



**AU ROADMAP**  
ON  
**HARNESSING <sup>THE</sup>**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC**  
**DIVIDEND <sup>THROUGH</sup>**  
**INVESTMENTS <sup>IN</sup>**  
**YOUTH**

In response to AU Assembly Decision  
(Assembly/AU/Dec.601 (XXVI))  
on the 2017 theme of the year



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## Acknowledgements

The African Union Commission wishes to express its deep appreciation to all its partners for their tremendous support in the development and production of the African Union Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth, notably the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for providing financial and technical support.

The Commission equally acknowledges the young people, Ministers, African diplomats, AUC officials, experts, civil society organizations, private sector, African regional institutions, UN system etc. for invaluable inputs into the roadmap.

## Quotes from AU Organ and Partners\*



“The demographic dividend is a window of opportunity in Africa that needs to be maximized. The time is now, let us take the strategic decisions and actions necessary to reap the demographic dividend through greater investment and policy implementation.”

**Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki**

Chief Executive Officer,  
New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency



“We will keep Africa's youth in Africa by expanding economic opportunities. This will help Africa to turn its demographic asset into an economic dividend.”

**Dr. Akinwumi Adesina**

President,  
African Development Bank Group



“Africa must take advantage of its population structure and its natural resources endowment to namely coordinate the expansion of investments in human development and social protection for achieving sustainable higher levels of equitable and shared growth, and employment creation; boost agriculture and food security; speed up the pace of regional integration; and enhance state and institutional capacities for improved economic and social governance”

**Dr. Abdalla Hamdok**

Acting Executive Secretary,  
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)



“Investments in a demographic dividend that are grounded in human rights, and that create opportunity for all young people, will drive change towards a better future for the world and for Africa.”

**Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin**

Under Secretary General and Executive Director,  
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

\*The AU assembly decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.591 (XXVI)) mandates the Commission in collaboration with UNECA, AfDB, NEPAD and UNFPA to develop a roadmap and expedite the implementation of the Demographic Dividend in Africa.

## Foreword

Africa is on the march towards a more prosperous future in which all its citizens, young, old, male, female, rural, urban, of all creeds and backgrounds are empowered to realize their full potential, live with satisfaction and pride about their continent. A future with healthy, well educated people living in robust and developed economies. Indeed, this is a progressive march towards the ‘Africa we want’ as envisioned in Agenda 2063.

Whilst many-sided and simultaneous steps are needed to achieve this bold vision, there are some very clear and obvious steps that must be taken without delay. This responsibility rests with all Africans, citizens and leaders alike, at the continental and regional levels and especially within countries to ensure we adequately invest in the development of our continent's greatest asset: its young people. A peaceful and secure Africa requires an empowered generation of youth; a well-developed continent depends on the education and skills of Africans, especially the youth and none of our aspirations would be met if disease and poor health continue to affect millions of our citizens.

With 60 percent of Africa's population currently 24 and below, it is no surprise that at the dawn of our implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, African Heads of State and Government have devoted the year 2017 to “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth”. The extent to which African governments are able to transform education and skills development, health and wellbeing, empowerment as well as employment and entrepreneurship would lie at the heart of this march towards progress, sustainable peace and development.

In the email from the future, I highlighted the significant role that successive generations of youth can and should play in our continent's development. Key investments in the youth of Africa today is critical to Agenda 2063 and to elevating Africa to be a strong and influential global player. The roadmap sets out the immediate actions for focused and expanded investments in Africa's young men and women. It was developed at the request of African Union Heads of State and Government, and highlights key actions that must be taken so that the continent can harness the demographic dividend.

It is my hope that Member States, regional economic communities, civil society organizations, young people, AU organs and all other stakeholders will work together to implement this roadmap in 2017 and beyond.

Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma  
Chairperson, Africa Union Commission

# 1

## Introduction

To effectively implement the Africa Union Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.601 (XXVI) of January 2016 to devote the theme of the year 2017 to “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investments in Youth”, the African Heads of State and Government requested the Commission, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Coordination and Planning Agency, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as well as other United Nations partners and development agencies to:



- i. Expedite the implementation of a continental initiative on Demographic Dividend for Africa; and
- ii. Develop a roadmap with key deliverables and milestones to be submitted to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly scheduled for July 2016 through the Executive Council, to guide Member States and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on concrete actions to be undertaken in 2017 and beyond.

In order to deliver on this important assignment from the Assembly, the Commission, together with the above-named institutions undertook a multi-stakeholder consultative process towards the preparation of the 2017 AU Roadmap on “Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth,” which reflects the inputs and aspirations of a wide range of key stakeholders.

Investments made today in the youth, who represent Africa’s greatest asset, will

determine the development trajectory of Africa over the next 50 years and position the continent towards realizing the “Africa We Want,” a strong, united and influential global player and partner as envisioned in Agenda 2063.

This roadmap has therefore been developed bearing in mind the urgent necessity to transform the potential of Africa’s large youth population, often referred to as the youth bulge, into a demographic dividend. It is also to help usher African countries towards the ambitious yet critical aspirations and goals of the complementary Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The demographic dividend can be defined as the benefit that can arise when a country has a relatively large proportion of working-age population due to declining fertility, and effectively invests in their health, empowerment, education and employment through public action and private sector involvement.

# 2

## Background

The central importance of the demographic dividend to Africa's transformative development has been repeatedly acknowledged by African leaders at the highest level and in key ministerial platforms. Over the last ten years, it has become evident that a demographic dividend lens offers a strategic basis for focusing and prioritizing investments in people in general and the youth in particular, in order to achieve sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, and to build "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, which is driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena".

The Joint Annual Meetings of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance have repeatedly underscored the importance of the demographic dividend in the development planning processes of African countries. It also called for the development of a continental demographic dividend initiative in 2013 (AUC/ECA Joint Conference of Ministers Ministerial Statement) aimed at accelerating economic development on the continent.

The African Population Commission, (now known as the African Population Experts Committee) also highlighted the importance of the demographic dividend in the 6th Ordinary session in 2007. It devoted the 2012 State of Africa Population Report to "Harnessing the demographic dividend for the socio-economic development of Africa". The Commission also co-convened with the African Union Commission (AUC), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Africa Regional Conference on Population and Development in 2013 again with harnessing the demographic dividend as the main theme. Subsequently, in January 2014, the Executive Council decision EX.CL/ Dec. 742 (XXII) called for the recognition of the demographic dividend in the continent's development efforts.

