



## **THE KAMPALA YOUTH DECLARATION ON THE PRINCIPLES, STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION**

### **PREAMBLE**

**WE**, the delegates to the Youth Specialized Meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region assembled here at Speke Resort, Munyonyo, Kampala, this 15<sup>th</sup> day of September 2004;

**REPRESENTING** the youth of the Great Lakes Region under the auspices of the Great Lakes Region Youth League;

**CONCERNED** about issues of peace, security and development in the Great Lakes Region;

**AWARE** of the high level of insecurity, civil wars and underdevelopment that continue to plague our region;

**KNOWING** the socio-political, cultural and economic dimensions of the causes and impact of political instability in our countries;

**APPRECIATING** the importance of peace and stability experienced by some countries in the region that the other relatively unstable countries would desire to achieve;

**REALISING** that we the young people pay the heaviest price for the shortsighted economic policies, political blunders and civil wars perpetrated by state and non-state actors;

**CONSCIOUS** of the fact that it is immoral that adults should want to use us young people to fight their wars, making us suffer as combatants, refugees and internally displaced persons, traumatised and denied other opportunities;

**PLEDGING** that we the youth shall no longer accept to be used by war lords and other opportunistic leaders;

**UNDERTAKING** to mobilise our energies and use our numerical strength to actively participate in the transformation of circumstances that contribute to our poverty and threaten to jeopardise our future.

**CONVINCED** that the pursuit of good governance and accountability calls for popular participation and broad based democracy aided by full acceptance of people's power including us the youth; **MOTIVATED** by our unshakeable belief in the principles of tolerance, equity, transparency and accountability as well as observance of human rights, liberty and dignity;

**COMMITTED** to the upholding of the principles of unity in diversity, constitutionalism, social, justice, democracy and good neighbourliness;

**KNOWING** that adults do not inherit the future but borrow it from us the young people;

**STRESSING** that we young people, as the architects of the bright future of the Great Lakes Region, can. only construct that future with the tools, skills, resources, and structures bequeathed to us by the present;

**EMPHASISING** that our leaders individually and collectively have a clear responsibility to strive for a bright future for the Great Lakes Region's next generations;

HEREBY AFFIRM the United Nation's Security Council's timely initiative of engaging Key Actors in the search for lasting peace, security and development in the Great Lakes Region;

D0. SOLEMNLY adopt the Kampala Youth Declaration on Strategies, Principles and Programmes of Action on the role of the youth in the four thematic areas of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region as formally adopted in the plenary this 15<sup>th</sup> Day of September 2004;

AND UNRESERVEDLY COMMIT ourselves to do everything in our power and capacity to pursue the upholding of the principles and the implementation of programmes of action enshrined in this declaration.

WE REQUEST that our views and aspirations for the search for regional peace and security, democracy and good governance, regional integration and economic development, humanitarian and social issues, and upholding of human rights be incorporated in the framework of the

International Conference on the Great Lakes Region under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Since 1994, the United Nations Security Council has on several occasions proposed the holding of an International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IC/GLR) under the auspices of the UN and the African Union (AU).

As the preparatory process that shall lead to the first, and ultimately second Summit of heads of state of the Great Lakes Region begins to take shape, it was deemed critical to hold a specialized youth meeting as part of the International Conference at which a Peace, Security and Development Pact on the Great Lakes Region will be signed.

Being the largest and most productive section of the population, we the youth, are certainly the most negatively affected in the continuing situation of brutal conflicts, wide spread violence and under development in the region.

With all our futures still ahead of us and as key architects to that future, the preparatory process of the IC/GLR has rightly identified us as an indispensable instrument of change, dialogue and development.

The overall objective of our youth specialized meeting held in Kampala was to get critical reflections of the youth representatives in the region on the four thematic areas of peace and security, democracy and good governance, economic development and regional integration and humanitarian and social issues.

The specific objective was however to enable we the young people to evolve a consensus on what should be contained in our own Kampala Declaration on strategies, principles and programmes of action on the role of the youth in the four themes of the IC/GLR.

Within the general context of the IC/GLR, we as young people, held our separate national preparatory meetings before coming to Kampala for this Specialized Youth Meeting to synthesize and synchronize our country views and aspirations into a regional declaration and plan of action.

