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REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL-LEVEL CONSULTATION

Ahead of the 5th Continental Dialogue on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) and Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

THEME:
Advancing Inclusive Governance: Institutionalizing the Role of Youth and Women in Peace, Security and Policy Reform in Africa

VENUE:
Best Western Plus Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Hybrid)

DATES:
14-16 July 2026

CONVENED BY:
Republic of Burundi, AU-EU Youth Voices Lab Programme, Oxfam, UNWomen, UNFPA, UNDP, GIZ, Search for Common Ground (SFCG),

Organized by:

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AU-EU Youth Voices Lab Power of the Collective

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From 14 to 16 July 2026, over 50 young leaders, policymakers, AU officials, UN representatives, civil society actors, and development partners convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for a landmark Technical-Level Consultation ahead of the 5th Continental Dialogue on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) and Women, Peace and Security (WPS). Convened under the theme 'Advancing Inclusive Governance: Institutionalizing the Role of Youth and Women in Peace, Security and Policy Reform in Africa,' the consultation served as a critical pre-dialogue space to shape the priorities and outcomes of the Bujumbura Conference scheduled for 10–12 August 2026.

Over three intensive days, participants reviewed existing YPS and WPS continental and national frameworks, diagnosed structural gaps in the African Youth Charter approaching its 20th anniversary, evaluated institutional pathways for youth and women's participation in the AU Peace and Security Architecture, introduced the “Common Impact Framework” as a unified measurement tool, and examined the African Youth Charter under clusters addressing political rights, legal enforcement, digital rights, economic inclusion, and environmental justice.

The consultation produced a comprehensive Outcome Document, a strategic, actionable blueprint for the 5th Continental Dialogue anchored in five strategic reform pillars and a proposed a Common Impact Framework using Five Vital Signs to measure YPS and WPS progress at scale. The Government of Burundi, as host of the 5th Continental Dialogue and holder of the AU Commission Chairmanship for 2026, committed to translating the Outcome Document into actionable decisions at the continental level.

A. CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES

Overall Objective

To facilitate a high-level, inclusive, and action-oriented technical consultation that generates evidence-based recommendations to shape the agenda, priorities, and outcomes of the 5th Continental Dialogue on YPS and WPS, while strengthening alignment between youth- and women-led perspectives and continental policy processes.

Specific Objectives

- Provide a structured platform for dialogue among Member States, youth and women representatives, and civil society on key YPS and WPS priorities
- Examine existing policy frameworks including the African Youth Charter and National Youth Policies and NAPs to identify gaps and opportunities for reform
- Promote enhanced participation of youth and women in peace, security, and governance processes
- Develop concrete, actionable, and forward-looking recommendations for the Continental Dialogue

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B. OPENING CEREMONY

The consultation opened with high-level remarks from five distinguished speakers representing the full spectrum of the partnership architecture underpinning the YPS and WPS agenda. Their contributions collectively framed the urgency and opportunity of the three-day deliberations.

Bakary Sonko — African Youth Ambassador for Peace, West Africa
Mr. Sonko called for a decisive shift from the drafting of National Action Plans to their effective implementation, stressing that meaningful youth participation and adequate NAP financing are the true measures of the agenda's impact. He called on the AU Peace and Security Council to institutionalize the African Youth Ambassadors for Peace as a sustainable mechanism and challenged participants to measure the success of the YPS agenda not by the number of strategies adopted, but by the strength of the partnerships built and institutions strengthened.

Ms. Ndeye Rose Sarr — Chief, UNFPA Representation Office to the AU and UNECA
Ms. Sarr underscored the complementarity of the YPS and WPS agendas and the imperative of their coordinated, coherent implementation. She acknowledged progress made while noting significant gaps in implementation and institutionalisation, with young people and women still inadequately represented in decision-making. She stressed the consultation's role in generating recommendations that would meaningfully inform the 5th Continental Dialogue in Bujumbura.

Dr. Josephine Nwaelugo — AUC Coordinator, Women and Youth Peace Security and Child Protection Unit
Dr. Nwaelugo called for resilient institutions capable of translating recommendations into meaningful, sustainable action. She challenged participants to reflect on how Africa's governance architecture can better serve future generations, bridge institutional divides, and ensure that partnerships forged at the consultation lead to tangible institutional strengthening.

