AFRICAN YOUTH
AND THE POST-2015 AGENDA

Activity Report on AYTF Mission to African Permanent Missions in New York

October 2014
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Acknowledgements and Partners

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The African Youth Taskforce in Brief

African youths need to participate more in global processes if they wish to influence the outcomes of tomorrow. The global processes will affect their futures, and youths need to connect with and speak with those that represent them if their voices will be carried into these important decision-making spaces.

Finances and geographical distance should not be barriers to their voices being heard. Their representatives in New York are mandated to meet with and share, represent and feedback to their constituency, and African youths need to move into these spaces and share their experiences with their representatives. In order to do so AAI has initiated an African Youth Taskforce on Post 2015 to New York.

The Youth Task Force of twelve respected, experienced and dynamic young African leaders travelled to NYC in October 2014 to learn from their Permanent Representatives there, to share their own experiences and to open a space for greater African inclusion in global processes.

“In today's much flatter world, it is everyday people – and, critically, their personal networks – who have the potential to be the world's big new problem solvers. My experience with the Permanent Missions in New York reaffirmed this as I was pleasantly surprised by the warm reception and very frank discussions we had on the continent’s position on socio-economic as well as political issues at the international level. This experience has empowered me to take on the leadership role of advocating authoritatively on youth issues bedevilling the continent. The consistent message we got from the Permanent Representatives was resounding; it is imperative that the continent supports and nurtures young talent in this field, in order to establish a future of global leaders who will secure positive gains for the continent as influential players in the international arena. I would like to thank all the sponsors that made this possible and AAI for setting up the initiative.” Felogene

The Post-2015 Process

The Post-2015 Development Agenda is defined through an intergovernmental process during the 69th session of the UN General Assembly (16 September 2014 – September 2015). This process will involve all governments represented at the UN General Assembly, and will conclude with a Post-2015 Summit, which is currently scheduled to take place in September 2015. The intergovernmental process, which will take the form of negotiations, will be based on a series of inputs from the following on-going key international processes, inter alia the Open Working Group (OWG) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In addition to the OWG outcome document, input will also come from other global reports such as such as the High Level Panel (HLP) report, the Global Compact, 1 Million Voices report (UN development group report) the sustainable development solutions network; The Colombo Declaration of the World Conference on Youth (10 May 2014); The Global Youth Call presented at the ECOSOC Youth Forum (3 June 2014); The Ministerial Declaration of the 2014 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development (9 July 2014); The outcome of the Third International Conference on Small Island Development States (September 2014). And also those that we are still waiting for: The report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Financing Sustainable Development (expected August 2014); The President’s Summary from his High-
Level Stocktaking Event (11-12 September 2014, New York), preceded by a civil society consultation on 26 August.

Furthermore, it is also hoped that African regional level commitments will also provide input into the Post 2015 development agenda. These commitments include but are not limited to: the African Youth Charter (2 July 2006); Maputo Plan of Action, a continental framework on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) (2006); Addis Ababa Declaration on ICPD Beyond 2014 (31 October 2013); African Common Position on the Post 2015 Development Agenda (5 June 2014) and Agenda 2063 (30 May 2013).

Given the above and the forthcoming inter-governmental negotiations, an African Youth Task Force representing civil society has been created to advocate for key issues that relate to youth empowerment during this process. This group will be tasked with the role of advocating for youth empowerment needs in the new Post-2015 development framework with a focus on; health, education, employment, inclusive participation, security and good governance.

The following are proposed goals and targets of interest to the African Youth Task Force:

- Proposed goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Proposed goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
- Proposed goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Proposed goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Proposed goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Proposed goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Objectives of the Youth Task Force to NYC

Long Term Objective
The long term objective of this project is to promote youth empowerment in Africa through influencing the new global development framework.

Mid Term Objective
The mid-term objective of this project is to increase African civil society youths input and influence in the global processes i.e. the SDGs.

Short Term Objectives
The short-term objectives of this project are to mend the disconnection between the African continent and the negotiators in NYC, by:

- Identify key African negotiators in the permanent missions, based on position in the OWG, stances at home and in NYC on youth empowerment issues such as health, education, employment and inclusive participation, security and good governance.
- Sensitise, build alliances with and advocate that these PMs improve the representation and demands of African youth in the global processes.
- Discover and discuss the stances of the countries based on existing regional commitments such as Maputo Plan of Action, African Youth Charter, African Common Position and the Agenda 2063.
- Offer the Youth Task Force and backing organisations as resources for the PMs in doing their work.
• Provide a platform for youth representing African civil society to advocate with the African OWG members and other African negotiators on the Post-2015 agenda.
• Propose and inform African strategy for engagement beyond September 2014.
• Identify and repair barriers to consistency between capital and PMs, and work to ensure all relevant individuals, both home and abroad, government and civil society are more accountable.
• Demonstrate with empirical evidence the (unmet) need for youth’s universal access to health, education, employment, inclusive participation, security and good governance as a means to provide PMs with resources for their advocacy of greater youth inclusion.