After brain storming sessions and consideration of views from our respective countries, we the youth delegates came up with this Kampala Declaration, which reflects our views and aspirations as representatives of all the Youth of the Great lakes Region.

## 2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

From the various presentations, discussions and comments a number of principles emerged as the ones that inform the policy aspirations of the youth in the Great Lakes Region. We the youth delegates therefore wish to call up on the entire leadership in government, private sector and civil society in the Great Lakes Region to re-commit and dedicate our region to the respect and upholding of these guiding principles so as to transform for the better, the conditions of war and economic deprivation under which, we the young people currently grow.

These principles, some of them are listed below, also underline the recommendations that we as youth put forward in the four thematic areas.

We firmly believe that our lives and the immediate living environment of young people would be a lot better, if these principles guided all policies and actions undertaken by the entire leadership of countries in the region. These include the respect for as well as, the promotion and adherence to the principles of:

- Sovereignty of nations
- A culture of tolerance and consistence
- Respect for human rights, liberty and dignity
- Morality
- Gender inclusiveness
- Observance of the Rule of Law
- Human Unity in diversity
- Constitutionalism
- Social justice
- Good neighborliness
- Transparency and accountability
- Active participation and contribution
- Dialogue and consensus building

- Openness and receptiveness to the youth.

### **3.0 PEACE AND SECURITY**

We identified a number of concerns and challenges that underlie the worrying situation of instability and impoverishment that adversely affect the youth in the Great Lakes Region.

#### **3.1 Current Situation**

To us the youth, we see the current situation characterized by wide spread violence underpinned by the often, inter-connected cultural identity conflicts as resulting from failure by the states of the region to positively transform the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity into an enriching unity in diversity, as well as failure to manage and transform resource based conflicts into programs that guarantee the utilization of economic assets and resources of the region for the total emancipation of all the people in the countries of the region.

This state of affairs which the different countries of the region are struggling to overcome through the respective democratic transitional agreements and institutional frameworks currently being negotiated and/or implemented, should be seen in our considered view, simply as outcomes of the multi-faceted interacting causative factors described here under as Political, Economic and Social issues of concern or challenges.

Our observation is that although each country situation may derive from a different set of issues of concern as contributory causative factors, these are not necessarily unique to that individual country as the geo-political and socio-economic positioning of the Great Lakes Region is such that these are shared and interlinked. They traverse the modern nation state's boundaries and have similar if not worse impact across the national borders within the region.

##### **3.1.1 Political**

The political issues and challenges identified as impacting on peace and security in GLR include the following:

- Dictatorship and Lack of truly democratic and effectively participatory governance.
- Limited participation of youth in governance structures and institutions of leadership.

- Lack of early warning forums to prevent conflicts.
- Political intolerance and Absence of dialogue as a means of conflict resolution.
- A leadership vacuum and Poor capability of political leaders, to govern their countries.

. Deficiency of visionaries hence leading to inadequate and inappropriate mentoring and role modeling of the youth.

. Failure to domesticate international instruments ratified by regional states.

The media has not done enough to responsibly highlight violent conflicts, and master public debate and consensus on a possible re-dress of such conflicts in the region.

. Terrorism - some countries in the GLR are a haven for terrorism perpetrators.

. The problem of child soldiers and young victims.

. Rampant abuse of human rights in the region.

### 3.1.2 Social

The following are the main social issues identified as constituting challenges:

- Ethnic tension and tribal hatred
- Problem of nationality
  - . Cultural practices such as those of Pastoralists competing with those of Settlers cultivating land that instigate violence.

- Ignorance and Lack of civic education, partly explaining the .  
weak civil society.
  - Religious intolerance.
  - Attendant humanitarian crises such as refugees and  
internal displacements.
- 
- HIV/AIDS

### 3.1.3 Economic Economic stagnation and poverty.

Persistent armed conflicts and Free Movement of firearms in the  
region with impunity.

.Existence of Warlords and informal war economic networks

The use of young people by adults as "Cannon - Fodder" to fight wars for  
them in the conflicts of the region.

Rampant unemployment and lack of sustainable income especially among  
the youth.

### 3.1.4 Cross-cutting, causes

Genocide ideology (political and social).

