



## AHAIC 2017 Youth Pre-conference Communiqué

The Africa Health Agenda international Conference (AHAIC), Youth Conference held from the 5-6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 in Nairobi Kenya, under the theme: *Towards a Healthier Africa: People, Systems and Innovations* brought together young people from 11 countries in Africa to meaningfully deliberate on strategies, scientific approaches and investments made on the improvement of their health. The Conference reviewed the 2013 Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) commitment by 23 countries, to tackle issues facing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRHR) with a focus on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE); and the 2006 African Union, *African Youth Charter 2020* and the role of the youth in achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

We the young people noted that:

- We are a majority comprising 65% of Africa's population.
- We have unique problems including vulnerability to SRH problems, HIV infection, sexual and gender based violence including FGM, early marriage and exclusion from economic activities among others.
- There are many commitments made at national, regional and global levels on the youth to mitigate problems that youth have and ensure a better future for them. These include AU youth agenda, ESA commitments and SDGs.
- These commitments are rarely backed by action at country level. This has led to a slow process in achieving results for young people.

Having realised that change is slow, the Youth Conference has resolved that any decisions affecting young people must be made in consultation with them. We must be empowered to hold governments accountable in their duty to take action; and policymakers must make an effort to include young people in the formulation of policies on issues affecting the youth.

We the young people have therefore come to a consensus. We:

1. Agree that being the majority of those affected by a number of issues on which commitments are being made, have to be effectively involved in decision making including participation in the implementation of the commitments. Nothing for us without us.
2. Call for our right to access information, especially sexual and reproductive health information through comprehensive sexuality education in schools;
3. Condemn and call for an end to sexual and gender based violence including those sanctioned by culture such as FGM.
4. Calls on governments to increase budget allocation to enable accessible youth-friendly health services including investment in HIV prevention and care for young people.



We call on governments, development partners and fellow youth in Africa as follows:

*i) African governments to :*

- Issue an official statement on ESA and AU commitments, sign them and implement them in their countries;
- Implement policies that are youth-centred and include youth as accountability partners so as to harness the demographic dividend;
- Implement youth-led Comprehensive Sexuality Education as a government policy in all educational institutions;
- Increase budgetary allocation and prioritization of resources towards improving health for young people.

*ii) Development Partners to:*

- Increase the involvement of youth in all stages of program and policy making- from designing, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. This will allow youth to fully explore their potential and innovation;
- Advocate for sustainable, accessible and affordable youth friendly services;
- Form synergy in coordinating sustainable youth programs.

*iii) Fellow youth to:*

- Get up, be innovative and take initiative because you are never too young or too small to make a change;
- Claim what is youth specific and sensitize other youth in communities on policies
- Bridge the gap; it is not us against them, make adult allies!
- Be accountable as young people to ourselves