

# PRESS RELEASE

## AFRICAN YOUTH SET FORTH TEN 'DEMANDMENTS' AT CLOSE OF AFRICA UNITE SYMPOSIUM

Addis Ababa, 5 February: Over 200 young people from across Africa have set forth a set of ten 'Demandments' urging their countries' leaders to implement programmes that address youth issues and most importantly to provide quality, free primary education.

They also called for space and representation for young people particularly within the structure of the African Youth Parliament.

The ten demands were presented at the close of a three-day symposium held as part of the Africa Unite activities to commemorate the anniversary of the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of Bob Marley. It comes in advance of the fifth Africa Development Forum ADF (scheduled for June 2005) which will focus on youth. The Africa Unite Symposium provided young people with space to hone their ideas and advocate for their agenda including the challenges of conflict and HIV/AIDS.

The youth participants came from Burundi, Cameroon, Djibouti, the Gambia, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Uganda. The African youth were joined by their peers from Jamaica.

The youth demands and pledges were as follows:

1. We demand the reconstruction and redefinition of the role, responsibility and structure of the African Youth Parliament in order to gain a greater representation of African youth and our brothers and sisters in the diaspora. We would like greater visibility of youth matters and to seek the effective implementation and sustainability of programmes that address youth issues

We pledge our support to achieve an accountable and responsible African Youth Parliament that seeks to address good governance through youth participation at all levels towards unity and the development of the African continent

2. We demand access to quality and free primary, secondary and, where possible, tertiary education in order to employ ourselves and gain knowledge and skills for the development of our countries and continent

We pledge that each one will teach one and that all skills will be used in our continent for our continent for the benefit of all Africans

3. We demand that our history be told and shared with our children and our children's children and generations to come. We want the voice of past youths in the struggle for freedom and equality to be told by Africans for Africa

We pledge to learn from our elders and to emphasize the positives of being African in our communities and to mobilise other youth to unite in Africa through our history

4. We demand the empowerment of women and gender equality in all sectors of African society – political, cultural, social and legal

We pledge that we will immediately as young women and men in Africa, improve the position of women and reduce the vulnerability of girls in our African communities in a spirit of togetherness as daughters and sons of Africa

5. We demand peace and reconciliation. We insist that our brothers and sisters in armed conflict be free from guns and persecution and that their right to live their lives free from violence be upheld, including the rights of marginalised African communities to be treated fairly and to live in freedom

We pledge to advocate for peace and prosperity in our communities and countries and to resist violence through our actions and to create dialogue in reaching peaceful resolutions to conflict

6. We demand that the voice of our young brothers and sisters living with HIV and AIDS be heard and integrated in our continental response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We demand appropriate and quality youth friendly HIV and AIDS services and health care facilities, free access to anti-retroviral therapy, nutrition and care and support for orphans and vulnerable children in Africa

We pledge our support to African youth living positively with HIV and AIDS and to fight stigma and discrimination so that those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS can live their lives indignity. We pledge to reduce the number of new infections through creating networks of peer education.

7. We demand that African culture be preserved and free from negative foreign influences and that African culture be promoted and protected within African youth and the illumination of negative cultural practices that keep women and young people suppressed and vulnerable to HIV and AIDS

We pledge to promote African culture through our lifestyles, music, traditional performance and dress and to develop new literature and other artistic expressions that portray our rich cultural heritage in a positive way

8. We demand effective and progressive leadership in the African continent and governments that walk the walk and not just talk the talk

We pledge to lead by example and to hold our leaders accountable to their actions and promises

9. We demand a positive African identity that is portrayed to the rest of the world, an African identity that remembers the struggles of the past and that is looking to a bright future

We will support Pan-Africanism and our brothers and sisters in the diaspora and will become renaissance youth that will lead Africa to a prosperous future

10. We demand multi-level resources such as technical support, materials and skills from local, national and international governments and development organisations to achieve our dreams of unity, peace and prosperity for African youth and children

We pledge to be accountable for all our actions and develop responsible plans of action for implementing sustainable development of young people in and from Africa

Africa Unite youth participants will continue their deliberations at an ADF preparatory workshop from 7-8 February.

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