



مجلس الشباب العربي والإفريقي  
**AFRO-ARAB YOUTH COUNCIL (AAYC)**  
Conseil de la Jeunesse Arabo - Africaine

EXCERPT FROM  
**ANNIVERSARY  
REPORT**

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**YOUTH | CULTURE | PEACE | WELLBEING**

Website: [www.aayouthcouncil.com](http://www.aayouthcouncil.com)

# Executive Summary

The Afro Arab Youth Council (AAYC) is an International Organization that brings together young people of the African and Arab nations. It was founded in 2004 in Khartoum at a gathering of over 3000 youth from the African and Arab regions. The major objective of the AAYC is taking advantage of the existing commonalities between the Africans and Arabs to bring about unity, peace and development in these two regions.

Following the resolution of the AAYC General Assembly in 2008 during the 2<sup>nd</sup> gathering at Munyonyo Kampala to have the organization hosted in Uganda, the AAYC entered a Host Country Agreement with the Government of Uganda and H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni President of the Republic of Uganda is its patron. The AAYC is involved with a number of national, regional and international organizations, cultural, Educational, and similar institutions, in pursuit of its objectives.

From 3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024, Afro Arab Youth Council held activities to mark its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in partnership with the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO). The ICESCO is an international organization that promotes cooperation among its member states in the fields of education, science, culture, and communication. ICESCO aims to support the development of knowledge societies, preserve cultural heritage, and foster dialogue and understanding between different cultures and civilizations. It operates under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and serves as a platform for collaborative initiatives that address common challenges faced by the Islamic world, such as illiteracy, technological gaps, and cultural preservation.

The celebrations were held under the theme **“Youth, Peace, Culture and wellbeing”**, highlighting

the synergy between culture, sports and good health. It further encompassed the promotion of the culture of peace and good leadership among the young people in the African and Arab nations. This commemorated the two decades of promoting Peace, Unity and Development among youth in African and Arab nations.

The Anniversary provided an opportunity to reflect on AAYC’s achievements, address contemporary challenges faced by youth and set an agenda for future initiatives that align with AAYC’s mission and objectives.

The 20<sup>th</sup> AAYC anniversary not only commemorated past achievements of AAYC but also set the stage for future collaborations and youth empowerment witnessed by the signing of the Memorandum of understanding between AAYC and ICESCO on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. During the same period, signatures were appended on an MOU between AAYC and Pan African Youth union on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024.



*The AAYC team led by the SG were hosted by the Executive director of National Authority for Youth and Democracy in Morocco, Mr. Jamal Touissi.*

# Preparatory Activities

In the lead-up to the anniversary, a series of preparatory activities were conducted to ensure the event's success in and outside Uganda, with both the local and international organizations and governments as highlighted below. During the same period. The Afro Arab Youth Council worked closely with all its partners to coordinate these strategic meetings. Engagements with member countries and local communities were also prioritized to ensure broad participation and representation.



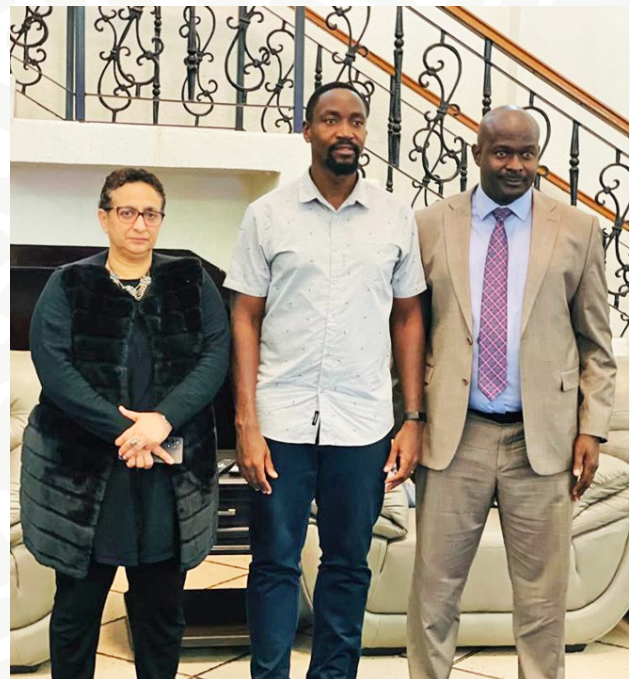
*The Minister for Youth, Culture and Communication of Morocco, Hon. Mohammed Mehdi Bensaid hosted the AAYC Executive team in preparations for the anniversary.*



*Hon. Dr. Agaba Abbas hosted by the Deputy Director General ISESCO in Morocco in the partnerships between ICESCO and AAYC*



*The Secretary General Pan-African Youth Union Hon Ahmed Bening Wiisichong hosted the AAYC SG and Deputy SG at their headquarters in Morocco.*



*His Royal Highness William Gabula Nadiopie IV the King of Busoga Kingdom in Uganda hosted the Afro Arab Youth council team at his Lubiri (Palace) on Igenge Hill in Jinja District where part of the AAYC anniversary activities were held.*



The Minister of Gender Labour and Social Development of Uganda, Hon Betty Amongi hosted the SG AAYC, Ms Ramata Mbaye of ICESCO & Ms Rosie Agoi at her office in Kampala as one of the AAYC Anniversary preparatory meetings.