Mr. Javier Niño Pérez — EU Ambassador to the African Union
Ambassador Niño Pérez reaffirmed the European Union's strong partnership with the African Union Commission, noting that the EU remains the largest financial and technical supporter of Africa's peace and security architecture. He reflected on the ongoing reality of conflict — affecting both Africa and Europe and reaffirmed the EU's commitment to supporting the forthcoming Continental Dialogue in August.

H.E. Willy Nyamitwe — Embassy of Burundi to the African Union
H.E. Nyamitwe observed that the room embodied a level of collective energy rarely found in traditional policy discussions. He called for a shift from developing recommendations to implementing them, noting that Africa's youthful population projected to exceed 500 million by 2050 demands stronger institutions capable of delivering meaningful outcomes. He acknowledged that Africa is not lacking in commitments, but in delivery, and commended young people and women as technical experts whose lived experiences would shape the consultation's outcomes.

Call to Action from the Opening

Participants were urged to move beyond dialogue and commitments toward concrete implementation, stronger institutional ownership, sustainable financing, and meaningful participation of youth and women in Africa's peace, security, and governance architecture.

C. DAY 1 — POLICY FOUNDATIONS & ARCHITECTURAL DIAGNOSTICS

Session 1: Panel Debate — The Evolving African Peace Landscape: Achievements & Framework Gaps; Moderator: Raquel leandro UNDP

Session 1 examined current global, continental, regional, and national YPS and WPS frameworks including the African Youth Charter, the Continental Framework on YPS and WPS, national youth policies, and NAPs focusing on achievements, gaps, and emerging challenges.

Key Presentations:

Fatuma Muhumed (UNFPA) highlighted key global and continental milestones including UNSCR 2250, the African Youth Charter, AU Decision 2807 (2025) calling for NAP institutionalisation, and the Pact for the Future (Actions 19 and 20). Despite these frameworks, implementation remains uneven, NAPs are under-adopted, YPS is chronically underfunded, and youth participation remains largely tokenistic rather than genuinely decision-making.

Patrick Kumi (Youth for Peace Africa, AU) questioned how institutions can create meaningful opportunities for youth participation and build trust by entrusting young people with leadership responsibilities and resources. He reflected on the implications of shrinking civic space and the rise of Gen Z movements across Africa, noting that YPS discussions are not sufficiently integrated into broader youth priorities including climate change, unemployment, and sustainable development.

Maryam Sami (Nigeria) shared Nigeria's NAP implementation experience — including strong national policy commitment, state-level action plans with dedicated funding, the Nigeria YPS Coalition, and a Strategic Implementation Plan. Key challenges included shrinking civic space and limited localization at community level.

Mr. Phocas; The Ministry of Youth representative from Burundi outlined the country's national approach, including economic empowerment programmes, government-supported vocational training centres, the National Youth Strategy (2024–2028), and collaboration with youth organizations on NAP development.

Christian Achaleke the Co-author of the Nairobi Continental Stocktaking Report presented preliminary findings from the Continental Stocktaking Report, noting that Africa has emerged as a global leader in institutionalizing the YPS agenda through five AU Assembly Decisions, the Continental Framework, the 10-Year Implementation Framework, the Youth for Peace Africa Programme, the African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAP) Programme, and the Continental Dialogue series. Eight countries have adopted NAPs and fifteen are actively implementing them. However, NAPs remain under-implemented due to inadequate domestic

financing and donor dependency, youth participation remains consultative rather than influential, and existing monitoring systems cannot measure trust, social cohesion, and long-term impact.

Key Recommendations from Session 1

- Shift from measuring activities to measuring meaningful impact using a common methodology such as the Peace Impact Framework
- Prioritize institutionalization, sustainable financing, stronger coordination, and evidence-based implementation in the next decade of the YPS agenda
- Establish an African Youth Peace and Security Commission to institutionalize coordination at continental level
- Build trust between governments and young people through collaborative NAP implementation, not just consultative processes
- Protect civic space and strengthen AU coordination and Member State capacity-building support
- Reform the African Youth Charter to address digital governance, economic integration, climate-security nexus, and shrinking civic space

Session 2: Diagnostics — Modernizing the African Youth Charter at 20: The Reform Mandate

Mr. Lefe from the AU Women Children and Gender directorate presented the rationale for modernising the African Youth Charter as it marks its 20th anniversary, identifying key gaps in digital governance, economic empowerment, gender equality, health, and cross-border mobility, and exploring alignment with the Continental Framework on YPS.

