

Marrakech February 7th, 2019

Framework for the second university of young leaders of African civil society

Africa, a continent of so many contrasts, shines bright with its economic as well as human potential, and suffers from the barriers that cut off this very potential.

Africa has many assets including: huge areas of farmland, incredible mining resources, not to mention its youth. Today, these assets make Africa the continent offering the most investment and employment opportunities, as evidenced by the fact that within a decade, some African countries that had been ravaged by famine or civil war were able to emerge and achieve record rates of economic growth. However, in order to continue to meet and support Africa's development challenge, a skilled and well-trained workforce is required. To achieve this, we need to invest in education, training, and applied research, mainly for young people. Indeed, Africa is the region of the world in which the population is youngest, so they must be adequately trained in accordance with the new economic, technological and social realities. Unfortunately this does not seem to be the case since, despite this growth and employment opportunities, each year twelve million young Africans enter the labor market, but only three million manage to be hired (African Development Bank), the others are hired in informal precarious jobs, immigrate, or are recruited by different factions of war or even terrorism. Though it is an indisputable asset, this youth and human capital which are so likely to create wealth and support economic and social development, are far from valued because of the policies followed in terms of education and socioeconomic development in several African countries.

It is important, in order to preserve this growth and ensure sustainable development, to act on several axes by lifting barriers, be they of customs or mobility of skills, to innovate in all sectors, particularly the energy sector (600 million Africans still live in darkness today), industry, agriculture and ICTs. This development must be achieved in an integrated and inclusive way in which all the principal actors (State, private sector and civil society) must combine their efforts and harmonize their actions.

It is with this perspective and impetus that many civil demonstrations and actions have emerged.

Indeed, a true development of our Continent remains an urgent and fundamental imperative. It is not only about enhancing the natural and human resources of the continent, but also about developing development strategies in which young people will be the locomotive and the fuel of this development process through an innovative, ambitious and motivated approach.

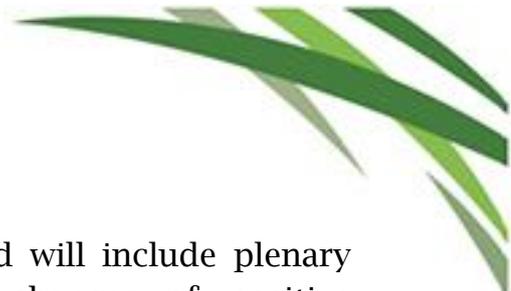
Our country of Morocco, for example, is well engaged on this path with the growing involvement of its companies, universities and banking institutions. Added to this is the political will of Morocco expressed by His Majesty time and again to fully play its role as an African country that was one of the pillars in the creation of the Organization of African Unity.

In this spirit, Moroccan civil society has joined forces with other actors to strengthen our country's ties with the rest of the continent. The CDRT, an association recognized as a public utility since 2006, was a precursor in this engagement in Africa. For example, its involvement in Morocco in a project financed by the African Development Bank (ADB) since 2010, its participation in various forums of African civil society, the organization of two universities for youth in civil society in the Maghreb countries, respectively in 2012 and 2013, and finally the organization of an African university in 2018 with the support of several partners including the OCP, the city council of Marrakech, the AfDB, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Cadi Ayyad University, and the UM6P. The CDRT's efforts, leadership, social involvement, and expertise have recently been recognized by the AfDB, which selected it as the representative of civil society in the North Africa region.

The first African university of young leaders of civil society, organized by the CDRT in 2018, was a great success with the participation of 120 young people from more than twenty French and English speaking African countries. It was an opportunity for young people to debate the tops five developed by ADB experts, namely, to nourish, enlighten, educate, integrate and improve the quality of life of Africans, in the presence of African, French and Canadian experts.

Afterwards, they debated and discussed the possibilities offered to them to play their full role as young leaders.

Building on this first success and the success of the first university of African youth, the CDRT with the support of its partners will organize the second university of young leaders of African civil society on July 25, 26, 27 and 28, 2019 at Mohamed VI polytechnic University (Marrakech region). The chosen theme is: "Youth, innovation and development in Africa".



The work of this edition will be spread over 4 days and will include plenary conferences, lectures, workshops, testimonials and exchanges of positive experiences. These activities will be supervised by a host of university professors, international experts and financial and administrative managers as well as economic actors. Also on the margins of this meeting will be cultural and artistic activities reflecting the richness and diversity of the African cultural heritage.

This meeting is an opportunity to reflect, propose and carry out actions that promote a culture of innovation by focusing on the role of young people and emphasizing the need for innovation for the sustainable development of Africa.

Several axes will be explored during the debates and programmed activities:

- Innovation strategies in Africa,
- The importance of collaboration and partnerships with civil society to inclusively deliver the African's priorities,
- Actors and mechanisms of innovation for sustainable development,
- Leveraging CSO value addition for a successful advocacy regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-Agenda 2030),
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation,
- Smart cities in Africa.

Note prepared by the members of the Africa-CDRT commission