



## Communique

12 August 2020

To His Excellency Kwesi Quartey  
Chairperson, Africa Union Commission

### **Youth Leadership & Engagement for Global Action, in These Times of COVID-19 and Beyond**

Today, August 12 2020, young people all over the world will unite in purpose to commemorate the International Youth Day 2020. The theme for the International Youth Day 2020 is Youth Engagement for Global Action. The aim of IYD2020 is to shed light on the need to enable the engagement of youth by making local, national and global institutions more inclusive for the purpose of strengthening their capacity and relevance to achieve global action.

This international Youth Day comes at an extraordinary time when COVID-19 is ravaging populations across the world. Nevertheless, it presents a great opportunity to showcase youth as effective drivers of change and to call upon African and world leaders to invest in youth and youth participation.

An estimated 75% of the Africa's population is below the age of 35, making young people the bulk of Africa's total population. Yet too many youth are unable to participate fully in society. This calls for recognition and support of the youth to harness their potential. Young people, when empowered and given the right opportunities are effective drivers of change.

Africa, the world's youngest continent, presents an opportunity and a responsibility for us young people on the continent to lead various initiatives, to promote action in our communities, countries and on the continent.

The Youth Leaders for Health<sup>1</sup> program is one such initiative. It is a leadership development program bringing together youth from three countries in Africa – Ghana, Sierra Leone and Tanzania to build our capacity, develop our skills and knowledge to help accelerate the progress to end Malaria and strengthen health systems in these countries and globally. The program is relevant especially during this time when COVID-19 is stretching healthcare systems beyond their limit. We urge for increased investments in health to build stronger health systems and for sustained focus on defeating malaria, as the world works at defeating COVID-19.

As we celebrate International Youth Day 2020, we Youth leaders for Health in Africa, note that now, more than ever, we, young people must be engaged meaningfully. We ask that we be engaged in the development and implementation of programs for sustainable development at community, national and global levels. We pledge to support Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Our key messages to national, regional and world leaders are:

1. Investing in youth is the surest pathway to achieving Africa's Agenda 2063
2. To achieve lasting change in health now and after covid-19, youth leaders must be at the table in global health.
3. Youth leaders in global health must be afforded opportunities in making decisions that affect their future

As youth leaders, we pledge unwavering support towards ending the malaria epidemic, achieving universal health coverage (UHC) and creating lasting impact towards sustainable development.

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<sup>1</sup> Youth Leaders for Health is a joint program by WACI Health, RESULTS UK, Health Promotion Tanzania-HDT, Hope for Future Generation, and CISMAT- SL with support from Comic Relief.