- Interference on internal affairs of sovereign states by  
External actors (former colonial masters) for their own  
political and economic resources gains.
- Corruption and lack of accountability, transparency, poor  
management of public funds (social and economic).

*N.B. There was no consensus generated on the problem of nationality and the issue of genocide ideology with some delegates viewing these as causes while others viewed them as consequences of conflicts in the region.*

### 3.2 Recommendations

#### 3.2.1 Strategies

Among the strategies we propose under peace and security are:

- The inclusion of hate crimes in the judicial systems of countries in the region. They are currently found lacking in a majority of cases.
- Use of Regional media to promote peace education and development education. Also to popularize and spread awareness of youth peace building activities and youth peer intervention initiatives in the GLR.
- Building and nurturing of patriotic and ideologically conscious youth democrats who will restore and promote democratic ideals and strict observance of human rights in the GLR.
- Youth should assume positions of leadership to provide a new non-partisan vision and ideologies identical to contemporary realities.
- States within the region should incorporate youth in all levels of governance relating to peace building and conflict resolution.
- Developing conflict resolution policy proposals that build on both African traditional norms and modern political ideas in order to generate appropriate peace building and reconciliation framework, which accommodates both the traditional and modern elements.
- States within the region should evaluate education policies in the region with the aim of making them relevant and responsive to respective positive African cultural, moral, social and natural heritage.

Inter-cultural and inter-regional activities for bonding cohesion and cultural tolerance among the youth of the GLR, should be encouraged.

Encourage volunteerism and community service among youth in GLR.



- Support the Disarmament, Repatriation Re-insertion and Resettlement (DRRR) of foreign troops to their countries of origin.

### **3.2.2 Actions**

The following courses of action are therefore proposed to enhance peace and security in the region.

Adoption of and strict implementation of national legislations providing for punishment of all forms of racial, ethnic, tribal or regional forms of discrimination.

- Enactment of laws regulating the question of nationality and citizenship as well as respecting such laws where they are already in force.
- Motivate law enforcement officers so that they can effectively concentrate on core-responsibility.
- Put in place a stand-by regional army as a rapid reaction force in the GLR as well as institute and facilitate the functioning of security committees at border points.
- Establish monitoring mechanisms at border points to check and discourage border movements of arms and rebel groups.
- Hold regular campaigns for the elimination and reduction of violence in everyday language among the youth and peoples' of the GLR using the media.
- Disarmament of various militia and other armed groups to instill social discipline and democratic values.
- Youth should have at least up to 30% of representational status in governance positions in the countries of the region.
- The use of diplomacy to defuse conflicts in the region should be promoted and strengthened further among all countries of the GLR.
- Leaders in the Region are called upon to appoint, utilize and enhance the capacities of youth peace ambassadors in the region to reach out with messages of peace and amnesty to their peer combatants.

- The countries of the Great Lakes Region should establish a peace education curriculum in all institutions and levels of education.
- Create and facilitate inter-youth exchange programs within the GLR to enhance experience sharing, cultural tolerance and promote mutual understanding among the youth in the region.
- Establish youth trauma healing centers to provide psychosocial support for the healing of people, mainly young victims, that have been exposed to war.
- Also equip youth with skills and equipment to actively participate in handling trauma victims in these centers.
- Establish and support among different stakeholder agencies and institutions in GLR an integrated Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) mechanism to provide timely responses to the conflicts that may arise from time to time.
- Enhance the role and capacities of youth organizations in the provision of quick response services to youth in complex emergencies in the region.

#### **4.0 DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**

##### **4.1 Issues identified:**

The following issues that require resolution under democracy and good governance in the GLR have been identified:

- Lack of continuity in terms of leadership.
- Weak constitutions and the ambiguity in other laws resulting in ineffective constitutionalism.
- Poverty compromising good governance.
- Lack of political and financial Accountability.
- Democracy has remained elusive in the region.
- Lack of Information

- Lack of Equity

## **4.2 Concerns and Challenges**

The youth identified concerns and challenges to peace and security, among which were:

- Democracy that has remained elusive in the nation-states of the Great Lakes region.
- Unfair distribution and redistribution of resources within the countries of the Great Lakes Region due to the prevailing situation of bad governance, with the 'haves' exploiting the 'have-nots'.
- A marked lack of strong national conscience especially among the ruling elites who are mainly motivated by egocentric needs.
- Political parties operating within the countries of the GLR, often lack sound and distinct ideological foundations.
- Lack of mechanisms within the individual countries of the GLR that can ensure smooth inter-generational democratic political transitions which has rendered youth to be marginalized and perennially referred to as "leaders of tomorrow".
- Lack of transparency and accountability in most aspects of life.
- Nepotism and cronyism where . top appointments to key positions in government are largely awarded to individuals who are either sycophants, related to or close to those in power.

