



**REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY**

**MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO THE MINISTRY OF  
PUBLIC SERVICE, YOUTH AND GENDER AFFAIRS AND  
THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE  
ON MONDAY 11TH JUNE 2018 IN NAIROBI**

2018

## **About The Youth Congress**

The Youth Congress is a youth serving Non-Governmental Organization founded in 2007 to provide young people in Kenya with a platform to articulate their issues, explore opportunities for youth participation and leadership to effectively address their interest and concerns and engage young people in social, economic and political processes. It was founded as part of efforts by youth to seek development and emancipation through political accountability works in a number of counties across the country with a vision of an inclusive society in which the youth enjoy all rights and apply their agency with a mission to provide a platform for the youth to improve their status and realize their full potential. The Youth Congress is among the organizations and stakeholders represented in the National Youth Policy Review Committee. The Youth Congress works with a number of youth organizations and individuals throughout the country.

## **How Views of the Youth Were Collected**

The Youth Congress held a National Youth Leaders Convention on April 19, 2018 at Utalii Hotel, Nairobi which was attended by about 300 youth representatives drawn from the 47 Counties. Among the key thematic areas of discussions at the Convention was youth participation and voices in the National Youth Policy Review Process. It was a platform to collect views of the participants regarding the on-going review of the National Youth Policy. The application questionnaire for the Convention posed among others, two questions;

- a) What is working in your county in relation to youth, that you would like to share?
- b) What do you think that your county would do better in relation to youth?.

Over 700 applicants to the Convention responded to these questions sharing what is working in their counties and areas they think needed improvement, new programme and strategies.

Furthermore, The Youth Congress has held a number of youth convenings and community dialogue cycles to collect views of the youth over the same. The Youth Congress with other youth serving organizations and stakeholders have been in the forefront in advocating for the review of National Youth Policy to address the new youth challenges. Among the initiatives it undertaken to realize this, included; published and distributed copies of *-Youth Policy-Kenya: Framework for Youth Participation in Policy-Making*. The guide was presented to Ms. Anne Waiguru, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Devolution and Planning and latter to Mrs. Sicily Kariuki, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs, these among other processes, have informed the commencement of the National Youth Policy Review Process. It has also done several articles for policy review published in national newspapers and other platforms. A template with questions as framed by the review team was sent to the more that 200 delegates and networks for their response. This Memorandum is therefore a summary of views collected from the youths.

## **Our Recommendations**

### **Thematic Area I: How the Government of Kenya Can Create an Enabling Environment Growth of Youth Entrepreneurship And Cooperatives.**

1. Carry out a performance and competence evaluation for current staff working for youth programmes across the country to ensure that they exhibit the rights skills and attitudes to implement youth programmes.
2. Ensure that high level standards of transparency and accountability are observed in all youth programmes and bold steps taken to prosecute those who are found culpable of perpetuating corruption. Furthermore, those found to have misappropriated resources meant for the youth must be made to repay besides being prosecuted and jailed if found guilty.
3. Provide young people with entrepreneurial skills as well as supporting youth initiatives to engage in entrepreneurial activities. We understand that availing resources to youth without an appropriate training programme might lead to most of their ventures collapsing a few months after being initiated. We recommend that youths benefiting from various funds at their disposal such as Youth Fund, Uwezo Fund and Women Enterprise Fund should be helped to organize into cooperatives which can enable them to save and access larger loans to expand their business ventures. We further recommend that governance issues around access to these funds need to be addressed so that access to the funds by youths particularly in urban slums and rural areas are improved.
4. To make the cooperative movement attractive to the youth, male and female youth need to be included in the boards and secretariats of the cooperatives.
5. The Youth Policy need to have a clear and practical framework for affirmative action towards supporting entrepreneurship endeavours by both male and female youth. Affirmative action must move beyond public relations to a measurable and visible move towards supporting youth in entrepreneurship.
6. The youth should be able to access land for agricultural development as well as other investments. The high cost of acquiring land as well corruption in the land sector has

kept away many young people who want to earn an honest living from owning land. The government should introduce incentives for youths who want to acquire land for investment. The government should consider selling part of its vast land reserves to young people at subsidized rates as long as they submit convincing investment proposals. To promote agribusiness amongst the youth, government should promote irrigation, marketing, subsidized inputs, credit facilities and tax incentives to facilitate growth of small and medium enterprise.

