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PRESS STATEMENT

African Monitor Commemorates Africa Youth Day Across the Continent

Monday, 7 November 2016

As part of commemorating Africa Youth Day, African Monitor (AM) through its Voice Africa's Future programme is hosting events in different parts of Africa – including Burkina Faso, Kenya, Ghana, Zambia and Uganda to celebrate African youth.

This series of events serves to commemorate a day dedicated to African youth and to promote increased recognition of youth as key agents for social change and economic growth in all aspects of the African society.

This year's events took place under the theme *"Promoting youth participation as a catalyst towards achieving sustainable development in Africa"*.

African Monitor's Director Namhla Mniki-Mangaliso said the organisation was pleased that these events would impact thousands of young people across the length and breadth of the continent.

"As African Monitor, our strong belief is that youth should be the main catalysts for development in Africa. Governments should allow young people to flourish, gain requisite skills and take leadership in key sectors of the economy, academia, government and civil society. Thus far, the idea of the demographic dividend is only a promise on paper in most African countries. Conditions on the ground are not conducive for African youth to attain their aspirations. So we continue to energetically and enthusiastically pushes forward relentlessly for policies and development approaches that create opportunities for the young people of our continent."

The event in Ghana, held on 1 November 2016 at the Central University in Accra, was a great success, bringing together a significant number of young people with policy makers. Key topics under discussion centred on youth unemployment, and how the National Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals can be used to accelerate implementation. In the panel sat representatives from the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), International Funds for Agriculture and Development and a Voice Africa's Future Youth Champion.

Mr Daniel Amofa, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer from NDPC, said the government is making efforts to ensure vulnerable groups, especially urban slums and rural areas are not left behind and that their concerns are integrated into the "Youth for Ghana" programme, which is a flagship consultative initiative to capture the voices and aspirations of Ghanaian youth and include them into the 40 year long-term development plan.

"The NDPC will be partnering Youth Advocates Ghana (YAG) to do youth engagement on the 40 year development plan," said Amofa.

The issue of skill training for job creation, alignment of the current educational curricula with industry demand, opportunity for internships and mentorship were agreed on as key determinants to reduce youth unemployment.

The lively discussion constructive dialogues served as tangible evidence that the youth are eager and ready to face the challenges of tomorrow.

The event in Uganda was largely covered by various media, including the Uganda national TV and radio station, where various issues such as "Promoting well-being and healthy living for all at all ages and Inclusive and Equitable quality education for all", were discussed on LIVE television, in what was dubbed the #MbaleDebate. The Mbale district leadership, including Mayor Mutwalibi Mafabi Zandya were present to answer questions that were posed to them by the youth.

Similarly, in Zambia the youth day was also celebrated in style. Our Voice Africa's Future Champions were invited on Zambia's national TV Talk Show called Our Perspective, discussing the topic "The Africa we want in the youth's perspective". The eloquent youths who were part of the panel expressed and discussed their views on key issues of national development and how they feel about challenges faced by the youth around Africa.

These kinds of events are a great opportunity for youth to connect, discuss key issues and work together to affect and lead change in their communities. The youth are indeed the present, as well as the future of every society.

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