Summary of AYTF Meetings

The following meetings were held by the African Youth Task Force:

• 2 day strategy meeting at IWHC offices
• 9 meetings with African Permanent Missions
• 3 meetings with key UN agencies and Partners (UN Statistical Division, UN Youth Delegates and Ford Foundation)
• 1 Evening Cocktail (AIDS Accountability International’s A dialogue on Accountability)

The AYFT managed to have 9 meetings with Permanent Missions namely Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia. Of the 9 meetings the AYTF was able to meet the 8 Permanent Representatives with the exception of South Africa.

“A couple of days before my departure for NY, I had this weird thought; a very discouraging and mixed feeling on whether the PRs would want to meet us. Behold, I was astonished when I finally met with some of them: their warm reception and encouraging words were very touching. I was also moved when they promised to share expertise as well as engage with our works throughout and even after the Post2015 review. This was somewhat an ‘aha’ moment for me, witnessing how a 30minutes conversation can bring lasting and meaningful change to so many people.” Zoneziwoh

“I was amazed by the openness of the ambassadors we met. Different discussions, these figures have shown -share available to exchange and learn from us. It was a positive achievement that young people from the continent come together and discuss issues of youth and future outside of official meetings. This allowed us to break the myth distorted that seem to exist sometimes between permanent representations and Capitals.” Loukman
1st AYTF Strategy Meeting

24th August at Mpumalanga Faircity Hotel in Johannesburg

This was a one day meeting that was attended by the African Youth Taskforce members, and Phillipa Tucker (Executive Director of AAI) and Jonathan Gunthorp (Executive Director of Southern Africa AIDS Trust (SAT)). This strategy meeting covered several topics which included updates on the Post 2015/SDGs and other relevant global processes. See Appendix A for the detailed programme of the first strategy meeting. This meeting was vital in ensuring that AYTF understood the political landscape of New York.

Just some of the topics discussed and debated included the following:

1. It is necessary to walk the line between respect, diplomacy and formality and activism, hard line talk. The sandwich effect does not work
2. Using a Q and A session will be most effective, send the questions beforehand. And allow them to prep. That way better quality discussion and force their engagement with the issue, intelligent confident feedback.
3. Offer yourselves as a resource, not confrontational space, they will come back to YTF later for information and bring you into their spaces – long term vision.
4. Get a photo of the PR with the visitors, this can be used later to remind them of the meeting.
5. G77- Kenya/South Africa: we should think about that space.
6. Bridging statements from what they answer to what you then answer and across all issues.
7. Meet with capital if possible PM will ask if we have taken those messages to the capital? This then also shows that you will take info of NYC meeting back to capital creating circle of accountability and report back mechanism. At this point we can also play into local media to highlight info and increase feedback and accountability mechanism.
8. Give them a list of docs we use as reference.
9. Do your key messages speak to the content or process?
10. Feedback from this meeting to your constituency and network and feedback post NYC for your constituency and network (as accountability resource and to AUC)
Prior to commencing the meetings with the Permanent Missions in New York, the AYTF attended a second strategy meeting held on 4th and 5th October 2014 at the International Women’s Health Coalition offices in New York. In addition to the AYTF members, this meeting was attended by the Secretariat of the High level Task Force on ICPD, various staff from the IWHC and Felix Dodds, a renowned lobbyist and advocate at the global level.

Bob Munyati began the Strategy Meeting with a brief capacity building session on Accountability Literacy which explains what accountability is, how civil society can improve accountability and what mechanism can be used to do this.

Following him was Henry E. Chang, Special Advisor at AAI, who presented on Strategic and global perspectives on negotiating for implementation at country level. This presentation spoke to Henry’s own experience as an activist in various regions of the globe.

Felix Dodds then held a highly useful session on Diplomacy with the UN and government bodies in the New York landscape.

International Women’s’ Health Coalition then shared their formidable experience in a session titled: IWHC Experience at the UN – Building young leaders and bridges to influence and secure governmental commitments to SRHR.

The AYTF then led a session where key messages were finalised for each of the Permanent Missions, as part of their preparatory work.

On the second day, the AYTF were lucky enough to have Catarina Carvalho of the ICPD High Level Task Force work with them on Advocacy Strategies – how, what and when to approach MS.

AAI’s Munyati then updated the group on what else African civil society is doing on Post 2015, through other platforms in which AAI is engaged back home. Felix and Henry then ended the day with role playing and logistical roadmap issues.

The programme comprehensively prepared the AYTF for the task ahead, and built their capacity considerably. This meeting was vital in providing a final preparation of AYTF members before meeting Permanent Representatives.

AAI thanks Ford Foundation for funding Felix Dodds time, IWHC for hosting and collaborating on the meeting and Catarina Carvalho for her time and input.
**SDGs Process**

The ambassador began by providing some information on the SDG process and what had been done. He mentioned that there was need to focus on featuring youths much more strongly in the SDGs. H.E. the permanent representative suggested that the AYTF should engage with the Economic and Financing committee reports. Released by the 2nd Committee.

