LEVERAGING YOUTH CAPACITIES FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

REPORT ON 2018 REGIONAL YOUTH CONSULTATIONS
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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Acronyms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6    | Executive Summary  
|      | Key Emerging Issues and Policy Recommendations|
| 13   | Introduction  
|      | • State of Play  
|      | • Aligning with the AU Theme of the Year  
|      | • About the Regional Consultations  
|      | • Areas of Focus|
| 20   | Regional Snapshots  
|      | • East and Southern Africa  
|      | • West and Central Africa  
|      | • North Africa|
| 31   | Social Media Reach |
### ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACHPR</td>
<td>African Commission on Human and People’s Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGA</td>
<td>African Governance Architecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGA-YES</td>
<td>African Governance Architecture – Youth Engagement Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU-ABC</td>
<td>African Union Advisory Board on Corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUCPCC</td>
<td>AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption in Africa</td>
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<td>AYCPAC</td>
<td>African Youth Community of Practice on Anti-Corruption</td>
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<td>CODE</td>
<td>Connected Development</td>
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<td>COMESA</td>
<td>Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<td>EAC</td>
<td>East African Community</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>EMA</td>
<td>Euro-Méditerranée-Arabe Association</td>
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<td>FOI</td>
<td>Freedom of Information</td>
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<td>HE</td>
<td>His Excellency</td>
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<td>HLD</td>
<td>High-Level Dialogue</td>
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<td>IFFs</td>
<td>Illicit Financial Flows</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>PPDC</td>
<td>Public and Private Development Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>RECs</td>
<td>Regional Economic Communities</td>
</tr>
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<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
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<td>UNCAC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention Against Corruption</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2018 was launched as the African Anti-Corruption Year, with the theme “Winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa’s transformation” during the 30th Assembly of Heads of State and Government in January 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In his speech at the launch, HE Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the African Union champion for anti-corruption, reiterated the need to sensitize Africa’s young people and meaningfully engage them in the fight against corruption.

Taking a cue from this, and in line with its annual tradition of engaging young people across the continent on the AU theme of the year, the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat under the auspices of its AGA Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES) organized the 2018 Regional Youth Consultations. The Consultations were convened in collaboration with African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AU-ABC) as the lead AU organ for the theme of the year. Over a period of five weeks, the perspectives, insights, experiences and proposals of youth from across Africa on giving rise to a corrupt-free generation were garnered. The Consultations were held under the theme, “Leveraging Youth Capacities for the Fight Against Corruption in Africa”.

They took place in Gaborone, Botswana from August 15-17 for East and Southern Africa; Dakar, Senegal from September 5-7 for West and Central Africa; and in Casablanca, Morocco from September 19-21 for North Africa.

The Consultations across the five regions were held to infuse new energies and perspectives into the fight against corruption in Africa. They were attended by over three hundred participants from across Africa, largely representing youth networks and youth-led organizations with a focus on transparency and accountability. Other participants included key relevant government officials and institutions, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and AU Organs who are AGA Platform members, development partners, and eminent African personalities.

Specifically, the Regional Consultations were aimed at identifying, supporting, strengthening and amplifying youth perspectives on the fight against corruption on the continent.
During the Consultations, participants reviewed and extensively discussed the following thematic issues:

- Corruption as a key driver of governance deficits;
- Anti-corruption normative and institutional frameworks at continental, regional and national levels;
- Leveraging youth capacities for the fight against corruption, strategies and lessons based on good practices;
- Fostering collaborative actions and working across government to prevent corruption in Africa.

In addition, the consultation further presented an opportunity for youth networks and youth-led organizations to acquire more knowledge on various anti-corruption tools and strategies, ethical leadership, building successful anti-corruption campaigns, and building alliances for anti-corruption approaches.
Advocacy for Universal Ratification and Implementation of Continental and Global Anti-Corruption Norms

While the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) and the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) provide a clear blueprint and compass for a sustainable fight against corruption, the limited domestication, implementation and reporting on progress made hinders the realization of their goals. The centrality of preventing and combating corruption is recognized as a key element in the acceleration and attainment of the developmental objectives of the continent as enshrined in Agenda 2063.

Participants across the regions called on the remaining 15 Member States that are yet to ratify the AUCPCC to do so, emulating the 40 who are State Parties. State Parties were also called upon to domesticate and implement the provisions of the Convention as well as submit regular reports on the measures undertaken to facilitate sharing of comparable lessons and experiences. Compliance to the AUCPCC was identified as a critical factor towards more efficient governance systems across Africa. As a result, Africa will be much closer to realizing its quest for a prosperous and transformed Africa with an engaged and corrupt-free generation that is well positioned to realize the aspirations encapsulated in Agenda 2063.