The AAYC Secretary General Hon. Abbas, Deputy SG Ms. Amina Hilmi hosted by the Sec. General of the Arab Maghreb Union, Dr. Taieb Baccouche.

## Anniversary Program

The anniversary was marked by a series of events focusing on various aspects that were crucial for youth development in the African and Arab region.

1. Opening Ceremony (4<sup>th</sup> March, 2024). Held at Makerere University. This included a formal opening, an intergenerational dialogue on the future of young people in the African and Arab space and a fireside chat/ leadership training and mentorship program at Okot P'Bitek Pavilion.
2. Mental Health Day (5<sup>th</sup> March, 2024) at Kampala International University. This focused on the **"Plight of Persons with Mental Health Challenges"** and was officiated by First lady and Minister of Education and Sports of Uganda, and the launch of the ICESCO Youth Peace Ambassadors.
3. Sports and Cultural Day (6<sup>th</sup> March, 2024) conducted at Jinja Secondary school on the theme **"Sports and culture for wellbeing"**. This encompassed a marathon and a cultural show.
4. Tourism Day (7<sup>th</sup> March, 2024) highlighting **"Tourism for Good Health"**, this took place at Mabira Forest with a nature walk and Busowoko Falls in Jinja with Prof. Roland Lumumba as chief walker.

5. International Women's Day Celebrations (8<sup>th</sup> March, 2024) celebrated in Katakwi District, focusing on the empowerment and contributions of women on the theme **"Accelerating Gender Equality through Women Economic Empowerment"**.
6. Anniversary Day (9<sup>th</sup> March, 2024). This was the climax event at Islamic University in Uganda featuring a dialogue reflecting on youth Entrepreneurship, Skilling and participation in trade.

Over 100 delegates from AAYC member countries participated and the anniversary was graced by a number of distinguished guests, as highlighted below;

### Special Guests

The Afro Arab Youth Council (AAYC) welcomed over 100 delegates to Uganda between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024 through Entebbe International Airport. The delegates arrived from Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Nigeria, DRC, Senegal, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Bangladesh, Jordan, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Cameroon, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, to mention but a few and this delegation included special guests including;

1. H.E. Dr. Salim AlMalik, Director General, Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO)
2. Hon. Dr. Abdul Haddi Lahweej, the President of AAYC and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Libya.
3. Prof. Roland Lumumba, son of the Late Pan-Africanist Dr. Patrice Lumumba and the Chairperson Patrice Lumumba Foundation
4. Hon. Wiisichong Ahmed Bening, the Secretary General of the Pan African Youth Union.



*Prof. Roland Lumumba, son of the Late Pan-Africanist Dr. Patrice Lumumba and the Chairperson Patrice Lumumba Foundation (left) and H.E. Dr. Salim M. AlMalik the Director General of ICESCO (right) welcomed at the Airport with a bouquet of flowers from Haiza Ahumuza and Haifa Ankunda, respectively at Entebbe International Airport.*



*Hon. Dr. Abdul Haddi Lahweej, the President of AAYC and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Libya (right) and Hon. Wiisichong Ahmed Bening, the Secretary General of the Pan African Youth Union(left).*

# Opening Ceremony of the AAYC 20TH Anniversary.

The opening day of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations was held at Makerere University and comprised of three parts; the official opening ceremony of the anniversary activities hosted at the Yusuf Lule Auditorium, the intergenerational dialogue featuring different dignitaries interacting with the youth on the future of young people in the African and Arab space

and concluded with the fireside chat/ leadership and mentorship training program hosted at the Okot P'Bitek Pavillion, Makerere University.

The event attracted over 800 attendees, including policy makers, researchers, academia, students and youth activists from within Uganda along with over 100 delegates from across

the AAYC membership, Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), key continental and global institutions like the United Nations (UN), National Youth Councils & organizations like the Pan African Youth Union (PYU), Patrice Lumumba Foundation and Private Sector partners among others.



Visiting delegates at the opening ceremony



Prof. Alinaitwe and the Secretary General AAYC, Hon. Dr. Agaba Abbas giving opening remarks at the AAYC 20th anniversary's opening ceremony at Makerere University.

