



PRESS STATEMENT

ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' AGENDA FOR THE YOUTH PAINTS BLEAK PICTURE FOR SOME CANDIDATES

(July 24, 2017) Youth constitute 51% (aged 18—35) of the voters registered as indicated by the IEBC records. Despite this significant number, youth remain an arm's length from the government ranks of policy formulation and implementation, hence leaving them unengaged, unresponsive and disoriented. To scale up the youth agenda, Youth Agenda in a groundbreaking move, initiated and administered Presidential and Gubernatorial Candidates' Questionnaires. Candidates were requested to respond by addressing youth interests ranging from unemployment, youth inclusivity in government at county and national levels (through key appointments in government), affirmative action mechanisms, skills development, youth participation and effective implementation of policies and legislation in the greater interest of the youth, tackling mismanagement of sports and arts and ease of doing business amongst youth entrepreneurs among others.

The responses from candidates were to be published to inform over 10Million youth of their Presidential and Gubernatorial candidates youth policy positions, commitments and priorities. Regrettably, very few candidates have responded to the questions from youth and have subsequently evaded platforms provided that would allow them to share their youth agenda.

Youth Agenda has in the alternative, analysed available presidential candidates' manifestos to assess the extent to which they respond to youth agenda by way of proposed interventions.

First, we note with concern that of the 8 Presidential Candidates cleared by IEBC to participate in the 8th August General Election, only 4 had manifestos published and available online at the time of content development. Those available and reviewed include National Super Alliance,

Jubilee Party, Third way Alliance and Prof Michael Wainaina an Independent Candidate Manifestos.

Secondly, on reduction of youth unemployment which is the number one youth need, Jubilee's Party and Prof Michael Wainaina Manifesto have articulated the specific youth policy and programmatic actions to be undertaken with a clear mention of youth. NASA and Thirdway Alliance have captured job creations interventions but not highlighted how the youth as a constituency will be benefit.

Young People in the administered questionnaire had questions on measures that the candidates will take in terms of establishing youth institutional and policy frameworks. Our findings were that only Jubilee and Prof Michael have outlined youth related institutions that they propose to establish or expand.

On the question of ease of doing business for young people; Jubilee Party, Thirdway Alliance and Prof Wainaina have detailed their intervention. NASA has on the other hand commit to "honor repayment obligation to genuine creditors and agree on sustainable payment Programmes" This has not mentioned youth as beneficiary but can only be assumed they will be part of the beneficiaries (which leaves a gap of doubt with respect to commitment on the youth interests.

In terms of skills enhancement; all the Parties and Candidates have clearly articulated their policy and intervention towards youth with non-being ambiguous on its beneficiaries

Youth Inclusion and Participation- Manifestos of all the four candidates/party/coalition have elaborate and progressive commitments on youth inclusion.

- Jubilee promises to "expand youth participation in national development and guarantee 30% of all appointments, projects and budgets to youth";
- NASA commits to "establish a government that reflects representation of the Kenyan nation including fair representation of youth";
- The Thirdway Alliance commits to "form a cabinet where at least 1/3 is youth and women with a view of making it a 50-50 Cabinet, structure senior government appointment to ensure 50% appointments are women and youth"; and

- Prof Wainaina commits to enact people-driven constitutional reforms to amend Chapter 7,8 &11 of the Constitution to achieve 50% representation of youth in National and County government.

Tackling Mismanagement of Sports and Arts- All Manifestos have clear indications of their plans to prioritize and safeguard Kenya's Sports and Art Industry. However only Jubilee's manifesto explicitly highlights if the initiatives affirmatively benefit the youth.

It is important to state at this stage that the four manifestos assessed by Youth Agenda respond to the youth "ask" from their Presidential Candidates. However, in some of the thematic youth issues, candidates/ parties/ coalitions have failed to explicitly state how their documented policy will benefit the youth.

This ambiguity provides room for assumptions, question their commitment to youth agenda and or a complete failure to honour the constitutional requirement that obligates the state(in this case if elected) to take measures, including affirmative action programmes to ensure youth access relevant education and training, have opportunities to associate, be represented and participate in political, social, economic and other spheres of life, access employment and are protected from harmful cultural practices and exploitation(Article 55 of the Kenyan Constitution, 2010. It further presents a challenge of accountability due to the "dangling" agenda of youth in Presidential Candidates Manifestos.

Youth Agenda appreciates the evident lapse of time to influence changes in the respective manifestos of political parties, on the basis of the issues raised above, we strongly suggest as follows;

1. **THAT** presidential candidates and gubernatorial candidates must take youth interests very seriously and commit to out rightly engage and include the youth in their mainstream administration, to have them be part of policy formulators and implementers, so that young people can determine their own destiny;
2. **THAT** presidential and gubernatorial candidates must commit to specific key appointments that they will set aside for the youth in their administrations. Blanket commitments do not sell, because it will be hard to hold them to account;
3. **We** demand for significant policy shift at national and county levels on youth involvement in governance beyond peripheral participation;
4. **We** demand unwavering commitment from presidential and gubernatorial candidates, that whoever wins office, will commit, prioritise and accelerate payment of youth entrepreneurs who have rendered various services through AGPO;

5. **THAT** observing the growing anxiety over elections and with the benefit of our electoral history, all presidential candidates commit not to incite, influence, use or signal the youth supporters to violence or related activities before, during and after elections.

Signed by:

Javas Bigambo

Date: July 24, 2017

The Board Chairman

Susan K. Mwongera

Date: July 24, 2017

CEO