

## Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG)

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### TRAINING WORKSHOP

#### "Youth Engagement in Institution Building and Public Services Delivery for Sustainable Development"

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire  
7-9 December 2022

#### Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development articulates a negotiated international strategy to support human well-being across the globe. Strong public institutions and efficient services delivery are crucial to the achievement of the agenda's 17 Goals. Therefore, it is important to develop and strengthen the capacity of Members States to build robust, innovative and transparent institutions that will deliver efficient and citizen-oriented public services. At the request of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, UN DESA/DPIDG organised the workshop "*Youth Engagement in Institution Building and Public Services Delivery for Sustainable Development*" in Abidjan from 7-9 December 2022.

Young people represent most of the population in the developing world, with more than 70 percent aged below 30. In Côte D'Ivoire, today, the median age is 18.9 years. Given these demographics, it is vital to capacitate and engage this large proportion of the population to play a role in global efforts to achieve intergenerational equity and sustainable development. A key commitment on the UN Secretary General's Report "Our Common Agenda", is to listen to, and work with the youth by removing barriers and promoting meaningful, diverse, and effective youth engagement. And that was a key objective of this workshop.

The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Ministry for Youth, the National Youth Council, and UNDP and UNFPA Country Offices. The local partners contributed with time and resources to this workshop. Senior ministry officials and the leadership of the National Youth Council contributed to the identification of participants from the government and the from youth-led civil society organisations nationwide. They produced the workshop certificate signed by the Minister of Youth, and made a photographic coverage of the entire event. UNDP provided support with logistics, the payment of DSA to local participants, and resources to cover some additional expenses (not included in the original FA). UNFPA provided the UNDESA team with a car and a driver for airport transfers and local travel during of the entire mission. Moreover, all partners contributed substantively by making their staff available to moderate sessions, facilitate group discussions, and lead training sessions (see attached workshop agenda). This was a truly collaborative endeavour in which each partner felt that they had a stake on a positive outcome.

## The Training Workshop

The training workshop brought together 80 participants amongst young leaders from diverse civil society organisations across the country, government officials, members of the UNCT, and academics. The workshop was inclusive with great participation of young women as well as young people with disabilities. The aim of the workshop was to enhance the capacities of young leaders and government officials to support the implementation of the SDGs, through building strong and more effective institutions, and delivering more efficient public services to the population of Côte d'Ivoire. This was a training of trainers' workshop, which prepared participants to conduct devolution sessions with their peers in their communities.

The training workshop included an introductory session focused on the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the AU Agenda 2063, and the Principles of Effective Governance. It was also comprised by three training sessions: (i) innovation, digital transformation and the jobs of the future; (ii) climate change and risk management; (iii) and youth peace, security and a culture of non-violence. Two discussion sessions, or open-dialogues, one between the youth and government officials, and another between the youth and the heads of UN Agencies were also part of the agenda. Finally, the participants organized in four working groups deepened the plenary discussions by relating the various topics to their everyday life experiences, and making specific recommendations for action. Below are short summaries of the workshop sessions.

**Opening session:** the workshop was opened with a speech by the Minister of Youth, Mr. Mamadou Touré, delivered by the Deputy Chief of Staff, Mr. Lancine Diomandé. Other addresses were presented by the Resident Coordinator of the UN System in Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Philippe Poinot, by the Resident Representative of UNFPA, Ms Cecile Zoungrana, and by the Principal Inter-regional Adviser at UN DESA/DPIDG, Alcinda Honwana. All interventions reiterated the importance of engaging young people as critical drivers in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the centrality of training and capacity development to strengthen their actions.

**Introduction session:** this session was led by Cristina Rodriguez-Acosta, from UN DESA/DPIDG and focused on enhancing the participants understanding of the UN 2030 Agenda and the AU Agenda 2063. The session highlighted the interconnections between the 17 SDGs, and between these and the seven aspirations of Agenda 2063. An interactive video presentation related the SDGs to people's daily lives, making it easy to grasp and translate their meaning. In a group exercise, participants discussed the key challenges faced by their generation, linked them to the SDGs, and proposed solutions to overcome some of those challenges. Due to time constraints, the materials on the principles of effective governance, prepared by Alcinda Honwana, were shared with the participants and the National Youth Council for later review, dissemination and discussion.

**Discussion session between youth and the government:** this session was chaired by Alcinda Honwana and included presentations by the National Director for Youth Empowerment and Associative Life at the Ministry for Youth, Mr. Koffi Constant; by Ms. Kouame Becanty Djedje, Deputy Director of the National Agency for Youth Employment, and by the Director of the National Observatory for Solidarity and Social Cohesion, Mr. Tiohazon Coulibaly. Key issues discussed in this exchange were: the criteria used by the Ministry of Youth for accreditation and for access to annual subventions by youth organizations affiliated to the National Youth Council; the criteria and the requisites for accessing funding for entrepreneurial projects, and for accessing internships in companies participating in the Youth Employment Agency program; and the need to incorporate preventive measures to avoid community conflicts that may jeopardize social cohesion and solidarity, especially during the elections. Several interventions called for supporting youth organizations in the rural areas, and young people with disabilities.