## Official Opening Ceremony

The ceremony was presided over by H.E Dr. Salim AlMalik, the Director General of the ICESCO as the chief guest and it hosted several speakers including; Hon. Dr. Lahweej Abdulhaddi, the President AAYC, Prof. Roland Lumumba, the Chairman of the Patrice Lumumba Foundation, Ms. Asmae Elhilali, the representative of the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication from Morocco, Ms. Rosie Agoi, the Secretary General of the UNESCO and ICESCO desk in Uganda, among others.

Prof. Henry Alinaitwe, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Finance and Administration at Makerere University warmly welcomed the guests and participants on behalf of the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University and appreciated AAYC

for choosing Makerere University to host their event.

The AAYC Secretary General thanked ICESCO for having partnered with Afro Arab youth council to mark its 20 years of existence and expressed gratitude to over 100 delegates from AAYC member states that honored the occasion including the ICESCO Youth Peace Ambassadors.

About the theme, the Secretary General said, *“The celebration’s theme was developed due to a surge in mental health issues among the youth, an issue which has upset the rest of the endeavors to ensure Youth, Peace and Development. Therefore, we intervene with a convention that through culture and tourism we can highlight the plight of mental health victims.”*

The Secretary General of the UNESCO and ICESCO desk in Uganda, Ms. Rosie Agoi, welcomed the guests to the Pearl of Africa, expressing what an honor it was for Uganda to host this meeting and expressed gratitude to ICESCO for their pivotal role in supporting Uganda during the Covid-19 pandemic through providing essential equipment to advance education.

The Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco, Ms. Asmae Elhilali of International Cooperation service-youth department represented the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication of Morocco. She emphasized the point of youth consciousness on the challenges of social inequality, climate change and peace. Ms. Elhilali’s participation in the anniversary celebrations strengthened Morocco’s commitment to support activities of the AAYC.



Hon. Dr. Abdulhadi Lahweej, the President AAYC (left) and Prof. Roland Lumumba addressing delegates at the 20th Anniversary Opening ceremony at Makerere University.



Ms. Rosie Agoi (left) and Ms. Asmae Elhilali (right) giving their welcome remarks at the opening.

The President of the AAYC Hon. Dr. Abdulhadi Lahweej highlighted the importance of youth engagement, dialogue, and solidarity in driving positive change and shaping the future of the African and Arab communities.

In his concluding remarks to the participants, he said, “As youth and leaders, we should focus on fighting poverty and ignorance rather than fighting ourselves”.

Renowned for his eloquence, insightful perspectives, and dedication to African development and Pan-Africanism,

he emphasized the importance of youth empowerment, leadership development, and continental unity. He also emphasized the need for African countries to harness their resources, both human and natural, to drive sustainable development and improve the livelihoods of their citizens.

## KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL ICESCO



*The Director General ICESCO H.E. Dr. Salim M. AlMalik addressing delegates and participants at the AAYC 20th anniversary opening ceremony.*

The Director General of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), H.E. Dr. Salim AlMalik presided as guest of honor at the anniversary. In his opening statement given ICESCO’s role as a specialized

organization within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), focusing on educational, scientific, and cultural cooperation among its member states.

Dr. AlMalik emphasized the importance of youth empowerment, education, and cultural exchange in fostering peace, development, and mutual understanding across borders. He highlighted ICESCO’s commitment to supporting initiatives that promote dialogue, tolerance, and cooperation among youth from diverse backgrounds, including those from African and Arab countries.

Dr. AlMalik also discussed ICESCO’s collaboration with AAYC in the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and other partners in jointly advancing youth-centric programs and projects aimed at addressing common challenges facing young people in the two regions.

## INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE ON THE FUTURE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AFRICAN AND ARAB SPACE

The intergenerational dialogue on ‘*The Future of Young People in the African and Arab Space*’ was designed as an open discussion on youth issues between the junior and senior leaders with special attention to what has made the senior leaders that can make the young ones. It provided a platform for participants to engage in meaningful exchanges, share insights, and explore collaborative opportunities between the young people and the dignitaries.

This dialogue featured a diverse panel of speakers, including prominent figures from various sectors such as academia, government, entrepreneurship, and civil society. Among the panelists were Prof. Roland Lumumba (Chairman of the Patrice Lumumba Foundation), H.E. Dr. Salim AlMalik (Director General of ICESCO), Prof. Maggie Kigozi, the former Vice Chancellor Nkumba University and Dr. Eya Essif, an entrepreneurial woman from Tunisia each bringing unique perspectives and experiences to the table.