Furthermore, participants called for the establishment and strengthening of independent anti-corruption bodies, with requisite resources and independence to fulfill their mandates.
Leveraging Youth Capacities and Fostering Partnerships

Across the continent, young people’s strengths, insights, experiences and capabilities have been grossly underutilized in the fight against corruption. This is partly due to the fact that youth experiences in combating corruption have not been adequately researched and documented over the years. This is largely buoyed by the perception of many citizens who view anti-corruption efforts as a strictly government affair with limited or no room for citizen’s engagement and participation.

In amplifying youth voices and perspectives on the fight against corruption, young people, youth networks and youth-led organizations with a focus on transparency and accountability were urged to ensure systematic documentation and communication of their experiences. This will go a long way in shaping the narratives on the role and contributions of young people in preventing and combatting corruption on the continent. In addition, youth networks and organisations were urged to endeavor to partner and collaborate with other state and non-state actors in the fight against corruption. Through partnerships and collaboration, youth capacities will be sufficiently leveraged in policy making, implementation and progress monitoring. Ultimately, such partnerships provide formal mentorship and inter-generational lessons learning on what works and what does not.
Participants lamented the absence of a common front amongst young people working on issues of anti-corruption on the continent. It was argued that, there is weak collaboration and coordination among citizens, especially young people, youth networks and youth-led organizations in the fight against corruption across African States. Participants argued that putting in place a coordination platform for young people working on anti-corruption issues will foster knowledge exchange, deepen collaboration and partnerships as well as enhance the impact of youth led efforts and interventions.

Specifically, participants called for the establishment of the African Youth Community of Practice on Anti-Corruption (AYCPAC) as a framework for coordination of youth led efforts in the fight against corruption in Africa. The AYCPAC will facilitate networking, sharing of experiences and foster collaboration among youth. The champions of AYCPAC should be drawn from young people and youth organisations with demonstrable work experience in the field of anti-corruption. The mandate of AYCPAC should be to ensure that the policy recommendations and lessons learnt from platforms and engagements such as the regional Consultations are consciously applied across Member States.

State-society relations in many African states are fraught with mistrust and antagonism. Participants decried the increasing restrictive laws in a number of countries thus limiting the space for civic engagement and participation in anti-corruption efforts. This situation has continued to hinder effective collaborative efforts between state and non-state actors in the fight against corruption in Africa. In this regard, participants decried the increasing and widespread clampdown on tools and avenues mostly used by young people to call out impunity, violations of human rights and challenge corrupt practices. The introduction of levies and fees on internet access as well as clampdown on social media use was particularly cited.

In addressing this challenge, participants reiterated the need for improved engagement between state actors and civil society actors. Such engagement should provide opportunities for dialogue on issues relating to protection of citizens’ rights to information, association and assembly. Furthermore, participants called for confidence building by the state with civic actors, through ensuring their effective participation and inclusion in the fight against corruption.
Access to Information is essential for transparency as it helps to deepen the culture of accountable governance. However, only a fraction of the 55 African countries have Freedom of Information (FoI) laws. Furthermore, implementation of these frameworks is woefully inadequate across countries. In addition, the lack of protection of whistleblowers has remained a major issue across the regions. Safety of whistle blowers is not guaranteed in practice even where there are policies and legislations in place. As a result, in most countries across Africa, young people are terrified and cautious to engage in the fight against corruption because of the attendant physical and psychological threats.

Participants called for enactment and implementation of FoI legislations as well as the protection of anti-corruption activists, whistleblowers and human rights defenders through the enactment, strengthening (where they exist) and implementation of appropriate legislations and policies. Participants identified parliaments, media and civil society as key allies for the protection of anti-corruption activists, whistleblowers and human rights defenders.

Addressing the Gendered Implications of Corruption

Apart from the broader impact of corruption in African societies, women are additionally subjected to specific gender-based forms of corruption such as extortion through sexual harassment and sex for services and promotions. All forms of corruption embody gender discrimination and inequalities which further disempowers women and children. The time spent by women and girls on unpaid care work, for example, is increased by limited access and inadequate provision of key infrastructure such as energy, water and sanitation facilities. Over seventy percent of the burden of collecting water for households falls on women and girls who spend 40 billion hours collecting water annually. When funds meant for social services and welfare are embezzled or mismanaged, women are disproportionately affected.

To this end, participants called for focus and attention on the gendered impact of corruption. Particularly, they called for mechanisms and systems that track, report and mitigate impact of corruption on women. Furthermore, the issue of socio-economic and political participation of women was also brought to the fore. Participants argued that the marginalization and discrimination of women in positions of power continue to hinder women and particularly young women's participation in the fight against corruption. Participants called for concerted efforts in implementation of global and continental frameworks towards meaningful participation of women in anti-corruption initiatives.

