

AFRICA 2015

Republic of Senegal



United Nations

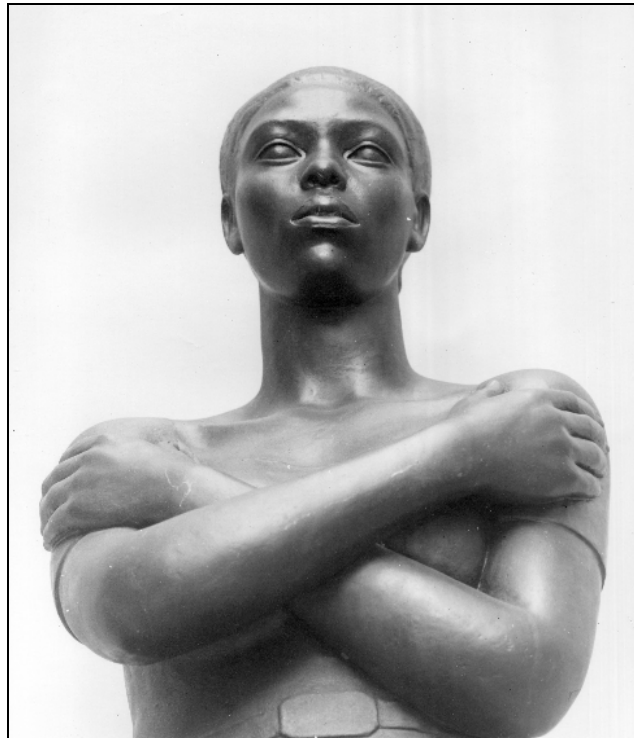


THE GLOBAL
PEACE INITIATIVE
OF WOMEN



United Nations
Development Programme

Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit ■ 27–30 June 2004 ■ Dakar, Senegal



Sculpture by Maurice Glickman

Photo by David Finn

Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit

*Providing a Global Platform for Africa's
Next Generation of Leaders in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015

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*"No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy.
Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime.
Young people must be included from birth.
A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifetime."*
Kofi Annan, Secretary-General, United Nations



Countries in Africa are currently working to fulfill the promises made at the United Nations Millennium Summit held in September 2000, where 190 governments made commitments to reduce poverty by half, ensure universal quality education, empower women, reduce mortality rates in mothers and their children, halt the spread of HIV/AIDS and achieve environmental sustainability by 2015.

The Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit is designed to help the next generation of Africa's leaders face their tremendous challenges. The Summit is being organized through an innovative collaboration between the United Nations Development Programme and a non-governmental organization, The Global Peace Initiative of Women, with support from the private sector. The goal is to help young leaders develop programs that address these issues and to provide a global platform for the voices of talented young African professionals.



AFRICA 2015

The Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit

June 27-30, 2004, Dakar, Senegal

Overview

World attention over the last few years has focused extensively on the growing global threat of terrorism. Too little attention and too few resources are being directed toward the social issues that are providing fertile ground for this instability, or toward training youth, the next generation of leaders, to deal with the emerging crises caused by the AIDS epidemic, the increasing poverty –and the growing depletion of the earth’s natural resources.

Governments alone cannot solve the problems confronting us. It will demand the commitment, resources, and best thinking of all sectors of society, including youth.

The Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit, a collaborative program between the Global Peace Initiative of Women (GPIW) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), seeks to identify, mobilize and support the next generation of African leaders, as well as harness the energy, talents and experience of these leaders. It builds on the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations system, hosted by the government of Senegal in cooperation with the United Nations, from 6 to 10 August, 2001, in Dakar.

The Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit is part of the *Africa 2015* initiative of the United Nations Development Programme, which was launched in 2003 to boost ongoing efforts and trigger new ones to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) all over Africa, using HIV/AIDS as an entry point. Initial components of *Africa 2015* brought together cultural and sports leaders throughout the continent to partner with the United Nations in endorsing these goals. In January 2004, top African soccer teams took to the field at the 24th African Cup of Nations in Tunisia, and in doing so brought the message of the Millennium Goals and stopping HIV/AIDS to tens of millions of spectators via television.

Soccer superstars Ronaldo and Zidane have enlisted in the initiative to protect as many from the epidemic as possible.

By targeting HIV/AIDS, the initiative also aims to help achieve the other goals — eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development.