*Prof. Roland Lumumba, H.E. Dr. Salim M. AlMalik, and Dr. Eya Essif at the intergenerational dialogue.*

This session which was moderated by Prof. Sarah Ssali, Dean of the School of Women and Gender Studies at Makerere University, also hosted Hon. Bakary Badjie, the Minister of Youth and Sport of Gambia and Mr. Didier Drogba, an international football icon from Ivory Coast who addressed the meeting through zoom.

Dr. Eya Essif, a Tunisian born businesswoman, International diplomat and Human Rights Activist is the Secretary General of the United Towns Agency for North-South Co-operation, a

United Nations accredited NGO that promotes North- South Co-operation.

Prof. Maggie Kigozi, a Ugandan medical doctor, business consultant, academician and sportswoman encouraged the girl child to find positive and reliable role models to inspire and mentor them in their different aspirations. As a mother and prominent entrepreneur, she urged young girls and women to take up their positions in terms of how they harness their potential for economic empowerment.

One of the notable aspects of the dialogue was the virtual participation of Hon. Bakary Y. Badjie, Minister of Youth and Sports of Gambia who despite being unable to attend physically, joined the event via Zoom. Hon. Bakary stressed the importance of integrating youth in various fields and the need to promote quality education in Arab and African societies in order to build young generations capable of contributing to achieving peace, facing global challenges and resolving conflicts, to build a bright future for their African societies.



*Dr. Eya Essif (left) and Prof. Maggie Kigozi (right) presenting during the intergenerational dialogue.*

The session was then concluded with a virtual message from a special guest star, Ivorian former professional footballer, Didier Drogba. In his speech, he talked about ICESCO's initiative to promote sports for girls and women.

*"Sports is one of the ways to connect people," he said. "It is a way to enhance people's quality of life."*



*Hon. Bakary Y. Badije Minister of Youth and Sport of Gambia (left) and Mr. Didier Drogba (right) delivering their messages to the participants via zoom.*

## FIRESIDE CHAT / LEADERSHIP AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The fireside chat was held at Okot P'Bitek Pavilion and honored Prof. Roland Lumumba as a son of the great Pan- Africanist Patrice Emily Lumumba. Modelled after the African traditional fireside chats in the African structures of society, the fireside chat offered

a calmer, and non-conventional conversation, where the elders had an opportune moment to speak heart to heart to the youth delegates.

This interaction provided a unique and valuable platform

for participants including youth council members and youth peace ambassadors to engage with and exchange ideas, experiences and insights with a renowned leader and intellectual figure in an informal and intimate setting.



*Delegates at Okot P'Bitek Pavilion for the fireside chat.*



Some of the moments at the fire side chat as delegates engaged in a conversation with Prof. Roland Lumumba.



Mr. Boikhutso Johannes Masipa from South Africa (top-right), Ms. Niyongere Annanciata from Burundi (top-left), addressing questions and their appreciation to Prof. Roland Lumumba at the fireside chat. Prof. Roland Lumumba (bottom) addressing delegates.

In his address to the youth during this session, Prof. Roland Lumumba shared his insights, wisdom, and experiences which were incredibly inspiring and empowering especially given his reputation as a passionate advocate for youth empowerment and social justice. He resonated strongly with the audience, capturing their attention and sparking their imagination.

youth empowerment, education, and peacebuilding in Africa and the Arab world. This award was accompanied by words of commendation from the

Secretary General, highlighting Prof. Lumumba's exemplary commitment to promoting youth development, social justice, and Pan-African solidarity.

## AAYC honors Prof. Lumumba

Prof. Roland Lumumba was awarded a gift of honor by the Secretary General of AAYC, a gesture that symbolized recognition and appreciation for Prof. Lumumba's contributions to



The Secretary General AAYC presenting a plaque to Prof Roland Lumumba at the fireside chat.

# AAYC MENTAL HEALTH DAY HELD AT KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY ON THE THEME: “PLIGHT OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES”

The AAYC Mental Health Day took place on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2024 at Kampala International University. The event brought together Youth Representatives, Researchers, Policy makers, Medical and development practitioners from Africa and Arab regions, who discussed recent developments on the issues of youth well-being and mental health in Afro-Arab region. The day's activities included a tour of the KIU Innovation Centre, launching of the new cohort of ICESCO Youth Peace Ambassadors, signing of the MOU between AAYC and ICESCO and concluded with a session on mental health addressed by various people including Prof. Dr. Byamah Mutamba, the Deputy Executive Director of Butabika Mental Hospital; Dr. Elisa Rutahigwa, Member of Parliament for Rukungiri Municipality; Hon. Mariam Nalubega, the Vice Chairperson of the Local Government Finance



*A team led by Dr. Mouhamad Mpezamihigo Vice Chancellor, KIU accompanied by Students Dance Group KIU, welcoming the Director General of ICESCO Dr. Salim M. AlMalik.*

Commission (Ministry of Local Government); Mr. Valerio de Divitiis from the United Nations Office for Counter-terrorism and Ms. Ramata Almamy, the Director Social and Human Sciences Sector ICESCO.