## **4.3 Causes:**

Some of the cited exacerbating causes to democracy and good governance problems in the region were:

- Lack of political will
- Ethnicity/ nepotism
- Dictated policies and conditionalities

- Lack of inclusive participation
- , Patriarchy system

#### 4.4 **Recommendations**

##### 4.4.1 **Strategies**

- Provide leadership training and mentoring resources for emerging leaders as means of empowering them.
- The entire education system should be revisited and improved to include essential modules on conflict resolution and good governance.
- Education should be such that it imparts the philosophy of humanity and its principles as a way of building a positive national conscience. This will ensure that the leaders and citizens put the future of the country before their own egocentric/ persona[ needs.
- Empowering citizens through a civil society to check dictatorship.
- Ensure that governance institutions and democratic structures are efficient, effective, participatory and accountable in their operations and delivery of services to meet the socio-cultural and economic needs and aspirations of especially young people.
- Political Party manifestos, policies and meetings should be encouraged to include and address regional issues.
- Political opposition capacities should be strengthened encouraged to check government excesses.

Work towards the reduction of westernization of democracy in GLR but promote the embracing and integration of positive aspects of African native democratic practices.

#### **4.4.2 Actions**

The Regional Governments should pursue the following courses of action:

- Affirmative action for young people's participation in the processes of governance is called for.
- **Strengthen the media with a view to have a free, vibrant and responsible press.**
- Strengthen civil society to advocate government's recognition and respect for people's power that they exercise through democratic institutions.
- Ensure that Constitutions of countries in GLR represent the will of the people and stand the test of time.

Enhance the – capacity of democratic institutions and organizations and service delivery systems to appropriately respond to the needs of the citizens.

- Countries in the Great Lakes Region should institute a policy where members of parliament should be given an age of retirement so as to give chance to the upcoming new generation to have opportunities of being voted into office.

Parliaments should be strengthened as autonomous centers of objective debate.

- Support ' democratization projects in the region and the deliberate nurturing of young democrats since there must be democrats for democracy to flourish

. Governments should meet on purpose and Summits be result oriented.

- Create mechanisms to enable networking and political ' dialogue among local governments in the region to facilitate the sharing of experiences and resolution of emergent issues.
- Decentralization should be promoted to give citizens chance to take part in decisions that affect their lives taking lessons from successful experiences in countries where it worked.
- Regular Civic Education and Information sharing for citizens. Building a strong civil society.
- There is a need for a regional language. Need to promote and popularize a regional language among the young people.
- Citizens should participate in the design of foreign and other policy.
- Distortions of cultural values and ethnocentrism should be redressed in countries of the GLR.
- Governments should work towards a Great Lakes political Federation with the youths spearheading the mobilization drive with a coherent Great lakes political system.
- Build strong institutions to fight corruption with practical and deterrent penalties.
- Promote equitable distribution of income and re-dress the current skewed income distribution patterns in GLR countries where only those well connected with the rulers are strikingly rich while those at the lower and middle stratas are poorer and poorer.
- State institutions such as the army, police, civil service and intelligence services should be eliminated from partisan politics.
  - Independent Electoral Commissions should be put in place with an Election Monitoring Body within the Great Lakes. Open mechanisms for peaceful transfer of power Clear RoadMaps should be put in place and made known to the populace.
- No winner should take it all, calling for proportional representation.
- Invest in diplomacy, employing career diplomats.

