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FACT SHEET: The President's Young African Leaders Initiative

President Obama launched the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) in 2010 as a signature initiative that supports young African leaders as they work to spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across the continent.

Investing in the next generation of African leaders is critical to ensuring the success of Africa's democracies and its economies. One in three Africans is between the ages of 10 and 24, and approximately 60 percent of Africa's total population is below the age of 35. Through YALI, the United States is investing in the next generation of African leaders, and has committed significant resources to enhance leadership skills, bolster entrepreneurship, and connect young African leaders with one another, with the United States, and with the American people.

Engaging Young African Leaders Who Will Shape the Continent's Future

President Obama has been personally engaged in YALI from the beginning. His 2010 Forum with Young African Leaders brought young African leaders to the White House for an interactive exchange and dialogue on leadership, youth empowerment, and good governance.

Annual capstone events have helped to build new networks of leaders and underscore high-level U.S. support for their futures - including a 2011 Young African Women Leaders Forum in South Africa with First Lady Michelle Obama and a 2012 Innovation Summit and Mentoring Partnership that brought young Africans to the United States for internships with U.S. companies.

YALI participants have leveraged this support and gone on to start youth-driven organizations and networks, advise their governments, and establish new and vibrant businesses - all showcasing the extraordinary talent and promise of the young leaders who are transforming the African continent and their communities.

Taking Action on the Continent

Engagement with young African leaders has become a key focus of U.S. engagement in sub-Saharan Africa and a priority for our embassies and USAID missions. Since 2010, U.S. Embassies have accelerated outreach to young Africans and scaled up programs to train and support aspiring business and civic leaders across the continent. The U.S. Government has created opportunities for young Africans to engage with U.S. Government officials, businesses, and citizens by establishing Embassy Youth Councils in 25 countries. High-level U.S. officials regularly meet with young leaders during their travel to the continent. In total, since 2010, the U.S. Government has held over 2,000 events across the continent aimed at developing the next generation of Africa's civic and business leaders.

In May 2011, our "Dialogue with Young African Leaders" included more than 200 events in 37 countries in a single month. That dialogue included Embassy-sponsored events on the continent and online engagement. It identified new U.S. partners, provided critical feedback on U.S. Government youth programs, and created a platform for a diverse set of young people to share their vision for the future.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, has also partnered with the African Union (AU) as the AU seeks to mainstream the participation of youth in all of its activities, including by funding pre-deployment training for 100% of the participants in the AU Youth Volunteer Corps and supporting the placement of AU Youth Volunteers in multiple African Union departments. The United States is also partnering with the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, and The Tony Elumelu Foundation to support the development of young African leaders throughout the continent.

Committing Resources to Developing Young Talent

Since 2010, the State Department has held fifteen exchanges specifically for young African leaders and sponsored 1,283 sub-Saharan scholars through its educational and cultural affairs programs. U.S. Embassies have awarded small grants totaling \$750,000 to YALI alumni groups supporting youth development in Africa. Other State Department-led efforts, such as LIONS @FRICA and Apps4Africa, have focused on building an entrepreneurial ecosystem to encourage broad-based economic growth and opportunity for young entrepreneurs - partnering with the private sector to run startup competitions, grow incubators, and develop innovative new products to address local and business and development needs.

USAID has worked with local governments and institutions to strengthen access to education, workforce training, and skills development to help young Africans develop the skills needed to enter the labor force. Since YALI's inception, USAID has invested more than \$100 million in over 76 partnerships with African universities to help train a

new generation of African leaders in health, agriculture, education, environmental science, technology, and other sectors.

Currently USAID's Higher Education Solutions Network – a \$25 million per year program – partners with African and U.S. higher education institutions, using science, technology and engineering to educate future leaders and research solutions for the greatest challenges in development. To further expand YALI, USAID will establish regional hubs to enhance leadership and training opportunities in Africa and better leverage over \$200 million in ongoing youth programs and initiatives, such as university partnerships and vocational training, on the continent.

Other Departments and Agencies have reoriented their programs and strategies to contribute to the goal of empowering and providing opportunities for youth in Africa. The Department of Labor, for example, is investing in efforts to promote safe youth employment and business opportunities as alternatives to child labor, including a new \$3 million program in Uganda to educate and train youth for quality jobs. The U.S. African Development Foundation is investing \$5 million in training and placing thousands of Somali youth in paid internships and jobs, in addition to supporting small business start-ups.

Introducing the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders

The Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders that President Obama announced today represents a major expansion of U.S. investment in the continent's next cadre of leaders. Through this effort, the U.S. will develop a network of thousands of young African leaders across key sectors for Africa's growth and development.

The Washington Fellowship will bring 500 young leaders to U.S. universities and colleges each year for academic and leadership training, beginning in 2014, with the goal of increasing to 1000 participants per year within five years. Fellows will receive world-class training and mentoring in three vital areas: business and entrepreneurship; civic leadership; and public administration.

The leaders' experience in the United States will include a Presidential Summit in Washington, D.C. where Washington Fellows will interact with U.S. government, civic, and business leaders, including President Obama.

With the support of private and public sector partners, Washington Fellows will have access to exceptional opportunities including internships and placements with companies and NGOs and small grants to start businesses, establish or expand non-governmental organizations, or undertake projects to improve their communities.

Regional enrichment seminars, an on-line community, and a vibrant alumni network across Africa will also support Washington Fellows as they seek innovative solutions to local and global challenges. The United States, in conjunction with leading private sector partners such as Boeing, Ethiopian Air, and Microsoft, will support the Washington Fellows in pursuing these opportunities. More information on this flagship program can be found at <http://youngafricanleaders.state.gov>.

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