The Kampala International University Management led

by the Vice Chancellor Dr. Mouhamad Mpezamihigo who were accompanied with cultural performances from the KIU students' dance group gave guests a warm welcome. Among the notable arrivals were; State Minister for Higher Education, Hon. Dr. John C. Musingo, Prof. Roland Lumumba, Chairperson of the Patrice Lumumba Foundation and H.E Dr. Salim AlMalik, the Director General of ICESCO.



*The State Minister for Higher Education, Dr. John Musingo together with the Director General of ICESCO Dr. Salim M. AlMalik during the tour the KIU Innovation Centre.*

*The intergenerational dialogue on “The Future of Young People in the African and Arab Space” was designed as an open discussion on youth issues between the junior and senior leaders with special attention to what has made the senior leaders that can make the young ones.*



(L-R): The Secretary General AAYC, Dr. Abbas Agaba, The State Minister for Higher Education, Dr. John C. Musingo, the Director General of ICESCO Dr. Salim M. AL Malik, the Vice Chancellor KIU, Dr. Mouhamad Mpezamihigo at Kampala International University.



Some of the delegates in attendance for the Mental Health day at KIU.

## Welcome Remarks

The Vice Chancellor gave a background of KIU, and highlighted the various accreditations of the university to the current second best university in Uganda and the number one private university and concluded by congratulating AAYC upon reaching a milestone.

*"I want to thank the Afro Arab Youth Council for identifying this particular topic which we are going to highlight this particular day on addressing the challenges of mental health and how to deal with them."* said Dr. Mpezamihigo.

The Secretary General warmly welcomed all delegates and guests for the AAYC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

*"It is 20 years since AAYC was founded on a vision of Youth, Peace, Unity and Development. Since its initiation, we have witnessed the growth and achievements of the organization which include; providing a foundation and platform for youth issues, mentoring leaders at different levels and buttressing the different government's efforts in empowering youth."* he said.

*"The council particularly does what we call ideological building of young people to persuade them into the understanding of the ideology of prioritizing common interests than interests of identity that cause division and disunity among the people."*  
He concluded.

*Hon. Bakary stressed the importance of integrating youth in various fields and the need to promote quality education in Arab and African societies...*



Dr. Mouhamad Mpezamihigo, Vice Chancellor KIU (left) and Hon. Dr. Agaba Abas Secretary General AAYC (right) giving welcome remarks at KIU.

### Statement from H.E. Dr. Salim AlMalik, Director General, Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO)

During the meeting, ICESCO Director-General pointed out to the Organization's initiative to establish a scientific research chair on psychological and mental health at Kampala International University (KIU) in Uganda, within the framework of ICESCO support for the efforts of its Member States in developing scientific research.

*"Importantly as ICESCO we have decided to establish a scientific chair of mental health at KIU. This will cater to all issues of mental health among women, adolescents, children and even men,"* said Dr. Salim.

The Director General informed that the chair will help support other African countries with the same cause. He also mentioned that the organization believes in the necessity of building inclusive societies, indicating that LTIPS has achieved great success since its launch in 2021, including its current edition, being held under the theme 'Planting the seeds of peace by mobilizing women and young leaders', which witnesses a wide participation of over two thousand candidates, from whom one hundred young men and women were selected.



H.E. Dr. Salim M. Al Malik, the Director General of ICESCO



State Minister for Higher Education, Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo giving his speech at KIU.

## Keynote address by the First Lady of the Republic of Uganda and Minister of Education and Sports

The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs. Janet Museveni was represented by the State Minister for Higher Education, Dr. John C. Muyingo. She welcomed this endeavor and initiative to address the mental wellbeing of the youth, appreciated the AAYC and ICESCO partnership for such a united effort towards ending mental health stigma in society.

In her communication delivered by State Minister for Higher Education Hon. Dr. John C. Muyingo during the

dialogue, Mrs. Museveni underlined the need to end stigma by creating safe environments for mentally challenged people to seek help without being judged. She further stated that breaking the stigma around mental health requires truly embracing it. Therefore, the First Lady encouraged people to be advocates for youth facing mental health problems in communities.

In his speech, Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo congratulated the young men and women on their appointment as ICESCO Peace Ambassadors, commending their key role in consolidating coexistence in the countries of the Islamic world and beyond. He also commended ICESCO's roles in supporting the efforts of its member states in their areas of competence, stressing the Ugandan Ministry of Higher Education's keenness to cooperate with the Organization.

