

The Opening's Speech of the African Union Youth Envoy at the 1st International APRM Youth Symposium in N'djamena, Chad

July 1st, 2019

Excellencies,

We must acknowledge that since 2011 waves of youth-led peaceful change has swept the continent demanding legitimate rights, particularly in governance peacefully and creatively.

We must see the youth movement, uprising, revolution and activism as an opportunity to channel that energy into positive change and engagement in governance. As we looked at youth in Tunisia, Senegal, Gambia, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and others, engaging in innovative ways of youth-led accountability, we must also see today youth in Sudan and Algeria as positive changemakers and support their engagement in governance and democratic transitions.

This is not the time for exclusion and marginalization, it is not time for polarization, it is the time for intergenerational co-leadership, honest governance, and young governments.

Governments alone cannot fix Africa's 21st-century challenges and youth cannot take the torch passed down and be expected to do some magic and solve all the issues. We must work together, co-create the solutions with civil society and other stakeholders and put youth especially young women at the center of these conversations.

We encourage our member states to honor their commitments to deliver the education, health, and the conducive economic environment for employment that our generation deserves, to have not just jobs but jobs of dignity.

We are a generation that doesn't want empty promises but want progress, that doesn't want tokenism but want action. The Africa we want is a borderless Africa with an African passport, where youth are perceived as drivers not subjects of development and where the Sahara is a bridge and hub of Pan-Africanism.

It is not just our role as youth to engage in governance, to hold our governments accountable, this is our duty and responsibility because "Where you will sit when you're old shows where you stood in your youth".

African youth,

During the five stages of A peer review; ask yourselves where is our voices at the consultation - review mission - draft report - the APR Forum - Final Report and the second-generation review, your voice at all these levels is critical and matter.

You do not need permission to participate or to be invited, you occupy your space because there is no governance without citizen engagement and youth-led accountability.

To achieve the Africa We Want, platforms for conversations such as this symposium, are essential. Key themes will be discussed during the next two days, including the role of technology, security, employment and entrepreneurship. And you are the main experts in this room, the frontliners, you understand the challenges in the community and you have the solutions.

We also encourage the establishment of the APRM Youth Network that will serve as a platform of governance and democracy in Africa. Indeed, if APRM wants to fulfil its mission this is a step in the right direction to engage youth meaningfully and sustainably.

I am here to emphasize my commitment to work closely with all of you in amplifying your radical political voice and initiatives, and supporting your activism and advocate for the implementation of policies that impact the livelihoods of youth on the continent, also committed also to work closing with APRM on youth engagement for measuring governance and support the African Union Commission work on youth with sufficient data and a robust reporting mechanism.

Thank you again Chad for hosting us, for the hospitality and for your leadership, thanks to the organizing team and we hope to come again here soon with concrete results because when young people promise, young people deliver.

Thank you

Ms.Aya Chebbi

**Chairperson's Special Envoy on Youth
African Union Commission**