**Demographic Dividends**

The ambassador mentioned that all discussions on the demographic dividend should feature means of investment, strategic opportunity presented to government. These discussions should further highlight the profitability and the danger complexities of the extremists such as Boko Haram on the African continent. Health should also be made a priority during discussions of the demographic dividend. The ambassador further highlighted that investing in education should be seen as an opportunity to give back to the citizenry and a core mandate that should not be compromised. This he said would result in ownership of our economic strategy formulation and implementation. He highlight the need for accountability by mentioning that there was a need to change culture of doing things and not shying from responsibilities and commitments we have made.

**Youth**

The ambassador asked for youths to find a niche within the post 2015 process, work on strategic points of engagement, initiate efforts (however small) to ensure that the evidence based and desired results are showcased and synergized within the policy formulation process. He encouraged the AYTF and youths alike to be vocal on youth issues when it comes to the SDGs, using mechanisms such as the UNSG, however engagement means improved performance and not going backwards given that SDGs document will not be reopened

**Conclusion**

He concluded by highlighting the need for waiting for the UN General Secretary’s Synthesis report which would be the basis for debate and negotiations. He called for the AYTF can be participate in these negotiations by sharing with delegations issue regular papers on youth issue with clear benchmarks. In addition, called that the AYTF should be able to identify allies to carry on youth issues in spaces where youth cannot gain access.
The AYTF met with Amb. Ntwaagae to discuss various aspects of Botswana’s role in Post 2015, not least of which is their role as Co-Chair of the African Group. In this regard the Amb. mentioned that there were problems and a disconnection in Post 2015 from the Rio process. The discussion moved to the change from MDGs to SDGs and how that affected Botswana’s priorities for their development agenda. He applauded the fact that there were lots of opportunities for young people in the SDGs process.

**Africa’s Ambition**

Amb Ntwaagae then highlighted that Africa’s ambition is the Common African Position and Agenda 2063 and that this features in how Africans are engaging in the SDGs discussions and the forthcoming inter-governmental negotiations. The Amb then referred to the implementation of the Maputo Plan of Action in Botswana and said how it had been initiated in Gaborone, and that for Botswana HIV was a priority and that government was fulfilling their commitments towards HIV needs.

**Importance of Youth**

The Amb then reiterated how the role of youth was important in the Post 2015 process, especially as we craft the commitment, and that youth could help carry out the commitments. The discussion then continued to the role of the AYTF and how they could play their part in ensuring the governments deliver on harnessing the demographic dividend, especially given that Africa’s population is largely composed of youths. The AYTF introduced the work they have been doing with other PMs, and highlighted how PMs can support the AYTF work, and mentioned commonalities between the Mozambican PM and AYTF. These included: Commitments made in the MDGs were not achieved, and the challenges this posed. And how youth were featured in the past and that they were impacted by these commitments.

**Failure of MDGs**

The meeting then discussed how the MDGs 4, 5 and 6 were not given the attention they deserved, the health component. The meeting also agreed that poverty eradication should continue to feature as an issue in Post 2015. The meeting then also discussed why the MDGs were not achieved and the Amb stated that insufficient political commitment may have been a reason, as well as the unforeseen circumstances due to the global economic crisis of 2008 and the impact on African countries economically. Natural disasters, linked to climate change, set back the MDG programme implementation and then political disasters such as lack of peace and security also played a role in hindering implementation. The Amb also mentioned that a disproportionate amount was spent on public expenditure instead of social infrastructure. And that partners did not deliver due to lower GDP results than expected impacting input from Overseas Development Agencies (ODAs).

**Vulnerable Populations**

The conversation then turned to the more “thorny” population groups such as sex workers and LGBT, which were identified as a serious challenge in Botswana as they are frowned upon culturally and not legalised, but rather in the penal code.

**Conclusions**
The Amb highlighted that the inter-governmental negotiations are the best platform to raise the issues of young people, and the most opportune time, and that there is not future for the people without the involvement of the youth. The Amb mentioned his high regard for civil society and recognition of the need for partnership, especially as actors in the health component of the new Post 2015. The Amb also spoke about the need for quality education that promotes critical thinking in order to harvest the demographic dividend, and that civil society must start with their own internal accountability too.

“I have come to realize that young people should not trivialize their own experiences and work as legitimate knowledge and experience to ensure discussions on issues affecting young people are backed up with personal stories and that the much needed evidence is adequately created. Being a part of a team that had members with various unique experiences and expertise, the complementary efforts made the entire week a success and one that all members could be proud of.” Catherine
The members of the AYTF were able to meet the deputy permanent representative for Burundi where he was able to discuss Burundi’s position on sexual and reproductive health rights. The deputy permanent representative also mentioned that his country ensured that youths were involved during implementation of MDGs.