## LAUNCHING OF THE NEW ICESCO YOUTH PEACE AMBASSADORS

As part of the mental wellbeing program, the accreditation ceremony of ICESCO's Young Peace Ambassadors was done, and the new cohort was launched by Dr. AlMalik, the DG ICESCO and Dr. Muyingo, the State Minister for Higher Education representing the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports Hon. Janet Kataha Museveni. These young people were tasked to become Ambassadors of Peace and to serve as leaders to their fellow youth all over the world.

Dr. Salim M. AlMalik, ICESCO Director-General, noted of positive change in their societies among the widespread conflicts and wars, indicating that the Organization aspires to reach 500 young Peace Ambassadors by 2025.



The new cohort of the ICESCO Youth Peace Ambassadors

## Signing of an MOU between ICESCO and AAYC

Dr. Abbas Agaba, Secretary-General of the African-Arab Youth Council, and Ms. Ramata Almamy Mbaye, Head of the Social and Human Sciences Sector at ICESCO, signed a Memorandum of Understanding between ICESCO and AAYC. This will enhance cooperation between the two parties in areas of common interest through planning and executing common programs for youth in the areas of youth, culture, sports, mental health, tourism, and further in the fields of artificial intelligence, space science, heritage preservation and peace building.



Hon. Dr. Abbas Agaba, Secretary-General of the Africa-Arab Youth Council, and Ms. Ramata Almamy Mbaye, Head of the Social and Human Sciences Sector at ICESCO, signed a memorandum of understanding.



## DIALOGUE ON THE “PLIGHT OF PERSONS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES”

This session included notable specialized health figures as panelists coming together to address the important issue of mental health and wellbeing especially among the youth. During this session, international engagement and collaboration in addressing mental health challenges ideas were shared comprehensively among the panelists including Prof. Dr. Byamah Mutamba, the Deputy Executive Director of Butabika National Mental Hospital as the lead speaker; Hon. Dr. Elisa Rutahigwa Member of Parliament for Rukungiri Municipality; Mr. Valerio de Divitiis, United Nations office for counter terrorism and Ms Ramata Almamy, ICESCO each offering professional knowledge to prevent, guide, protect or cure the delegates, guests and students from mental health challenges.

*During this session, international engagement and collaboration in addressing mental health challenges ideas were shared comprehensively.*





**Left to right:** Prof. Dr. Byamah Mutamba, Hon. Dr. Elisa Rutahigwa, and Mr. Valerio de Divitiis at KIU.



Moderator Hon. Mariam Nalubega (left) and Ms. Ramata Mbaye Almamy, Head of the Social and Human Sciences Sector at ICESCO (right).

The session was moderated by Hon. Mariam Nalubega, the Vice Chairperson of the Local Government Finance Commission (Ministry of Local Government) who also shared insights on the issue.

Ms. Ramata emphasized the need to raise awareness of mental health issues in light of the challenges and changes being witnessed in the world today especially by the young people.

*“The plight of persons with mental health challenges is*

*multifaceted and encompasses the debilitating symptoms that rob individuals of their joy, vitality, and sense of self. It also encompasses the stigma and discrimination that permeate society, erecting barriers to treatment, support, and understanding.”* she stated.

## MARATHON AND CULTURAL GALA IN BUSOGA SUB-REGION



*The delegates taking part in the Band Match*

On 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the Afro Arab Youth Council celebrated the sports and cultural gala at Jinja Secondary School in the Busoga sub region as part of its 20th anniversary activities. With the theme **“Sports and Culture for Wellbeing,”** the event highlighted the importance of sports and cultural engagement among youth in African and Arab nations aiming to promote overall wellness and socio-cultural advancement.

The gala attracted over 500 people including young men and women from Jinja Secondary School and various parts of the Busoga Sub-Region, delegates from AAYC member countries including, Kenya, Burundi, Eritrea, Morocco, South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Jordan, Sudan, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Libya, Somalia, Malawi, Cameroon, Azerbaijan, Palestine, Madagascar, Lebanon, Indonesia, Cape Verde, Bangladesh, Benin,



*The runners warming up to start the marathon*



*The runners setting off for the 5km marathon in Jinja*



The Executive Director Gabula Royal Foundation and the Head of the Youth Peace Division ICESCO handover a bull to the overall winner Ochieng Charles.



Delegation from Libya awarding Anena Caroline with a goat in the Female Category under 20 years.



Showcasing of the Cultural attires at the Gala

Tunisia and Ghana among others. The event also featured a band match from the Source of the Nile Hotel to Jinja Secondary School followed by a five-kilometer run in Jinja which created a memorable experience for the attendees.