Access to Information and Protection of Whistleblowers

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Harnessing Africa’s creative industry for building social consciousness

Public education, sensitization and conscientising young people in Africa has not been fully utilized in the prevention of corrupt acts. The necessity of tapping into the inventive capacities of Africa’s creative industry including working with African musicians, film makers, and visual artists amongst others to drive mass consciousness on the ills of corruption was highlighted.

Participants suggested diverse and innovative strategies – including working with the creative industry and utilizing visual and other forms of art mediums such as music, film, theatre, cartoons – as a means to inculcate a culture necessary for a corrupt free generation. State and civil society in collaboration with renowned and influential personalities in the creative and art industries were urged to work closely in promoting conscious music and art that shapes, lauds and encourages conscious, ethical and responsible leadership and citizenship.

Curbing Illicit Financial Flows

Africa loses tens of billions of US dollars to corruption annually. This has continued to greatly hamper socio-economic development and infrastructure initiatives, even as it further deepens governance deficits in Africa.

To address the issue of illicit financial flows out of the continent, participants called on African leaders to implement the recommendations of the Report of the High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa as well as other decisions adopted at regional and continental levels on asset recovery, responsible tax management and transparent management of Africa’s extractive industry. Participants further urged the international community to work closely with Africa to repatriate Africa’s stolen assets.
INTRODUCTION

State of Play

On July 11, 2003, the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government adopted the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption in Africa (AUCPCC). The Convention which entered into force on August 5, 2006 signaled the political commitment of African leaders to fight and combat the cancerous scourge of corruption on the continent. To give effect to Article 22 of the Convention, the AU established an Advisory Board on Corruption (AU-ABC) in 2009 with a broad range of functions including promoting and encouraging adoption and application of anti-corruption measures on the continent. These efforts are grounded in the commitment of African leaders as espoused in the Constitutive Act of the AU to protect and promote human and peoples’ rights, consolidate democratic governance and the rule of law, as well as promote social justice to ensure balanced economic development.

Corruption, a global phenomenon, continues to be at the heart of governance deficits in Africa. Without a doubt, it is a daunting challenge to good governance, sustainable economic growth, peace, stability, and development in Africa. Corruption continues to negatively hamper efforts aimed at promoting democratic governance, socio-economic transformation, peace and security in AU Member States. According to the Report of the High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) from Africa, popularly known as the Mbeki Report, Africa loses over 50 billion US dollars every year through IFFs. This huge drain on resources continues to negatively impact on developmental efforts of the continent. If sustainable efforts are not put in place to address this challenge, among other elements of corruption, attaining the goals of Agenda 2063 - Africa’s 50-year development blueprint - as well as the Global Sustainable Development Goals may be slow, if not impossible to achieve.

Corruption disproportionately affects people living in poverty and those whose voices are marginalized, the significant majority of whom are young people and women. Youth and women make up more than half of Africa’s population, and they are both at the receiving end of the worst effects of corruption on developmental outcomes on the continent. Corruption is widening fault lines, causing setbacks in socio-economic and political development of the continent and tightening its grip on the full enjoyment of young people’s rights and freedoms in Africa. More evidently, corruption continues to impoverish young people through widening social, political and economic inequalities. It deprives youth of opportunities to develop meaningful livelihoods and survival mechanisms. Corruption distorts the equitable distribution of social services such as health, water, sanitation, and education. It breeds unequal societies, renders vulnerable groups, including women and youth, prone to human trafficking, irregular migration, recruitment into armed groups and militia as well as other forms of violent extremism.
The situation has been exacerbated by the fact that corruption has become a norm and is now accepted among all segments of society, including youth. To prevent and fight all forms of corruption in Africa, normative and institutional frameworks have been put into place at continental, regional and national levels. Specifically, at the continental level, normative frameworks have been adopted including AUCPCC and the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration, among others. These instruments stipulate what States should do to ensure good and transparent governance systems by preventing, detecting, punishing and eradicating corruption and related offences in public and private sectors. Anti-corruption and Ombudsman institutions have been established and operationalised at continental, regional and national levels to oversee efforts to prevent and fight corruption in Africa. Nonetheless, the challenges of limited political will; interference in the work of anti-corruption institutions; the overt focus on state-led management of corruption and exclusion of key groups in the process, including youth, continue to hamper the goal of a corrupt free Africa.

Of equal importance is the double-edged role of young people. While many young people are indeed at the receiving end of corruption, young people cannot be entirely absolved. In many cases, young people have also been perpetrators of corrupt acts in several forms. Notwithstanding this reality, young people have the potential and capacity to infuse new energies, innovative approaches and rally their peers as a formidable bulwark against corruption. Although often overlooked, youth are some of the most important agents of change in the fight against corruption, for they are key in reshaping norms and values. As such, building a groundswell of support for anti-corruption efforts will benefit immensely from a new socialisation that instills zero-tolerance for grand as well as petty corruption and practices from an early age. Without a doubt, turning the corner on sustainable prevention and fight against corruption requires a proactive and deliberate engagement of young people at all levels.