Furthermore, the AU Agenda 2063, makes several calls for investment in



youth and women in realizing its vision of "an Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth". Equally important is the recognition of the demographic dividend as a key element in the people-centred framework of the Common African Position on the Post 2015 Development Agenda. This resulted in the inclusion of the demographic dividend in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This was one of the key contributions of Africa to the 2030 Agenda.

It is also worthy to note that many countries across Africa are already putting in place measures and policies that would help create an enabling environment to position them towards reaping the demographic dividend.

# 3

## Context and Justification

According to the UN World Population Prospects (2015 Revision), the continent's population reached 1.2 billion in 2015 and is projected to grow rapidly, reaching 1.7 billion in 2030 and more than double by 2050, to 2.5 billion in 2050 and 3 billion in 2063. It's share of the global population will increase from 16 per cent in 2015 to more than 29 per cent in 2063. More remarkable is the fact that about 46 per cent of the 1.3 billion increase in Africa's labor force over the period 2015-2063 will be young people aged 15-34, averaging 12.1 million a year.



With a fast transformation in the age structure and a decline in dependency ratios, there is a potential for economic growth spurred by the increased labor income and increased savings. This can also correlatively lead to improvements of human capital as: (i) lower fertility is usually associated with delayed age of first birth and longer spaces between births, both of which improve maternal and child health; (ii) a lower youth dependency ratio allows larger investments per child; and (iii) lower fertility increases the potential for female employment and hence empowerment.

Given Africa's current demographic structure with a high youthful population, there is a significant potential for economic

transformation. Beyond the simple increment in the number and share of working-age population, the development and implementation of sound policies in education, health, including family planning and the creation of an enabling macroeconomic environment that facilitates job creation and access to decent employment would ensure increases in the productive workforce and lead to higher growth and rising income per person. Finally, harnessing the demographic dividend presents a great opportunity to building resilience of young people and addressing the root causes of many of the key challenges facing Africa including forced migration, radicalization and violent extremism.

# 4

## Objectives

The overall objective of the roadmap is to guide and facilitate the implementation of the theme of the year 2017 by Member states, Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) and partners through key deliverables, milestones and concrete actions as stated by the Assembly Decision ( Assembly/AU/Dec. 601(XXVI)).

In particular, the roadmap spells out the necessary areas for key investments (labeled as pillars), that are needed for countries to maximize their potential to harness a demographic dividend in the decades ahead. Under each pillar, key actions and areas of investments have been defined in line with relevant and strategic AU policy instruments and frameworks to position countries towards harnessing the demographic dividend and ensuring the full implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

# 5

## Guiding Frameworks and Principles

### a. Frameworks

To ensure a proper grounding and alignment of the roadmap with existing AU frameworks and commitments, the development of this roadmap has been guided by the Agenda 2063 and its 'First Ten-Year Implementation Plan' which together lay a strong foundation for the vision of African leaders in all facets of the continent's development especially as they relate to the thematic pillars elaborated in this roadmap. Similarly, the roadmap is guided by the Common African Position on Post 2015 Development Agenda, the Malabo Summit Declaration of 2011 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all of which highlight the importance of the demographic dividend to people-centred and inclusive development.



Furthermore, given the importance of investments in youth towards the achievement of the demographic dividend, the African Youth Charter has been critical in the development of the roadmap. Additionally, each of the thematic areas has been guided by the relevant AU policies and frameworks at the continental level and key cross-sectoral instruments like the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development beyond 2014, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Continental Policy Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, etc.

### **b. Principles and Values**

In the process of preparing the roadmap, it was also very important to build and reflect on key principles and values of the African Union such as those enshrined in the OAU Charter (1963) and in the

Constitutive Act of the African Union (2002). These principles and values would facilitate empowerment and the creation of an enabling environment within countries and RECs to harness and maximize the demographic dividend:

- Upholding of the principles of transparency, democracy, good governance, anti-corruption and rule of law;
- Accountability in the delivery of services and the effective performance of accountability institutions, particularly parliaments, the judiciary, and civil society organizations;
- Women and youth participation in decision-making at all levels;
- Equity and accessibility- leaving no one behind;
- Multi-sectoral approach to development;
- Human rights for all.

# 6

## Consultative Process

In developing this roadmap, a deliberate attempt was made to consult a broad spectrum of stakeholders including young people, Ministers, African diplomats, AUC officials, experts, civil society organizations, private sector, African regional institutions, UN system etc. to ensure that the activities proposed are comprehensive, broad, innovative, result-oriented, have the ownership of all key stakeholders and are country-driven.

The Commission and partners also used virtual consultations, including social media, that provided the opportunity for various stakeholders – mainly youth - to make inputs by sending their proposals and contributions through a template that was developed for this purpose. The Commission and mandated partners (ECA, NEPAD, AfDB and UNFPA) also took advantage of several key events and platforms taking place around the continent for advocacy and outreach on Project 2017 and to solicit the inputs of various stakeholders.

These included:

- Accra Conference on “Realizing the Demographic Dividend”; Ghana, 8-12 February, 2016;
- Dialogue with African Youth and Adolescents Network (AfriYAN) on “Empowering Young People to Harness the Demographic Dividend”, Dakar, Senegal, 19 February 2016;
- African Demographic Dividend Leadership Seminar; Abuja, Nigeria 7-9 March 2016;
- Working Dinner on Initiative to Harness the Demographic Dividend with the Diplomatic Corps and partners; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 31 March 2016;
- Meeting of Health Experts as a Working Group of Specialized Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control (STC-HPDC), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25-26 April, 2016;
- Meeting of the United Nations Liaison Team; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 27 April 2016;
- 5th Pan-African Summit of the Young Leaders of the United Nations (ROJALNU), Libreville, Gabon, 4-6 May, 2016;
- 26th Annual World Economic Forum on Africa; Kigali, Rwanda, 11-13 May 2016;
- African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development; Cairo, Egypt, 17-19 May 2016;
- Ministers of Health Meeting; Geneva, Switzerland, 21 May 2016;
- Banjul +10: Celebrating Ten-Years of the African Youth Charter, Banjul, Gambia, 23-25 May 2016;
- African Development Bank Annual General Meeting, Lusaka, Zambia, 23-27 May 2016;
- AU Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sports, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13-17 June 2016;
- High level Symposium on Demographic Dividend and Africa’s development, Dakar, Senegal, 20 June 2016.

At each of these meetings and platforms, participants and representatives of Member States had the opportunity to make concrete contributions towards the roadmap. In some instances, the participants received the roadmap template and had opportunities to consult further with their constituencies before submitting inputs and suggestions.

