

**Concept Note**

**Model African Union**

**African Union Commission HQ, Addis Ababa**

**October 2018**

# Background

The foundation of the African Union (AU) in 2002 was a milestone on the path to a more peaceful and prosperous African continent. Moving forward from the mandate of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to liberate the continent from colonialism, the AU pursues the transformation of the continent to a peaceful, democratic and prosperous actor within the next 50 years as outlined in its Agenda 2063. However, the challenges to implementation of continental AU resolutions at the national level has negative implications on the African people as well as the acceptance and recognition of the AU itself as a strong and capable institution.

The Agenda 2063 sets very high political, economic and social targets for the AUC and member states, inspired by future development and innovations. Driving this agenda requires strong leadership and guidance of the AU; it also requires strong leadership capacities for implementation at member states levels. This is particularly important as the current youth population on the continent will translate into the future leadership of the continent and the AU. There is recognition, in Africa and globally, that investing in young people and empowering them for leadership and effective civic engagement, can contribute positively to the achievement of development outcomes set in Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 on the Sustainable Development Goals. Both Agendas recognise the critical agency of young people and emphasise inclusivity and broad participation as well as the principle of leaving no-one behind. The AUC Youth Engagement strategy seeks to strengthen the relationship between African youth and the AUC, as well as encourage young people's ownership of the development of the continent towards the realisation of Agenda 2063.

It is against this background that the AU Human Resources, Science and Technology (HRST) Commission in partnership with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) seeks to convene a Model African Union (MAU) with African youth. The MAU ties in with the AUC strategies that work towards eliminating barriers to achieve active participation of young people and aims to identify solutions and opportunities that contribute to their development. It offers a unique opportunity for African Youth to study and familiarise themselves with the AU through simulating the decision-making process. This serves to enhance the leadership and decision-making capabilities of African Youth and educate them through practice on diplomatic behaviour through negotiation, consensus building and compromise to become active stakeholders in the vision, mission and activities of the AU.

# Objectives of the M-AU

The MAU is a simulation of the AU as participants assume the role of representatives of African governments. They represent various countries and participate in debates about current issues in the AU agenda, culminating in the drafting of resolutions to address current African challenges.

Specifically, role-playing in a Model AU meeting should enable them to:

* Understand the concern and hopes of people in different countries and regions of the continent.
* Acquiring in-depth knowledge of the African Union’s priorities and functions and building foundational skills to integrate these functions across member states.
* Learn about the potential influence of the AU in global governance.
* Formulating a holistic approach to identify problems, develop solutions, and adapt change.
* Building strategic skills for effective decision making, strategy development, and implementation.
* Developing a personal leadership philosophy.

# General Outcomes

At the end of this program, participants would be able to:

* Understand the complexities and accomplishments of continental solidarity.
* Understand challenges and barriers hindering full empowerment of African Youth.
* Understand strategies to accelerate popular participation of the Youth in the affairs of the AU.
* Identify and propose critical areas of investment in youth.

# Format

## Basic Components of the Model AU

There are three basic components of the Model AU:

* Preparation
* Role-Playing
* Evaluation

## Preparation

The first step is to prepare the youth/students to be delegates (representatives of governments) by researching and acquiring knowledge about following three areas:

1. The country they are to represent.
2. The subject or issue on the agenda.
3. The work of the AU related to the subject or issues.

The process begins with researching the country which they represent to know basic facts, including economic and political systems; social structures and values, cultural, national and international priorities, which may affect its policies. Such information can be found in an up-to-date encyclopedia, articles, research papers or similar sources. They may also want to contact the nearest diplomatic mission/embassy of the country. Furthermore, participants try to get a sense of how a delegate thinks and reacts to these circumstances. The objective of their research is to ascertain the ways in which their country perceives and collaborates with the AU and its application to their country’s interests and policies. The country research segment of their preparation is an ongoing activity, which will take considerable time.

The second stage of the preparation focuses on understanding the issues or subjects that are on the Model AU agenda. Besides informing themselves about the subject, they have to deduce what their country’s views may be on these matters.

The last stage of their research focuses on the AU system and its work. Understanding the role and functions of the various parts of the AU system on the issues and concerns is essential to their roles as delegates. This part of their research helps them better understand the role the AU plays in continental affairs and how the AU operates as a diplomatic policy-setting body for the African community.

## Role-Playing

The second component of the Model AU experience is the application of the information and knowledge acquired during the preparation stages. During the simulation, the delegates are “official” representatives of the countries to which they have been assigned. Their purpose representing the AU member states is to address the issues and the problems on the agenda and to develop a workable resolution which the largest number of nations can support, through simulating the organs and processes of the African Union.

The Model AU meetings are governed by rules of parliamentary procedure, which provide the ways and means for countries to express their views, to consider proposals and resolutions, and to come to decisions on resolving the issues and concerns on the agenda.

They will have two principal concerns

1. To express the perspective of the country they represent to share the ideas and experiences of "their" government and procuring a resolution acceptable to "their" country;
2. To contribute to developing a continental response fair to all nations.

## Evaluation

At the end of the simulation, delegates engage in a debriefing session to collate the learnings from the simulation, as well as an evaluation of the processes of the simulation.

The purposes of the evaluation will be to understand the following:

* What did the meeting accomplish from the viewpoint of the country represented?
* How closely did the Model AU simulate the real AU?

Delegates would also be encouraged to re-visit the embassies of the countries which they represented in the preparation phase to provide feedback on their experiences and to share the lessons learned.

# Participants & Partners

The M-AU is aimed at max. 110 African Youth and Students from all five African regions to have at least one representative of each member state for the role-playing. They will be comprised of:

* Students from senior high schools and African universities
* Representatives from national and regional youth organisations especially those dealing with young people's affairs
* Youth formations/networks and young leaders from the diaspora

These include and will be targeted through the FES Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) and fesmedia Africa (app. 40), African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AUYVC), Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, and other partners of HRST and FES on the continent. The Model African Union Tunisia supports the MAU by giving input to the sessions and preparations.

# Framework

Venue: AU Headquarters, Addis Ababa

Timeframe: October 2018

# Budget

The FES proposes a budget of 50.000 Euros; this depends on the availability of funds though and will be responsible for the expenses (flight tickets, full board accommodation, local transport and visa reimbursement). The AUC will be responsible for the Conference venue, translation, refreshment and visa facilitation.