- All governments should promote human rights and respect of basic freedoms such as freedom of association, press, and opinion.
- Institutionalization of Presidential Term Limits in all Great Lakes Region countries should be enforced and respected.
- MPs to the East African Assembly should be directly elected through adult suffrage.
- The culture of tolerance and dialogue should be promoted in all institutions of governance and politics.
- All countries in the region should allow multiparty politics and hold regular free and fair elections.
- All decision and policy making institutions should have at least 30% of their membership from youth
- Deliberate efforts should be made to promote a culture of constitutionalism and to strengthen institutions that enhance greater accountability, democracy, and citizen participation
- Efforts should be made to recognize the sovereignty of nations in the GLR in order to reduce negative external pressures and influences.
- Put an end to unilateral military hot-pursuits by countries in the region and instead put in place regional frameworks and mechanisms for collectively handling such challenges across borders.
- The government and the private sector should work together to develop incentive programs that would minimize brain drain so as to retain critical man power for utilization in the building of countries of the GLR.
- The GLR youth league national chapters from each country should explore ways and means of working in partnership with their respective governments, private sector, and the civil society in ensuring that the recommendations made in this declaration and issues adopted from this conference are followed up and implemented.
- Reinforce the on-going decentralization process by availing sufficient facilities including funds to the lower structures.

- Consult the population at all times while designing policies affecting their well-being.
- Guarantee the independence of the judicial system and other arms of government.
- Fight against all forms of injustice by empowering national institutions charged with exposing and punishing the perpetrators of injustice in society.
- Establish and/or strengthen institutions guaranteeing good governance and democracy. In particular, the African Peer Review mechanism should be adhered to and supported by all regional countries.
- Put in place, promote and nurture National Youth structures, youth forums and networks with consultative status and incorporating our ideas into national development plans.
- Establish a comprehensive youth policy and plan of action in each country of the GLR with a clear set of priorities for the full and effective participation of youth in the decisionmaking processes.
- Work towards an economic community of the Great Lakes countries.

#### **4.4.1 The UN, AU and the International Community**

- Support democratic processes being implemented by Regional States.

#### **4.4.2 The Civil Society**

The civil society should actively get involved in the democratic process and intensify advocacy and the campaign of civic education among the populace;

- Safeguard its objectivity in its activities.
- Expand their operations to include the rural areas



- 4.4.3 The Youth  
The youth in the region should:

- Participate actively in decision making processes affecting their welfare;
- Participate in maintaining national security;
- Develop a sense of patriotism and Pan Africanism;
- Advocate for special mechanisms to deal with the question of youth in the NEPAD framework of operation.

## **5.0 HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

### **5.1 Issues and Challenges Identified**

The meeting identified the following humanitarian and social challenges that incapacitate youth participation in development:

- HIV/AIDS
- Gender disparities
- Refugees and IDPs
- Food security
  - The search for food is a central issue in the region which has made local people refugees in their own countries.
  - Youth are not involved in farming and general agriculture.
  - Land crisis a growing problem.
  - The advent of genetically modified crops may pose a danger to the region and will also lead to the demise of traditional foods.
  - Subsistence farming not sustainable in providing enough food supplies.
- Conflicts

- Unemployment
- Rampant nepotism in the industries and employment situations
- Prostitution
- Poverty
- Bad governance
- , Poor education system
- The education system is not relevant to modern reality. Computer education comes very late in the education curriculum.
- There is lack of information technology equipment in learning institutions to keep up with the modernisation.
- Natural disasters
- Privatisation - External investors are usually equipped with their experts at the expense of the locals.

## **5.2 Strategies**

The following are the strategies that have been proposed to be deployed in the resolution of the identified problems and issues of concern:

- Slum upgrading and improving living conditions in Refugees and IDP camps was called for.
- Structural policies governing HIV/AIDS programs should be devolved to the grass root levels to have an impact.
- Censorship to pornographic material in the media and Internet.
- Enhancing positive cultural values to arrest increasing immorality.
- Education should be a tool for empowerment of the youth and other citizens of the region.