Youth Participation

The ambassador mentioned his country’s commitment to ensure that youths attend several forums and conferences as a means to increase youth participation in regional and global process. However, he cautioned that having youths attend these events is not enough but important for youth involvement and inclusion in decision making. The ambassador welcomed the services of the AYTF in sharing their experiences and experts in youth development and participation. The ambassador mentioned that initiatives such the AYTF were a great way to ensure that youth issues would be brought to the attention of policy makers. He advised the AYTF to take a leading role in inspiring and motivating young people to fight for political seats in order for youth issues to be heard. He mentioned that there was need for youths to be organized in presenting the common needs and prove to governments that young people can deliver if placed in positions of power.

Common African Position (CAP)

The ambassador felt that the CAP had several gaps on youth related issues such as employment and education. He emphasized the need for implementation beyond the usual policy formulation especially at country level.

Conclusion

The ambassador concluded by thanking the AYTF for this initiative and highlighting the human resources gaps that exist in missions to ensure that youth issues are highlighted during negotiations and policy formulation. He further highlighted the need for youths to be united in seeking their agenda.
The meeting at the Kenyan Mission was majorly focussed on the formulation process of the SDGs noting that Kenya was a Co-Chair in the recently concluded Open Working Group.

**Discussion**

The team noted that the discussion on how the MDGs was nothing new but simply a written down version of the realities of many countries. This is had been done through the compilation of existing documents that had wanted to address various development issues. Countries were thereafter left with the responsibilities of implementing the proposed goals and ensure that they kept to them as per the agreement. In the review process of the MDGs in 2010 there was a realization that some of the MDGs would not be realized and hence the discussions began on how to take those goals “beyond 2015” and this is how the process to create a beyond 2015 agenda began. In the 2010 meeting there was also a realization that there was a need to alter and change some of the MDGs so as to take into account the dynamic and ever changing world stage. Furthermore, at the Rio meeting there were several consensus reached which accurately represented various constituents as it was one of the most well attended and biggest conferences in the world with various stakeholders and key players present to present their points of view. This gave birth to recommendations made for the formation of the Open Working Group.

**An Improved Agenda**

During the Post 2015 discussions, there was a realization that financing to carry out the development goals was needed and hence the formation of the financial committee to oversee the financing and ensure that provisions are made within national and global budgets. Additionally, there is increasing awareness that there needs to be a technology facilitation mechanism to enable developing countries to utilize the technological abilities and advances of the developed countries through a sharing of information and tools. Some of the challenges that arose during the Open Working Group process were around trying to balance the various interests of the different constituencies and countries. Various difficulties arose from trying to balance the technicalities of the framework and political agendas.

**Conclusion**

The Kenya Mission team felt that within the proposed framework, there is a great appreciation of young people. The reference to young people is not as a stand-alone goal but rather as an interest and sub category of the various other proposed goals. The team proceeded to share with the Africa Youth Taskforce (AYTF) an analysis of the document from the youth perspective. They, however noted that while there is recognition of young people in the document a lot more needs to be done and they welcomed suggestions from the AYTF team. In closing, they urged that youth within themselves need to engage and be informed on the processes and also what is happening at grass root and at capital so as to be able to inform and engage with PMs.
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Liberia

Ambassador Marjon V. Kamara

SDGs process: transparent, engaging and open

Amb. Kamara provided several updates on the SDGs process and how it has been done so far. She mentioned that several sessions were conducted to allow for everybody’s views to be aired. Amb. Kamara mentioned that she was pleased with the outcomes and goals that captured the various positions and needs of the different countries. She further informed the AYTF about the presence of the SDGs expects and the financing committee. Amb. Kamara mentioned that prior to the intergovernmental negotiations, the PMs and the various key players are awaiting the Secretary General’s Synthesis Report on Post 2015. Past few months have been about setting the stage for the negotiations and finalizing of the proposed SDGs document. Within the process of setting the next goals there has been a general consensus and realization that the MDGs were set mainly by the developing countries and in so doing did not take into consideration the views and needs of the less developed countries. Therefore, the next set of goals will be more universal and inclusive. The next goals will also seek to engage with various stakeholders from civil society, private sector, government, youth etc. In the drafting of the new goals, there is a realization that the job is big and thus the main concern is to ensure that the essentials are provided for.

Youth and Peace and Security.

There have been many discussions on the inclusion of young people within the process to ensure that there is a fair representation. Furthermore a connection needs to be made with various agencies to ensure youth inclusion and participation i.e.AU, SADC etc. She further highlighted that the Permanent Representative of Benin was a great advocate for youth issues in the Post 2015 development agenda. The representative mentioned that also even more so within African countries issues such as peace and SRH are polarizing and are often left to capitals to decide on how to proceed

Common African Position (CAP)

Amb. Kamara mentioned that the CAP had been reflected into the global position by the various African missions. However it was seen that some African positions/wants were not seen as beneficial to others more developed countries. Nonetheless, Amb. Kamara emphasized that even though some goals will not remain in the Post 2015 goals, they will remain in the African agenda.