# 7

## Understanding the Central Importance of Population Dynamics to Africa’s Economic Transformation and Harnessing the Demographic Dividend

The demographic dividend remains central to realizing Africa’s aspiration for economic transformation. It is evident that, given proper investments, population dynamics would play an important role in facilitating high and inclusive growth and poverty reduction. Indeed, the large youth population if well harnessed, would spur the continent to greater economic achievements. Africa is moving at a pace much slower than its potential due in great part to the untapped potential of its youth. The 2016 Economic Report on Africa



puts the growth rate of the continent at 3.7 percent and although this masks higher performance in certain countries, economic growth has not been in areas that are labour intensive. For example, Africa spends about 30 billion US dollars importing processed foods every year and could create about 5 million jobs just by transforming natural minerals by 5 percent. The time to invest in human resource, particularly youth is now.

A set of important measures that include high stakes investments in health, particularly access to family planning, which has been noted by Agenda 2063 as among the driving forces behind the economic successes of the Asian tigers, must be put in place. Further, lowering mortality and fertility; eliminating gender inequalities that impede women's right to decide on the number and spacing

of their children; improving access to quality education that is matched with labour market demands; putting in place macroeconomic measures that would facilitate job creation and entrepreneurship, including removing barriers that inhibit businesses, are all central to economic transformation. Conducting proper profiling of countries to ensure policy makers make evidence-based decisions during country development planning would therefore help to address Africa's current challenges that render young people vulnerable to fundamentalism, extremism, forced migration, etc.

These investments and policy responses are interlinked, and exploiting their synergies would be critical to increasing and maximizing the dividend in the long run.

# 8

## Thematic Pillars

Harnessing the demographic dividend requires key actions from all aspects of development planning and nation-building. This roadmap focuses on four key interconnected pillars that are most critical to increasing investments in youth, driving change and setting African countries on the path towards harnessing the demographic dividend.

Given that country contexts differ, it is expected that the key actions proposed would serve as a guide that will be implemented based on local priorities.

## Pillar 1: Employment and Entrepreneurship



African youth (15-24 years) constitute about 37% of the working age population, but account for more than 60% of all African unemployed people in Africa (AfDB, 2013). To address this high youth unemployment rates and the mismatch of qualifications in Africa, labor force participation needs to be increased by providing employment opportunities to youth in particular. With high-quality jobs predominantly provided by private sector to absorb new workforce entrants and increase overall productivity, there is a need for a paradigm change as young people should be empowered with the necessary entrepreneurial skills to enable them to create their own enterprises. As such, governments should create

conducive political, business, financial and economic environment by developing and effectively implementing policies that promote flexible labor markets, facilitate the development of labor-intensive sectors that can compete globally, and liberalize trade. Governments need also to engage with Chiefs Executive Officers (CEOs), national and regional banking institutions and the private sector to enable them to contribute to the emergence of a new generation on entrepreneurs in the continent as well as in the mobilization of the necessary funding. Adequate and tailored policies on Corporate Social Responsibilities should become a norm. These measures are necessary to increase employment

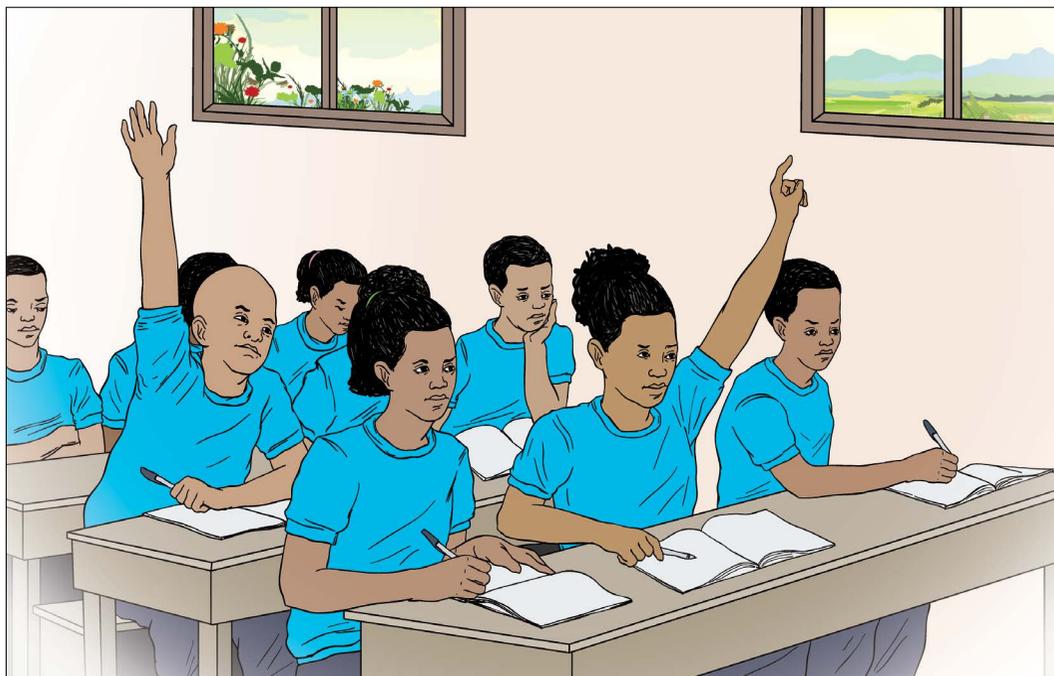
opportunities and productivity needed. Finally, considering that agriculture employs 60% of the labour force in Africa and accounts for 25% of the continent's GDP<sup>1</sup>, it is extremely important that this sector is prioritized to help absorb most of the youth in Africa facing unemployment.

### Key Actions and Deliverables

1. Develop and implement strategies aiming at reducing the proportion of 2013 youth unemployed by at least a quarter by 2024 (in accordance with Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan).
2. Improve access to credit facilities for youth and establish and operationalize national and regional Youth Funds to increase young people's access to business capital.
3. Engage with private sector partners to expand internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities for women and youth.
4. Develop proper policies, incentive measures and create conducive environment for Corporate Social Responsibilities with the aim of supporting youth entrepreneurship.
5. Engage African philanthropists, Chiefs Executive Officers (CEOs) and private sector to develop and support transformative youth development initiatives towards building entrepreneurial skills and capacities of African youth.
6. Enhance access of young people to government procurement and financial services, including special considerations for youth-led businesses and measures to reduce the challenge of starting and/or doing business within and across African countries
7. Invest in sectors with high job-multiplier effects, including Information and Communications Technology (ICT), manufacturing, agriculture and agro-industries in order to generate employment and spur inclusive growth.
8. Create youth development funds at national, sub-regional (RECs) and continental level (AfDB) to support youth entrepreneurship advancement within all sectors.
9. Promote Africa youth volunteer and Junior Professional Programmes and other internship opportunities to enhance capacity and grant exposure to young Africans in regional and international organizations.