Key Recommendations from Session 2

- Broaden Charter review consultations to include younger youth (18–23 years), particularly through educational institutions
- Integrate the YPS agenda — including UNSCR 2250 principles — explicitly into the revised Charter
- Better integrate YPS and WPS agendas to ensure inclusive representation across age and gender
- Strengthen accountability mechanisms for Member States through regular progress reviews and Charter implementation reporting
- Ensure greater inclusion of refugees, persons with disabilities, and other marginalised groups
- Strengthen National Youth Councils through advocacy and institutional capacity-building
- Preserve institutional memory from the 2006 Charter drafting process to inform the reform

Session 3: Framework Audit — National Policies & Action Plans (NYPs, YPS/WPS NAPs) Moderator: Fatuma Muhumed UNFPA WCA

Discussions focused on strengthening national implementation and coordination of YPS and WPS frameworks. Participants explored how the AU Youth Envoy coordinates both government and civil society reporting, the limited number of countries with joint YPS and WPS coordination mechanisms, the potential of digital platforms for data collection and monitoring, and the value of national networks — such as the Namibian experience with the

WPS Centre in providing technical guidance on stakeholder engagement and parliamentary processes.

The Continental Framework includes 28 indicators to support implementation and reporting, and participants noted the importance of digital platforms to improve evidence generation and monitoring at scale.

The Burundi YPS framework experience relies, first, on the will of the government of Burundi to recognize the efforts of its young people, and express the needs to promote its engagement to achieve its vision of an emergent Burundi in 2040, and a developed Burundi in 2060, secondly, on its motivated youth and their actions that reflect a better way for a sustainable development.

The policies include the National Youth Policy (NYP) which was updated recently, the National Strategy on YPS and its NAP. The development of those have seen a participation of different stakeholders such as youth ministries with a lead from the youth ministry, youth organisations such as YELI, AJAP and REJA, with support from UNDP and UNFPA. More stakeholders engaged through in-person consultations in the different regions of the country and online consultations. Despite the engagement of the government and other stakeholders, the main challenges rely on the implementation of the frameworks, many young people working on youth issues are not informed of the existence of those policies and this situation presents itself as a major challenge. To address it a Coalition on YPS has been recently put in place to create this space for experience sharing and strengthen their roles in the implementation of the National Strategy on YPS and its NAP.

The South Sudan YPS framework experience highlights the central role of youth, who constitute 70% of the population, in peacebuilding. Led by the Ministry of Peacebuilding, the initiative received broad support from government bodies (MoYS, MoGCSW, NPRC), UN agencies including UNFPA and UNESCO, and CSOs such as PAPA Africa. Stakeholder engagement was secured through the consultations, forum, and validation stages. Key success factors included strong political will, active youth participation on the frontlines, and robust partnerships. However, implementation was hindered by tokenistic participation, alignment issues, limited funding for CSOs, and coordination gaps among actors. Further challenges included instability during political transition and a limited understanding of the YPS agenda among government officials. Recommendations for future efforts emphasize building consensus among actors first, ensuring youth engagement at all levels of the process, and disseminating the agenda to all stakeholders beforehand.

Session 4: Institutional Pathways Inside the AU Peace & Security Architecture

Gloria Kabage (African Union Commission) introduced the key institutional mechanisms within the AU Peace and Security Architecture available to youth and women including the African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAPs), WISE Youth, and FemWise. Plenary discussions explored practical approaches to strengthening youth participation and institutional accountability.