- Establish and facilitate a strong regional framework to advocate for protection and assistance of youth participation in leadership, democracy and governance.
- Advocate and support Universal and Free Girl Child Education in the countries of the GLR.
- Empowerment and fair treatment of refugees and IDPs with capacity building for youth activities in the camps.
- Spread and strengthen disaster awareness and preparedness in the GLR Countries to avert the adverse effects of the said disasters in the event of their occurrence.
- Sensitisation of the youth on issues of gender mainstreaming.
- Addressing of negative cultural practises.
- A thorough evaluation of the security situation should be done before repatriation with creation of conducive environments to re-instate the returnees in their communities.
- The media should be involved to highlight the plight of refugees and IDPs situation in camps in order to expose and prevent other atrocities being committed against them.
- Inclusion of affirmative action in the GLR country constitutions as well as in other national laws. Also work towards adoption of regional treaties and instruments to promote affirmative action.
- Diversification of the agricultural products.
- Application of ICT in agriculture

### **5.3.1 Actions**

The following courses of action are recommended:

#### **5.3.1 HIV/AIDS**

- Youth friendly VCT centres should be established and made accessible to both urban and rural youth.

- There is need for youth participation at all levels of implementing HIV/AIDS programs.
- ARVs should be made accessible to youth free of charge.
- Young infected people should be involved in HIV/AIDS programs and equipped with skills on positive living.
- Introducing and enhancing life saving skills in the education curriculum would go a long way in the prevention of HIV/AIDS.
- Accessibility to Reproductive Health Services should be made easier.

### **5.3.2      Gender Disparities**

- Respect for human rights
- Criminalisation of sexual abuse and rape.

### **5.3.3      Refugees and IDPs**

- A regional body and funding institution to facilitate access of funds for the refugees and the IDPS is imperative.
- Rehabilitation centres for psychosocial support should be put in place.
- Exchange program between refugee youth and other youth in the region are necessary for them to share experiences.
- Expanding the scout movement to assist in the camps also to involve Scouts and Guide movements in implementing immunization programs, HIV/AIDS, etc in the camps.
- Protection of refugees and IDPs and also ascertaining the settlement of the camps away from the borders.

- Extend the refugees' support to the local host community to curb tensions.
- Truth and reconciliation commissions to be established to reinforce unity and reconciliation in many of the countries of the GLR.
- Involve civil society organizations to sensitise the refugee population on their rights and duties.

#### **5.3.4      Food Security**

- Adequate power generation for use in agriculture industrialisation.
- Fishing must be promoted since we have an abundance of water bodies in the region.
- Imported canned foods may be dangerous and should be discouraged.
- Training of agriculturalists to improve agriculture productivity.
- Taxation regimes should encourage the importation of agriculture equipment and technology.
- General infrastructure and communication in the rural areas to act as incentives to young people.
- Deliberate attempts should be made to establish a policy that guarantees a market for regional products.
- Utilitisation of Lake Victoria should be optimised for mutual benefit of the region.
- A Regional Fund for agro-based projects should be promoted
- A Common Market in the GLR states should be established.

- Enough storage capacity for food should be installed and used by governments to prevent shortage.
- Cross border networking and food exchange and trade should be introduced and promoted to curb regional shortages and food imbalance.
- Youth through CBO and experts should support the local people in agricultural project management.
- Food hygiene and nutritional value should be key concerns in production, processing and storage.
- A Regional Committee involving the youth should be formed to address the emerging issues in the area of food security.
- Introduce drought resistant crops and animals into the Great Lakes Region.
- Governments of the region should provide agricultural subsidies.

### **5.3.5 Unemployment**

The following are the actions considered to check youth unemployment:

- Lack of experience should be exempted for the youth and internship programmes promoted.
- Retirement age must be considered to give room to the youth. • Skills imparted to youth must be relevant in employment market to allow absorption of the said youth.
- Governments should develop policies for job creation and develop youth friendly laws allowing for labour mobility and stability to promote investment.
- Youth should be integrated in the employment environment by involving them in decision-making on matters of employment.

- Affirmative action for the youth in political and socio-economic spheres.
- Employability of young people must be assessed and evaluated.
- Young people should be vigorously involved in practical exchange programmes within the region instead of engaging experts from outside the region.
- Establishment of youth fund within the region for them to set up business enterprises.
- Discourage retrogressive cultural practices, which retard youth development by way of school drop out, early marriages, etc.
- Protection of local industries in respect to liberalisation providing for participation of locals through ownership, management and employment.

### **5.,3.5 Prostitution**

- Legalise prostitution after a thorough study of the social implications.
- Set up Rehabilitation Centres for prostitutes who intend to go back to normal lives.
- Creation of jobs.