<sup>1</sup> African Economic Outlook Report, 2013

## Pillar 2: Education and Skills Development



Improvements in the outcomes of education in Africa will be critical to the continent's efforts towards harnessing the demographic dividend and serves as one of the most important areas that require strategic investments. Across Africa and within various policy instruments and studies, some of the key challenges facing the educational system are well documented. These include access, quality, relevance, options for technical and vocational education and training, the need for emphasis on science and technology, the mismatch between

what students learn and the demands of national development and the labour market, high cost of tuition, inadequacy of learning materials, etc. Indeed, there is a need for a skills revolution in Africa. Building on the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-25), these challenges have to be addressed in a meaningful manner that involves all the key actors and stakeholders from country to the continental level and including government, the private sector, civil society and youth.

### Key Actions and Deliverables

10. Review curriculum of educational institutions to increase quality and relevance to labour market and national developmental needs, particularly through an emphasis on skills development and a greater focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through enhanced implementation of continental policies like the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2014-24); and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-25)
11. Expand vocational training opportunities for skills acquisition for young people to enhance their employability (including self - employment), productivity and competitiveness as stated in the Continental Strategy for Technical, Vocational Education and Training. (TVET CS)
12. Improve inclusive access to education at all levels and provide viable alternatives for the many young people, particularly adolescent girls, who drop out of the formal educational system, by facilitating re-entry, revamping informal education and training through standardized certification within and between African countries.
13. Adopt a life-course approach to learning that encompasses a wide range of subjects and topics, including livelihood skills, age appropriate and culturally sensitive comprehensive education about sexual and reproductive health and address sexual harassment affecting young women in the education system.
14. Establish and strengthen regional educational institutions that create learning and exchange opportunities for students across Africa, including the gradual introduction of internship programmes from secondary up to tertiary levels.

### Pillar 3: Health and Wellbeing



The importance of ensuring good health is key to reducing youth vulnerability and to maximizing human capital investment. It is also critical in speeding up the demographic transition and improving the productivity of the workforce. As such, to harness the demographic dividend, it is critical to make strategic investments that would improve health outcomes especially as relates to access to sexual and reproductive health including family planning to ensure that women can decide on the number and spacing of their children. In addition, it is critical to improve child survival by focusing on prevention of infectious diseases, immunization, improving nutrition and strengthening interventions around the

neonatal period. Agenda 2063 “commits member states to integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights, family planning and HIV/AIDS services through reinforcing action on earlier commitments to enhance maternal, newborn and child health status, ensuring the integration necessary to facilitate synergies between HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health programmes”. Nevertheless, a worryingly high adolescent fertility rate and unmet need for family planning, despite the high demand for example, is one of the reasons for high fertility rates that could delay or jeopardize the harnessing of the demographic dividend. A combination of low mortality and fertility is a critical

element for harnessing the demographic dividend. Whilst child mortality rates in Africa have declined, fertility rates have remained high, with a continental average of 4.7 (World Population Prospects 2015 Revision). In some African countries, the fertility rate stands as high as 7.6. These phenomena give rise to high youth dependency rates and manifest themselves in many other challenges as there are limited resources to adequately invest in the development of each individual.

Across Africa, barriers limiting young people’s access to sexual and reproductive health information and services particularly for young girls persist. Addressing adolescent unmet need for modern contraception alone would reduce unintended pregnancies and abortions by 70 percent<sup>2</sup>, along with significant reductions in maternal death and morbidities. Thus, access to family planning services, including access to modern contraceptives

could be a life-saver for many women and adolescent girls. Furthermore, the high maternal and child mortality, prevalence of sexually transmitted infections, socio-cultural practices that inhibit access to health and wellbeing, particularly harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) and the unacceptable school dropout rates due to unintended pregnancies, pose a serious threat to Africa’s efforts towards harnessing the demographic dividend. This situation calls for urgent, systematic and strategic investments in health in order to facilitate harnessing of the demographic dividend. It also requires a change in socio-cultural norms, including with regards to the roles and responsibilities of women and men, boys and girls. The potential for a demographic dividend cannot be realized in the context of persistent gender discrimination and inequality, that leaves many women and girls disempowered and disenfranchised.

2 Guttmacher Institute, 2016

## Key Actions and Deliverables

15. Establish and promote integrated adolescent and youth friendly health services in public and private health facilities, school clinics and other venues, with adequate services for sexual and reproductive health.
16. Prioritize national investments to ensure universal access to family planning services, including expanding the use of modern contraceptives as stated in the Extended Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2016-2030) and reiterated by Article 14(g) of the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women.
17. Foster sustainable investments in health systems, including in human resources and infrastructure, with the goal of enhancing access to quality health services for all and guaranteeing adequate financing for the health sector in line with the Abuja commitments and address morbidities that undermine quality of life and productivity of the workforce.
18. Scale up the promotion and implementation of policies, community engagement strategies and behavioural change measures to enhance the reproductive rights of women and adolescent girls and their access to sexual and reproductive health education, information and services.
19. Promote policies and programmes to improve child survival e.g. increasing immunization coverage, integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI) and improving child nutrition among others.
20. Scale up age-appropriate and culturally sensitive comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health<sup>3</sup> in order to avert many complications and challenges associated with unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and its consequent impact on the development and wellbeing of young people, for in and out of school youth and implement innovative behavioural change programmes using new media and technology.
21. Foster inter-sectoral action for health at all levels (state and non-state) in a manner that demonstrates broad stewardship towards all actions conducive and necessary for improvement in reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health.
22. Create an enabling environment by empowering communities and strengthening the role of men in improving access to sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights services.

<sup>3</sup> (Extended Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, 2016-2030), para 18v, vi.

## Pillar 4: Rights, Governance and Youth Empowerment



Africa's youth account for more than 60% of the continent's population. This is a huge resource if adequately incentivised for ensuring meaningful participation, representation and observance of human rights on the continent. However, the challenge remains the limited participation of this huge resource in formal political processes and insufficient enjoyment of their rights. This challenge often leads to disenfranchisement and frustrations which if not adequately addressed threatens social cohesion, peace and security of the society to expand their capabilities.