1. Implementing the Summit

Working with experts from the United Nations and other international agencies, as well as with private sector leaders, the Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit will seek to establish model projects in these thematic areas in each region in Africa. The Summit will establish a permanent network of young African leaders who can work across the continent to monitor the progress of their projects and who can achieve a voice globally on key issues pertaining to Africa.

Youth leaders from throughout Africa and the Diaspora will launch the Summit in Dakar, Senegal, June 27-30, 2004, and establish a permanent body with a board to guide future activities. The board will work closely with UNDP and the GPIW, the two main organizing bodies of the Summit. UNDP is the UN's global development network, which is marshalling its communications resources throughout sub-Saharan African countries under the label *Africa 2015* to complement and advance the efforts of all UN agencies, civil society groups and government agencies already working to achieve the MDGs on the continent. The GPIW is a non-governmental organization that mobilizes the resources of women to expand opportunities for women in developing nations and in regions of conflict and post-conflict.

The goal of the Youth Leadership Summit is to provide opportunities for leadership, to identify and tap leadership potential, to educate youth on the critical issues and to enable them to develop their own plan of action for the decade ahead. The youth leaders will present their own vision of development goals for their region and a youth plan of action to the African Union when it meets July 9-11, 2004.

The youth will also receive training in communications and develop mechanisms for reaching larger networks of young people in their countries. Over the course of time, the Summit will seek to project a new image of Africa, with a focus on the positive initiatives emerging from this next generation of leaders.

2. Poverty Reduction

The United Nations has set the goal of reducing extreme poverty by half by the year 2015. Current predictions indicate that Africa will not reach this target until the year 2040, unless radical steps are taken. The Youth Leadership Summit will seek ways to increase the development of small businesses in rural as well as urban areas: in agriculture and crafts as well as in technology and finance. It will explore current business opportunities as well as future areas of growth.

The Global Peace Initiative of Women's Business Council already has a successful project working with widows of the genocide in Rwanda. It has provided access to international markets for products produced by these women, generating approximately \$60,000 for the widows in the first nine months of the partnership. Similarly, the Business Council will provide business training to the youth involved with the economic sector and help in the establishment of one or two initial business projects, focusing on building business partnerships with the international community.

3. Fostering Sustainability and Preserving Africa's Botanical Resources

One of the functions of the Youth Leadership Summit is education on critical global issues. Mindful of the recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, experts will review with youth leaders the most pressing environmental problems facing the African continent at the launch of the Summit. Youth leaders will then develop a statement concerning the use of Africa's natural resources and protection of the environment.

Africa's unspoiled natural habitats are a critical resource for the future, and the Summit will work to develop a strong commitment from the next generation to preserve these habitats.

One of the key objectives of the Summit is to develop an environmental platform that will include:

- Ways to increase the availability of safe drinking water;
- The development of chemical-free agriculture;
- The preservation of Africa's botanical resources, especially those with medicinal uses, and the development of a Seed Security Network of traditional heirloom seeds;
- A program of reforestation and sustainable forestry; and
- The fostering of affordable, nonpolluting sources of energy.

Youth leaders will also propose a few model projects to utilize the natural resources of Africa in a sustainable way.

Many parts of Africa are replete with botanical sources for natural medicines and healthcare products. There is growing recognition of the potential health benefits of these products, and increasing international demand. A recent *New York Times* article stated that the demand for natural medicinal herbs has increased by 10% annually over the last decade and predicted a serious shortage of the natural plants and medicines if action is not taken to preserve these botanical assets. While demand is growing, there is no concerted effort in Africa to continue the sustainable cultivation, replenishment and conservation of these plants. A goal of the environmental sector of the Pan-African Youth Summit is to focus on major conservation priorities including the preservation of this important resource.

One project of the Summit could be to develop a database of the natural botanical products of Africa and their health benefits. Another project could focus on marketing these botanical health and beauty products internationally, while preserving their natural habitats and bringing recognition and benefit back to Africa. Too often, multinational companies use these products with little return to the local community. The Summit will work to see that Africans maintain ownership and direction over these natural resources.

An African seed bank and exchange will be developed to give African farmers and cultivators easier access to pure African heirloom seeds for rare flowers, teas, medicinal

plants, native grasses, as well as endangered species, thus aiding in the conservation of the botanical diversity of the African continent and ensuring the survival and proliferation of endemic flora.

