

Liberian Youth SDGs Summit

CONCEPT NOTE



Draft Theme:

...Prioritizing Youth Participation in SDGs...

“Creating the Liberia we Want”

BACKGROUND

The role of Liberia in the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cannot be over emphasized. This role is critical in the global community because young people represent about 75% of the country's population with remarkable power to influence, drive, and catalyze the country's inclusive economic and social prosperity and its overall peace and security. Yet, due to a multitude of factors, not the least of which the long-standing civil conflict and the Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak, more than half of Liberia's youth find themselves in vulnerable employment, with limited educational attainment, and limited to no opportunities to forge a path toward a better future. To this point, in a *School to Work Transition Survey (SWTS)* conducted by the ILO in 2013, findings noted that 78.7% of Liberia's working youth fall within the category of 'under-utilized labor' and 77.9% are considered in 'vulnerable employment', characterized by low wages, periodic or seasonal work, insecure working conditions and with limited and no access to safety nets.

Considering the significance of this background, it is important to recognize the inclusive participation of young Liberian in fostering the agenda of the SDGs. This is because the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute a shared global framework of development priorities to 2030 and aim to bring an end to extreme poverty, promote prosperity and wellbeing for all, protect the environment, address climate change, and encourage good governance and peace. They apply to all countries, including Liberia. Agreed by the 193 Member States of the United Nations, the agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, as well as a section on means of implementation and renewed global partnership, and a framework for review and follow-up. This historic agenda calls upon countries at all developmental states to join efforts in realizing economic growth, social inclusion, environmental protection which are all underpinned by good governance and accountability.

In January 26, 2016, the SDGs was launched in Liberia by Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former President of Liberia. The ascendancy of the Coalitions for Democratic Change (CDC) led Government headed by President George M. Weah have identified five (5) priorities areas of interest for its first year which is aligned with 11 SDGs and Medium-Term National Development Plan (2018-2023). The Development of the Results Framework and M&E Plan Matrix for the medium-term development plan were put in place and the outcome is promising.

For Liberia, the new agenda suggests solutions to many longstanding developmental challenges, as well as opportunities to showcase progress and strengthen regional collaboration. Every country faces its own unique set of challenges, but there are also similarities, particularly within sub-regions such as West Africa, which offers opportunities for cross-country learning.

Despite the progress made on the SDGs in Liberia, there are still significant challenges ranging from low capacity in data collection, analysis and presentation, weak information sharing and coordination on the SDGs among stakeholders, weak institutional framework, limited participation of the youths in the implementation of the SDGs and unclear reporting mechanism and limited funding to support SDGs institutionalization in Liberia. This situation is compounded by entrenched traditional and cultural practices and beliefs that favor the boy child or male over the girl child or females. Toxic masculinity and the inadequate will by major stakeholders and the most of the males / boys to challenge these norms have created power imbalance between the females and males youths, with the males having dominance in every sector. According to a study on masculinity and gender norms in Liberia (February 2019) Women and girls in Liberia are expected to be homely, obedient, accommodating and do the house whole works, be submissive and therefore regulate to the private sphere, with limitation to her mobility, appearance and behavior.

In 2017, the 2030 Youth Alliance launched the African Youth SDGs Summit as the largest gathering space for dialogue, networking, learning and celebration of successes and participation of young people in the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and AU Agenda 2063 in Africa. As an improvement and follow up process from the first summit, the 2nd African Youth SDGs Summit took place in November 2018 in Accra, and attracted 1400 delegates from across the globe who then declared their readiness to partner with world leaders to drive the implementation of the SDGs. The 2018 summit adopted a work plan to replicate the summit at national levels giving young people at each and every participant country an opportunity to actively participate and contribute to the SDGs implementations.

RELEVANCE OF THE LIBERIAN YOUTH SDGs SUMMIT

Africa is the youngest and fastest-growing continent in the world. By 2030, the number of young people in the African labor force will increase to 375 million. According to the International Monetary Fund, population growth on the continent means that by 2035, there will be more young Africans entering the workforce each year than in the rest of the world combined. Liberia also falls within this global perspective.

The Liberian Youth SDGs Summit is organized by **YOUTH IN TECHNOLOGY AND ARTS NETWORK (YOTAN) along with MenEngage Liberia Network and likeminded youth focus organization** as an annual gathering platform for youth that brings together a community of purpose driven young aspiring African and innovative leaders nationally and beyond to discuss, share ideas and adopt methods of accountability that reflect the unique challenges on ground and set a path towards driving local progress for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is expected that the summit will mobilize actions-focused youth and right holder's community tackling local challenges to engage duty bearers, share their voices and provide practical strategies on building economic growth and to address a range of social needs including education, Promotion of Sexual Reproductive HealthRights (SRHR), social protection, Gender inequality, Prevention Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV)and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

Additionally, at the end of the Summit, participants will derive an action plan that will advocate for the involvement of youths in the implementation of the SDGs at the rural and urban community levels. Furthermore, the Summit will form youth CSOs Network on SDGs to continuously engage relevant stakeholders nationally on youths' issues taking into consideration SDGs, contribute to the national review process and support the annual event planning.