Harnessing the demographic dividend on the continent requires investments in ensuring participatory, representative and inclusive political processes as well as responsive state institutions. This must be premised on the enjoyment, protection and respect for fundamental civil, political and socio-economic rights of young people including young women, who experience dire rights-based challenges. Further to this, effective management of diversity through the provision of safe spaces for inter-generational mutual learning and collaboration is anticipated to help provide leadership and mentorship opportunities for the emerging leaders on whose shoulders the sustenance of the modest gains the continent has achieved rests.

Local, national and regional policy implementation in addition to socio-cultural attitude changes are capable of providing the foundations for unleashing the creative potentials of an increasingly educated, cosmopolitan and indeed tech-savvy youth population. Ensuring greater access for young people to effectively engage and participate in local governments, legislatures, judiciary and political parties will significantly accelerate the attainment of the goals of the African Union Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030.

In laying the foundations for harnessing the demographic dividend and propelling transformative development of AU Member States, investments must be made in continuously opening the political space, upholding rights, ensuring participatory governance and empowering Africa's youth. Already, the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and Member States have adopted several normative instruments, policy directives including the African Governance Architecture – Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES) to accelerate progress in these areas. Emphasis should remain on improved implementation, progress monitoring and sharing of comparable lessons across the board.

Overall, accelerating the implementation of these commitments will enhance the delivery of the other three pillars needed to harness the demographic dividend for the attainment of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 sustainable development goals.

### **Key Actions and Deliverables**

23. Ensure universal ratification, domestication and full implementation of all African Union Shared Values instruments including the African Youth Charter (AYC) and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) by all Member States of the African Union by the end of the year 2017.
24. Create inclusive National Implementation Mechanisms for regular and periodic reporting on the implementation of the Shared Values Instruments particularly the African Youth Charter and the ACDEG, through existing mechanisms such as the African Peer Review Mechanism and the State Reporting on the ACDEG. Specifically, institute the regular production of the State of African Youth Report that incorporates reports from National Youth Councils and various stakeholders on the status of implementation of the African Youth Charter and related instruments.
25. Eliminate barriers to active participation of youth in nation building including in political spaces and put in place mechanisms to facilitate their meaningful participation in political parties, parliaments, judiciary, cabinets and civil service structures of Member States.

26. Remove all discriminatory laws and limitations to full participation of young people in electoral processes through inclusive electoral laws and constitutions which fosters effective diversity management.
27. Enhance the empowerment of youth through the integration of civic education in national educational curricula, media platforms and other channels to instill principles of Pan-Africanism, the rule of law, human rights and individual duties and responsibilities.
28. Proscribe all laws posing barriers to the full exercise and enjoyment of the fundamental rights of young people to fully participate in the democratic governance processes at continental, regional, national and grassroots levels.
29. Review, revise, amend or abolish all laws, regulations, policies, practices and customs that have a discriminatory impact on youth especially girls and young women, without distinction of any kind, and ensure that the provisions of multiple legal systems comply with international human rights regulations and laws. These must include protection from harmful practices like early, forced or child marriages, sexual and gender-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM).
30. Strengthen independent youth formations, networks and organisation including establishment of independent youth commissions at national and sub-regional levels to champion youth activities.
31. Strengthen AU's institutional structure and delivery capacity for youth empowerment and development through the elevation of the Youth Division to a Directorate.
32. Appoint an AU Special Envoy on Youth to lead advocacy and champion the prioritization of youth issues within continental and other decision-making spaces.
33. Institute youth leadership and empowerment trainings aimed at deepening Pan African ideals and aspirations in the youth.
34. Ensure the implementation of various decisions of the AU Assembly of Heads of States on youth leadership and participation in decision making processes. In this vein, efforts must be put in place to establish an annual Youth Parliament and a Model African Union Assembly at the continental level.
35. Strengthen existing youth engagement and participation initiatives of the African Union including the African Youth Volunteers Corps, African Union Youth Clubs, AGA-YES activities including the Youth Advisory Panel, the Moot Court and Annual Youth Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance.

# 9

## Enabling Implementation and Measuring Progress

In order to facilitate effective implementation of the key actions and proposals of this roadmap, it is important to emphasize the need to be guided by the core principles of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development especially as relates to a people-centred approach to development and a commitment to leave no one behind. The other principles and values elaborated in the roadmap will also remain central towards ensuring that the impact of its implementation is inclusive and sustainable. Whilst commitments are important at the continental and sub-regional levels, they only get truly manifested in the lives of people if implemented at country level.



As such, in order to facilitate effective implementation of the roadmap, it is important to put in place measures that would guide countries, anticipate proper monitoring, evaluation and reporting and enable the active participation of all stakeholders at all levels. The main drivers to ensure implementation include adequate policies, frameworks and funding; capacity-building and partnerships. Additionally, it would be important to leverage the decisions of Heads of State and Government on the follow up and implementation of key continental level instruments such as the

Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development beyond 2014 and its accountability, monitoring and reporting mechanism as a way of demonstrating progress.

It should also be underlined that based on inputs received from various stakeholders, the Commission in consultation with partners have proposed a calendar of key activities (August 2016 to December 2017) with a clear timeline in order to facilitate and accelerate the implementation and measure progress of the Roadmap.

In this regard, the following key actions have been proposed:

