

Africa's Last Hope



Employing the combined powers of youth energy and ICT opportunities for Africa's accelerated development

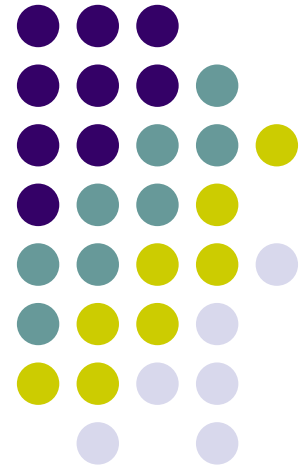
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Wake Up Call



❖ *“Meetings have held, seminars have been hosted, communiqués have been issued but it appears that the face of things in Africa remains the same, if not deteriorating. We believe it’s high time we took the bull by the horns and exert the force that will take Africa from its place of inertia, and place it on the path of action and relevance.” (ITU **AFRICA 2001 Youth Forum Declaration**)*

❖ *“Africa must get onboard... Right now! ... Africa will be either on to the Information Age or off to the dark Agricultural Age ... Africa is suffering from knowledge apartheid that forces its children to eat the crumbs from the dinner table of the information-affluent nations.” (Philip Emeagwali - **Emeagwali.com**)*

❖ The average African Youth does not place too much *premium* on his continent, but this must come to an end if we must create an enviable tomorrow for the next generation, and possibly ourselves...we must raise Africa’s hope for accelerated development by employing the opportunities that ICTs offer... the unique opportunity created by her youth and ICTs, bringing energy and synergy!

Reality vs Optimism



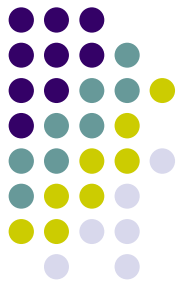
❖ **In The Beginning, It Was Not So:** Africa was not always like this! We once led the world into innovative creations such as the enduring Pyramids of Egypt, and our sons – though on foreign soil – kept the spirit of creativity on. Why then is our garden filled with thorns while we help keep other gardens?

❖ **While Men Slept:** If we call a conference to discuss where Africa went off the path, there may be countless suggestions – slavery, leadership, maintenance, and the list goes on. While men slept, the garden grew thorns...

❖ **Poverty In The Midst Of Plenty:** Africa is blessed with both natural and human resources. What is our problem? Little wonder that our best are always attracted to the dangling carrots across the high seas... brain drain has become the norm rather than the exception

❖ **Attitude And Altitude:** A man's attitude will determine his altitude. We fly so low because our attitude is more-often-than-not not right. There is nothing we can do about the past and its attendant woes but what about tomorrow? Maybe we can even influence today!

Quo Vadis?



- ❖ **I Can See The Sun:** All hope is not lost... things are looking up. Recent study by the International Telecommunications Union revealed that Africa's ICT sector has grown significantly. The African Union has been born, NEPAD sounds great and the Economic Commission for Africa is not resting
- ❖ **Quo Vadis?:** If we must not repeat the trend of *meetings-declarations/reports-meetings*, we must join forces in charting a path out of this state to our desired place. My challenge is to the youth
- ❖ Create a **network** of all young people who are presently **actively** involved in initiatives that point to Africa's development; Identify present youth efforts towards a New Africa in different areas; Identify common bottlenecks, from discussions; Identify strong points, from inputs, stories and discussions; Analyze problems and discuss possible solutions; Identify possible partners and supporting organizations; Map out an **action plan**. Target dates should be set, with individuals working in Specialized Committees that are most relevant to their action paths; Get full-time workers This step (8) may be taken care of by an existing organization

Before We Go...



- ❖ **Small Steps And Giant Strides:** Since consistent tiny drops of water can produce a mighty ocean, I believe that the present efforts across the continent (and from the diaspora) – which many of us here represent – will eventually come together as an ocean and a flood
- ❖ Without the fear of praise singing, I must commend the efforts of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in building youth agenda into the ADF, and in diverting high-level attention to youth issues
- ❖ The “African Youth and the Information Society” informal network and youth attention during the ADF are great signs of support for young people
- ❖ I believe that it is not a question of **if** Africa will enjoy accelerated development, it’s a question of **when** and **who**. **Can we stand up for Africa?** I will... will you?
- ❖ **Final Words:** I believe the young people of Africa must rise to the challenge of weaving the New Africa, the Africa of our collective dreams. *(Please request a copy of the complete text of the final words)*

Thank You



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