

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

"Future Africa-Europe: Youth Championing New Paths to Financing Progress"

March 19th, 2025, Addis Ababa – Ethiopia

This document presents actionable recommendations developed by youth participants at the "**Future Africa-Europe: Youth Championing New Paths to Financing Progress**" meeting held in Addis Ababa on March 19th, 2025. Co-organized by the **Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF)** and **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH**, the event convened 22 young African and European professionals alongside 20 senior experts and officials, on the sidelines of the **UNECA's Conference of Ministers (CoM) 2025**, to address pressing fiscal challenges and identify opportunities for youth-led solutions within the Africa-Europe partnership. The program shifted from expert-led pitches to dynamic intergenerational roundtables and peer-to-peer learning sessions, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange. This initiative directly responds to growing youth frustration across Africa regarding debt, taxation, economic hardship, and governance, as evidenced by recent social media-organized protests, as well as the sentiment among European youth, that government spending and the take-up of debt is not focused on their future. Building on existing financial governance initiatives, the discussions centered on transforming fiscal challenges into opportunities for youth, with a focus on combating illicit financial flows, leveraging remittances and investments, and redesigning the international financial architecture – all topics which can only be addressed through cooperation between Africa and Europe. These recommendations, aligned with **Agenda 2063**, are intended to inform future international finance dialogues, including the upcoming **Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4)** in Seville, and potential AEF intergenerational dialogue at the Forum.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Empower Youth-Led Solutions:**

Strengthen the role of African and European youth—particularly from the private sector and youth-led enterprises—in AU-EU multilateral cooperation by institutionalizing their participation in policy processes and directly supporting youth-led initiatives that drive innovation, job creation, and sustainable economic growth.

This can be achieved by:

- **Formalizing youth representation** through structured partnerships with established platforms such as the *Pan-African Youth Union*, *AU-EU Youth Voice Lab*, *European Youth Forum*, and the *EC Youth Sounding Board* to co-create and implement pilot projects on issues like business, digital economy, and Finance.

- **Integrating youth-led enterprises** into economic and development discussions by creating dedicated youth seats in AU-EU ministerial and working groups—particularly in priority sectors like the green economy, digital innovation, and trade.
 - **Providing targeted support to youth-led initiatives** through AU-EU development cooperation instruments (e.g. *NDICI – Global Europe*), including access to finance, capacity-building, and mentorship. The *EIB’s Boost Africa Initiative* offers a precedent for youth-focused investment and can be expanded to directly involve young entrepreneurs in program design and monitoring.
 - **Ensuring youth-led policy co-creation** by mandating joint drafting of thematic policy briefs and position papers by youth organizations and AU-EU task forces ahead of summits and ministerial meetings.
- **Optimize Funding Mechanisms:**
 - Consolidate development banks, climate funds, and COVID initiatives to enhance funding disbursement efficiency in Africa especially for pandemic preparedness. This can be implemented through establishing an inter-agency Task Force (chaired by AfDB) to map current portfolios, eliminate redundant projects, and reallocate capital.
 - Foster collaboration between public and private institutions to enhance efficient capital deployment through convening government ministries (e.g., Finance, ICT) alongside leading banks, telecoms, and venture capital firms to meet and set joint priorities for capital allocation.
 - Allocate a dedicated tranche within existing development finance budgets to equity investments and blended-finance deals targeting early- and growth-stage African fintechs specializing in cross-border payments (e.g., startups following the Remitly model).
 - Launch a “Young Innovators in Finance” grant window, offering awards for incubator support, specifically for young entrepreneurs developing low-cost digital payment and remittance transfer and investment solutions.
- **Elevate African Priorities on the Global Stage:**
 - Proactively engage with the G20 and Y20 by establishing a unified African bloc that coordinates and champions a shared agenda, focusing on key continental priorities such as youth employment, climate resilience, digital inclusion, and sustainable development.
 - Actively identify, prepare, and fund youth, civil society leaders, and technical experts from Africa to participate in G20 and Y20 engagements, ensuring broad and equitable representation across regions and sectors.
 - Advocate for a permanent African presence within the G20 to ensure that African perspectives shape global economic policy.

