



AFRICAN YOUTH WATER FORUM

“One Continent. One Vision. One Voice.”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AFRICAN YOUTH WATER FORUM COMMEMORATES INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2026 WITH A CALL FOR MEANINGFUL YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN WATER GOVERNANCE

The African Youth Water Forum (AYWF) joined young people, organisations and stakeholders across Africa and beyond on **12 August 2026** to commemorate **International Youth Day 2026** under the global theme “**Different Contexts, Common Aspirations.**”

The Forum organised a continental virtual dialogue under the focus:

“Youth Leading Water Governance Across Africa.”

The dialogue brought together young people, water professionals, researchers, advocates, students, civil society organisations and other stakeholders from different countries to reflect on the role of youth in shaping Africa's water future.

The event provided an opportunity to recognise the diverse realities facing young people while highlighting the common aspirations that unite them, including access to quality education, meaningful participation, decent opportunities, dignity, sustainable development and a secure future.

Youth and Africa's Water Future

Speaking during the dialogue, the African Youth Water Forum emphasised that young people must be recognised not only as beneficiaries of development programmes but as **active partners, leaders, innovators, researchers and advocates** in sustainable development.

The Forum stressed that young people must have meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives and communities, particularly in areas such as water governance, climate resilience, WASH, environmental sustainability and development planning.

Across Africa, young people are already contributing to solutions to water challenges through community action, research, innovation, advocacy, entrepreneurship and knowledge sharing. However, greater investment, inclusion and institutional support are needed to enable youth -led solutions to grow and influence policy and practice.

Four Key Areas of Discussion

The continental dialogue explored four key areas:

- **Youth and Water Governance**
- **Youth Leadership and Participation**
- **Research, Innovation and Knowledge Management**
- **Policy, Advocacy and Storytelling**

The discussions highlighted the importance of creating spaces where young people can move beyond consultation and become meaningful contributors to water -related decision-making.

The speakers brought diverse experiences and perspectives to the conversation, including **Robert Strand**, Founder and Director of the **World Water Film Festival**, USA; **Gauri Nimbalkar**, a representative from **United Nation's Major Group for Children and Youth**, Malawi; **Kekesi Defoe**, Co-Convener of the **African Youth Water Forum** and Director of the Foundation for Environmental Watch, Ghana; and **Angella Nakkungu** Student Leader, and World Bank Scholar at **IHE Delft Institute for Water Education**, Netherland

Their contributions demonstrated the value of connecting youth leadership with research, innovation, advocacy, storytelling and governance in addressing Africa's water challenges.

Introducing the New AYWF Coordinating Council

A key part of the International Youth Day commemoration was the formal introduction of the **new African Youth Water Forum Coordinating Council members**.

The new Coordinating Council brings together young leaders and professionals with diverse skills and experiences who will contribute to the Forum's continental work and support its growing network of young people across Africa.

The Council will contribute to areas including **water governance, research and innovation, policy and advocacy, communication and media, partnerships and resource mobilisation, programmes, monitoring and evaluation, and regional coordination.**

The introduction marks an important milestone in the development of AYWF as a growing continental platform committed to strengthening youth leadership in Africa's water sector.

A Call for Meaningful Youth Participation

The African Youth Water Forum used the occasion to call on governments, development partners, civil society organisations, academia, the private sector and water institutions to create more meaningful opportunities for young people to participate in decision -making.

Towards Water Security for All

The International Youth Day dialogue forms part of AYWF's broader commitment to building a connected continental platform where young people can collaborate, exchange knowledge, advocate for change and develop innovative solutions to Africa's water challenges.

The Forum's vision is: Water Security For All

AYWF remains committed to empowering young people to contribute to a future where water is **safe, sufficient, sustainable, equitable and climate -resilient** for communities across Africa.

The Forum further encourages young people to continue using their voices, knowledge, creativity and leadership to address water challenges in their communities and contribute to broader national, regional and continental solutions.

About the African Youth Water Forum

The **African Youth Water Forum (AYWF)** is a continental youth platform committed to strengthening youth leadership and participation in water governance and advancing water security across Africa.

AYWF connects young people, youth -led organisations, professionals, researchers, policymakers and partners to exchange knowledge, promote innovation, advocate for change and collaborate towards a water-secure Africa.

ENDS: Different Contexts. Common Aspirations.
Youth Leading Water Governance Across Africa.

SIGNED

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