

**RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE EAST AFRICA YOUTH AT THE EAST AFRICA YOUTH FORUM HELD AT SAROVA PANAFRIC HOTEL, NAIROBI, KENYA**

We, the East African Youth,

*Grateful to the almighty for life, livelihoods, family and friendship*

*Acknowledging the commitment all the member states have made towards the integration of all persons in the confederation of the East African Community (EAC);*

*Appreciative specific measures that member states have taken to promote youth participation in the confederacy of the EAC;*

*Recognizing the EAC secretariats efforts towards the generation of a draft East African Youth Policy;*

*Having read and analyzed the draft East African Youth Policy;*

*Considering the needs and interests of the youth constituencies we represent and the need for their voices on this matter to be heard;*

*Cognizant of the need for the East African Youth Policy to reflect the desires and aspirations for youth on the policy and mechanism to be deployed to promote youth engagement;*

*Having deliberated on the country positions on the draft policy and reached a consensus;*

*Convened at the East Africa Youth Forum in Nairobi on the 26<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> October 2011 to reflect on the Draft East Africa Youth Policy, herein recommend the following:*

THAT:

**1.0 Objectives**

- Section 1.2 on Council Decisions based on the recommendations of the EAC Forum of Ministers responsible for Social Development:

*Recommendation*

*This section of the policy should only highlight the initial processes leading to the resolution to develop a youth policy. It should form a background to the development of this policy. Our proposal is to reduce it to a maximum of half a page*

**2.0 Major issues common to the Youth in the East African Community Partner States:**

**2.1 Peace and Security**

We propose that this policy promotes peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue and consensus.

*Recommendation*

*The policy should recognize and set guidelines on building peace consciousness among all young people within the region – through this justice, democratic principles and human rights will be promoted and non military forms of peacemaking strengthened.*

## **2.2 Inadequate participation in political processes and decisions-making processes**

The policy should recognize the different levels of youth participation in decision making within the EAC member states.

### *Recommendation*

*In light of the political federation, the policy should emphasize the participation of the youth in mainstream governance and specify measures that work to eliminate barriers to youth participation. This representation should recognize diversities among the youth constituency*

## **2.3 Unemployment and Skills under-development**

A regional policy document should set benchmarks for national policies/regulations.

### *Recommendation:*

*Thus, the policy should:-*

- *Prescribe long term solutions including strategies to generate and enable youth to access employment in the regions;*
- *Harmonization and restructuring of the education systems to be relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of EAC. The proposed education system should promote creativity and innovation*
- *Supporting and building regional employment programmes/initiatives that are labour intensive.*
- *Enhance business start up support for young people including removal of barriers to enterprise.*

## **2.4 Limited facilities for sports and recreation**

### *Recommendation:*

*Sports and recreation should be promoted as business entities owing to the global fortunes within such sectors.*

*This policy should clearly emphasize the importance of sports and creative industries and urge partner states to jointly put resources and efforts towards its popularization.*

## **2.5 Health**

### *Recommendation:*

Youth issues in the region are not restricted to HIV/AIDS. We propose that this section encompass the different health issues facing the youth of East Africa, to read the following

*The youth have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and psychological/ mental health.*

## **2.6 Limited opportunities for sustainable livelihoods**

### *Recommendation:*

*Poverty is not a problem unique to the youth and thus addressing poverty under this section creates the risk of the issue being lumped under the partner states plans for poverty eradication. The youth seek innovative action to resolve the problems that result in lack of sustainable livelihoods.*

*We propose that this section should read sustainable livelihood is achieved by way of creating a conducive environment through skills development, linking skills to jobs, provision of competitive employment opportunities and equally competitive remuneration, which in the ideal case should be commensurate to work done. It further demands for application of mechanisms to ensure that the source of income has longevity. The youth have the right to a standard of living adequate to their health and well being including food, water and sanitation, and housing.*

## **2.7 Conflict resolution, peace building and security.**

*Recommendation:*

*This should also be merged with peace and security*

## **2.8 Cultural Life**

The second sentence promotes a loophole for the advancement of negative cultural values.

*Recommendation:*

*The word progressive should be added between promote and cultural at the end of the sentence*

## **2.9 Vulnerable and Marginalized Youth**

*Recommendation*

The title should change to read: - ***Vulnerable and marginalized youth (Diversity and inclusion)***

The list of group of youth that fall under this title cannot be exhausted, hence at the end of the paragraph add *“and any other groups and may be indentified in different situations”*

## **2.10 The environment**

*Recommendation*

The title should change to read ***“The environment and sustainable development”***

At the end of the paragraph, the following should be added:- *“the youth should thus be involved in decision making on issues on environment and sustainable development”*

## **3.0 Guiding principles and Values**

Suggested principles for the EA Youth Policy

- Respect for common cultural, religious and ethical progressive values
- Promotion of Good Governance and respect for democratic institutions

## **4.0 PRIORITY AREAS OF COOPERATION IN YOUTH SECTOR**

### **4.1 Participation in political processes and decision making**

Prohibitive legal and institutional frameworks should be reviewed with the intention of ensuring a favorable legal, political and institutional environment for youth participation; where youth representation should be cognizant of the need for equal engagement of young women and men.

### **4.2 Employment**

- The Policy should set benchmarks for the enactment of regional labour laws especially with the common market protocol in place. With the free movement of labour, a uniform minimum wage should be enacted to avoid exploitation of the youth.
- Efforts to aggrandize youth engagements in poverty eradication should receive huge legal and financial investments at both regional and national levels. The EAYC alone is enough to advance this strategy.
- We propose the creation of a support office within the EAC secretariat to service the EA Youth Council

## **5.0 Implementation mechanisms**

In addition to the stipulated implementation mechanism in the draft, a comprehensive M&E framework should be suggested to keep track of the progress of policy implementation.

## **6.0 East Africa Youth Council**

The establishment of the EAYC is of paramount importance to the youths of East African Community.

### *Recommendation*

### *Composition*

- *Each member state will have 7 representatives in the Council, 3 of these will be seconded from the National Youth Councils (and where absent by the Ministry of Youth) while the remaining 4 will be from civil society organizations (that is 1 representative of persons with disability, 1 representative from civil society, 1 representative from private sector, 1 representative from institution of higher learning)*
- *There will be a criteria for countries to follow when nominating any of the above positions for the Council*

### *Governance structure*

- *The above 35 representatives will elect 1 representative each to sit on the Governing Council; they will elect another one representative each to sit in the Secretariat. This group will also select a Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer.*
- *Every of the above positions (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) will be deputized by a person of the opposite gender and different country.*
- *In case of change of leadership at national level the position of Chair remains in the country for the length of their tenure.*

### *Tenure*

- *The tenure of the chair will be 1 year. This will be on rotation basis according to the Chair of the summit.*
- *The tenure of all the 35 members will be 3 years. At the end of year 3, each country retains 1 of these 35 for sustainability and continuity. Each country will decide who to retain.*

### *Age limit*

- *There will be an age limit of 35yrs for all members of the Council*

## **WAY FORWARD**

It was agreed, in the meantime, an ***“interim committee”*** be set up to follow up with the above issues and the implementation of the East Africa Youth Policy. The members of the interim committee will be representatives of civil society organization (AYT focal points) and National Youth Councils. In countries where there is no National youth Council, the Ministry of Youth shall second a representative.