Key Recommendations from Session 4

- Explore the appointment of National YPS Champions to strengthen visibility, coordination, and implementation at country level

• Invest in institutional leadership capable of bridging policy development at the national level with community-level implementation

• Strengthen recognition and support for the AYAPs to build public and institutional confidence in young leaders

• Draw on previous AYAP cohort experiences — particularly in Southern Africa — to establish national focal points and institutional continuity

D. DAY 2 — THE IMPACT PIVOT & YPS-WPS SYNERGY INTEGRATION

Morning Briefing: Synthesis of Day 1

Day 2 opened with a synthesis of Day 1's key themes, grounding the room in the four dimensions of the YPS agenda that had emerged: Recognition and Value (making youth feel seen and heard); State-Society Relations (strengthening partnerships between youth and government); Building Capabilities for Mediating Conflict (developing skills and structures for effective mediation); and Impact and Communication (measuring and communicating the collective impact of youth-led action). The facilitator highlighted the 'superpower' of youth leadership — the ability to bring people together — setting the tone for a day focused not just on policy architecture, but on the human story behind the agenda.

Session 5: Strategic Coherence — Future Proofing the Agendas; Moderator Saji Prelis; Search For Common Ground

Participants mapped the complex issues that young people and adults are inheriting in the next 3–5 years through group brainstorm and Remesh polling. The following challenges emerged:

• Economic insecurity: high unemployment leading to mental health crises, drug abuse, and intergenerational trauma

• Normalisation of corruption, governance deficiency, and African identity crises

• Geopolitical fragmentation from regional and multilateral frameworks

• Climate change and climate-induced conflict

• AI and technology misuse and under-use, particularly among marginalised communities

• Violent extremism and increased militarisation

• Ethnic politics, electoral manipulation, and unconstitutional changes of government

• Resource-based conflict, xenophobia, migration, and displacement.

When asked whether these issues had influenced their governments' policy responses, no participant raised their hand — a powerful diagnostic moment illustrating the disconnect between lived youth realities and national policy frameworks. The Cameroon delegation offered a notable counter-model: working with the Ministry of Planning to align existing youth activities with the YPS agenda rather than creating entirely new programmes, using UN funding to amplify rather than replace existing structures.

Session 6: Impact Methodology — Designing Accountability

Participants identified the core barriers to measuring and communicating YPS impact as

follows: no common mechanisms for tracking progress; activities are reported rather than impact; absence of a Community of Practice for impact sharing; communication mismatch between organisations' outputs and systemic change; no central repository for collective impact; jargon that disconnects impact from human experience; structural absences including no functioning National Youth Index in any African country; and difficulty aggregating individual stories into systemic evidence.

Through structured group reflection, participants mapped their vision of successful YPS impact across seven categories: Participation, Inclusion and Engagement; Resourcing and Investment; Safety and Security; Institutional Legitimacy; Communication and Language; Policy Coordination and Collaboration; and Policy Coherence.

The facilitator Saji Prelis introduced the Common Impact Framework, drawing on the medical analogy of vital signs. The Five Vital Signs of a Healthy Peaceful Society are:

- Agency: The opportunity people have to influence their societies
- Institutional Legitimacy: People's trust in their institutions
- Trust / Polarisation: People's trust in each other, across generations
- Safety / Violence: Freedom from physical violence and insecurity
- Resources: Contribution and investment of resources toward shared objectives Three measurement approaches were introduced: Lived Experience (indicators co-developed with communities for better accountability); Aligned Measures (globally comparable indicators for long-term tracking); and Expert Observations (real-time practitioner inputs to capture unexpected changes). Countries currently piloting the framework include Nigeria, Gambia, Liberia, Cameroon, DRC, and Kenya.

A critical plenary insight: the five YPS pillars should function as cross-cutting principles in NAP design, not as structural categories. NAPs should be built around the issues young people face, with the pillars as guiding principles.

Session 7: Co-Creation — Building the Feedback Loop Architecture

Three guiding principles framed the session: Reach, then Resonance, then Response (showing up is the beginning, not the end); Peace moves at the speed of trust (sustainable change requires trusted relationships); and Unlearn what we already know (frameworks of the past may not serve future goals). The session drew on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's concept of 'the danger of the single story' arguing that indicators, like narratives, must capture the full spectrum of lived experiences, not just what is easiest to count.

Four country case studies were presented: Namibia illustrated challenges in managing internal youth organisation divisions during NAP development. Kenya — presented by Felix Orwaka (KCYPS) — demonstrated how the Remesh deliberative technology platform reached 1,500 young people across Kenya's 47 counties, with data directly informing a 9-month government NAP roadmap, shifting ownership from civil society to government co-ownership. Nigeria showed how sustained engagement — particularly through movements and coalitions — can unlock both political commitment and financing. Cameroon illustrated how inclusive, well-structured coordination mechanisms between government, UN agencies, and technical partners accelerate YPS implementation.