### Cultural Gala

In the afternoon was a cultural gala featuring a vibrant display of traditional dances from African and Arab nations, alongside a fashion show exhibiting cultural attire of both the African and Arab countries.

The Gala highlighted diverse performances, including the Kisoga dance from Eastern Uganda, Kiganda dance from the Central region of Uganda, Rarakaraka dance from the Northern Region of Uganda, and traditional dances from Libya and Egypt along with a traditional wear fashion show.



The Delegation from Burundi dances to Kirundi dance



Jinja S.S MDD club captivate the audience with Kisoga Dance

## MEETING OF ICESCO AND AAYC DELEGATES WITH H.E THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA ON 5TH MARCH 2024.



*Part of the AAYC team at Munyonyo Speke Resort ahead of the meeting.*

In the midst of the heavy schedule of the different activities marking the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Afro Arab Youth Council, the Secretary General of the AAYC, Hon. Dr. Abbas Agaba led a team of heads of the delegations, largely representatives of the different networks and the member countries to have a meeting with H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda and Patron of the AAYC on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 at Munyonyo Speke resort (NAM complex).

H.E the President met with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) team led by H.E Dr. Salim Al Malik, the Director General. In this meeting, the

Secretary General AAYC briefed H.E the President that for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AAYC had been organized in partnership with ICESCO. He also informed him of the excursion in Morocco in November, 2023 where the AAYC team held a meeting with ICESCO among others during which the two parties acknowledged the commonalities between the two organizations in terms of their activities and programs with Youth, Sports, Culture, education and humanitarian efforts and agreed to pursue them closely together.

During this meeting the Director General expressed gratitude to the President for making time to meet them and also briefed

him about the work that ICESCO is doing in Uganda especially under the Ministry of Education and Sports and pledged to do more and briefed him about their donation of the mental health chair at Kampala International University and their intention to visit Butabika hospital to also make their donation there. The Director General further briefed H.E the President that ICESCO was to move with AAYC to see how the Cultural heritage center at the AAYC International headquarters takes shape.

The President was very happy to receive the Director General and his team and thanked him for gracing the AAYC 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As the Patron of the



*The ICESCO team presents a souvenir to H.E Yoweri Kaguta, President of the Republic of Uganda and Patron of the AAYC as a token of appreciation.*



*Group photo moment of the AAYC delegation with H.E the President.*

AAYC and basing on his vision for the council, the President also committed to the Director General about the work of the AAYC. The President emphasized that it is important in this world for people to live together in peace and also peaceful coexistence among their different tribes, religions, and also for leaderships to prioritize always the issues that have common interests to many of their people than issues that divide the people.

H.E the President further emphasized that ideologically, the AAYC will be responsible for teaching the people that the ideology of commonality of interests is the most important because we have all been created different, than the ideology of differences that divides the people.

The AAYC team also led by the AAYC President, Hon. Dr. Abdulhaddi Lahweej meeting

the President and Patron of the AAYC included Prof. Roland Lumumba, the son of Patrice Emily Lumumba and Former Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo; the Executive Committee members of AAYC and also representatives of the different countries that were participating in the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The meeting also included Hon. Ahmed Bening; the Secretary General of the Pan African Youth Union who equally

had been invited to preside over at the closing ceremony.

In this meeting, the Secretary General further briefed the President that Prof. Lumumba had been invited as one of the special guests to preside over a number of activities of the AAYC anniversary.

The President of AAYC thanked H.E the President and Patron of the AAYC for his fatherly support to the council to make it stand up to now and also thanked him for his role that he is playing throughout Africa to create peace both in Africa and the world and further invited him into the peace process in Libya and requested him to invite the warring parties in Libya to come and have a session here.

He further reminded him that he had invited the Prime Minister

of Libya based in Benghazi and his Executive but which meeting hadn't happened yet. The President agreed to have that meeting and asked the Principal Permanent Secretary to remind him.

Also the President agreed to have a meeting of the pharmaceutical investors of the Afro Arab Youth Council and India who had been invited earlier who will come and have a meeting with him but hadn't been actualized.

Further, the President promised to cover up for the missed opportunity at the Arab Africa Summit where there was going to be an opportunity for the youth to talk to the leaders of the African and Arab world about the issues affecting their young people, and promised to deal with it at the next meeting of the Arab Africa Summit.

On his side, Prof. Lumumba thanked the President for his role in creating peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo and asked him to continue supporting them as they make peace and also requested him to have a meeting with the Patrice Emily Lumumba Foundation which he Chairs.

Delegation by delegation were grateful to H.E the President for the kindness and hosting and support he has rewarded to the AAYC to actualize its vision.