The Liberian Youth Sustainable Development Goals Summit (LYSDGs Summit) is expected to attract about 500 ambassadors representing youth organizations and national government, international development and UN agencies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the private sector and SDGs actors to share experts exchange on innovative financing for sustainable development, mobilizing national resources and successful involvement of the youth and private sector in the national planning process towards the 2030 Agenda and the good practices in tackling National Challenges that link to the achievement of the SDGs and African Union Agenda 2063.

The proposed Liberian Youth SDGs Summit is scheduled to take place from 27-29, November 2019 in Ganta, NimbaCounty to discuss ways of localizing the SDGs that will enable young people be the driver of their future

and to also continue the discussions from the 2nd African Youth SDGs Summit and engage policy makers and young people in Liberia with the commitment made at the 2nd African Youth SDGs Summit on Goal 3,4,5,6,10,13, & 16 of the SDGs.

It is anticipated that of the 500 target participants, 80 persons will come from outside of Liberia and they shall be expected to pay a summit fees of 200USD to cover Souvenir and internal transportation and local delegate will be require to pay 80 USD for souvenir and internal transportation. The amount collected from the registration of delegates shall subsidies 30% of the total budget provided that the number of delegates herein projected attend the upcoming SDGs youth summit.

Therefore, the relevance of ensuring that the young men and women of Liberia actively participates within the confines of the SDGs is critical for National, Regional and global development and sustainability. This annual summit will create a national space for young people to learn and discuss issues relevant to the SDGs through a platform that will attract greater access to domesticating the advancement of the 17 Goals.

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GOAL

Overall, the proposed **“LIBERIAN YOUTH SDGs SUMMIT”** will focus mainly on how clearly youth have been prioritized and carried along the SDGs in Liberia taking into account Pillar 1 & 4 of Liberia’s Pro Poor Agenda (2019-2023), the UN Development Assistance Framework for Liberia road map (2020-2025) as well as Seven (7) Goals (3,4,5,8, 10,13 and 16) of the seventeen (17) Global Goals in ensuring that the fundamental principle of “Leaving No One Behind” is achieved.

The goal of the summit is aimed at increasing youth participation through building a common understanding of the SDGs and what they mean for all Liberian youth and others youth within Africa.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the proposed **“LIBERIAN YOUTH SDGs SUMMIT”** is to mobilize youth participation and discuss progress made so far on the SDGs and to recommend actions needed for scaling up local innovations.

The objectives of the summit include:

- To promote youth participation and discuss progress and challenges on the implementation of the SDGs;
- Identify power imbalance and develop strategies to bridge the gaps between boys and girls.

- Create space for young people to identify and discuss issues of SRHR/GBV that hinder their participation and develop action to address those SRHR/GBV concerns.
- To provide a forum for experts to exchange experiences that lead to the formation of youth reference group that will resource and advocate for the involvement of youth in planning and implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Document and share summit reports to relevant stakeholders

EXPECTED RESULT

At the end of implementing this summit, there are key results that are expected to be yield:

1. 500 young people equipped with SDGs knowledge passionately ready to make the difference in their communities with emphasis on SRH&R and SGBV issues;
2. Increased participation of young people in decision making in respective of their sex and gender.
3. 200 young people empowered with new knowledge about the SDGs and are ready to contribute to the National review process through an established youth reference group on thematic area.
4. Youth reference group comprising of 200 youth formed and able to drive youth issues
5. Documented and published report detailing the summit;

Participants

The target groups are the voice of the civil society who continue to demonstrate a high level of engagement and input during and after the summit. Collaboration and effective engagement with these sectors will provide the opportunity to ensure that there is focused attention for each agenda and comprehensive representation. They include the following:

Participant/ Stakeholders

- Children and Youth
- Women and Girls
- Non-Governmental Organizations/CSOs
- CBOs/FBOs
- Motor Cyclist
- Universities
- Government line Ministries
- INGOs and UN Agencies
- Embassies