4. Promoting Democracy and Good Governance

UNDP has been providing technical and financial support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the all-African plan designed to raise living standards in the region through improved local governance, better global trading and financing terms and intensified attention to priorities such as education and health care. NEPAD will undertake a number of priority actions, putting into operation the African Peer Review mechanism, a provision that enables African countries to evaluate each other's democratic performance and that has received enormous attention from the international community.

The United Nations released a report on the state of democracy in Latin America in the Spring, 2004. This report will serve as a springboard to stimulate a series of national conversations on the issue of democracy and governance in Africa, initiated by youth leaders. Working sessions at the launch of the Youth Leadership Summit in Dakar will provide training opportunities to develop such dialogues for universities and community centers throughout Africa. The goal is to foster awareness of democratic values and the role of civil society in strengthening democracy. The Summit will also explore traditional African models of democracy that can be applied to the modern state.

The Summit will put together recommendations for how youth leaders can contribute to greater stability and the strengthening of civil society.

5. Working Toward Gender Equity

Cultural practices around the world make gender equity a challenging task, but already in the last decade much progress has been achieved. Early marriages and economic dependence continue to be the major obstacles for young women. A key factor in changing these denominators is education. The Youth Leadership Summit will explore how to work within the existing cultural framework to provide greater opportunities for women through:

- State mandated primary education and the opportunity for secondary education;
- Career counseling and professional training;
- Local support networks;
- Enhanced awareness of all forms of violence against women and of cultural practices that inhibit the wellbeing of women.

More importantly, the Summit will work in collaboration with UNDP's regional gender programme to map out a new comprehensive strategy to advance gender issues and women's empowerment in Africa.

6. Taking Steps for an AIDS-Free Generation

There are a plethora of initiatives underway to help stem the AIDS crisis in Africa, and yet it is not enough. The Youth Leadership Summit will focus on fostering a commitment among youth throughout Africa to take the necessary steps so that the generation to follow will be AIDS-free. It will seek to supplement the work already being done by promoting AIDS awareness messages through cultural and media outlets in every country. One goal will be to remove the stigma attached to AIDS so that many more people can receive testing and treatment.

The Youth Summit will also discuss how to engage young people in caring for AIDS orphans. Currently, there are 10 million AIDS orphans in Africa. The number is expected to rise to 20 million within a few years. This could have enormous social consequences for the continent and will be felt around the world. Youth leaders in Africa can be encouraged to demonstrate their concern by supporting a campaign to care for these orphans, showing how young professionals can develop a caring relationship with an AIDS orphan, providing him or her with the friendship and care of a family member. This can be extended by initiating an international movement of young people to generate awareness and concern for orphans on a global scale. A variety of programs could be developed and initiated by international youth through schools and organizations that would provide emotional and material support for those orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

7. Tapping the Spiritual Resources of Africa

Many of those who know Africa perceive that it has a unique contribution to make to the world community at this moment in time. Its history, its vibrant cultural traditions, its environmental wealth and a pervasive spirituality provide the African people with a special vantage point that has not been well articulated or recognized. The continent has not yet come into its own. It will be this next generation who can present a new vision of Africa to the world. Struggling with an almost overwhelming AIDS crisis, amid poverty and potential social unrest, how will this next generation lead the way? How can they help Africa achieve its potential so the continent can assume its rightful role in the global arena?

Religious leaders from throughout Africa will provide guidance and support to the Pan-African Youth Leadership Summit to foster greater appreciation for Africa's diversity, and the understanding that a coming together of the many religious traditions in a new collaboration can provide the vision and wisdom needed to find the way forward.

The Youth Leadership Summit will aim to create a sense of unity for the African people from the ground up, supporting efforts of the African Union to provide a strong and unified global presence and voice.

8. Communicating the Successes of *Africa 2015*

The international public relations firm, Ruder Finn, as one of the sponsors of the Summit, will offer its services *pro bono* to help create global visibility for the work of the Summit. It will do so as part of the campaign to create a more positive image of Africa globally. To increase investment in Africa, the positive initiatives of young leaders must be conveyed in a compelling fashion. Images of war, famine and disease must be replaced with images of stability, innovation and strategies for preserving and growing the unique assets of the continent.

The vision and commitment of these young leaders, coupled with their skills and creative resources, will be an important factor as the continent works to meet the goals of *Africa 2015*.

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