Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Ms. Irene Naliaka, the lead consultant and the great team behind her that participated in the development of this document.

We also thank the FAWE Regional Secretariat Team in Nairobi, Kenya led by Ms. Hendrina Chalwe Doroba, the Executive Director for her professional guidance and input into the work; Ms. Juliet Kimotho, the Advocacy and Communication Assistant for her relentless support to ensure that the work was efficiently done.

This publication was made possible through the generous financial support of the Plan International Africa Liaison Office located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Glossary

AYC - Africa Youth Charter
CSO - Civil Society Organisations
GAA - Girls Advocacy Alliance
AU - Africa Union
EE - Economic Empowerment
GBV - Gender based Violence
EAC - East Africa Community
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and status</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the content</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Mechanism</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance to GBV Prevention</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance to EE</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAA Ratification</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps/Recommendations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key meetings/events/ activities</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and reporting Mechanism</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment and Revision of the Charter</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FAWE is a pan-African non-government organisation founded in 1992 by five women ministers of education to empower girls and women through gender-responsive education in sub-Saharan Africa. The organisation’s members include female ministers of education, university vice-chancellors, education policy-makers, researchers, gender specialists and human rights activists. FAWE Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya is a network of 34 National Chapters in 33 countries.

FAWE’s vision is a world in which all African girls have access to education, perform well and complete their studies and gender disparities in education are eliminated. FAWE’s mission is to promote gender equity and equality in education in Africa by fostering positive policies, practices and attitudes towards girls’ education.

FAWE works hand in hand with communities, schools, NGOs, Ministries of Education to ensure that African girls receive equal education and life chances so that they grow into women who have the knowledge, skills and opportunity to contribute to the economic, social and democratic development of their societies.

FAWE believes education is a human right and that all citizens, including women and girls must enjoy that right. Educating girls and women reduces fertility rates, child and infant mortality rates, improves nutrition and health, protects girls and women from abuse, exploitation and HIV/AIDS, increases economic productivity and growth and improves governance and democratic processes.

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

FAWE acts as a watchdog on the implementation of national and continental education policies and strategies to ensure that they do not discriminate against girls and women. In 2017, FAWE conducted an assessment on existing key policies, laws, protocols and treaties that denounce Gender Based Violence (GBV) and promote Economic Empowerment among girls, women and the youth at the regional (AU) and sub-regional (EAC and ECOWAS) level.

In line with its objectives; FAWE is implementing a Girls advocacy Alliance Programme in partnership Plan international African Union Liaison Office, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to specifically enhance the capacity of selected regional and sub-regional CSOs network/alliance to influence regional policy-making and monitoring bodies on Gender-based Violence and Economic Empowerment of the youth at the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) regional blocks. The goal of the Programme is;

“Girls and Young women in Africa, and their civil-society organisations use regional monitoring accountability mechanism to hold their governments to the fulfillment of their protection and rights.”

The information in this document is packaged for selected CSOs under the Girls Advocacy Alliance Programme to enable them play a critical role in pushing African governments to commit and report on these regional instruments.

This summarized version of the Africa Youth Charter is therefore developed to:

• Enable selected CSOs better understand the existing AU, ECOWAS, EAC protocols and policies especially the clauses that relate to issues of Gender Based Violence and Economic Empowerment of girls and young women.
• Serve as reference points for selected youth led CSOs to engage, lobby and hold their governments accountable to fulfil their protection and rights at national, sub regional and regional level.

This document can however be used by any other organization advocating for ratification of policies. It should be noted that the original version of the Africa Youth Charter was the main reference document for this work.
The African Youth Charter (AYC) was endorsed on 2 July 2006 by the African Union Heads of States and Governments meeting in Banjul (Gambia). It entered into force on 8 August 2009.

The Charter is a political and legal document which serves as the strategic framework for African States, giving direction for youth empowerment and development at continental, regional and national levels.

It originated from the need to address the situation of the Youth in Africa, many of whom have been marginalised by society through wealth and power inequalities, poor quality of education, limited health care, unemployment, and exposure to violence. It defines youth or young people as every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years.

To take effect, African Member States need to ratify the Charter and translate the Charter’s commitments into their national laws. It is an active document.

**SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT**

The Charter focuses on Youth participation in society and politics; the role of Youth in development; commitments to young people regarding education, health, employment, eradication of poverty, the environment, peace and security, law, and culture. The Charter also addresses itself towards specific groups of Youth including; young women, girls, and disabled young people.

The Charter refers to the rights, freedoms and obligations of Youth in Africa and is the first legal framework provided to Africa by the relevant actors in the area of Youth, to support national policies, programmes and actions in favor of youth development.