Over the years, several youth-led and focused initiatives have been established to champion accountability and transparency efforts across the continent. Most of these initiatives are premised on the need to address the trans-generational perpetuity of corruption in Africa. For instance, Accountability Lab with offices in Mali, Liberia, and Nigeria amongst others, supports change-makers to develop and implement positive ideas for integrity in their communities, unleashing positive social and economic change. Through their Integrity Idol initiative, the organization identifies and celebrates honest government officials through a citizen-led campaign, to encourage positive role-modeling for anti-corruption in African public service. Other initiatives such as BudgIT (Nigeria), Follow The Money (Nigeria, The Gambia, Kenya), iWatch (Tunisia), Mzalendo (Kenya), and CLARION (Kenya), Accountability Lab (Mali, Liberia and South Africa) are implementing several initiatives aimed at encouraging transparency and accountability, galvanizing active citizenship and driving government-wide commitment to openness. Many of these organizations are working with government institutions such as the parliament, security agencies, and anti-corruption bodies to further strengthen institutional efforts in this area.
Aligning with the AU Theme of the Year

As part of its efforts to prevent and fight corruption, the AU during its 30th Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in January 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia launched 2018 as the African Anti-Corruption year. This followed the declaration made at the 29th Assembly of the Heads of State and Government in January 2017 to dedicate the theme for 2018 to “Winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa’s transformation.” To further give political weight to this declaration, the AU Assembly designated HE Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as the Champion for the theme of the year, in recognition of the efforts made by him in the fight against corruption.

Through various activities and initiatives within the context of the theme of the year, the AU aimed to rally various segments of the African society including AU Organs, Institutions, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States; Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), as well as citizens - women and young people alike - to address the urgent need to fight corruption and impunity.

The year is further expected to give impetus and girth to the commitment of African leaders to anchor the AU development agenda on the dreams, aspirations, energies, and capabilities of the African people. This will ensure the attainment of Agenda 2063 Aspirations, particularly Aspiration 3 which calls for an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law, as well as Aspiration 6 which calls for an Africa where development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth.

As part of its contributions to the activities of the year, the African Governance Platform through the AGA Secretariat convened three Regional Youth Consultations covering the five regions. The Consultations were premised on the realisation that beyond normative declarations and state-centric implementation efforts aimed at addressing corruption, putting in place a citizen-centered prevention strategy largely built around Africa’s young people as major actors in the fight against corruption and impunity, is indeed one of the surest paths to sustainable development in Africa.
About the Regional Youth Consultations

The 2018 Youth Regional Consultations were convened under the auspices of the African Governance Architecture Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES) as well as the AU theme of the year. The Consultations were held under the theme, “Leveraging Youth Capacities for the Fight Against Corruption in Africa.” They took place in Gaborone, Botswana from August 15-17 for East and Southern Africa; Dakar, Senegal from September 5-7 for West and Central Africa; and Casablanca, Morocco from September 19-21 for North Africa. The Consultations were attended by over 270 participants from 49 African countries.

To further deepen meaningful youth engagement in the prevention and fight against corruption in Africa, the 2018 Regional Youth Consultations focused on leveraging and reinforcing young people’s insights, capacities, and initiatives for preventing and fighting leveraging and reinforcing young people’s insights, capacities, and initiatives for preventing and fighting corruption in Africa. The aim was to identify, support, strengthen and amplify youth perspectives and insights on the sustainable fight against corruption. The Consultations also provided a platform for capacity building for youth-oriented and focused organisations and networks towards enhanced involvement in building a culture of personal integrity, transparency, and accountability in Africa; in addition to facilitating inter-regional exchanges and lessons learning. The Consultations also provided a platform for participants to collectively craft recommendations and strategies to sustainably prevent and combat corruption in Africa.
More specifically, the Regional Youth Consultations:

- provided a platform for intergenerational reflections on the scourge of corruption in Africa and its various manifestations as governance deficits;
- ensured participants understood corruption as a mitigating factor for meaningful youth engagement and development;
- improved participants understanding and appreciation of continental, regional and national frameworks and institutions on anti-corruption;
- assessed and documented the contributions of young people in the prevention and fight against corruption through individual activism and collective efforts;
- strengthened the capacity of young people in the prevention and fight against corruption including by forming effective alliances with various national, regional and continental actors;
- identified concrete strategies and innovative initiatives at national, regional and continental levels for meaningful youth engagement in the sustainable prevention and fight against corruption.
### Areas of Focus

The Consultations featured a number of discussions on issues related to fighting corruption and the protection and promotion of young people’s rights within their region-specific peculiarities and realities.

