



FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists
Forum des éducatrices africaines



We, the youth participants of the [Make Way programme](#) in Zambia, convened earlier this month at the Pre-Youth [SDG Summit](#) Event on Intersectional Youth Engagement to collectively voice our aspirations and concerns as young change makers in Africa. With a shared commitment to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through innovation, inclusivity, and meaningful engagement, we hereby present this Communique as a call-to-action for a more equitable and sustainable future.

As young people in Africa, we are not homogenous and we do not live single issue lives. Therefore, intersectional approaches are key to addressing the complex and interlinked challenges faced by young people with compounded vulnerabilities as we deal with existing and looming multiple and interrelated crises. The African continent has the world's youngest population with 70% under the age of 30. Addressing the challenges and taking advantage of the opportunities requires engaging young people in all their diversities meaningfully and involving them in decisions that will determine their present and future.

We are currently at the midpoint of the implementation of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda. We call on governments, civil society organizations, United Nations agencies, private sector and other critical stakeholders to integrate an intersectional lens in all development efforts, ensuring that no one is left behind and the furthest behind are reached. This call-to-action entails that we do not only carry along the slogan of leaving no one behind, but that we examine who is left behind and why they are left behind, as well as ensuring their inclusion in the developmental agenda. It entails intentional innovative approaches to be inclusive of young people with compounded vulnerabilities. This is critical because according to the United Nations Secretary General Report, we are off track on the achievement of the targets set in 2015 and this is especially true of African countries.

African adolescents and youths face a myriad of challenges, including lack of platforms to exhibit innovations or acquire support, high unemployment levels, lack of information with policy and complex legal framework documents designed only to be understood by technocrats with a desired number of years of experience. Young African youths also face challenges; religious, traditional and social cultural norms that perpetuate discrimination and stigma, structural drivers of migration, displacement and human trafficking, the climate crisis, unfulfilled need for comprehensive sexuality education and a non-human rights-based approach to universal health coverage. More often than not, young people's ideas and perspectives are sought after but yield inadequate outcomes. Compounded vulnerabilities are never considered. African youths in all their diversities

lose so much potential human capital of our nations to child marriages, teenage pregnancies and maternal mortalities. Governments and stakeholders have done a great job at inviting young people to have a seat at the table without them really knowing who owns the table. We have called out the dichotomy of having young people's voices at the table without their needs being met. It is good progress that we are called upon to share our voices, but it would be even better if our voices are actually heard and action is taken in that direction.

We demand increased opportunities for youth-led innovations, entrepreneurship and skills development. Governments and partners need to invest in programs that empower young people to create sustainable solutions, provide opportunities for decent work, foster economic growth and reduce inequalities, and promote the rights-based approach to service delivery in all sectors. Zambia and all other African nations need to urgently address the unmet sexual and reproductive health needs of young people and the growing alcohol and drug dependency among adolescents and young people that is threatening their development. In the same vein, it is vital to promote disability competent education and health systems across the continent.

As the Zambia CSO Voluntary National Review shadow report highlights the challenges that people faced that necessitated the coming of the SDGs, these challenges affect people differently and this marks the basis onto which development must be approached with an intersectional lens. And as African countries celebrate the 20th anniversary of the ratification of the Maputo Protocol on the rights of women in Africa, the emerging and critical issues facing adolescent girls and young women in Africa reinforce the need for interlinked and interconnected solutions that address structural and systemic inequalities.

We emphasize the importance of accessible and comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services, information and education for all youth in their diversities. It is imperative to eliminate discrimination and stigma, ensuring that every young person can make informed choices about their health and well-being.

We call for the meaningful inclusion of young people with compounded vulnerabilities in decision-making processes at all levels in the implementation of the global goals. Governments and institutions must create spaces for the youth to contribute to policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring, ensuring our voices are heard, respected and utilized to inform decisions.

We advocate for increased youth involvement in Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes. Governments must actively engage young people in drafting and reviewing VNRs, reflecting the unique perspectives and priorities of youth in national development strategies.

We commit to advocating for our rights and holding governments accountable. We urge fellow youth to take part in advocacy initiatives, mobilizing our collective strength to drive positive change in our communities.

We, the youth, stand united in our quest for a future marked by equity, innovation, and inclusivity. We commit to use an intersectional lens in our work. through the use of an intersectional lens in our programming.

This communique serves as a blueprint for action, highlighting our shared vision for achieving the SDGs and creating a better world for generations to come.

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