Conclusion

The representative suggested that the AYTF should in future set up a meeting with the Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth and have African youth issues and priorities presented. She further stressed the need to advocacy for inclusion of contentious issues such as gender and SRHR in a subtle manner that speaks to the economic growth of the various African countries. There is need to realize that some African countries do not want to acknowledge certain groups and would rather “sweep them under the rug” and this has been an ongoing issue. Therefore, as youths there the need to realize that the passing of a resolution is not the end but the beginning because as policy has to be also domesticated at country level. This is was to highlight the importance of keeping abreast of national and global discussions around development goals and agendas.
Amb. Antonio Gumede emphasized the need to continue momentum built from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through to the proposed Sustainable Development Goals. One of the goals that remains at the top of discussions is eradication of poverty and more so in developing countries. He further acknowledged that not all countries have been able to achieve the MDGs but partaking and trying to achieve some of them was a good start especially considering why they were formulated. Furthermore, he said that the MDGs were created as an ideal for which countries should continue to strive towards.

**On Post 2015 Development Agenda**

His Excellency reiterated the importance of ensuring that commitments that were made are not lost in the new goals. The shared responsibility between governments, civil society and the private sector needs to be considered and utilised effectively. Going forward, the new goals place a huge emphasis on partnership and the inclusion of various stakeholders to ensure that financing the proposed goals and implementing them is made possible through shared responsibility.

**Challenges**

Some of the challenges he mentioned in moving forward include bringing poverty to the fore especially as some countries are not interested in including it. Secondly, another challenge is maintaining the momentum built in the discussion on the importance of education especially as he felt this will lead to an empowered society.

**Climate Change**

Discussion’s on climate change at the centre of current discussions especially with regard to developing countries. While much emphasis is being laid on how development in and of itself impacts the environment and climate, he felt that this should not hinder the growth and development of developing countries.

**On Africa’s Priorities**

Amb. Gumede felt that the issue of peaceful societies is of particular importance in sustaining peace in all countries, especially African countries. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of keeping the African narrative and ensuring that the Common African Position (CAP) is not just the position of African governments but also reflects the voices and realities of all Africans.

**Youth**

Acknowledging that we are currently operating in the “century of the youth”, His Excellency highlighted the change in the dynamics of knowledge and information sharing and that young people are moving away from asking “what” to asking “why”. He largely attributed this to “Dr Google” (Google search engine) which is able to provide more answers than parents/elders. He placed emphasis, that no future framework or agenda can be developed without young people.

**Question and Answer**
• Is Africa funding its own health initiatives and what are the dynamics around financing the Post 2015 Development Agenda?

It is important to note that the financing question is not based purely on the actual giving/receiving dynamic but also on the philosophy of the process. He noted that there was a time when resource mobilization for health issues such as HIV was easier than it is today. According to him, this is because previously the discussion around HIV was based around information sharing around prevention to treatment, and what treatment includes or should include given the vast new knowledge on HIV. He further acknowledged the need for Africans to move towards adopting a more domestic approach when it comes to resource mobilization so as to diversify the sources of funding. He also mentioned Private-Public-Partnerships, where the private sector is coming in with different models of resourcing that help to develop a “health bond”. Some of the current key private sector players include Nandos, Alma and various airlines through airport taxes. There is need for more creative thinking around programs and funding. Finally, he emphasized the importance of educating women and girls so as to allow them to make more informed decisions with regards to health-seeking behaviour.

Conclusion

In his concluding remarks, he reiterated the need for continued emphasis on the strength of Africa as the only continent with a perceived common position and the need to leverage that. However, there is a realization that whilst there is general consensus on some issues, there is still need for consensus building on others.

“The fact that all PRs emphasized on the need and acknowledged that youth role is extremely important in the setting up the next 15 years development plan, so far was the best thing I needed to hear. And also the fact that in their remarks, issues around accountability, financing and implementation strategy for the SDGs came up so strong, gave me more hope. It made me proud and I feel deeply honoured to have been part of such a diverse and amazing group of young people, committed in promoting change.”

Zoneziwoh
Notably, the Africa group relies on Nigeria as a spokesperson for the group. According to the Nigerian Mission, this is due to Nigeria’s progressive nature. According to him, one out of every seven Africans is Nigerian. He reckons that Africa is a force to reckon with due to: 1) Political system – Africa’s transition to democratic governance and 2) Investment of China in Africa. On the Post 2015 Development Agenda, the Africa Group is rallying behind the Common African Position adopted by at the African Union Summit. However, this was not the case initially as there was disconnect between missions in Addis and New York. He notes that there was a challenge in the process as initially it did not take into consideration the views of other missions outside of Addis. However, the PMs in New York are now on board with the document and the content. Nigeria feels very strongly about promoting their country interest both in the Africa Group as well as the United Nations.

On Sexuality

The Nigeria Mission Representative held strong views on LGBTI. He mentioned that these rights were culturally unacceptably and illegal based on the Nigeria constitution. At the UN, he questioned the focus on issues that are contrary to “our” culture, religion and tradition.

On Access to Safe Abortion

Access to safe abortion must have exceptions e.g. in cases of rape, incest and when the life of the mother is in danger. However, the representative felt that the introduction of a blanket law on abortion will open doors for immorality.