Session 8: Policy Tools — Parallel 'How-To' Labs

Four parallel Solution Labs ran with rotating participation, each producing concrete recommendations:

Lab 1 — Data-Driven Tracking for the African Youth Charter Reform:
- Establish AU-level coordination for all youth structures to consolidate reporting and eliminate duplication
- Develop an African Youth Development Index capable of measuring impact across Member States
- Deploy deliberative AI tools (Remesh, Pol.is) to generate youth feedback at scale for AYC reform processes
- Draft a consolidated position paper to the AUC Commissioner with binding requests for Member States

Lab 2 — Strengthening Accountability & Monitoring in NYPs & YPS Plans:
- Adopt a common impact evaluation framework for YPS plans and youth policies across Africa
- Establish annual peer review programmes where Member States present NAP implementation reports
- Form inclusive working groups and task forces for YPS and youth policy oversight
- Establish and support youth-led coalitions to enhance grassroots ownership of implementation

Lab 3 — Financing & Resourcing the YPS/WPS Nexus:
- Reframe 'financing' to include materials, human capacity, and institutional infrastructure — not only money
- Do not reinvent the wheel: leverage existing frameworks, coalitions, and mechanisms
- Localisation must be the primary lens; resources should be deployed according to context
- Ministries of Youth should be joint implementation leads, with supplementary budget lines secured through cabinet processes
- Establish youth committees within local policy architectures to embed YPS at subnational level
- Ghana's model of partnering with established organisations to manage donor funds while implementing locally is replicable

Lab 4 — Strengthening National, Regional, and Continental Coalitions:
- Leverage existing platforms and actors rather than creating parallel structures
- Maximise online tools for data collection and coalition communication
- Develop shared accountability mechanisms across coalitions under a common framework
- Create communities of practice for shared learning across networks
- Work toward a unified umbrella coalition for Africa coordinating YPS and youth policy advocacy continentally

E. DAY 3 — POWER, VOICE & THE AFRICAN

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YOUTH CHARTER REFORM

Day 3 was devoted to structured working group sessions on African Youth Charter reform, organised across four thematic stations. Each station examined specific Charter articles through five analytical lenses: barriers today, what is missing or outdated, proposed amendment language, enforcement and monitoring mechanisms, and measurable benchmarks.

Station 1: Power and Voice — Political & Legal Rights (Articles 11, 12, 17, 18, 30, 31)

The central diagnosis: the Charter's ambition for youth participation is undermined not by an absence of provisions, but by vague language, weak enforcement, and the absence of binding institutional mechanisms. The problem is implementation, not drafting.

Key Recommendations

- Define 'meaningful participation' in the Charter itself and mandate a binding 30% quota for youth (with gender parity) in elected and nominated decision-making bodies, with a fixed implementation deadline
- Require each Member State to legislate a binding National Youth Act/Policy as a condition of Charter compliance, reviewed under the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)
- Replace vague obligation language (e.g. 'recognise') with affirmative duties to 'recognise and enforce'
- Mandate that every Member State institutionalise a National Youth Council with statutory footing and a resourced AU Youth Envoy focal point
- Introduce a treaty-based Youth Rights Committee; establish national Youth Ombudspersons; harmonise voting and candidacy age limits; and embed APRM-tracked compliance ratings
- Undertake a legal-language audit of the Charter to replace ambiguous or dated terms with precise, binding drafting
- Add an explicit non-restriction clause on youth movement tied to participation in regional AU processes
- Adopt a harmonised minimum standard for freedom of association that Member States cannot legislate below

Station 2: Body & Mind — Health, Mental Health & Peace (Articles 16, 17, 22, 24)

Participants diagnosed barriers including limited rural health infrastructure, cost of access, drug trafficking, limited mental health services, climate-related health risks, inadequate disability inclusion, and shrinking civic space for youth peacebuilders.

