



Accelerating Youth Action Towards Africa's Greener Future



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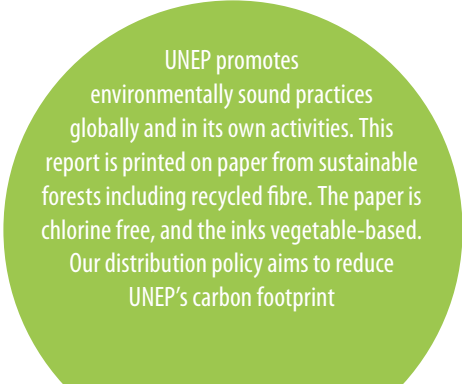
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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AEETAP	Africa Environmental Education and Training Action Plan
AEO	Africa Environment Outlook
AU	African Union
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AYEN	Africa Youth Environment Network
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
EE	Environmental Education
EETU	Environmental Education and Training Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GUPES	Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
MESA	Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities
ODA	Official Development Assistance
QA	Quality Assurance
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TEEB	The Economics of Ecosystem and Biodiversity
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WEEC	World Environmental Education Congress

Foreword



With almost 200 million people aged between 15 and 24 representing 20% of the population, Africa has the fastest-growing and most youthful population in the world as chronicled in various reports. It is generally estimated that over 40% are under the age of 15. The number of young people in Africa will double by 2045 and if this trend continues, the continent's labour force will be 1 billion strong by then, making it the largest in the world.

This Africa's youth population is not only growing rapidly, it is also getting better educated. It is estimated that 59% of 20-24 year olds will have had secondary education in 2030, compared to 42% today. But this African youth is less employed than their parents. Many African young people are neither employed, nor studying, nor looking

for a job eventually. Due to their sheer numbers, these young people have the potential to nurture Africa's sustainability quest. But if we fail to create sufficient economic and employment opportunities to support decent living conditions for this important group, our youth can present a significant risk to social cohesion and political stability.

Africa has become an important player within the global economic system, and continues to record strong economic growth despite the weakened global economic environment with six of the world's ten fastest-growing economies located in Africa. But this economic growth has been non-inclusive.

How do we ensure that Africa benefits from the swiftly increasing reservoir of human capital? How committed are we as policy makers to listening to and including our most precious resource in policy decisions? And how committed are Africa's youth to unleash their creativity and capacity so that it can be harnessed and channelled towards the productive sectors of the sustainable development?

These are some of the key issues that prompted the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) to position the youth as a priority in its agenda, in line with its constitutional mandate to strengthen the participation of youth in sustainable development activities.

The participation by young people in sustainable development is the foundation of Africa's greener future, and a vibrant factor of its successes today. This is why the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which serves as the secretariat to AMCEN has developed and is implementing its Tunza strategy in Africa, that seeks to enhance, inspire and enable the involvement of children and young people in environmental activities, with a vision to foster a generation of environmentally conscious citizens and leaders, capable of positive action to promote sustainable development.

In fully endorsing the outcomes of the International Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), concerning the children and the youth, African ministers of the environment commit to active involvement of young people in decision-making processes as the issues we are addressing have a deep impact on present and future generations.

The post 2015 development agenda gives us a momentum to reset the policy agenda of our governments towards an inclusive, employment-creation and sustainable growth strategy that would address the special needs of our young people.

This publication which casts an eye on the past in order to draw vital lessons that inform the way forward lays out a roadmap that will accelerate youth action towards Africa's greener future is meant to guide us on this journey.

Hon. Dr. Binilith S. Mahenge,
President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment,
and Minister of State–Environment, Tanzania

Mounkaila Goumandakoye,
Director & Regional Representative,
Regional Office for Africa (ROA)

Executive Summary



This paper retraces the path that UNEP has travelled in its dealings with African youth. The paper casts an eye on the past in order to draw vital lessons that inform the way forward. It discusses and lays out a roadmap that will accelerate youth action towards Africa's greener future. The roadmap uses the core competencies and attributes of African youth, which include: high demographics, enthusiasm, technological savvy and professionalism.

The post-2015 agenda presents a new set of opportunities for African youth to seize so that they can play a decisive role in Africa's quest for sustainable development and poverty eradication. These opportunities are discussed within the context of a green economy that will inform and catalyse youth action.

Green economy underpins the post-2015 agenda and is therefore a mainstay of this paper. Proposed strategies for accelerating youth action are consequently anchored in green economy. This is in line with UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) for 2014 – 2017, which directs that green economy should be integrated into all Subprogrammes. In addition, UNEP's Foresight Process on Emerging Environmental Issues ranked green economy as the second most critical issue of our times.¹

The paper further illustrates how youth action towards Africa's greener future can be further accelerated through a tripartite approach that will activate, train and equip.

Activation will trigger the latent energies in already existing youth initiatives and channel them towards green economy projects that will contribute to a greener Africa. TunzAfrika¹ is in essence an activation platform for youth networks and organizations in Africa to nurture sustainability on the continent and eradicate poverty.

As the global voice and leader of the environment, UNEP has a myriad of invaluable environmental initiatives and publications that address wide-ranging sustainability issues. This rich experience will inform TunzAfrika's initiatives. In this regard, TunzAfrika will not reinvent the wheel but will draw insights from UNEP's extensive environmental experience. It will also be a distribution framework for UNEP's publications as this will enhance informed lobbying of policymakers and informed local level action.

Activation assists youth to be action-oriented in working towards a greener Africa. This matters because regional youth

action in Africa has traditionally centred on lobbying other third parties to take action. This paper discusses a strategic shift that will activate youth to take action towards a greener Africa; an approach that heeds Mahatma Gandhi's call to 'be the change you want to see in the world.'

As used in this paper, training refers to targeted impartation of requisite sustainability skills and not generic education. This can be done through education for sustainable development coursework in institutions of higher learning or through customized forums, like workshops and on-the-job training.

The Rio+20 Outcome placed a strong emphasis on training. It called on the international community to 'enhance international cooperation in support of capacity-building and training programmes.' It also resolved to 'enhance agricultural research, extension services, training and education to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability.' In addition, the Outcome document encouraged 'extension training programmes and scientific studies and initiatives aimed at deepening understanding and raising awareness of the economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable land management policies and practices.'

Training is therefore a cornerstone of the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and needs to be part of UNEP's work with African youth. UNEP's Foresight Process on Emerging Environmental Issues also found that a green economy cannot be realized unless human capabilities are transformed. Training is indeed a critical platform of transforming human capabilities.

As regards equipping, this paper proposes equipping African youth with tangible tools that will help them to tap into the green economy and pursue sustainable development. In the spirit of UNEP's results-based management, these tools should enhance activities that lead to concrete deliverables. In this regard, each section in this paper contains a 'Takeaway' segment that spells out sustainability opportunities for youth and the tools needed to tap into those opportunities.

Tied closely to the whole notion of equipping youth, the paper proposes to set up a Green Africa Youth Fund. This fund will be used to provide financial, material or technical resources for equipping youth with tangible tools that will enable them to popularize and utilize a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication,

Annexed to this paper are innovative recommendations on the methods, mechanisms and actions that can be taken to enhance strategic youth action towards a greener Africa that prospers through sustainability.

¹ TunzAfrika was founded in 2013 and is UNEP's multi-tier platform for engaging African youth.

Introduction



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