

Re-imagining the SDGs

Online Creative Writing Workshop for young writers participating in the Championing the Decade of Action Initiative

Parallel Session ARFSD 4-5 March

Introduction: The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is contributing to the awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among the youth through the *Championing the Decade of Action initiative* in which 15 to 35 year old African youth creatives and writers have responded to a Call for Short Stories, reflecting the goals across genres that include Afrofuturism, science fiction, action adventure, speculative fiction, suspense, mystery/crime, comic/graphic novel and literary fiction.

Objective: The ultimate objective of this initiative is to increase understanding of SDGs among African youth and provide an opportunity for young writers to publish their stories and be mentored. The initiative, therefore, promotes content-driven creativity, grounded on the SDGs and the efforts needed to accelerate action in this decade.

To support the young writers, an Online Creative Writing Workshop will be held over a period of two days. The goal of the workshop will be to increase SDG understanding and sharpen the craft of creative writing among participants. They will acquire skills in the building blocks of prose writing to produce or sharpen their own original stories. Guided by African creative writers and resource persons, participants will explore how to blend the SDGs with the fundamentals of plotting, controlling point of view, creating characters, managing voice and key aspects of concrete active literary style.

Rationale: While the SDGs are familiar in the development terrain, a large segment of Africa's youth have not fully internalized them. The Workshop is an opportunity to explore how issues of poverty eradication, climate change, migration, technology, human rights and gender equality can be woven into compelling short (fiction) stories.

They will also learn the importance of context and back stories in pushing a story forward, as well as how to write dialogues for each character and propel the plot, articulate fears, voicing of

aspirations and inspire action. Features such as uniqueness of diction, syntax, and body language will be explored. Of equal importance during the Workshop will be exposure to how to begin a short story and allow it to unfold naturally by introducing conflicts and raising the narrative quest. Due to increased demand, it is expected that the second phase of this initiative will be extended to Francophone, Lusophones and the Arab-speaking world in Africa.

Creative Writing Workshop: Participation at the moderated Creative Writing Workshop is open to all that have responded to the Call for Submission. Each Session will last three (3) hours. At the end of the Workshop, participants will have identified a theme of interest and understood how to recraft their stories. They will be encouraged to write an abstract to their short story and a plan of work developed towards completion.