Key Recommendations

- Expand Article 16(h) to include life-threatening diseases beyond HIV/AIDS (diabetes, dialysis, Ebola, COVID-19) and establish insurance schemes to address cost barriers
- Insert provisions on digital health, telemedicine, cybersecurity, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence
- Revise the preamble of Article 17 to affirm the agency of young people as active peacebuilders, not passive victims or beneficiaries
- Incorporate transitional justice (truth, healing, reconciliation, accountability) into peace and

security provisions
• Revise the title of Article 24 to 'Youth Living With Disability'
• Establish biennial mandatory reporting to the AU (integrated into APRM), create an African Youth Charter Scorecard with independent civil society monitoring, and require dedicated national budgets for implementation

Station 3 & 4: Future Systems — Economic, Digital & Environmental Rights (Articles 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21)

The station observed that the Charter's principal weakness is not the absence of rights, but its lengthy, repetitive, and aspirational wording, combined with weak domestication, implementation financing, and accountability mechanisms.

Structural and Drafting Recommendations

• Consolidate overlapping provisions and replace vague verbs ('recognise', 'encourage', 'promote') with clear obligations ('shall enact', 'shall fund', 'shall protect', 'shall report')
• Separate each article into components covering the right, State obligation, implementation, financing, monitoring, and remedies
• Replace outdated MDG references in the preamble with the SDGs, Agenda 2063, and relevant continental frameworks
• Align provisions with the AfCFTA, continental digital and data governance frameworks, climate commitments, and the Continental Framework on YPS
• Require measurable targets, disaggregated data, and specific implementation timelines
• Open the Charter's preamble with an Africa-rooted philosophical framework — delegates proposed language such as 'We shall be guided by Ubuntu' — to anchor the reformed Charter in shared African identity

Digital Rights Cluster

Given that the Charter was adopted in 2006 before smartphones, social media, algorithmic content moderation, and AI became central to how young Africans exercise voice and access services, delegates proposed a new standalone digital rights reform cluster:
• Require Member States to build digital civic participation infrastructure (e-registration, digital consultation platforms, open compliance dashboards) with connectivity benchmarks ensuring rural and low-income youth are not excluded
• Extend Article 4/5 protections explicitly to digital expression and association, including a Charter commitment against politically motivated internet shutdowns
• Add a data protection standard requiring Member States to legislate youth-specific data rights (consent, data minimisation, right to redress), enforced through Youth Ombudspersons and a Youth Rights Committee
• Require an algorithmic accountability clause wherever AI systems allocate youth-facing public services, with a right to human review
• Fold digital and AI literacy into capacity-building funding as a precondition for meaningful participation

Article-Specific Key Reforms

• Article 9 (Property): Add youth-specific intellectual property protections, covering digital content, innovations, traditional knowledge, and benefit-sharing frameworks aligned with the AfCFTA
• Article 13 (Education): Integrate digital literacy, critical AI literacy, cybersecurity, and green-economy skills; mandate curriculum co-creation with youth, industry, and government every five years

● Article 14 (Poverty Eradication): Facilitate access to affordable, non-predatory credit; extend portable social protection to gig, informal, and platform workers
● Article 15 (Employment): Regulate platform-based and gig work; protect young workers from algorithmic management and unfair deactivation; extend portable labour protections to non-standard employment
● Article 19 (Environment): Mandate meaningful youth representation in climate decision-making; establish youth climate finance mechanisms; integrate climate displacement, loss and damage, and just transition frameworks
● Article 21 (Diaspora): Establish digital platforms for remote diaspora contribution; create transparent qualification recognition mechanisms; develop youth-accessible diaspora investment instruments

F. OUTCOME DOCUMENT — KEY ELEMENTS

The consultation produced a comprehensive Outcome Document to serve as the strategic blueprint for the 5th Continental Dialogue in Bujumbura. It was structured around five strategic pillars and a proposed roadmap for action from August 2026 to December 2027.

Five Strategic Pillars

1. Reforming and Revitalizing the African Youth Charter: Integrate digital rights, AfCFTA economic integration, shrinking civic space, media and information manipulation, and the climate-peace-security nexus into the Charter review. Align the modernized Charter with the Continental Framework on YPS.

2. Operationalizing the YPS-WPS Nexus: Dismantle structural barriers to women's and youth's participation in peace negotiations and governance. Position youth and women as strategic actors in water and natural resource governance, aligned with the AU Assembly theme of 2026.