36. Analyze and understand socioeconomic and political situation through the preparation of national demographic dividend profiles with the objective of facilitating evidence-based development planning processes with regard to the challenges and opportunities to harnessing the demographic dividend in countries in order to define country-specific responses.
37. Strengthen capacity to coordinate, monitor and report on progress in implementation of demographic dividend priorities (including strengthening of national data systems to ensure timely and quality data for planning and decision making). This may include establishment of a multi-sectoral demographic dividend observatory under the leadership of the National Statistics, Planning and/or Population Agencies, as appropriate.
38. Work with academia, research institutions and think tanks to generate needed research and evidence towards harnessing the demographic dividend and provide technical support towards building country expertise.
39. Strengthen the capacity of planning authorities, sector and district planning units to integrate demographic dividend priorities into sectoral, local and national development plans and actions based on analytical evidence.
40. Develop and implement a robust performance monitoring, and accountability mechanism for demographic dividend initiatives and strategies at national, regional and continental levels, including for youth-focused investment policies and programmes.
41. Build on the successes of key regional initiatives<sup>4</sup> around the continent on demographic dividend and women's empowerment and scale them up to cover more countries across Africa, including to facilitate access to funding. Convene multiple stakeholders and partners for advocacy, resource mobilization and strategic partnerships around harnessing the demographic dividend.
42. Establish continental and national funds for youth development to support implementation towards the demographic dividend including through increasing and allocating special funds to implement the 2017 theme of the year and engaging regional and other development banks (AfDB, EADB, BOAD, BCEAO, BEEAC, etc.) to increase their youth portfolio to facilitate access to credit and support to entrepreneurship initiatives of youth
43. Mobilize support, particularly through AU and partners Bilateral Forums (TICAD, Africa-China, Africa-EU, Africa-Korea, Africa-India, Africa-USA, G20 etc.), for youth empowerment and increased investments in education and skills development, entrepreneurial skills and jobs creation, health in order to harness demographic dividend.
44. Ensure country launches of the theme of the year 2017 on harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth, through multi stakeholder engagement. These national launches and consultations will facilitate and guide the preparation of National Demographic Dividend Roadmaps.
45. Conduct continental, regional and national advocacy campaigns, including at the grassroots level, to raise awareness and increase understanding of the demographic dividend with the objective of building ownership and to ensuring the successful implementation of AU Project 2017.
46. Encourage the UN system, including key agencies like UNFPA to work with relevant stakeholders to establish a global partnership, including the creation of a Group of Friends at the UN General Assembly, towards harness demographic dividend in Africa.
47. Create an index based on a set of indicators, specific to each pillar of the roadmap (Economic empowerment; Health and wellbeing; employment and entrepreneurship; education and skills development; youth empowerment and advocacy) with the aim to measuring, monitoring and reporting on investments in youth at the country level towards harnessing the demographic dividend.
48. Engage networks of Parliamentarians to champion demographic dividend initiatives in their respective parliaments and at the level of the Pan African Parliament (PAP).
49. All AU Specialized Technical Committees, RECS and other continental meetings held in 2017 to focus on and identify their sector contribution to harnessing the demographic dividend and harmonization of continental policies towards a coherent demographic dividend implementation in Africa.

<sup>4</sup> Example: Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project funded by World Bank and supported by UNFPA: Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger.

# 10

## Conclusion and Way Forward

Harnessing the demographic dividend in Africa presents a strategic opportunity to realize the aspirations and goals of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda and this roadmap serves as a strong foundation to position countries in Africa towards this objective. Africa has been committed to transforming its large youth population into a development asset. Building on previous decisions of the AU Assembly on youth empowerment, the 2017 theme on “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth”, has the potential to have far-reaching implications that would address all the key issues that Governments have had to contend with, and change the development trajectory of Africa towards building the Africa We Want.

As Africa implements this roadmap, it would be important to take steps to ensure that the gains made are sustained.



## Matrix of Key Activities

January 2017	February 2017	March 2017	April 2017	May 2017	June 17
African Cup of Nations to commemorate the importance of investments in youth towards harnessing the demographic dividend in Africa (to be held in conjunction with CAF/FIFA) Libreville, Gabon	Launches of AU 2017 theme of the year at country level	Key sessions on DD to be held during Africa Development Week (Including the Annual Adedeji Lecture)	STC-Social Development Labour and Employment; "Social Development and Employment : Adding value to the Demographic Dividend for inclusive development"; Algeria	Continental Donor Roundtable towards mobilizing resources for demographic dividend in Africa (including the possible establishment of the Africa Youth Development Fund) on sidelines of Annual AfDB Assembly	CSOs & Agenda 2063 Youth Engagement
Pre-Summit on Harnessing Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth - January 2017 (With all Stakeholders. i.e MS, Private Sector, Partners, Donor countries, youth, RECs, Media, ... etc),	Bamako Summit on Peace, Security and Economic Development	Specialized Technical Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment		Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights on the 2017 AU Theme	Development of the Demographic Dividend National Profiles for 54 Member States
Launch of the Atlas on Demographic Dividend	2017 Young Africa Works Summit organized by MasterCard Foundation under the theme "Youth Driving Agricultural Transformation"	2nd meeting of the Specialized Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control (STC-HPDC) "Investment in the health of Youth, towards harnessing the DD"			
Development of Gender Score Cards with linkages to the key pillars of DD		Status of African Population Report 2017 "Keeping Rights of Women and Girls at the Centre of Africa's Demographic Dividend"			
High-Level Breakfast Meeting to Welcome the UN Secretary General and to Strengthen the AU-UN Partnership to Harness the Demographic Dividend		Meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology			
Forum of African Philanthropists, CEOs and Entrepreneurs on the Demographic Dividend under the theme "Transforming Africa through a Skills Revolution and Entrepreneurship" held within Pre-Summit, Addis Ababa		5 Sub-Regional Consultations on 2017 theme – at REC level			

July 2017	August 2017	September 2017	October 2017	November 2017	January 2018
Continental Forum on Girls' Empowerment and Elimination of Harmful Practices in Africa Hosted by Liberia	Commemorate International Youth Day with a focus on investments in youth towards harnessing the demographic dividend in Africa	UN General Assembly High Level Event on Demographic Dividend with African First Ladies in the margins of the 72nd UNGA (OAFLA) New York	African Week in New York on "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth"	Africa Youth Day on "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth" Hosted in Malawi	Decision on Demographic Dividend Continental Initiative and Plan of Action by AU Heads of State
AU Civic Innovation and Exhibition Camp on the margins of the AU July 2017 Summit to provide a platform for young innovators and policy analysts to showcase their socio-economic and political ideas/projects in line with the AU Agenda 2063 Aspirations				Preparation of report on implementation of theme of the year by Steering Committee	
				Audit impact of programmes/ activities on the 2017 theme.	

# Quotes from Heads of State and Government

## Quotes from Heads of State and Government



“The public and private sectors actively take part in vocational training efforts by tailoring apprentice profiles to labor market needs. Together we will continue to strive to instill the virtues of work and positive and constructive concepts in the younger generations.”

H.E. Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika  
Algeria



“Pride of place will be given to dialogue with the youth. Our young people need efficient channels to involve themselves in solving problems that affect all of society, contributing with their dynamism, enthusiasm and creativity.”

H.E. Mr. José Eduardo Dos Santos  
Angola



“I will give priority to the reorganization of the health system to provide our citizens a more effective and more inclusive health coverage. I will focus on rebuilding the education system to ensure its relevance to the economic ambitions of our country.”