### **Thematic Area 2: How the Government of Kenya Can Deal With The Looming Challenge of Youth Unemployment**

1. The government should develop a policy on youth employment that will provide that at least a third of civil servants in the public sector must be youth.
2. The government should ensure that recruitment into the public service is above board and those found culpable of corruptly recruiting staff punished and banned from working for the public service for a specified period of time.
3. The government should introduce a compulsory internship programme that requires that all students graduating from colleges and universities attend the programme for at least 6 months. This programme should therefore reduce levels of requirements for experience before getting employed into the civil service. When young people are not offered opportunities to get experience, where should they get the experience?
4. The government should give tax incentives for youth-led entrepreneurial ventures as well as private sector initiatives whose workforce consists of at least 30% of youths.
5. The government in partnership with other stakeholders should create awareness on the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) for youths, women and people living with disabilities. Proactive steps need to be taken to ensure that the youth get pre-qualified to access at least 30% of the government tenders.
6. The government need to address bottlenecks to youth access to Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), Uwezo and Women Enterprise Fund. The Youth Congress has noted in its interactions with youth and youth organizations across the country that access to these funds continue to be a preserve of 'those who knows who' in the

system. Many young people complain that they apply for the funds and they don't get them, neither do they get feedback on why their applications were not considered.

7. The government should scout for civil servants from colleges, universities and polytechniques. Through this, young people will be able to get job offers on completing their education. Furthermore, steps should be taken to offer scholarships and school fees subsidies for youth from poor background to enable them gain post-secondary education skills which improve their employability.
8. The president should create a standalone Youth Ministry to address all issues relating to youth. The current situation where youth affairs are handled in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender affairs means that youth affairs are not given primary attention by the Ministry.
9. Opportunities for youth employment should go beyond the National Youth Service since not all young people can work within the NYS framework which in itself is riddled with allegations of massive corruption.
10. The national and county governments should ensure that labour intensive works should engage young people. This will ensure that employment opportunities to youth are spread across the country to prevent massive migration of young people to towns and cities which build further pressure on employers.
11. The government should support young people to organize themselves into business groups which give them comparative advantage of those who operate as individuals. Further, those who tender as consortia should have an advantage under AGPO.

**Thematic Area 3: How the Government Can better facilitate the youth to access the necessary exposure required for the rapidly changing employment environment?**

1. The government should initiate a local and international exchange programme that allows the youth both in and out of school to learn lessons from other counties and countries.
2. Further, the government should provide free visas to youths who secure internship and exchange programme opportunities abroad.

3. There is need for mentorship sessions or programmes from senior staff for skills transfer at the same time enabling the more experienced civil servants to expose the youth in order to improve their performance.
4. There is need for business incubation centres. Youths who demonstrate that they are able to initiate incubation centres where they can support other youths improve their skills should be given incentives.
5. Not everyone can be an entrepreneur. The government should therefore diversify opportunities available to youth. For example, the government should support involved in sports, music, poetry and other fine and performing arts.
6. Introduce caps on the large tenders to accommodate youth in Kenya, say for example a Chinese company doing a Kenyan road must give 20% of the tender to the youth in Kenya.
7. Innovations by young people such as the MPESA should be protected. The government should ensure that such innovators are supported to implement their ideas. Corporates with interest to adopting the innovations should be made to compensate the innovators at market rates and involve them in implementing the innovations.
8. Review labour laws to prohibit the issuance of work permits for expatriate staff who come in the country to perform jobs which young Kenyans are qualified and available to perform. .

#### **Thematic Area 4: How the Government Can Best Harness and Develop Bursting and Latent Talents, Creativity and Innovations**

1. Youth who have made tremendous contributions should be awarded during presidential commendation ceremonies.
2. Build social amenities for creative arts in each county and reclaim any current ones which may be deplorable state or may have been grabbed by private speculators.
3. The government should ensure transparent leadership at all sports and creative arts facilities throughout the country.
4. The government should allocate more funds towards development of sports and creative arts sectors