## **6.0 REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

We the youth of the GLR Countries observe that regional integration and economic development have for long eluded our countries and that there is need to redirect our efforts towards finding a way out of this unacceptable situation.

### **6.1 Factors responsible for economic underdevelopment**

We consider the following to be among the factors impeding economic development in the Great Lakes Region:

- High levels of poverty
- Increasing youth unemployment
- High levels of illiteracy • High debt levels
- Low productivity levels (GDP)
- Low market access because of inter-state tariffs and quotas
- High population growth and Low per-capita income
- Lack of political will among our leaders
- Distortion in planning (poor planning)
- Under-utilization of resources
- Political instability
- Internal and external conflicts
- Rampant corruption
- Lack of long range strategic vision and commitment among leaders
- Globalization - unfair world trade regimes
- Weak civil society and can't provide necessary checks and balances
- High burden of disease especially HIV/AIDS pandemic and malaria; poor health affects productivity
- Low levels of technology in key sectors of agriculture and industry in our economies
- Poor Infrastructure and social services (health, transport and communication etc)
- Low investment in human resource development
- Failure to develop indigenous capital bases
- Integration efforts have been at the level of Leaders and have failed to involve citizens



- Lack of political will of leaders and fear of losing sovereignty
- Lack of significant synergy between the existing Regional Integration initiatives (i.e. COMESA, EAC, IGAD, IOR-ARC).

## **6.2 Challenges to Regional Integration**

- Globalizations and unfair world trade practices
- Integration efforts has been at the level of Leaders and has failed to involve citizens
- Lack of political will of leaders and fear of losing sovereignty
- Low interstate trade because of similarity of products because almost all GLR countries depend on Agriculture
- Internal and external conflicts Interference by foreign powers Lack of access to credit to youth and other entrepreneurs

## **6.3 Recommendations**

### **6.3.1 Strategies**

- We propose the following strategies to foster regional integration and economic development in the GLR:
- Improve access to credit facilities for youth and other entrepreneurs to invest and create more jobs, goods and services
- Supporting our continent's and regional initiatives for economic development and NEPAD in particular

Emphasising human resource development

- Harmonisation and rationalisation of the education system
- Promotion of a common language for the region to facilitate regional integration and economic development.

- Creation of youth economic networks across the region
- Promote new class of agricultural and industrial entrepreneurs
- Develop a customs union towards a political federation in the future
- Civil society should play a key role by closely monitoring the use of grants and loans from financial institutions
- Improve security situation within the region

- Promotion of small scale enterprises
- Promote the use of technology in agriculture
- Promotion of gender equity

### 6.3.2 Actions

We recommend the following courses of action to facilitate regional integration and economic development of the Great Lakes Region:

- Engendering the utilisation of Information Communication Technology in the region.
- Promote optimum utilization of resources.
- Develop a regional employment strategy and policies which allow for free movement of labour within the GLR and facilitate work permits for citizens of countries of GLR to seek and obtain employment any where in the region.
- Government and other stake holders should actively involve the youth in policy making processes.
- Regional Anti-corruption body that involves the civil society and youth be established and made operational.
- Evolve through a consultative process that involves all stake holders, including youth, a Regional development plan for economic Development.
- Foster harmonization of membership to existing regional trade blocs.
- Advocate for Unconditional Debt cancellation.
- Investment in infrastructure (Social and physical).

- Establish national funds to finance youth entrepreneurial initiatives.
- Establish a regional development bank.
- Develop schemes aimed at supporting youth-led projects.
- Rationalize land tenure (promote large scale commercial farming)

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

After a critical reflection on the factors affecting peace and security, good governance and democracy, humanitarian and social issues as well as human rights, regional integration and economic development in our region and particularly reflecting on the daunting task of reversing the negative trends experienced by the people of the GLR on all the four thematic areas addressed by the conference, we note that the youth should be enabled to play a pivotal role as active participants as partners and architects of a greater future. We can only be able to build for that future using the tools, skills, and resources put to our disposal by the present leadership and development agencies.

We the youth have made several recommendations as indicated under the respective thematic areas contained in this declaration and do hereby state that there should be 'NOTHING PROCLAIMED FOR YOUTH WITHOUT THE YOUTH.'