



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
1 December 2017

Original: English

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### Commission for Social Development

#### Fifty-sixth session

31 January–7 February 2018

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and  
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:  
priority theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to  
achieve sustainable development for all**

### **Statement submitted by Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **African Youth Committed to Finding Their Own Way to Eradicate Poverty in Africa**

Eradicating poverty has been at the forefront of many development institutions mandates, however, in the past, these institutions have prescribed solutions instead of engaging those whose lives they are trying to impact. The Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA) works to ensure that young people in Africa are included and that their voices are heard and taken seriously in all matters pertaining to their development, including all strategies aimed at eradicating poverty among youth.

The definition of Poverty in the simplest language is mostly referred to as lack or scarcity, especially in terms of material possession or money. However, delving further into the subject reveals that poverty is actually multifaceted and would include economic, social and political element. According to the United Nations (UN) definition:

“Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation”  
(UN Statement, June 1998 — signed by the heads of all UN agencies)

Poverty is as a result found to have multiple dimensions as explained by

- Low household income
- Limited education
- Lack of health insurance
- Concentrated spatial poverty
- Unemployment

These five dimensions are inspired by William Beveridge’s report titled Social Insurance and Allied Services (1942). He identified “Five Giant Evils” that needed to be confronted and defeated once the war was won. These five evils were “squalor, ignorance, want, idleness, and disease.” Beveridge believed that all five had to be addressed through concerted government action, with improved housing (“squalor”), universal secondary education (“ignorance”), income transfers to the poor (“want”), full employment (“idleness”), and a national health service (“disease”).

This multidimensional nature of poverty forces us to look at the multiple deprivations people experience together, as well as income poverty as according to Sabina Alkire, the Director of Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative.

Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals — Agenda 2030 looks at poverty in its multifaceted nature. Hence the very first goal to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere”.

The following facts are the reason why the world is compelled to have poverty eradication topping the priority list:

- ♣ 767 million people live below the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day
- ♣ The overwhelming majority of people living below the poverty line belong to two regions: Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa

### **Youth Alliance for Leadership & Development in Africa & its Role towards Poverty Eradication**

Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA) is an international network of youth (18-30) formed in 2004 by a group of Harvard students, born and raised in Africa. Currently, YALDA is the only African youth NGO with special consultative status to the United Nation Economic and Social Council. Moreover, YALDA is recognized by the African Union and the African Development Bank for its outstanding work in the youth space. YALDA's objective is to make a positive impact on the social and economic development on the African continent through the development of young African leaders, making use of intergenerational synergies. Members of YALDA are action oriented and eagerly transverse cultural and national boundaries to raise awareness, collaborate with likeminded peers, or provide mentoring for young Africans with leadership potential, helping them realizing their short and long goals.

As a youth empowerment oriented movement, YALDA has committed to promote social inclusivity at all levels with focus on youth — young men and women. This is due to the fact that all the countries where YALDA is located are relatively youthful with more than half the population being people aged between 15 and 35 years. We believe that young people are very critical in the economic development of the continent and therefore envision an international network of inspired, empowered and proactive young African leaders who hold influential decision-making positions and are running their own organisations or companies, ultimately culminating in a prosperous and developed African continent.

In addition to the 1st Sustainable Development Goal; the YALDA organisation has committed its work to contribute towards and promote the following goals that address the dimensions of poverty and most importantly, affect youth:

- ♣ Better health as reflected in goal 3
- ♣ Better and inclusive education as reflected in goal 4
- ♣ Youth employment and access to economic opportunities as reflected in goal 8
- ♣ Peaceful societies and better governance as reflected in goal 16

The following are just a few examples illustrating YALDA's commitment to encouraging Social Inclusivity and therefore contributing whether directly or indirectly towards the eradication of poverty:

- ♣ YALDA is actively involved in shaping policies that encourage youth participation in Africa's Good Governance through partnerships with UN bodies such as UN Habitat and UNECA as well as the African Union. This on its own influences the economic stability as a country with a stable political environment is often characterized by a relatively well functioning economy.
- ♣ YALDA is at the fore front of domesticating the Sustainable Development Goals and has translated them into some indigenous languages, in addition to spreading awareness and encouraging ownership of the goals at the grassroots level.
- ♣ YALDA has advocated for inclusion of Youth Representation in the National High-Level decision-making platforms of many African countries that decide the shape and fate of the global goals and has its members sitting in those

platforms including the National Steering Committees, The National Taskforces and the Communications Team on Global Goals.

- ♣ YALDA runs “i-Boot Camps” aimed at capacitating young people who display thirst to come up with disruptive, innovative ideas that can shift the economic landscape of Africa in a positive direction, while creating the much-needed jobs for themselves and their peers.
- ♣ YALDA has partnered with an Australian Company to increase distribution of condoms in a country where Sexual Reproductive Health amongst youth is a huge issue.
- ♣ YALDA is committed to enhancing education curriculum in Secondary Schools and has taken initiative to adopt a few of these schools and through its university student members run Mentorship Programs that drive Personal Skills Development.

YALDA commits to continue in striving to seek space to contribute to all elements that can add towards complete eradication of poverty. In addition, we urge the United Nations to continue engaging YALDA in initiatives aimed at wiping out poverty in Africa, and most importantly having a direct positive effect on the empowerment of African Youth. YALDA will continue in unlocking the potential of African Youth to contribute towards Africa’s Development wave and therefore significantly reducing poverty in all its dimensions.

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