On Comprehensive Sexuality Education

The representative mentioned the following as basic human rights: Right to Life, Right to Basic Amenities and Right to Development. And not the right to sex. As Nigeria, he felt that they do not want to get to the point where children are learning about sex. He, however, noted that the right to education is a universal right. Whereas the MDGs focused on quantity, he believes that the Post 2015 Development Agenda should focus on quality over quantity. Sexuality education however remains foreign to our culture and legislation (Constitution).

Question and Answer

- How has your Post 2015 experience been so far?
He explained the Open Working Group process that led to proposition of Sustainable Development Goals, the Financing strategy for Post 2015 of which Nigeria was nominated by the G77 and China to chair the process and the current discussion on technology transfer from developed to developing countries.

- What should the African Union do right to address the current disconnect?
Nigeria holds strongly the content of the Common African Position. The representative, however, feels that the AU process is not inclusive hence the disconnection. Going forward, the AU should consult and where possible invite experts from New York to input into continental documents.
• What are Nigeria’s priorities for the intergovernmental negotiations on the post 2015 development agenda?
  Good governance, Education, Enablers of development i.e. Infrastructure and Peace and Security (A strong pillar for development) and Technology transfer.

*Conclusion*

The representative reiterated Nigeria’s support towards youth participation in the UN process. He welcomed the initiative as a much needed one in the continent citing spaces such as UN youth delegates forum where there is minimal representation from African youth to give African perspectives. He looked forward to receiving communication from the taskforce on what they would like to see featured in the Post 2015 development agenda.

“The opportunity to interact with African Permanent Representatives will always be something I carry with me for the rest of my life with great humility. This is because my voice and that of every other AYTF member represented over 60 percent of Africa’s population. I will continue to stand for these other African youths that don’t have the opportunity to address our representatives that have the opportunity to determine our future through policy.” Bob
Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa

Counsellor Thulane Nyembe

SDG Process

Counsellor Nyembe mentioned that discussion at Rio + 20 Conference informed the process of formulating the SDGs. He further mentioned that the transition from MDGs to SDGs would ensure that MDGs also feed into Post 2015 through avenues such as the MDG report. The counsellor felt that the MDGs should not have been completely abandoned to transition to the SDGs. Furthermore, the representative highlighted that the means of implementation. Various issues raised include the Means of Implementation-SDSN but at this stage there will be no reopening of the SDGs document. The counsellor confirmed that South Africa would be chairing the G77 and that the Ministerial statement at the Agenda 2063 meeting would inform South Africa’s direction in the area of young people’s investments. He further clarified that the Africa group always took orders from the heads of states and their commitments prior to negotiations to inform the African consensus.

HIV and SRHR

The counsellor mentioned the importance of highlighting HIV and SRHR as areas where governments and private sectors should invest. He further mentioned that South Africa as a country did not have any problems with the provision of sexual rights but this was not the same across Africa. The South African counsellor further discussed his country’s role in taking a lead to negotiate for fair pricing of ARV treatment with the various initiative such as the Bill Clinton Initiative. There is need for common but differentiated responsibilities within countries and across various systems.

Youth

South African mission would be open to engaging the AYTF as the reference point for youth issues in the African continent, financing youth participation is an issue that should be discussed because it affects participation, engagement and eventual featuring of youth issues in policies. He mentioned that the limitation is that the mission does not necessarily deal with youth related issues except through the 3rd committee which is composed of 6 member states where both Kenya and South Africa are represented. He mentioned that youths have a space to be represented on the ECOSOC Youth Forum and also through having youths on government delegations.

Conclusion

The counsellor concluded the discussion by highlighting some challenges that existed which include:

- Gaps with civil society engagement
- Barriers of ECOSOC accreditation
- Coordinating of Civil Society, government (capital) and mission

He further mentioned that low African human resource representation at the UN mission provides a challenge to have meaningful Africa group representation. He mentioned this was especially strategic positioning to ensure language proposed by Africa group on issues such as youth is maintained as proposed. Africa has realized adequate representation through South Africa, Kenya and Egypt.
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia

H.E. Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota,

On Post 2015 Development Agenda

Ambassador mentioned that she was happy with what was achieved this far with the development of proposed 17 goals for the Sustainable Development Goals. She explained that a major part of this process began in 2012 during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio +20 which was themed ‘The future we want’. Through this conference the Secretary General mandated the OWG to formulate the Post 2015 agenda that would replace the MDGs. H.E. the ambassador acknowledged that various countries had different ambitions for the Post 2015 agenda thus making it was difficult during negotiations to come to common ground. For instance, Zambia never reported anything on Goal 7 which focused on environment but had other priorities. She mentioned that the main challenge for the SDGs was going to be finding consensus in one document that was going to reflect the aspirations of both developing and developed countries. It is for this reason that the goals must be mindful of the fact that no country should be left behind.

Zambia’s priorities in the Post 2015 Development Agenda

The ambassador provided some insight on Zambia’s priorities within the SDGs including education and health.