The Consultations focused on five broad thematic areas as highlighted below:

1. **Corruption in Africa - Addressing a key driver of Governance Deficits:**
   
   This sub-theme discussed the state of corruption in Africa and its impact on democratic governance effectiveness and development outcomes. Discussions on this theme included a horizon scanning on the realities of corruption in various governance spaces, the role of youth in corruption, and how collective efforts and action can help turn the tide.

2. **Leveraging Youth Capacities for the fight against Corruption: Lessons from the frontlines:**

   This sub-theme focused on the role of young people in the fight against corruption in Africa. It featured presentations from young people on the frontlines of the fight against corruption, highlighting and reiterating the impact they are making and the challenges they face. The presentations highlighted various interventions young people are implementing in the areas of prevention, mitigation, leveraging technology, encouraging open governance systems, and creating state and citizen’s joint action for anti-corruption.

3. **Assessment of Anti-Corruption Normative & Institutional Frameworks at Continental, Regional and National Levels:**

   This sub-theme assessed the effectiveness of anti-corruption normative and institutional frameworks at various levels. Discussions bordered on the adequacy, effectiveness and appreciation of the value of the instruments by citizens, particularly youth. Furthermore, interventions dwelled on various non-state efforts in the field of anti-corruption and how they support, interact and amplify state-led efforts and interventions. This sub-theme also provided policy recommendations that will support the effective implementation and operationalization of the various instruments and institutions respectively.

The Consultations featured a number of discussions on issues related to fighting corruption and the protection and promotion of young people’s rights within their region-specific peculiarities and realities.
This sub-theme addressed the need for broad-based, collaborative efforts and action in fighting corruption in Africa. Interventions focused on the various roles played by key stakeholders and how joint efforts can help increase the efficacy and impact on a large scale. Discussions provided alternative narratives about state-led efforts through understanding the peculiar challenges of individual stakeholders and helped to build trust in such efforts. This sub-theme helped to foster more cordial relationships and strengthen partnerships amongst the various stakeholders including National Anti-Corruption Bodies, Security Agencies, and Parliament amongst others, in the fight against corruption.

The training programme introduced participants to emerging issues in the field of accountability and transparency globally and particularly in Africa. The training focused on issues relating to trends in anti-corruption efforts on the continent as well as practical tools that can be employed in the fight against corruption. Participants developed and shared innovative ideas that can be adapted by governments and civil society organisations.
REGIONAL SNAPSHOTs

The following sections provide an overview of the emerging issues, discussions and policy recommendations from each Regional Consultation.

East and Southern Africa Regional Youth Consultation

The East and Southern Africa Regional Youth Consultation took place at the Travelodge Hotel in Gaborone, Botswana from 15 to 17 August 2018. The Consultation was attended by over 100 young people representing various organisations and networks from 23 Member States from East and Southern Africa. It was convened in collaboration with AU-ABC and the government of Botswana. The meeting was officially opened by H.E Dikgang Makgalemele, Assistant Minister for Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development of the Republic of Botswana.
The consultation noted that young people in the two regions, like many across the continent, continue to grapple with the challenge of meaningful participation in the development processes in their respective countries. Participants from the two regions noted that the nature of predominant political systems is such that, young people are structurally excluded and discriminated against in social, political and economic spheres of society. It was further noted that this is compounded by the absence of a level playing field for young people who venture into these spaces, thus creating a spiral of frustration, detachment and resentment of governance in Africa.

Participants further noted that corruption has become dynamic and complex, yet the engagement of young people – as a critical demographic – in the fight against corruption remains limited. Furthermore, the use of technology in the fight against corruption in East and Southern Africa, as a veritable tool for advancing accountable and transparent governance, has not been adequately harnessed – with traditional methods yielding limited results. It was argued that there is need to broaden anti-corruption interventions by leveraging the energies and capacities of young people in the regions in the fight against corruption.

Participants also reiterated the critical role of individual-ethical leadership as key in the fight against corruption. It was argued that individual ethical lifestyles are capable of creating a ripple effect of a people who abhor corruption and impunity.

In addition, participants lamented the spate of corruption in public utility management and procurement which endangers the lives of the young people by impoverishing them, denying them of livelihoods and social services such as qualitative education, functional health systems, access to clean and portable water and provision of sanitation services. It was argued that the impact of corruption on service delivery and the need for alternatives in form of a lifeline is a push factor for migration, terrorism, armed banditry, etc.

Furthermore, participants called for the maximal use of new and emerging technologies as well as innovations that can help to prevent and combat corruption. A number of initiatives were highlighted as comparable practices that can be replicated in the two regions. Notable among this is the Integrity Idol project, initiated by Accountability Lab South Africa, aimed at identifying and celebrating ethical public servants in a given country.

Finally, participants challenged anti-corruption campaigners and activists on the need for adequate demonstration of transparency and accountability in running their own affairs. The issue of internal reflection and transparency by organizations working on corruption was emphasized.
In the light of the foregoing issues, participants at the East and Southern Africa Youth Consultation made the following policy recommendations:

### Youth Networks and CSOs

- Young people and CSOs should systematically document their work and experiences in combating corruption and generate lessons for governments as well as for future generations.

