

**CONFERENCE ON GIRLS' EDUCATION IN AFRICA AND  
FAWE 25<sup>TH</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**Statement by youth on positioning the youth to  
champion Africa's Education Agenda**

We, the Youth at the Conference on Girls Education in Africa August 23rd to -24th August 2017, under the theme; ***Towards Gender Equality in Education; Positioning the Youth to Champion Africa's Education Agenda.***

**WELCOME** the decision of the African Union Heads of State and Government to declare 2017 the year of youth with the theme;" **Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in Youth**", which falls within the Decade of Youth Development in Africa (2009-2018), the Decade of Human Rights in Africa (2015 to 2025) and Agenda 2063, which aspires to build an Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially women, youth and children;

**APPRECIATE** the conveners of this conference namely FAWE, Africa Union Commission and Ministry of Education Zambia and support offered by international bodies (UNESCO, Plan International, ADEA, UN Women)in making this event a reality and assembling the youth participants and supporting implementation of youth affairs at all levels.

**RECOGNIZE** that Africa has a comprehensive policy framework that promotes youth inclusion, including the African Youth Charter, Protocol to the African Charter and People's Rights on the Rights to Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child, revised Maputo plan of action on sexual Reproductive health and rights 2016 to 2030; and that African governments have put in place programmes to end gross sexual violations, increase access to quality education for the girl child and end child marriage and all forms of harmful traditional practices:

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the signing of the Education 2030: Incheon Declaration, by African governments thus making a commitment to transform lives through education, and recognized the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs and particularly SDG 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" hereby obligating all nations to ensure that people of all ages access appropriate opportunity to learn

**HOWEVER**, there are 89 million out-of-school youth who comprising of nearly half of all youth in Sub-Saharan Africa, and that within the next decade, when this cohort becomes the core of the labor market, an estimated 40 million more youth will drop out, and will face an uncertain future with limited work and life skills

**ARE MINDFUL** that 65% of the population in Africa is made up of young people, half of whom are adolescent girls and young women who are mostly unemployed and not engaged economically, socially, culturally and politically thus limiting their ability to realize their full potential;

**NOTE WITH DEEP CONCERN** the disparity on access to formal education and employment among youth. This is characterized by deep patriarchal beliefs and practices, child marriage, discrimination of girls and disabled youth, gender based violence in schools and communities, civil wars and terrorism and extreme poverty.

We therefore urge the African Governments to:

- Amplify and increase youth engagement and participation in decision making by appointing youth to various government positions and national development committees;
- Support youth initiatives to advance the implementation of Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016 – 2025;
- Prioritize education financing among youth especially in Technical and Vocational training;
- Prioritize Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights education and reinforce national mechanisms and policies that support Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, including the involvement of regional and national youth organizations;
- Commit to review and harmonize Customary and Constitutional Laws to reflect the protection and safety of the girl child;
- Support the African Girls Education fund that we are launching today to ensure that African girls have an opportunity to access, and complete education
- Support the re-entry out of school children initiatives especially the re-entry policies for teenage mothers and adolescents; and,
- Create a Regional Qualification framework to raise the profile of non-formal education systems to increase youth employability.