Education: With regard to education, Zambia wanted to see the education benchmark moved from primary provision of education to secondary and tertiary. In addition, there was need to ensure that there also the provision of skills development institutions.

Health and Youth: Zambia remained committed to providing sexual reproductive health services that are youth friendly targeted. These services include provision of services that ensure that women and girls also access reproductive health services. Despite this clear national stance, provision of SRH and respect for reproductive rights was heavily debated with the OWG.

Most African states felt that a SRHR as an issue was a western pushed agenda for homosexuality. This therefore created distrust during negotiations around matters of sexual reproductive health and rights. In the case of Zambia, homosexuality is considered illegal given that 80 percent are Christians. Therefore, speaking for homosexuality would be a highly political issue.

Another issue of interest was related to abortion. Zambia would provide abortions in accordance with the ICPD Programme of Action in conformity with national laws. However, there was a mistrust during negotiations as some countries felt that abortion was being suggested a family planning method. This in the ambassador’s view promoted promiscuity among young ones.

The ambassador mentioned that it was important to maintain what the constitution requested as this would ensure that the president (H.E. Michael Sata) would be re-elected.

H.E. Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota expressed happiness in meeting the AYTF and stated that it was a pleasure meeting people who faced realities when it came to matters of population and development.
CSO and Youth participation

The Ambassador mentioned that Zambia was able to engage with CSOs prior and during the formulation of the proposed SDGs. Particularly the Ministry of Finance and National Planning who is the principle custodian of this process managed to have consultations with CSOs in Zambia on regular basis. In addition, youths were also a part of these consultations through the University of Zambia. Nonetheless, the ambassador thought that CSO were not proactive in holding governments accountable. This lack of holding leaders accountable was particularly more pronounced among African countries compared to Europeans who were quite passionate.

Processes

H.E. Dr Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota provided some insight in the dynamics that take place during the negotiations. The ambassador mentioned that for successful stances to be effectively communicated during negotiations, lobbying needs to be done at capital in Africa. She mentioned that different countries had different priorities thus co-facilitators only captured the general feeling of member states. Many countries had general consensus on economic empowerment, technology transfer and advances in science. There seemed to be a lack of consensus health with particular reference to sexual reproductive health and rights. In the case of Africa, this lack of consensus is also an exhibition of the disconnection between African Union, African member states at capital and in New York. This is given that African has very progressive policy through the Maputo Plan of Action on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the ambassador mentioned that Africa’s position in general and Zambia in particular were guided by the African Common Position. Nonetheless, it was important for considerations with the Post 2015 agenda to be made for landlocked countries such as Zambia where the cost of trade was high. She further mentioned that the unfinished business of the MDGs for developing countries must not be completely abandoned once the new SDGs are adopted.
This meeting provided an opportunity for the African Youth Task Force to learn from Matthias Reister the current process that will be used in the formulation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Indicators. Secondly, this meeting provided an opportunity for AYTF members to identify potential advocacy platforms during the indicator development phase.

**Discussion**

Mr. Reister highlighted the key role of the General Assembly process which will inform the synthesis report. From his point of view, he felt that there is need for streamlining of the SDGs without any reopening of the proposed framework by the Open Working Group (OWG). The UNSD supports the OWG report as they feel it was consultative as well as taking into consideration all the countries represented. While right now, the way forward with regards to the Post 2015 agenda is not clear, he noted that by March 2015 the roadmap will be clear.

**Process**

The development of the SDGs will be an inter-agency process especially for the development of health indicators and the unfinished business of the MDGs such as health should be featured in the SDGs. He also noted that there will be certain expectations of policy level interference from national governments as well as at a global level. This is because the success in the uptake of the proposed SDGs will be at national level which will be established during implementation through national differentiation. Individual country’s priorities will define mechanism of global monitoring and accountability.

**Data for Accountability**

A Senior Statistician, he noted that resource constraints continues to affect country’s capacities to collect disaggregated data that can inform effective planning, also countries need coordinated mechanisms of data collection to ensure efficiency. Various indicators will serve different purposes nationally and globally but there will be synergized systems of monitoring, however the global mechanism of global monitoring has not been established. The process of indicators formulation will build on the goals and targets as they are proposed.

**Opportunities for Engagement**

Firstly, he noted that as a statistician it is usually a great challenge to come up with social indicators. Furthermore in terms of development of indicators for the SDGs, there is no mechanism developed so far to inform CSO engagement but the intergovernmental process in 2015 presents a good opportunity.
Background

Every day, 37,000 girls are married before the age of 18. This effectively ends a girl’s childhood, curtails her education, minimizes her economic opportunities, and in turn perpetuates cycles of poverty and violence. Girls who are married too young are at greater risk of experiencing sexual and reproductive ill-health, including unwanted and high-risk pregnancies and HIV.

Drawing on emergent evidence and proven best practices, this panel discussion addressed the links between child, early, and forced marriage and sexual and reproductive health and rights in order to mobilize commitments to comprehensively address the practice in the African context. Panellists drew on their regional experience of working to ensure that girls have access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, comprehensive sexuality education, and safe spaces to learn about their health and rights.