- A stronger partnership amongst civil society, government, media and private sector is crucial for public education and sensitization on issues of corruption.

- Individuals and CSOs that work on transparency and accountability issues must demonstrate transparency and accountability in running their own affairs. Participants believe this would legitimize individual and civil society anti-corruption efforts and campaigns, demonstrating campaigners’ commitment and sincerity of purpose.

### Member States of East and Southern Africa

- Governments in collaboration with civil society should create an enabling environment for young people to participate fully in governance processes including facilitating young people to run for office and shape policies and practices so that they can more closely monitor the use of resources channeled for development.

- On the issue of corruption in public utility management and procurement that endangers the lives of young people, participants called on governments to be more transparent in procurement processes as well as hold accountable those in power. They specifically called upon governments to put measures in place to track and report on utilisation of public funds as well as public service delivery.

- Member States should harness the power of new and emerging technologies in the fight against corruption.
The West and Central Africa Regional Youth Consultation took place at the Abdou Diouf International Conference Centre (CICAD), Diamniadio-Dakar, Senegal from 5 to 7 September 2018. The Consultation was attended by over 100 young people representing various organisations and networks from 20 Member States West and Central Africa. The Consultation was convened in collaboration with AU-ABC and the government of Senegal. It was officially opened by Hon. Pape Gourgui Ndong, Minister of Youth Citizen Construction and Promotion of Volunteering of the Government of Senegal.
EMERGING ISSUES

While corruption is a global phenomenon, it has stunted the growth and development of West and Central Africa for far too long. Participants argued that corruption has delayed attainment of progress, prevented economic growth, denied quality services to citizens, perpetuated inequalities, devalued the state and undermined governance. They further argued that governance deficits exacerbated by corruption are driving the illegal immigration of Africa’s young people through the Mediterranean. Limited opportunities in terms of employment, poor quality education, healthcare and infrastructure, to mention a few, are amongst the push factors for this risky voyage.

Participants lamented that several years of the anti-corruption fight has not necessarily yielded considerable progress, stating that there is a need to review the approaches and strategies employed. They argued that the absence of a holistic strategy that encourages ethical and value-based lifestyles continues to be of great concern.

Apart from the broader impact of corruption on African societies, women are additionally subjected to specific gender-based forms of corruption. Among the forms cited include “sextortion” as well as the protracted impact of corruption on public service delivery.

More concerted efforts are needed to realise the full potential of all national, regional and continental norms. Complementarities that exist between continental and regional instruments such as the ECOWAS protocol on corruption must be maximised;

Participants lamented the discrepancy in the commitment of Member States to global norms on corruption, compared to regional and continental norms. Participants further acknowledged the importance of institutions such as the AU Advisory Board on Corruption and national anti-corruption bodies as key governance institutions for implementing norms, monitoring progress and sharing of comparable lessons on the fight against corruption on the continent;

A sustainable fight against corruption can only be achieved if efforts are streamlined with broader governance reform processes on the continent. This will go a long way in improving citizen’s perception of anti-corruption efforts in Member States;

Participants argued that state-centric approaches in the fight against corruption has given little credence to citizen’s actions in the fight against corruption. They insisted that citizen’s efforts have made significant inroads in the fight against corruption and argued for the adoption of multi-stakeholder approaches. Youth led efforts across the two regions were acknowledged as having contributed significantly to efforts to prevent and combat corruption;
Participants noted that acts of social vices, violent extremism, terrorism and insecurity in general are often direct consequences of or perpetuated by corruption. Unfortunately, young people are both victims and perpetrators; 

Fighting corruption is difficult because it is personified in people. Citizens are of the view that successive political leaders failed to demonstrate the required political will and courage necessary for effectively fighting corruption; 

Access to information is essential to prevent and ensure accountability for corruption. However, only 7 out 15 Member States in ECOWAS have legislation on access to information. Implementation of these frameworks is woefully inadequate across countries; 

Limited opportunities for interaction and exchange of lessons between state and non-state actors in the fight against corruption exist. Specifically, participants noted the limited information amongst citizens and young people of mechanisms such as the open governance partnerships, the open parliament initiative, access to information processes and many others which are capable of strengthening the evidence-base in the fight against corruption; 

Participants also noted that youth organisations and networks have a comparative advantage in the prevention of corruption. They argued that prevention strategies are more effective and less costly to implement compared to investigation and prosecution. Participants posited that youth organisations and networks should be supported and partnered with in their efforts at enlisting the majority of the continent’s population in prevention efforts; 

Participants also acknowledged that the use of technology, especially social media and other digital engagements by young people is sometimes abused, calling for responsible use of digital tools for the fight against corruption. 