**Discussion session between the youth and the UNCT:** this session was chaired by the representative of the Minister of Youth, Mr Lancine Diomandé, and included interventions by the Ms Cécile Zoungana, Resident Representative for UNFPA; Ms Carol Flore, Resident Representative for UNDP; Mr. Frederic Lapeyre, ILO Country Director; and Mr. Gervais Anoma, representative of the UNESCO Country Director. The heads of UN agencies shared the activities being conducted in their offices that related to youth empowerment, in terms of reproductive health and social engagement (UNFPA), innovation and digital transformation (UNDP), employment and entrepreneurship (ILO) and education and creation of a culture of peace and tolerance (UNESCO). The discussion focused on how best the UNCT can support young leaders and their organisations with information, skills, and resources to enhance their engagement, and that of their constituencies, in the implementation of the SDGs.

**Training session on climate change and risk management:** this was led by Ana Thorlund and Samuel Danaa from UNPOG. The objective of the session was to increase the understanding of participants in the key concepts of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and to enable them to play an informed and positive role in their communities through advocacy and knowledge sharing. The session facilitated in-depth discussions on how youth action and engagement for climate action and risk management, through risk-informed governance and innovation, are critical in the implementation of the SDGs. The last part of the session presented examples of innovative experiences of youth engagement in climate action and resilience from across the globe.

**Training session on innovation, digital transformation:** this was led by Mahama El Hadj Gbane from UNDP who moderated a conversation with four successful young entrepreneurs: Corine Maurice Ouattara, Edi Valère, Koffi Thierry Mensah, and Saoud Gramboute. All four speakers shared their entrepreneurial experiences with the participants, pointing out to the challenges they face and how they have been able to succeed with the help of digital tools and digital platforms. They stressed that the professions of the future will be based on digital technologies, and this will require new skills and new ways of thinking. Digital transformation will help develop new skilled talent, rethink different types of employment relationships, and create diverse workplaces. The participants were really engaged in this exchange and keen to learn from the experiences of their peers.

**Training session on youth, peace, security and a culture of non-violence:** this was led by Joël Kouassi a researcher from INDIGO-InterPeace in Côte d'Ivoire. To encourage participants to discuss conflict prevention and building a culture of peace, Joël Kouassi initiated the session with a video presentation showing Ivorians of different backgrounds commenting on peace and security issues in the country. He then invited the participants to comment on the video and share their own views and experiences. This generated a lively debate on the terrorist actions taking place in the northern region of the country, in which disenfranchised young people are being lured to join extremist groups. Discussions also pointed out to the the disinformation and the violence surrounding the elections, and the need to educate people about peace and non-violence from an early age, among other issues.

### **Key Recommendations from the Working Groups**

The working group discussions focused on four specific themes: (i) employment and digital transformation; (ii) climate change and risk management; (iii) social cohesion, tolerance and solidarity; and (iv) peace, security and a culture of non-violence. In the working groups, the participants made specific recommendations for action which are summarised below:

#### **Group 1:**

- Reinforce internship programs for graduates in companies to ease their entry into the labour market

- Strengthen mechanisms of communication and dissemination of job opportunities and project funding.
- Provide support and information to young people in the informal sector about job opportunities and the pension schemes for self-employed workers.

Group 2:

- Strengthen young people's knowledge of DRR and climate change
- Promote young people's involvement in agroforestry in rural areas
- Create youth-led Neighborhood Development Committees

Group 3:

- Strengthen initiatives to promote social cohesion in the communities
- Youth organisations should play a role in preventing and combating fake news and disinformation
- The National Youth Council and its affiliated organizations must engage and take ownership of the actions to prevent conflict and foster solidarity and tolerance.

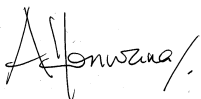
Group 4:

- Provide support to young people in difficult socio-economic situations to avoid their recruitment into extremist and violent groups
- Produce school training manuals on peace and security to facilitate the promotion of the culture of non-violence among children in secondary school
- Establish prizes and awards in neighborhoods, high schools etc, for young people involved in good initiatives to prevent conflict and foster peace

## Final Thoughts

The style of the workshops was very interactive, with videos, quizzes, games, and debates conducted in small and large groups. Young participants were encouraged to share their experiences, bring in new ideas, and propose constructive solutions to the challenges they face. This was an extremely productive workshop in which the participants, representing more than 50 youth-led civil society organizations, with an outreach of over one million members, spent 2.5 days discussing issues that matter to them and their constituencies. The discussions with the government, the UNCT, the facilitators and amongst the participants were very lively and engaging. According to the evaluation report, the participants were very appreciative of the inclusiveness, openness and depth with which the various topics were delivered, and the discussions conducted. They showed an insightful understanding of the situation in their communities, of the challenges they face, and proposed very concrete actions to improve their work and enhance youth contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

\* *Attached the workshop agenda*



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