- **Domesticate the AfCFTA Women and Youth Protocol:**
 - Develop and implement national strategies to integrate the Women and Youth Protocol into AfCFTA by creating legal frameworks and setting clear timelines for action, ensuring youth and women's organizations are actively involved in the process.
 - Encourage policymakers to partner with youth groups for better domestication efforts.
 - Call on EU member states to prioritize the domestication of the Women and Youth Protocol to foster gender equality and youth empowerment.

- **Localize Information and Capacity Building on finance:**
 - Customize capacity-building initiatives to effectively reach marginalized communities, with the emphasis on solving industrial and governance related issues.
 - Foster collaboration with community organizations and local youth leaders to co-design and deliver capacity-building programs that are meaningful, sustainable, and aligned with the unique needs of the community.

- **Enhance Remittance Flows and Digital Finance:**
 - Lower the costs associated with remittances transfers and expand access to digital financial services, promoting competition among remittance providers.
 - Develop strategic frameworks and platforms that support the growth of African-born remittance companies and FinTech startups.
 - Implement targeted programs to equip youth with digital financial skills by partnering with tech companies, financial institutions, and educational organizations, ensuring accessible training on digital banking, fintech tools, and online financial management to foster financial inclusion and economic empowerment.

- **Promote Domestic Resource Mobilization:**
 - Encourage self-reliance among individual African nations and reduce reliance on external debt by bolstering domestic resource mobilization efforts.
 - Implement regulatory reforms to foster public-private partnerships aimed at combating illicit financial flows (IFFs), while simultaneously prioritizing capacity-building programs to educate and raise awareness among youth about IFFs, regulations, and the importance of financial integrity.

- **Enhance Strategic Partnerships for knowledge transfer:**

- Analyze historical Africa-EU relationships to address existing gaps in past partnerships, facilitate knowledge transfer, and promote more equitable collaboration.
 - Establish joint Africa-Europe youth exchange programs and innovation labs, leveraging platforms like Erasmus Mundus, to foster cross-continental collaboration, skills development, and co-creation in areas such as digital innovation, green economy, and social entrepreneurship.
 - Build strategic alliances through the G20 to tackle shared financial challenges and promote sustainable development.
- **Strengthen Support for the UN Tax convention:**
 - Advocate for increased support from European and African countries for the UN Tax Convention to bolster global financial stability and resilience.
- **Address Structural Issues in Global Finance:**
 - Tackle structural issues in the international financial architecture, promoting openness and cooperation to liberate the global system from colonial legacies.
 - Establish accountability mechanisms and transparency standards to ensure equitable participation and benefits for all nations.
 - Integrate principles of sustainable development, environmental protection, and social justice into the core of international financial policies.
- **Implement Practical Action:** Develop concrete tools to directly address finance issues discussed.

CALL TO ACTION

These youth-driven recommendations represent a vital pathway toward a more equitable and sustainable future for international finance. By prioritizing these action items, policymakers, international financial institutions, and African and European stakeholders can leverage the ingenuity and expertise of youth to build resilient financial systems, promote inclusive growth, and unlock the full potential of the Africa-EU partnership. The AEF and GIZ are committed to championing these recommendations and ensuring their effective integration into ongoing international finance conversations as well as sustaining youth engagement through youth-led monitoring mechanisms, including a review of progress on the implementation of recommendations, to ensure accountability

and continuous improvement. The recommendations would potentially support in designing an intergenerational dialogue at the upcoming FfD4 where they'd be also presented.

This document serves as a call to action, urging decision-makers to embrace these transformative ideas and work collaboratively toward a future where international finance serves as a catalyst for shared prosperity and sustainable development for all.