Technology and innovation have been significantly leveraged upon by young people in Africa to advance anti-corruption efforts. Initiatives such as Budeshi by Public and Private Development Centre (PPDC) in Nigeria, Follow the Money by Connected Development (CODE) with projects in Nigeria, Kenya, and The Gambia, Accountability Lab’s Integrity Idols reward system, amongst others, have continued to innovatively and effectively amplify the impact of anti-corruption efforts;
To address the above emerging issues and observations, participants at the West and Central Africa Regional Youth Consultation recommended:

**Youth Networks and CSOs**
- Participants suggested that dialogue, collective action and unity should remain central to addressing the developmental challenges occasioned by corruption. Young people’s voices and viewpoints should be heard, amplified and young people should be positioned as key actors in the fight against corruption in Africa;
- The fight against corruption must be both a collective and a personal commitment. Education and conscientisation at home, in schools and in religious, community and cultural centres is a key element in creating and sustaining a corrupt free generation;
- It was observed that young people in Senegal were involved in drafting the national strategy against corruption, a practice that should be emulated by other countries. Young people should also be more open to engaging relevant institutions in the fight against corruption;
- Citizens should view government as a necessary entity that must be engaged and supported, giving way for CSOs to be involved during budget formulation and public resource allocation processes and allowing for oversight especially on procurement and award of contracts;
- Corruption is deeply rooted in procurement processes particularly as information related to such processes are not usually available or accessible to the public. To bridge this gap, BUDESHI (Open it) system initiated by PPDC Nigeria should be tried and replicated by civil society in their respective countries. Under the system, projects from inception have an identity number and can be tracked at each phase. This helps citizens track and monitor the resources allocated to their communities;

**Member States of West and Central Africa**
- Transparency and accountability institutions in Member States should ensure youth voices are heard. Effective platforms are needed for meaningful interface between young people and government in the fight against corruption. Member States should invest the necessary resources to provide young people with platforms to engage on these issues;
- Members of Parliament, in collaboration with civil society, should propose legislation and law reforms for a more holistic and effective approach to fighting corruption that advance access to information and whistle blower protection for example;
- Ensure separation of powers between the judiciary, legislative and executive arms of government so that each serves as a check and balance against the other, mitigating against abuse of power;
- Young male and female activists working towards a corrupt free generation must be supported and protected. The collaboration of government and civil society is needed to establish sustainable and accountable democratic systems that provide opportunities for social accountability at local levels;
- Successful efforts combatting corruption in Member States should be identified, profiled and celebrated so as to encourage other Member States to adapt and upscale similar strategies and ensure greater impact;
The North Africa Youth Consultation took place at the Idou Anfa Hotel, Casablanca, Morocco from 5 to 7 September 2018. The Consultation was attended by over 70 young people representing various organisations and networks from 6 North African countries. The meeting was officially opened by Mr. Otmane Gair, Director of Youth, Childhood and Women’s Affairs at the Ministry of Youth and Sports.
The continued delay of Member States in ratifying, domesticating and implementing the AUCPCC has far reaching consequences, as does the inexistence of national anti-corruption strategies in certain Member States. The achievement of Agenda 2063 is however dependent on the full implementation of the Convention;

The AU commitment to youth-led development on the continent has been expressed through various AU policy frameworks. For instance, the AU’s theme for year 2017 was ‘Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth’. Participants argued that African youth are yet to leverage on this, neither have they realized that the African Youth Charter and its subsequent Decade Plan of Action paved the way for their involvement towards the realization of the AU’s Agenda 2063;

Several anti-corruption initiatives and conventions exist at the national, regional, continental and international levels such as UNCAC, AUCPCC, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Anti-Bribery Convention, Arab Anti-Corruption Convention, Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (the Macolin Convention) and Marrakech declaration on the prevention of corruption. However, corruption persists and is perceived as a norm across the region.

It has been reported by the World Bank that about 1.5 billion dollars are paid as bribes annually in Africa, which is about 2 per cent of the global GDP and 10 times the value of overseas aid received by the continent. More worrisome to participants is that about 75 million Africans are also reported to have paid bribes in one form or another every year;

Participants decried lack of critical thinking skills and inculcation of civic education regarding corruption and its dangers at primary level and the development stage of citizens. The issue of corruption is mostly seen as an adult affair and this has become more dangerous as citizens grow with corrupt acts like vote selling, exam malpractice, etc., thinking it is a normal way of life. This situation has further paved way for mediocrity and impunity to thrive;

Participants observed that corruption is a national and transnational issue that affects everyone. Citizens including CSOs, religious and cultural leaders and political parties have fundamental roles to play in preventing and combatting the vice. Unfortunately, they are yet to fully embrace their civic responsibilities of ensuring the effective implementation of international instruments their countries signed unto;
Participants raised concerns about the shrinking civic and political space across the continent which impedes the participation of young people, media, activists and CSOs in governance processes. The inter-generational scramble for the civic and political space has marginalized young people and women in particular. In Mauritania for example, youth cannot turn the tide on corruption because the current political culture in the country does not allow political denunciation and there are no legal frameworks in this regard.

