

**Why 'Adolescents' Well-being' matter for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063 and recovering from COVID-19, March 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Proposal for a side event at the African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development (ARFSD)**  
Organized by PMNCH, the Governments of Ghana (TBC) and South Africa, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, SRHR Africa Trust, AfriYan, FIA Foundation

***A thriving adolescent population leads to a flourishing society.***

Numbering over 226 million, adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa make the largest proportion of the adolescent population of the world, with 23 percent of them aged 10-19 years old<sup>1</sup>. The number of adolescents will continue to grow as fertility rates in the region remain high. With such a large population of young people becoming adults, supportive policies and programs on ***inclusive, intersecting*** adolescent and youth development are critical now more than ever. And if the right multi-sectoral investments in their education –including comprehensive sexuality education, environmental justice, human rights, and gender equality-, health –including mental health and SRH-, employability skills, etc. are made in adolescents and youth, especially as the world recovers from COVID, African countries can realize the enormous opportunity that this population dynamic represents, contributing to the economic and social development of their families, communities, and nations.

Adolescents and young people in the continent and everywhere have joined forces with major international agencies, civil society, and Governments to call for increased political and financial investments on a robust multi-sectoral country, regional and global response for ***adolescent and youth well-being*** coordinating education, health, labor to recover from COVID, achieve the SDGs and the Agenda 2063. They have also appealed to engage and empower adolescents in this process.

***Proposal***

We propose to organize a virtual panel with the participation of the Governments of Ghana and South Africa (TBC), UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, SRHR Africa Trust, Afriyan, and the FIA Foundation to:

- (1) share national and local experiences of multi-sectoral approaches to ***adolescents and youth well-being*** in the context of the 2030 Agenda, the Agenda 2063, and COVID recovery, especially on education, gender equality, including prevention of child marriage and violence against women, climate change, and partnerships.
- (2) Share participatory experiences of adolescents and youth in multi-sectoral policies and programmes,
- (3) Discuss a possible ARFSD 8 message to the High-Level Forum for Sustainable Development (HLSD) to mandate countries to include adolescents and youth as a focus area in the 2023 national SDG reviews.

The virtual panel can create momentum from governments, adolescents and youth networks, UN organizations, and the private sector to support ***a focus on adolescents and youth*** in the 2023 SDG reviews to assess what was done in the seven years since the SDGs were agreed upon and identify areas that require further political and financial investments and increasing multi-sectorial coordination so that each sector could work together for adolescent and youth well-being and inclusion. Furthermore, panel participants could agree on one of the main messages that the African Regional Forum for Sustainable Development 8 could convey to the High-Level Political Forum in July, especially about ensuring that countries conduct a review of the SDGs in regards to how they have impacted the lives of adolescents and youth.

**Audience:** African Governments, adolescent and youth networks, NGOs, private sector.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://data.unicef.org/topic/adolescents/demographics/>

