

Implement policies that empower the youth

2024 revealed the power of Africa's youth – their determination and resilience. They have demonstrated their love for the continent—making outstanding contributions to bring it to the next level, with their insights, innovation and resilience.

Young Africans have shown who they are, what they want to be, what they want to achieve and what they want Africa to become. They are taking responsibility to move Africa forward and build the future on their terms. All young people need is an enabling environment—opportunities to work, innovate and participate in decision-making.

Youth are standing out, coming out and fighting for what they want to be and want to have. They are not waiting for anybody to do it for them, or to give it to them.

Africa's population is predominantly young. About 70 percent of Africa's population is under the age of 30.

Africa must do the right thing to reach our shared vision for a bright future. Countries must tap into the energy and creativity of young people. Measures must be

taken to support the youth as drivers of change by transforming governance, creating meaningful jobs, and supporting innovations that empower young people.

More should be done to develop solutions that address the reality for young people today and implement policies that could open doors for the youth.

Leaders must back their talk with tangible actions. Not only should they say the right things, but also to do the right things. It is important to recognise that young people are equal partners, with ideas, and deserve to be listened to and engaged.

Make no mistake, the youth are not leaders of tomorrow, they are the leaders of today. Create an environment to enable youth to take leadership positions—leaders in Africa must play their role in making sure that it happens.

Young people are not asking for handouts. They are demanding opportunities, including access to education and jobs that would enable them to build better lives for themselves, their families and their communities. Governments must take bold and decisive steps to ensure

they are included in decision-making and development.

It is crucial to establish initiatives that will enhance youth ownership in the implementation of development plans. Youth must not only be beneficiaries of development programmes but also partners in ensuring sustainable development.

At the same time, governments must prioritise investments in youth development across various sectors, including education, skills training, health, recreation, sports and job creation.

Young Africans must be encouraged to dream and enabled to achieve their dreams, which can transform the future of the continent. The youth are the catalyst for positive change. Through inspiring actions and determination Africa can realise the much-needed transformative change.

The power that Africans wield is immense, and more should be done to help youth unleash their potential and embrace their destiny.

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