**The key role of the African Youth Charter**

The Charter:
- facilitates the institutionalization of Youth participation, on a regular and legal basis, in political debates, decision making and development processes at national, regional and continental levels; for positive and constructive contribution;
- contributes to the strengthening of capacity building programmes for young leaders in Africa;
- opens the possibility of dialogue and greater opportunity for exchange on youth development issues and facilitates relevant actions for improvement through education, training and skills development;
- Outlines the responsibilities of Youth for their own development and to their countries and the Continent
A Youth Decade Plan of Action 2009-2018 was developed as a roadmap for the effective popularization, ratification and implementation of the AYC. It needs to be implemented and monitored by various stakeholders including the youth themselves.

- Member States under the Charter are obliged to develop and implement comprehensive, integrated and cross-sectoral youth policies and programs with the active involvement of young people.
- Such policy and programme development process needs to be underpinned by the mainstreaming of youth perspectives into broader development goals and priorities, and investing in a meaningful participation and contribution of young people towards Africa’s progress and sustenance of current gains.
- The Africa Union Special Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sports is responsible for considering progress on the implementation of the Youth Development 2009-2018 Action Plan and the Youth Charter, among other youth initiatives of the AU.
Article 13: Education and Skills Development

3. The education of young people shall be directed at:
   f. The development of life skills to function effectively in society and include issues such as; HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, substance abuse prevention and cultural practices that are harmful to the health of young girls and women as part of the education curricula;

*Life skills should be included in Education Curricula*

Article 20: Youth and Culture

1. State Parties shall take the following steps to promote and protect the morals and traditional values recognised by the community:
   a) Eliminate all traditional practices (FGM, Child Marriage) that undermine the physical integrity and dignity of women;

Article 23: Girls and Young Women

Enact and enforce legislation that protects girls and young women from all forms of violence, genital mutilation, incest, rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking, prostitution and pornography;

E.g. sexual offences act. All forms of sexual harassment including sexual advances to girls in learning institutions and at work have to be prohibited.

Article 25: Elimination of Harmful Social and Cultural Practices

State Parties shall take all appropriate steps to eliminate harmful social and cultural practices that affect the welfare and dignity of youth, in particular
   a) Customs and practices that harm the health, life or dignity of the youth;
   b) Customs and practices discriminatory to youth on the basis of gender, age or other status.

*Laws to criminalize harmful practices should be put in place and enforced.*
Article 9: Property
1. Every young person shall have the right to own and to inherit property.
2. State Parties shall ensure that young men and young women enjoy equal rights to own property.
3. State Parties shall ensure that youth are not arbitrarily deprived of their property, including inherited property. This includes girls and young women, property can provide opportunities for economic advancement.

Article 11: Youth Participation
1. Every young person shall have the right to participate in all spheres of society. They shall:
   c) Ensure equal access for young men and young women to participate in decision-making and in fulfilling civic duties;
   The voices of young people must be heard in community decision making. The youth should participate and make positive contribution on to community development.

Article 12: National Youth Policy
All State Parties shall develop a comprehensive and coherent national youth policy.
   f) The policy shall advocate equal opportunities for young men and for young women;
   Each Member states needs to have a youth policy in place, it should be comprehensive and should include measures to prevent GBV and Promote EE for young women and girls.

Article 13: Education and Skills Development
1. Every young person shall have the right to education of good quality.
4. State Parties shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving full realisation of this right and shall, in particular:
   h) Ensure, where applicable, that girls and young women who become pregnant or married before completing their education shall have the opportunity to continue their education;
   n) Promote culturally appropriate, age specific sexuality and responsible parenthood education;
   Girls who become pregnant should be able to return to school. Girls should have age appropriate sexuality education as a means of prevention of sexual violence and its likely effects on their development efforts.

Article 15: Sustainable Livelihoods and Youth Employment
4. State Parties shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving full realisation of this right to gainful employment and shall in particular:
   b) Develop macroeconomic policies that focus on job creation particularly for young people and for young women;
   Young people should access to decent and well-paying jobs both in the formal and informal sector. Policies to address discrimination and corruption in employment should be enacted and effected.

Article 23: Girls and Young Women
State Parties acknowledge the need to eliminate discrimination against girls and young women
RATIFICATION

All GAA countries have signed the Charter. Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Ghana have ratified the Charter. Liberia and Sierra Leone are yet to ratify the Charter.

COUNTRIES SIGNED 43
COUNTRIES RATIFIED 38

GAPS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Apart from article 23, the Charter addresses the rights of youth in general, rather than distinctive rights of young women or men. As a result, only a few formulations can be directly identified as being supportive of combating GBV and promoting Economic Empowerment.

Nevertheless, the general formulations relate to “every young person,” that is, “every young man and every young woman”. Therefore, this document could and should be used as a tool for improving young women’s WEE and combating GBV. It should be widely popularized among the youth for effectiveness.

The Charter recognizes the obstacles that still prevent girls and women from fully participating in African society.