H.E. Mr. Patrice Talon  
Benin



“...the future of any organization lies in its ability to invest in its young people.... Government remains committed to addressing issues pertaining to the youth in Botswana, with a view to make them part and parcel of the country’s economic progression, as strategic players.”

H.E. Lt. Gen. Seretse Khama Ian Khama  
Botswana



“I am personally convinced and I already agree to contribute with the younger generation to building a world of peace, democracy, justice, equality and freedom.”

H.E. Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré  
Burkina Faso



“Young people, I advise you to go ahead with your studies until graduation and prevent early marriages. We intend to support youth development projects and create schools of excellence for the best students in order to train elites to confront the challenges that our country faces, including the control of population growth through family planning.”

H.E. Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza  
Burundi



“...our youth is a major asset for the future of the nation. They are large in numbers and full of potential, dynamic and ambitious, inventive and conquering.”

H.E. Mr. Paul Biya  
Cameroon



“The youth is essentially creative, demanding, innovative, rebel in its aspirations. All these qualities are critical for the development of any country and are one of the strongest signs of their vitality...In a nutshell the youth will be and must be the most decisive part of the civil society that is supposed to be vibrant and active.”

H.E. Mr. Jorge Carlos Almeida De Fonseca  
Cape Verde

Quotes from Heads of State and Government



“Another important dimension concerns the professionalization of our educational system. I am confident that we will perceive dividends in terms of employment. Facilitating access to health care and quality medicines is another way to improve the living conditions of our people, especially the poor.”

H.E. Mr. Faustin-Archange Touadéra  
Central African Republic



“To harness the demographic dividend, we need to put in place bold interventions to manage fertility and population growth to be able to accelerate demographic transition, economic growth and job creation.”

H.E. Mr. Idriss Deby Itno  
Chad



“We will foster investment in youth, in their training for them to become the building blocks of development and the custodians of the reforms that will mostly benefit them.”

H.E. Mr. Azali Assoumani  
Comoros



“It is our responsibility to make sure that young people are employed and to encourage specifically all companies that give the youth the opportunity to join the work force.”

H.E. Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso  
Congo, Republic of



“The good economic prospects of our country must first profit our youth, because they are our greatest strength and our greatest wealth.”

H.E. Mr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara  
Cote D'Ivoire



“Our youth should rest assured that their concerns, doubts and ambitions remain at the center of our action.”

H.E. Mr. Joseph Kabila  
Democratic Republic of Congo



“You young people are the hope for better days, the hope for successful human beings, but also the hope of a country that takes charge of its own destiny.”

H.E. Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh  
Djibouti



“Young people have their share of the State's efforts as they have a priority given the fact that they are the driving force of the present time and hope for the future.”

H.E. Mr. Abdel Fattah Al-Sissi  
Egypt



“To properly use the capacity of young people it is necessary for governments to establish systems and mechanisms that facilitate access to training, new technologies, employment, participation in public life and, therefore, their social integration without discrimination of any kind.”

H.E. Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo  
Equatorial Guinea

Quotes from Heads of State and Government



“...youth need to transform the country from the year 2010 to 2020, making work, skills, knowledge, commitment and collaboration their core principles.”

H.E. Mr. Isaias Afwerki  
Eritrea



“We believe by providing entrepreneurial skills training and mentorship to our youth, tens of thousands new jobs will be created, which will in turn stimulate economic growth. This will ultimately lead to the economic empowerment of our youth and women which are the most critical stakeholders in the development process.”

H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn  
Ethiopia



“This is an opportunity for me to pay tribute to our youth. Let me tell our young people that they are our future. They must be aware today that we are committing ourselves to their sake and that it's together with them that we will succeed.”

H.E. Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba  
Gabon



“My Government will continue to protect the rights of women and children, particularly the girl child. We shall promote their welfare and enhance their wellbeing as indicated in the recent ban on the long standing cultural practice of female circumcision which is harmful to the girl child.”

H.E. Dr. Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh Babil Mansa  
Gambia



“We must create wealth and restore happiness to our nation. We can only do this when we have an educated and skilled population that is capable of competing in the global economy. We must expand our horizons and embrace science and technology as critical tools for our development.”

H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo  
Ghana



“It is our duty to support the youth by helping them to obtain loans so that as entrepreneurs they can employ other young people.”

H.E. Mr. Alpha Condé  
Guinea



“No country that prides herself can leave her youth behind. Towards the future, we will all go together: State and non-State actors, national citizens and the international community as well as development partners, traditional and religious authorities, the youth and everybody else... “Mon-Na-Lama” so as to unleash the full development of your potential and ensure your future, in order to turn this country into a country of opportunities.”

H.E. Mr. José Mário Vaz  
Guinea-Bissau



“In the shadow of shared, pervasive, continental challenge of youth unemployment, and in the wake of a ‘demographic dividend’ versus ‘ticking time-bomb’ debate, agriculture also provides an avenue for all our nations to open up opportunities for decent jobs, and dignified lives to millions of African youth.”

H.E. Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta  
Kenya

Quotes from Heads of State and Government



“Equally important is the need to acknowledge that we will never achieve real development if some sectors of society continue to be marginalized. The role of children and women, as well as other disadvantaged groups in our communities, in advancing the global development agenda, must be further enhanced.”

H.E. P.M Pakalitha B. Mosisili  
Lesotho



“... creating a sustainable and peaceful social environment is directly linked to how young people and women find their rightful place, with opportunities open to them.”

H.E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
Liberia



“Our men, women, youth and children must have access to education, basic health care, security and justice. We have a young population that commits us to address the challenge of education, training and job creation. It is the responsibility of all to offer decent jobs to our youth.”

H.E. Mr. Hery Rajaonarimampianina  
Madagascar



“Youth can be critical agents for socioeconomic change if appropriate investments are made to unleash their promise.”

H.E. Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika  
Malawi



“Youth unemployment is among the ills that afflict our society and one of the most painful. Without employment, there is no successful social integration, nor self-realization in the community...Ultimately, it will be necessary to foster the emergence of a youth responsible for their destiny and able to play their full role as citizens of the world.”

H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta  
Mali



“Additional efforts are needed to combat endemic diseases and to reduce unemployment and poverty, particularly in the ranks of women and youth.”

H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz  
Mauritania



“For me, young people first and foremost represent a change for a better future and a better society. It is only through good education that they may have a more open mind and go above and beyond their aspirations.”