5. Evaluate the impact of NYS and recommend ways of reforming it in line with emerging needs of young people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While proposals to make NYS a compulsory stage for the youth is important, this is only relevant if it's fully reformed.
6. The government should fully implement the policy on consumption of local content as opposed to western content.
7. Reclaim public facilities and amenities, renovate and equip them to create centre for talent identification, nurturing and marketing.
8. Both the national and county governments must create innovation hubs that bring young people together to articulate various development agenda where innovation in terms of agriculture research, science innovation, sports arts and culture and various life skill trainings are provided to the youth of this country. In order to facilitate its sustainability the national government should create one innovation hub where the best innovators from the 47 county governments have their own innovation hub and the best from these hubs are taken to the national hub. This will create competition and creation of interest and experience since the government will have data of experienced young people to pick from when recruiting personnel for various works.
9. The government should develop an elaborate framework through a participatory process to collaborate with youth serving organisations and other stakeholders to identify, nurture, promote and market talent and innovation.

**Thematic Area 5: What the Government Can Do to Empower Young People to Take Advantage of Opportunities Presented by Information, Communication and Technology**

1. The government should fulfil its promise to children and ensure that each of them gets a laptop. This should be extended to high schools. Ultimately, ICT education should begin at primary schools. Ultimately, all learning institutions should have access to free internet facilities.
2. The national and county governments should create ICT centres where youths are able to get services and other opportunities available online.



3. The government should support young people to access markets online through ensuring that youth enterprises are linked to major online platforms locally and internationally.
4. The government should increase access to internet and electricity particularly in urban centres and rural areas.

### **Thematic Area 6: How the Government Can Address the Upsurge of Crime Involving the Youthful Population in Kenya.**

1. Both national and county governments should provide scholarships to poor children to enable them gain education. No child in this era should drop out of school due to lack of school fee and embrace crime as an alternative means for survival.
2. The government should set up rehabilitation centres to rehabilitate those who have are engaging in criminal activities. Map out young reformers and engage them in initiatives to reach other young people in crime, prostitution and drugs and substance abuse.
3. Government need to come with reliable ways of curbing crime rather than extrajudicial killings
4. The government should address unemployment because this is a major cause of youth engaging in criminal activities.
5. Government security agencies should play their roles in curbing crime by engaging with the young people. The security agencies should build trust with the community to facilitate ease of information sharing.
6. Youth officers should be recruited from the communities where they live since they understand the local dynamics and family backgrounds of the youth.
7. All young people should benefit from financial literacy which makes them plan their lives based on the financial resources at their disposal. Many young people get into crime because they live beyond their means. Those who are engaged in business or are employed do not know how to plan their finances.
8. Meaningfully involve and have youth representatives in peace and security committees

### **Thematic Area 7: How the Government Can Provide Better Healthcare to the Youth Especially dealing with drugs and Substance Abuse among the Youth.**

1. Expand and support rehabilitation facilities in every county to make addicted youth productive again.
2. Pursue and convict adults supplying young people with drugs. NACADA should work closely with youths and engage their support in fighting drug abuse

3. Make prevention of drug and substance abuse training mandatory in all education institutions.
4. Advertisements which tend to promote use of drug and substance abuse should be disallowed from the media. The media, Kenya Film Classification Board and NACADE should play prominent roles in enforcing this.
5. Develop a policy that provides for a mandatory rehabilitation program for drug addicts (strict enforcement of the Mututho laws).
6. The government should work with youth serving organisation and young role models to address the issues of drug and substance abuse.

**Thematic Area 8: Ways through which the Government can deal with the problem of youth radicalization and violent extremism in Kenya today.**

1. The government should address drivers which push young people to become radicalized and join violent extremism groups. These include unemployment, exclusion, lack of involvement of youth in leadership positions in the society, ethnicity and nepotism which lock young people from humble backgrounds from accessing opportunities, lack of trust between government security agencies and communities, presence of violent extremist groups and vigilante groups which propagate violent extremist ideologies in many parts of the country, misuse of young people by politicians and arbitrary arrests and extra-judicial killings of young people suspected of crime instead of subjecting them to due process of law.
2. The National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC) which is in charge of coordinating ,preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) activities should engage youth organizations and youth leaders who are role models in carrying its activities.
3. The government and the political class need to spearhead prosses which make Kenyans proud of their country and embrace values articulated in the National Anthem and the Constitution of Kenya (2010).
4. The government should work closely with religious leaders and other P/CVE stakeholders in developing true narratives against the false ideologies being propagated by sympathizers of violent extremists groups.