3. Strengthening National Youth Policies and NAPs: Urgently develop National Youth Policies that integrate NAPs on YPS and WPS. Leverage existing resources, prioritize investments aligned with YPS and WPS strategies, and move toward community-verified impact assessments.

4. Securing and Modernizing the Civic Space: Safeguard youth and women's leadership. Harness deliberative technologies and AI tools — while ensuring offline inclusion — to democratise listening and translate lived experiences into policy reform. Institutionalize gender- and youth-friendly mental health and psychosocial support.

5. Grounding Impact in the Deconstruction of Overarching Barriers: Develop age- and gender-sensitive conflict analysis using the Nine Barriers (Political, Socio-Cultural, Economic, Digital, Physical, Legal, Gendered, Mental Health and Psychosocial, and Climate/Environmental) as a diagnostic starting point.

The Common Impact Framework — Five Vital Signs for Africa

● Increasing Positive Youth and Women's Agency: Tracking quality of opportunities for youth and women to lead peace, security, and development

● Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Responsiveness: Measuring structural changes within the AU, RECs, and Member States to accommodate youth and women
● Improving Intergenerational Trust and Reducing Polarization: Capturing cooperation and mutual dignity across generations and cultures
● Improving Safety and Reducing Violence: Tracking structural, physical, and digital drivers of violence threatening civic space
● Improving Resourcing for YPS: Quantifying accessible, sustained allocations and articulating the social and economic return on investment

Roadmap for Action (August 2026 – December 2027)
● 10–12 August 2026: Present the Addis Ababa Technical Outcome Document to the President of Burundi at the 5th Continental Dialogue
● September 2026: Advance the Common Impact Framework at UNGA 81 High-Level General Debate; align the Continental Stocktaking Report with the CFYPS Progress Assessment
● August/December 2027: Launch the first comprehensive report compiled using Common Impact Framework data ahead of the 6th Continental Dialogue

G. CROSS-CUTTING THEMES & STRATEGIC OBSERVATIONS

● From commitments to delivery: Africa is not lacking in frameworks or declarations the critical gap is implementation, financing, and institutional ownership
● A Common Impact Framework: Resonated strongly across all sessions as a paradigm shift from project-based output tracking to people-centred measurement of societal health
● Deliberative technology as a game-changer: Kenya's KCYPS experience demonstrated that AI-powered deliberative platforms can reach thousands of young people and directly shape government policy roadmaps
● Localisation is non-negotiable: Tools, frameworks, and resources must be adapted to local realities; the 'don't reinvent the wheel' principle illustrated by Cameroon offers a powerful model for YPS implementation without parallel structures
● The YPS-WPS nexus requires structural integration: Young women sit at the intersection of both agendas yet remain critically underserved treated as passive victims in WPS spaces and overshadowed in youth-centred spaces
● Coalition strengthening over coalition proliferation: Existing structures must be resourced, coordinated, and connected rather than duplicated
● The intergenerational dimension: YPS is not just a youth agenda it is a human agenda requiring co-leadership across generations, institutional trust-building, and a shift in how governments relate to young people

H. CONCLUSION

The Technical-Level Consultation in Addis Ababa was a landmark moment in Africa's journey toward institutionalizing the roles of youth and women in peace, security, and governance. In three intensive days, participants moved from diagnosis to prescription identifying not only where the frameworks fall short, but how they can be strengthened with precision, ambition, and accountability.

The consultation produced a clear mandate for the 5th Continental Dialogue in Bujumbura: transform the recommendations embedded in the Outcome Document into continental commitments, backed by the political authority of the Government of Burundi as AU Champion for YPS and holder of the AU Commission Chairmanship for 2026. Africa's youth population is growing, civic space is shrinking, and the window for institutionalizing youth and women's leadership in peace and security is narrowing.

The message from Addis Ababa is unambiguous: the next decade must be defined not by the number of frameworks drafted, but by the evidence of lives changed, institutions strengthened, and a continent where young people and women are not just at the table they are shaping the agenda.

Co-funded by the European Union

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union under the financing of a **EuropeAid/177759/DD/ACT/Multi** Grant. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab - Power of the Collective** consortium and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

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