H.E. Mrs. Bibi Ameenah Firdaus Gurib-Fakim  
Mauritius

Quotes from Heads of State and Government



“We continue to focus our action on sexual and reproductive health and rights for adolescents and youth, resulting in increase of life expectancy.”

H.E. Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi  
Mozambique



“The creation of conditions required for a shared inclusive economy that generates descent job opportunities will be pivotal in our quest to eradicate poverty by 2030.”

H.E. Dr. Hage Geingob  
Namibia



“The creation of the conditions for the demographic transition is another aspect of cultural renaissance. We have to significantly change behavior on this important matter... our religion, Islam, does not constitute an obstacle in our effort to address the demographic challenge.”

H.E. Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou  
Niger



“We acknowledge the importance of youth in national development and remain committed to harnessing the potential of the increasing youth bulge. We must take advantage of the numbers and creative energy of young people who are in the majority in Nigeria and in most other member states.”

H.E. Mr. Muhammadu Buhari  
Nigeria



“We need a new generation of problem-solvers, who see farther, and work smarter. You are that generation. No matter where you live, you have a role to play.”

H.E. Mr. Paul Kagame  
Rwanda



“We cannot achieve Africa’s transformation unless we end colonialism in our continent; invest in our young precious human capital through education, skills development, empowerment and respect of human rights and dignity.”

H.E. Mr. Brahim Ghali  
Sahrawi Republic



“We must prevent the disintegration of territories and repair the abnormal and degrading situations of people who have already suffered from the poverty and exclusion created by the lack of democratic leadership and the effective and democratic Rule of Law.”

H.E. Mr. Patrice Emery Trovoada  
Sao Tome and Principe

Quotes from Heads of State and Government



“We now need to open this vast project to enable Africa to develop other sources of economic growth by exploiting our major asset that is the youthfulness of our population.”

H.E. Mr. Macky Sall  
Senegal



“The youth are our future, the future leaders of our tomorrow. We must therefore invest in them and mentor them so that they become responsible global citizens who can live together peacefully and in harmony. We are the guardians of the generations to come and it is our role to ensure that those who come after us are given all the opportunities to build an equitable world and bright future.”

H.E. Mr. Danny Rollen Faure  
Seychelles



“From education to health, community development, and employment, most of my government’s programmes are youth oriented. Without the resilience of youths, we would not have conquered Ebola.”

H.E. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma  
Sierra Leone



“It is not enough that we created 2500 jobs in 2015. With a population of 70% under the age of 30, we need hundreds of thousands of jobs. We must do more so that we have concrete projects all over Somalia– not just plans – that link youth development with education and with job creation.”

H.E. Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud  
Somalia



“We are a very youthful continent and investment in education and skills development will take Africa closer to the goals of sustainable development and an end to hunger, disease and deprivation.”

H.E. Mr. Jacob Zuma  
South Africa



“It is my strong belief that every child, whether they are the children of a government leader, businessman, soldier or farmer should have the same opportunity to go to school. No longer can it be that only children of the privileged have access to a quality education in South Sudan.”

H.E. Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit  
South Sudan



“Mothers are the source of life, and our children are the country’s future. No nation will prosper if it does not place their health and welfare at the heart of its development agenda.”

H.E. Mr. Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir  
Sudan



“Africa is faced with a huge population of young skilled people who are not employed and yet can contribute positively to our sustainable economic development.”

His Majesty King Mswati III  
Swaziland

Quotes from Heads of State and Government



“Even with emphasis on Industry, Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery, we must empower our youth to start various income generation activities at different levels.”

H.E. Mr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli  
Tanzania



“... we intend to pay special attention to out-of-school or semi-educated youth who lack qualifications and thus struggle to find a gateway to the labor market. These young people who are mostly from disadvantaged settings are the first victims of social exclusion. We need to reach out and give them a chance to get out of poverty.”

H.E. Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé  
Togo



“Opening future prospects for the youth, designing solutions to the problem of unemployment and integrating youth into the political and cultural life are the priorities at this stage.”

H.E. Mr. Béji Caïd Essebsi  
Tunisia



“If you control population only, and you do not work on other factors, including education, health, infrastructure and job creation, you are not going to go very far.”

H.E. Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni  
Uganda



“I wish to state from the outset that the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development in Africa Beyond 2014 and the African Union Agenda 2063 gives us the impetus and the commitment to realize Africa’s demographic dividend. There is a need for African member states to continue to advance regional and national efforts to translate the commitments to concrete actions by integrating demographic dimensions in all national development programmes.”

H.E. Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu  
Zambia



“The migration of African youths is an issue of serious concern that has to be addressed urgently. Not only does it dent our image as Africa, but slows our economic development endeavours. We cannot continue to allow a situation where our able-bodied men and women embark on a risky and perilous journey across the oceans in search of a supposedly better world.”

H.E. Mr. Robert Mugabe  
Zimbabwe

# Annex

## Relevant AU Decisions on 2017 Theme of the Year

### Assembly/AU/Dec.591(XXVI)

Assembly of the Union  
Twenty- Sixth Ordinary Session  
30-31 January 2016, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The Assembly,

**ADOPTS** the theme of “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth” for the 28th and 29th Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly scheduled for January and June/July 2017 respectively;

**REQUESTS** the Commission in collaboration with the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Coordination and Planning Agency as well as other partners such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other United Nations and Development agencies to:

1. Expedite the implementation of a continental initiative on Demographic Dividend for Africa;
2. Develop a roadmap with key deliverables and milestones to be submitted to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly scheduled for July 2016 through the Executive Council, to guide Member States and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on concrete actions to be undertaken in 2017 and beyond.

### Assembly/AU/Dec.601(XXVI)

Assembly of the Union  
Twenty- Sixth Ordinary Session  
30-31 January 2016, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The Assembly,

1. **WELCOMES** the proposal by the Republic of Malawi to declare 2017 the year of “**HARNESSING DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND THROUGH INVESTMENTS IN THE YOUTH**”,
2. **REQUESTS** the Commission to take necessary measure to launch in January 2017 the theme of the year.

### EX.CL/Dec.921(XXIX)

Executive Council  
Twenty-Ninth Ordinary Session  
13-15 July 2016, Kigali, Rwanda

The Executive Council,

**ENDORSES** the Roadmap and accompanying matrix of key activities as the main guiding framework for the commemoration of the 2017 theme of the year “**On Harnessing Dividend Through Investment in youth**” and **CALLS ON** all Member States and Regional Economic Communities to be guided by its recommendations and key actions to help position Africa towards harnessing the demographic dividend.