Operationalisation of the Charter and its commitments on GBV prevention and EE remain to be a big challenge.

Sub-regional and continental organization (EAC, ECOWAS and AU) should harmonize their national Youth policies, thereby creating a framework for cooperation among youths at regional and continental levels.
1. The 4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit will be held from 2-4 October 2017 in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire; and will bring together more than 120 Youth leaders from both continents including African Diaspora. The Youth Summit will result in a declaration on themes including education, peace & security, environment, business, democratic inclusion and culture.

2. Gender is my Agenda Campaign meeting (AU Presummit consultative meetings).

3. UN Commission on the Status of women Youth Forums- Held in March every year.


5. International Conference on AIDS and STI’s in Africa (ICASA)

6. The Africa Union has various Youth structures and programmes that can provide a platform for advocacy and engagement on youth issues this include;-

   a) Africa union youth clubs

   African Union Youth Clubs are a network of clubs through which Youth can take positive and proactive ownership of national, regional and continental programmes, policies and legal instruments—particularly those targeting women and youth; contributing to their development and their implementation.

   b) Model African Union

   Model African Union is a simulation of the African Union (AU), bringing together Youth from across Africa and the world at large to take on the roles of African leaders working to tackle issues affecting or influencing the continent today. These conferences aim to establish a network among Africa’s youth as well as to create social and global awareness regarding prominent challenges facing Africa.

   c) Inter-Generational Dialogue (IGD)

   The IGD with Heads of State and Government and key continental and global institutional Leaders, key youth constituencies including university students, National Youth Councils, social justice actors, African diaspora and media among others is one of the ways envisaged in improving the contact between youth and key policy makers, in order to achieve understanding and solidarity between them. This event provides a platform for the voices of young people to be heard by decision-makers at the highest level facilitating dialogue between the two generations.
d) International Youth Day
International Youth Day is celebrated every year on 12th of August. At the AUC, the commemoration aims at bringing the African voice to the worldwide celebrations, while raising awareness on the transformative role of African youth through civic participation in governance processes on the continent. This activity also intends to promote new and more proactive citizenship towards the realization of Agenda 2063 and other relevant continental policies and strategies.

e) Africa Youth Day
Africa Youth Day is a day set aside every year on November 1st to promote the increased recognition of youth as key agents for social change, economic growth and sustainable development in all areas of African Society. It is an occasion to celebrate the youth on the continent, opportunity to contribute and channel youth motivation, energy and creativity towards political, social and economic renewal. The purpose of this event is also, to contribute and channel the youth voices, energy and idealism to reinforce the efforts towards the achievement of sustainable development in Africa.

7. The ECOSOC Youth Forum,
This was launched in 2012, provides an annual platform for youth to engage in dialogue with Member States on a range of issues of interest to them. The two-day event features brainstorming sessions, interactive speaker panels and discussions with Member States, providing youth representatives with an opportunity to voice their opinions, share ideas, and think together about specific issues of relevance to youth as well as the broader role of young women and men in enabling and promoting sustainable development.

8. The Pan African Youth Union (UPJ/PYU),
The Pan African Youth Union (UPJ/PYU), is the coordinating body for youth organizations at the national, regional and continental Africa. The UPJ/PYU has a mandate from the African Union Heads of State (July 2006 Summit) and has headquarters in Khartoum, Sudan. The UPJ/PYU is an advisory agency for the Youth Commission of the African Union and is currently supported by the African Union Youth Programme. The UPJ/PYU is a member of the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICYMO) and is recognised as the regional youth platform from Africa. In 2016 the UPJ/PYU signed a cooperation agreement with the Commonwealth Youth Council to strengthen regional youth representation.
**MONITORING AND REPORTING MECHANISM**

- The Decade and implementation of this plan (Youth Charter Action Plan) are evaluated at regular intervals by the Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Youth (COMY) through its secretariat: the Division for Youth and Capacity building at the African Union Commission.
- A Biennial Status of Youth Report in Africa is to be produced based on data collected from Member States for the purpose of mid-term and end term evaluations in 2012, 2015 and 2018.
- At national level, each country is required to set its own monitoring and reporting system, utilizing continental technical guidance on standards.
- The Regional Economic Communities will collect and submit annual progress report on the status of implementation within the region.

Regional programmes review reports may be shared during statutory meetings of Ministers of youth at the RECs level. The RECs could also undertake progress reviews during the stipulated years.

**AMENDMENT AND REVISION OF THE CHARTER**

1. The present Charter may be amended or revised if any Member State makes a written request to that effect to the Chairperson of the (AU) Commission, provided that the proposed amendment is not submitted to the Assembly of the Union for consideration until all Member States have been duly notified of it.
2. An amendment shall be approved by a simple majority of the Member States. Such amendment shall come into force for each Member States that has ratified or acceded to it on the date of the deposit of its instrument of ratification.