The panel discussion was organized by the Permanent Mission of Zambia to the UN and the International Women’s Health Coalition in celebration of the 3rd annual International Day of the Girl Child.

Thursday, October 9th, 11:30am-1pm United Nations, New York.

Programme

Introductory Remarks
H.E. Dr. Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, Permanent Representative, Zambia

Panelists
Françoise Girard, President, International Women’s Health Coalition (moderator)
Felogene Anumo, FEMNET, Kenya
Zoneziwoh Fem, feminist blogger and youth activist, Cameroon
Emmanuel Etim, Observatory for Policy Practice and Youth Studies, Nigeria

AAI would like to thank the Permanent Mission of Zambia to the UN, and the International Women’s Health Coalition for organising this event.
On 9th October AAI hosted an evening cocktail titled “A Dialogue on Accountability” held at New York. This event brought together several people from Civil Society Organizations, UN agencies, Media, Students, Funding partners and others. This platform provided invited guests to meet the AYTF members as they shared their experiences meeting the PRs in NYC. It also allowed for meaningful networking that would be useful for future implementation of AYFT objectives.

AAI would like to thank Sonke Gender Justice for their financial contribution to making this event a reality.
In conclusion AAI is pleased to say that the objectives set by the African Youth Task Force for the October 2014 Advocacy trip to New York were achieved.

The short-term objectives achieved were to mend the disconnection between the African continent and the negotiators in NYC, by:

1. Identifying key African negotiators in the permanent missions, based on position in the OWG, stances at home and in NYC on youth empowerment issues such as health, education, employment and inclusive participation, security and good governance.
2. Sensitising, building alliances with and advocating that these PMs improve the representation and demands of African youth in the global processes.
3. Discovering and discussing the stances of the countries based on existing regional commitments such as Maputo Plan of Action, African Youth Charter, African Common Position and the Agenda 2063.
4. Offering the Youth Task Force and backing organisations as resources for the PMs in doing their work.
7. Identifying and repairing barriers to consistency between capital and PMs, and working to ensure all relevant individuals, both home and abroad, government and civil society are more accountable.
8. Demonstrating with empirical evidence the (unmet) need for youth’s universal access to health, education, employment, inclusive participation, security and good governance as a means to provide PMs with resources for their advocacy of greater youth inclusion.

All short term objectives, with the exception of 7, which to date, has not yet occurred and which remain on the agenda for the AYTF going into 2015.

The project will continue to seek funds to reach its mid-term objective to increase African civil society youths input and influence in the global processes i.e. the SDGs, especially in New York and in 2015.

We are confident that doing so will help us to achieve our long term objective to promote youth empowerment in Africa through influencing the new global development framework.

AAI and the partners on the AYTF will strive to raise more funds to ensure the ongoing participation of these and other youths in global processes, using this dynamic and collaborative model.

“For a complete proposal and budget for the next activities of the AYTF, and further information on how you can get involved please email phillipa@aidsaccountability.org”
Partners

AIDS Accountability International wishes to thank the following partners for their financial and strategic support and participation:


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October 2014 AYTF Members
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About AAI

AAI’s Vision, Mission and Values

Vision
AAI’s vision is a world where strong and accountable leadership permeates all levels of society to ensure effective responses to health challenges.

Mission
We do this by increasing transparency, promoting dialogue and supporting action for an improved response.

Values
Dedication – Our wholehearted commitment to the cause and to people affected by the lack of the provision of quality, affordable, accessible and acceptable health care informs all our work.

Human Rights – AAI is committed to human rights for all. No exceptions. Our research and advocacy is intended to contribute to the fulfilment of human rights for all including women’s and girls’ rights, the rights of key groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, sex workers and injecting drug users .

Participation – AAI consults broadly with stakeholders and collaborates widely on research and advocacy. Our work is done in a collaborative manner, always.

Transparency – Without transparency there can be no accountability. AAI is transparent about what we do, how we do it and who funds us. We advocate for others to be transparent too.

Accessibility – AAI continuously strives to make our research processes accessible and our material user-friendly for advocacy.

Strategy for Increasing Accountability
AAI believes that strong and accountable leadership is necessary to ensure effective responses to health needs. We do this by increasing transparency, promoting dialogue and supporting action to improve the response.
1. **Transparency**

Data, full, relevant, correct, accurate and unbiased data that is methodologically sound, periodically collected and collectively reported, discussed and reported as well as transparent about its failings and limitations is a vital starting point for any discussion on developing a response to health problems.

2. **Dialogue**

Dialogue should mean all relevant stakeholders can meaningfully and freely participate, without fear, in the discussions and debates on the delivery and performance of health by public servants, especially in relation to the commitments that they as governments and leaders have made.

3. **Action**

Action is necessary for public servants to improve their delivery of health, share their successes and learn from their failures making for quality, improved, sustainable and human rights based health access for all a reality. All leaders, not just governments, need to act to ensure transparency and dialogue are part of the health development process.