- Media institutions
- Local Authorities

Draft Agenda

DAYS	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Pre-summit activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SDGs Awareness</i> • <i>Media Awareness</i> • <i>Social Media Campaign</i> 	Advocacy and awareness are essential tools towards ensuring that young people are fully engaged in the process of making sure that information surrounding the SDGs is achieved. The SDGs awareness is a strategy to reach out to young men and women on University campuses and others public gathering in Liberia. The using of mix-media for publicity as a strategy will be used which includes Social Media Campaigns on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.
Day one	<i>SDGs Discussion</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Formal opening section</i> • <i>Presentations</i> • <i>Focus Group Discussion</i> 	The First day of the program will involve the participation of the summit target group in an indoor consultative session. This session will be an open space for sufficient discussion surrounding the 17 SDGs Goals. It will also entail presentation, panel discussion from CSOs and Focus Group Discussion.
Day two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>General briefing of Day one</i> • <i>Panel Discussion</i> • <i>Formation of resolution drafting committee</i> • <i>Developing TOR for the reference group</i> • 	The second day of the program will involve the general briefing of day one, panel discussion on SRHR, SDGs, SGBV, accountability etc., the formation of drafting committee and the development of TOR for reference group.
Day three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>General briefing of Day two</i> • <i>Socio-Cultural Exchange</i> • <i>SDGs Dinner</i> • <i>Football SDGs match</i> 	The summit will be finalized with a General briefing of day two, a social-cultural exchange and football match that will promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The SDGs Dinner seeks create space for networking after the summit

DURATION

The summit has been developed and designed to last for five (5) days including arrival and departure days.

The lead implementing partner: YOUTH IN TECHNOLOGY AND ARTS NETWORK (YOTAN), MenEngage Liberia Network
Other collaborating partners: 2030 youth Alliance, African youth SDGs Secretariat.

PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT

The SDG Goal 17 states that a successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector, civil societies; *“all hands-on deck”*.

Additionally, we believe that synergy and cooperation are essential for the success of a summit such as this, YOTAN and her partner are open to organizations and individuals from Liberia, and beyond who are willing to join this great cause.

Partners and sponsors will have their logos displayed on all media and publicity tools such as banners, booklets, flyers, etc. and an opportunity to speak and present their works and projects related to the SDGs.

FUNDING

YOUTH IN TECHNOLOGY AND ARTS NETWORK (YOTAN), MenEngage Liberia Network and the 2030 Youth Alliance shall solicit funding from organizations and government institutions, etc. for the event. The intention of YOTAN and its Partners is to make the event as less cost-effective as possible, hence we will also appeal for organizations to also sponsor young people, most especially the marginalized youth to attend.

COORDINATION

YOTAN, MenEngage Liberia Network and its partners shall constitute a local organizing committee made up of representatives of convening partners, government agencies, the UN System, and partnering organizations. In addition, YOTAN, MenEngage Liberia Network shall work hand in hand with the various committees formed to oversee the preparation and realization of the summit.

The Committees and lead organizations include, but not limited to:

- Content Development Committee (YOTAN, CJPS)
- Publicity and Media Committee (YOTAN, MenEngage Liberia Network, YAL)
- Registration and Logistics Committee (YOTAN, MenEngage Liberia Network, Helping Kids International etc)

- Partnership and Fundraising Committee(YOTAN, MenEngage Africa, CJPS, Passion Link Liberia)

ABOUT YOTAN

YOUTH IN TECHNOLOGY AND ARTS NETWORK (YOTAN) is an innovative youth-driven growth, a non-governmental organization that advocates, mentor, inspires and strengthens vulnerable voices, empowerment, well-being and social democratic accountability to identify locally-driven innovative solutions to reduce poverty.

What We Do:

The world is continually integrating economically, socially and technologically and as we progress towards universal regionalized power and political systems, **YOTAN** is solving the barriers to ensure that citizens are informed and have social democratic participation, right and economic empowerment through leveraging of civic engagement with tech tools.

With the above, the organization work to integrate a strong gender perspective, human rights principle and 6 SDG's goals into her programming and engagement, leveraging on civic engagement with tech tools to ensures that vulnerable people have the capabilities, resources and information they need to exercise greater choice and control over their own development, and make evidence-based decisions to hold decision-makers to account.

Since 2012, The institution has helped increase youth and women's participation in decision-making processes, advocate for their priorities, empowered the vulnerable thrive and improve accountability at the local level.

MISSION

YOTAN key mission is to promote social democratic accountability, health equity and education to increase opportunities for underprivileged persons to maximize their full potential for better livelihood.

VISION

YOTAN seeks a transparent and an accountable, gender balanced society where every person is informed, protected and working to their full potential.

Thematic Focus Areas:

- . ICT4DEVELOPMENT
- YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & DEMOCRACY
 1. Youth Economic Empowerment Program
 2. Education and gender equality
 3. Democracy and human rights
 4. Child Protection & Well-being
- SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY
 - Civic Engagement & Social Accountability
 - Climate Change Adaptation Program (C-CAP)