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African Youth Report 2009

Expanding opportunities for and with Young people in Africa



Economic Commission for Africa

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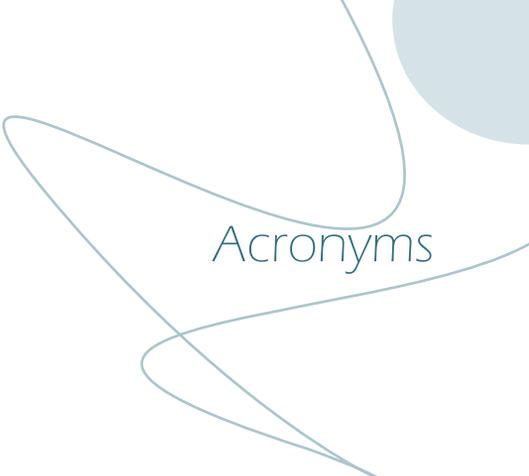
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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies and Programme
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

African governments and their partners have become increasingly cognizant of the centrality of youth and youth issues to the continent's development agenda, including the task of meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Young people are not just beneficiaries of policy interventions, but are also key stakeholders and contributors to developing sound policies and implementing effective programmes.

This increased awareness was amply manifested through the adoption in 2006 of the African Youth Charter by African Union heads of State and government at the Fifth African Development Forum on "Youth and leadership in the twenty-first century". The Forum was jointly organized by the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission. The Charter provides the continent with a framework to develop and implement more tangible youth policies and programmes. Thirteen countries have formally ratified the Charter, a number very close to the 15 ratifications required to bring the Charter into force. All member States should intensify efforts to ratify the document and advance to the next stage of developing and implementing appropriate national policies, plans and programmes.

Several States are already making good progress in developing appropriate policies and allocating more resources to the concerns of their young people. Young people are also participating increasingly in political and decision-making processes, and in helping to raise the profile of youth issues. Nonetheless, there are challenges that continue to require the urgent attention of African governments and their development partners. Young Africans continue to face formidable hurdles such as accessing quality education, finding decent jobs and maintaining good health, particularly given their vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. In all these areas, young women especially face heightened barriers and vulnerabilities across the continent.

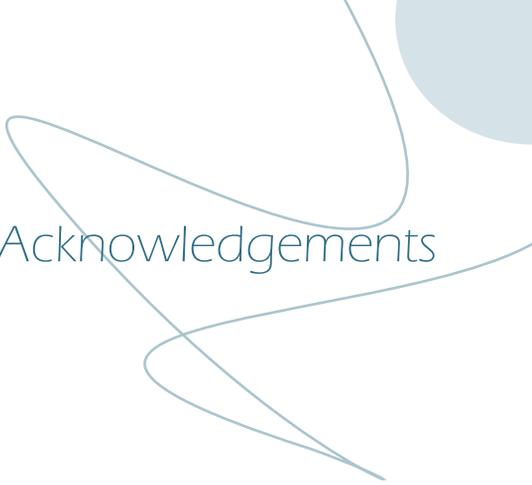
All stakeholders both in Africa and among its partners, have a role to play in scaling-up efforts to tackle these challenges, especially by improving implementation through capacity-building and increasing the allocation of

resources to this crucial area of development. ECA's African Youth Report 2009 on the theme "Expanding opportunities for and with young people in Africa" will help to increase awareness of the dynamism of Africa's youth and promote better understanding of their concerns. This report also contributes to the continent's youth development agenda by undertaking an analysis of the major problems and providing recommendations to enable African member States to tackle them.

Ultimately, a coordinated approach by the United Nations system, the African Union, development partners, civil society, academia and, most importantly, young people themselves, will ensure the fulfilment of the various global and regional commitments such as those espoused in the African Youth Charter.

Abdoulie Janneh

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Secretary of the
Economic Commission for Africa



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