent jobs, sexual and reproductive health, healthcare and improved agricultural technologies.

The High Level Youth Policy Dialogue on SDGs will be held in July 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya as an African youth event, open to international youth, with an aim of gathering and strengthening political commitment for governments to support prioritizing investment in youth development in the post-2015 era. The meeting will cultivate on the recommendations made by young people and create political goodwill for African countries to champion the youth agenda.

**Justification**

With so many issues being pushed for inclusion in 2015, there is a likelihood Youth as a as priority might be forgotten. We need youth development as an Agenda and not only mainstreamed in the other goals. Mainstreaming the young people agenda might fail to incorporate and reflect the many issues young people face.

Kenya is in the best position to champion for a goal on youth development considering the country has a Youthful president; the Co-chair of the Open Working Group on SDGs and therefore a key player in the negotiations; the highest population of youth are from Africa; and also the allies the government of Kenya enjoys.

We therefore believe Kenya is able to play major roles in regards to youth inclusion in the Post-2015 Agenda which can include:

* Host the HLYPD meeting.
* Kenya as Post 2015 Youth Agenda Champion will rally all African governments to support the call of the young people and ensure they create a political goodwill for a youth development goal.
* Safe guide and commit to supporting the recommendation / outcomes of the meeting
* Ensure the Youth Development goal reflect the any social, political and economic needs of young people
* Ensure the Post 2015 have a Strong Youth Development goal

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. To galvanize governments to make political commitments towards supporting young people’s demands and aspirations for a better future in the post-2015 era.
2. To provide an inclusive platform for young people to engage in a dialogue with decision makers including head of states and ministers to share ideas, experiences and innovative approaches for effectively contributing to the designing of SDGs and their implementation.
3. To facilitate effective partnerships with young organizations, the Governments and UN Agencies in designing and implementation the SDGs.
4. To engage African countries and organizations including CSOs that will act as youth champions to push for the youth agenda in the SDGs intergovernmental process.

**MEETING PREPARATIONS**

The Organization of Africa Youth is proposing to organize this meeting and hosted by the Government of Kenya in partnership with the UN Agencies and Development partners. The meeting planning will be conducted by a youth steering committee and a secretariat.

* **Youth Steering Committee**: It will be co-chaired by OAYouth and composed of 15 young leaders drawn from youth organizations actively engaged in the post-2015 agenda. The committee will be responsible for approving the program (contents, themes, panelists and speakers) of the meeting. It will also participate on the selection criteria for participants, and the follow-up and evaluation of the meeting activities.
* **Meeting Secretariat**: It will be co-chaired by the Government of Kenya and another organization preferably a UN Agency. It will include all the UN Agencies, private sector and development partners. The secretariat will be responsible for promotion and funding strategies and invitation of high level participants including the Head of States, Ministers and Directors of UN Agencies and partners.

The meeting preparations for the secretariat are expected to start in January 2014. A youth steering committee will be formed. Preparatory meetings will be scheduled and a draft budget will be developed before. A linkage will be provided between the ongoing youth initiatives and meeting focused in post-2015 and build up to the youth meeting.

**Preparatory Initiative**

The Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth is spearheading an initiative titled “Crowdsource Youth Targets in the Post-2015 Development Agenda”; with an objective of allowing the youth to identify and formulate targets and indicators which could support the youth agenda within the Post-2015 development framework. The Organization of African Youth and other youth organizations will be supporting the implementation of this initiative and ensure effective youth participation and meaningful contributions. The outcome of this initiative will be used as a discussion paper in the High Level Youth Policy Dialogue on SDGs.

**PARTICIPANTS:**

The organizer will ensure that the selected delegates are abreast of issues related to youth in their countries and could engage in quality discussions during the Forum. The youth steering committee will determine the selection criteria and ensure it is done in competitive basis. A total of 300 youth delegates, both from global south and global north, are expected to attend and between the ages of 15-30 years. The organizers will seek funding to support the participation of young people particularly from the global south. The rest of delegates will include Governments particularly Heads of State and Ministers, CSOs, UN Agencies and development partner’s representatives.

**FORMAT**

The format of the youth meeting should be interactive and conducive to certain debates being able to be televised for virtual delegates (eg. in the breakout sessions). It is proposed that the high level youth meeting runs for 2 days and incorporates:

* **Plenary sessions,** including opening, closing and thematic sessions.
* **Breakout sessions,** organized on specific issues relating to the youth meeting theme.
* **Cultural evenings,** sponsored by partners
* **A “media hub”,** run by young journalists (in cooperation with News Agencies) who will report daily on the meeting. The media center would ideally host media groups covering the youth meeting and would provide a space for interviews, press conferences etc. The media center would also provide a space for young participants themselves to update directly on the proceedings of the youth meeting through blogs, online uploads etc.
* **Building the capacities of youth**: The organizers might consider organizing a pre-training workshop to capacity-build the youth delegates, so they can acquire or strengthen personal skills and competencies, particularly advocacy, lobbying and become knowledgeable on the post-2015 and SDGs process to enable their effective and meaningful participation.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

1. The meeting will offer concrete policy-relevant and development-oriented recommendations in relation to increased Youth leadership and participation for inclusive growth and achievement of sustainable development goals.
2. The meeting will secure political leadership commitment towards ensuring the needs and values of young people are included and met in the post-2015 era.

**KEY OUTPUTS**

* A youth statement on a proposed formulation of an SDG on youth development.
* A consensus position on government and UN Agencies commitment towards ensuring youth development is prioritized in the Sustainable Development Goals.
* Media outreach and outcome statement.
* Web-based information and press releases (including social media).
* Inter-generational dialogue between current youth leaders and prominent global actors on issues of post-2015 agenda
* Roadmap on accelerating youth leadership and participation in global, continental and national governance in the SDGs process.
* Young ambassadors working to influence the post-2015 agenda and lobby their governments in the national, regional and international levels. Member states commit to include youth representatives in their official delegations to the UN General Assembly and other important meetings.

**Follow-up**

A follow-up mechanism will be initiated to ensure countries uphold their commitment in the negotiation process for a new framework. The UN World Youth Conference in May 2014 expects an outcome proposing the establishment of a youth sub-working group to the Open Working Group on youth in the SDGs and this is something we can build on. We will convene follow-up meeting will countries that accept to champion the youth Agenda. The young ambassadors will continuously check on their governments positions and ensure it reflects the needs of young people. Effecting lobbying will be done to ensure countries include youth representatives in their official delegation to UNGA. A youth meeting will further be organized at the auspices of the 68th General Assembly with UN Permanent Missions and push for actions. A more coordinated approach will be applied to all the youth initiatives linking to the post-2015 agenda until 2015.