The lack of access to information and non-protection of whistle blowers despite the existence of legislation is troubling, as is the lack of transparency and accountability from government institutions. Young people and other citizens are becoming increasingly frightened of reporting corrupt acts especially in situations where the state fails to make information available on request and cannot guarantee their safety.

The use of new technologies has been grossly under explored by African governments. Engaging creative and multi-talented young people in developing technologies and digital platforms could be optimally used to prevent and combat corruption in Africa, rather than perpetrate corrupt practices in various forms.

Participants lamented that non-state actors including CSOs and private sector actors are also culpable of corruption. CSOs often have technical and financial constraints in fighting corruption, however, they are alleged to be pursuing development partners’ agendas and also blamed for perpetrating acts of corruption through lack of accountability and transparency in their modus operandi. The private sector actors on their part are accused of getting involved in corruption especially when they evade tax and engage in corruption during procurement and contract awarding in connivance with government officials. Nevertheless, participants observed that efforts of civil society and private sector in the fight against corruption will remain futile if African leaders do not demonstrate strong political will, commitment and courage in this regard;
Youth-led organisations and youth activists should leverage on the opportunity created by the AU-ABC to provide clear and innovative strategies for preventing and combatting corruption on the continent;

Citizens should begin to trust and partner with government on issues of governance, especially in the prevention and fight against corruption. Participants strongly recommend the need for effective collaboration amongst CSOs, citizens, the creative industries, the media, academia, private sector, the parliament and other relevant government institutions for a successful and result-oriented fight against corruption. Furthermore, participants re-emphasized the critical role of the media, the need for evidence-based research and scientific investigation in advancing the fight against corruption. The media should continue to be a watchdog, raise awareness about corruption and inform citizens about government efforts in the area of curbing corruption;

Participants call on young people to make themselves available to partner with government, private sector, media, and CSOs in developing new technologies that could be effectively deployed in preventing and fighting corruption in Africa;

CSOs have a fundamental role to play in educating and getting young people to be well-informed and become active citizens in the fight against corruption, adopting inter-generational approaches;

In the light of the foregoing observations, participants at the East and Southern Africa Youth Consultation make the following policy recommendations:

Youth Networks and CSOs

- Participants agreed that it is not enough to draft or have laws and initiatives for the fight against corruption, what is urgently needed is to have systems and structures in place that will continue to sensitize and educate citizens on issues of corruption and accountability. For instance, whistle blower protection law and Freedom of Information Acts exists in some countries but there is no system in place that ensures their effective implementation;

- Member States must take lessons from countries like Morocco and Tunisia where online digital platforms are created and effectively used in dealing with corruption cases related to procurement. These platforms ensure anonymity and protection of whistle blowers while providing evidence. Similarly, to encourage whistle blowing, the Algerian government created a platform where citizens can indicate the location of corrupt institutions. The information is then analysed by experts who produce reports on the issue;
SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

East and Southern Africa

15,236,711
Estimated Social Media Reach

80,887
Social Media Interactions

4,966
Social Media Interactions

74,710
Social Media Likes

1,211
Social Media Comments
### West and Central Africa

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Youth Regional Consultations Report 2018
North Africa

4,926,657
Estimated Social Media Reach

6,588
Social Media Interactions

1,727
Social Media Shares

4,779
Social Media Likes

82
Social Media Comments
Across the three Regional Youth Consultations

- **26,561,449** Estimated Social Media Reach
- **105,192** Social Media Interactions
- **13,462** Social Media Shares
- **90,399** Social Media Likes
- **1,331** Social Media Comments
The AGA Secretariat is grateful to the various individuals and partner institutions who supported the successful convening of the 2018 Regional Youth Consultations. We acknowledge the collaboration and partnership with:

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European Union
National Democratic Institute
ONE Campaign, Africa
Training for Peace Programme

APPRECIATION

THE AGA REGIONAL YOUTH CONSULTATIONS

Convened under the auspices of the African Governance Architecture Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES), the Annual Regional Youth Consultations is a citizen’s engagement and knowledge management initiative of the African Governance Platform. Since 2013, various youth consultations have been convened to facilitate youth participation and engagement with topical democracy, human rights and governance policy issues. Policy recommendations from these regional consultations form the basis for discussions at the Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance. In addition, outcomes of these consultations contribute to improved youth programming by AGA Platform Members and ultimately infused into policy processes of the African Union. The Regional Youth Consultations are part of AGA’s contribution to the attainment of aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 on ‘an Africa where Development is People-Driven, Unleashing the Potential of its Women and Youth’.