5. The national and county governments should develop sports and cultural facilities to provide young people with alternative recreation activities away from ideologies being promoted by violent extremists.
6. The government should develop an elaborate framework to partner with youth serving organisations and other stakeholders working on youth radicalisation and extremism.

**Thematic Area 9: Ways through which the Government of Kenya can enhance Youth representation in Government and other decision making bodies.**

1. The government should increase the number of slots available to youths in public service and constitutional commissions. The government should ensure that the 2/3 rule is invoked in favour of youth in all public appointments.
2. The government should develop the Youth Affirmative Action Policy which will address diversified issues of youth representation in government and other decision making organs . These include: Inclusion of youth in elective leadership, addressing the 2/3 gender rule, involving youth both in urban and rural areas in governance and inclusion of youth with special needs (PWDs) in leadership.
3. Ensure youth are represented at the Public Service Commission and youth employment desks.
4. Develop leadership and mentorship programme for emerging leaders and link them other opportunities and leadership platforms

**Thematic Area 10: How the Government can work jointly with the youth towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

1. Carrying out awareness session to the youths regarding the SDGs and how these affect youth development
2. Meaningfully engaging and consulting youth at all phases of government responses to the SDGs.
3. Developing a youth policy paper on Youth and the SDGs.

4. The government should create curriculum that provide employment to the young people and provide space for the youth to showcase their prowess in line to the sustainable development goals and Jubilee's agenda 4 of agriculture, universal healthcare ,decent housing and infrastructure
5. Exploring ways of engaging youth in the process of economic development and identify constraints that hinder Kenyan youth from realizing their potentials.
6. The government should develop an elaborate framework to work with youth serving organisations and other stakeholders focusing on vision 2030, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other national and international frameworks and blue-print for development.

## **Thematic Area 11: How the Government can effectively coordinate Youth programmes and activities**

1. Demand regular accountability reports from youth institutions starting with the Ministry and the 47 Counties.
2. Carry out awareness session on the structure of youth leadership and the various levels of participation and feedback available to them. There should be youth officers from the sub-location to the national level.
3. Ensuring that all youth departments and programmes are led by the youth. The youth should be involved in determining those who lead youth initiatives
4. The government should establish an interactive youth dedicated website linked to various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, SMS , email and Instagram among others. This will provide opportunity for youths to give feedback to the government and share their innovative ideas.
5. Establish and strengthen Youth Sector Working Group – bringing representation from the youth serving organisation, government, private sector, Institutions of higher learning and Research, development partners and Council of Governors.
6. Resource and Strengthen a representative and responsive National Youth Council that is up-to task as envisaged in the National Youth Council Act.

## **Thematic Area 12: Whether the youth support the current structure of National Youth Council**

1. Most of the young people who were aware of National Youth Council didn't agree with its structure and recommended its review to align it to their needs. A majority of the youths were not aware of its existence.
2. The general feeling is that the National Youth Council should be restructured with effective representation at all levels- ward, constituency, county, council members and board with clear roles. There should be an election for National Youth Council.

### **Thematic Area 13: How the National Youth Council should restructure to ensure it delivers on its mandate as the Voice of the youth**

1. It should be made as an independent commission with its own budget.
2. It should also be devolved to the county level with offices to the sub-location level
3. It should comprise of elected leaders as opposed to the current situation where the chairman and other leaders are appointed hence their allegiance lie with the appointing authority and not the youth. The officers should serve for one term of 3 years.
4. The Council should be able to release the Annual Youth Report during the National Annual Youth Conference which should rotate among counties.

#### **Conclusion**

The Youth Congress have established that while young people are supportive of the National Youth Policy and the National Youth Council, a majority of them are either not aware of its existence or have limited knowledge regarding its content. It's therefore imperative upon the government and National Youth Council to ensure that awareness creation regarding the policy is done nationwide. Furthermore, this should be the policy document guiding all youth programmes and therefore should be harmonized with the constitution of Kenya (2010). Ultimately, it should derive its security from the National Council Youth Act which parliament should review as a matter of urgency. The Youth Congress and other youth-led initiatives will continue to play its role in mobilizing young people and appeal to the National Youth Council to continue partnering with youth voices.