The President pledged further that now that the land was ready, he was ready to write the letters to his colleagues to do the fundraising for the construction of the international headquarters of the AAYC and instructed the Principal Private Secretary to follow through with that as well.

## MABIRA FOREST EXCURSION

The tourism Day on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 as part of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities not only highlighted Uganda's natural and cultural treasures but also underscored the role that tourism plays in promoting sustainable development, fostering cross-cultural exchange, and nurturing a sense of pride and stewardship among youth in the African and Arab world.

The tourism day was celebrated under the theme **"Tourism for good health"** with over 100 delegates from different Afro Arab Youth Council member countries and ICESCO Youth peace ambassadors. The day recognized the link between tourism, conservation and human well-being marked by the walk to Mabira forest in the morning and the Visit to Busowoko Falls in the afternoon.

### Mabira Forest walk

The festivities commenced with a one hour's walk led by the Director General of ICESCO H.E Dr. Salim M. AlMalik on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, setting the tone for a day of exploration on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and appreciation of nature. As the Director General traversed the winding trails



*Prof. Roland Lumumba (Chief walker) leading delegates in Mabira forest. Delegates representing different member countries enjoying the beautiful sceneries of Mabira Forest.*



From right, The Secretary General Pan African Youth Union Hon. Ahmed Bening, the Secretary General Afro Arab Youth Council Hon. Dr. Abbas Agaba, Mr. Alioune Ndiaye from ICESCO and Mr. Ebenezer Oyetakin from Nigeria in Mabira Forest.

of Mabira Forest, surrounded by trees species and the melodic chirping of birds. The Director General gained insights into the delicate balance of ecosystems and the importance of conservation efforts in preserving Uganda's natural treasures. On the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024, following in the footsteps of the Director General, over 100 delegates led by Prof Roland Lumumba, chairman Patrice Lumumba Foundation embarked on a walk through the forest, eager to soak in the sights and sounds of this biodiverse ecosystem.

Adding intellectual vigor to the event, the Secretary General of the Pan African Youth Union Hon Ahmed Bening was part of the walkers, engaging participants in discussions on the importance of youth involvement in conservation efforts and the role of tourism in fostering sustainable development across Africa.

The one-hour walk, left a long-lasting impression on all, fostering a sense of connection to nature among delegates.

## Encounter with the Kabaka of Buganda

The walk was climaxed with the unexpected encounter with one of the most respected and revered individual in Uganda, His Majesty Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, the King of Buganda Kingdom. Delegates were thrilled to have the opportunity to shake hands with the Kabaka, a customary



The Secretary General AAYC Hon. Dr. Abbas Agaba interacting with the Kabaka (King) of Buganda Kingdom, His Majesty Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II on his appearance at Mabira Forest.

gesture in Buganda Kingdom, despite the tight security surrounding him. The Secretary General took the opportunity to brief the Kabaka about Afro Arab Youth Council's activities, which led to an invitation from the Kabaka himself for the AAYC to visit him at the royal palace. This encounter enhanced the significance of their visit to Uganda and fostering diplomatic relations between the AAYC and the Buganda Kingdom.

### Visit to Buswooko Falls

Following the delegates walk in Mabira Forest, delegates embarked on the exciting journey to discover the beauty of

Buswooko falls. The journey was a moment of excitement, as they traversed through winding paths and lush countryside. Along the way, delegates got glimpses of rural life and the enduring connection between communities and their natural environment.

Buswooko Waterfalls is located 19kms from Jinja City in Bususwa/Bukongo village Eastern Uganda and is one of the most spectacular waterfalls in [Uganda](#). Buswooko falls attract hundreds of revelers with rushing waters coupled with scenic views for photography and tubing.



## Afro Arab Youth Council Delegation's Participation in International Women's Day Celebrations

The Afro-Arab Youth Council (AAYC) delegation was thrilled to participate in this year's International Women's Day celebrations. From Jinja, the delegation made its way to the Booma Grounds in Katakwi.

At the celebration, themed *"Accelerating Gender Equality through Women Empowerment,"* the 100 AAYC delegates expressed their happiness to be part of the occasion and they were welcomed by the state minister of Gender and Culture, Ms. Peace Mutuuzo and the Vice President, Hon. Jesca Alupo Epel, who extended a warm welcome as she introduced them to President H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the Chief Guest.

Addressing at the celebrations, President Yoweri Museveni emphasized the importance of achieving wealth for all Ugandans to address obstacles facing and highlighted the significance of mass education and integrating adults into the money economy. The President also urged leaders to work towards altering Ugandans' lives, emphasizing that the much-needed socioeconomic revolution can only be done through two means: mass education and integrating every adult into the money economy.



Hon. Dr. Agaba Abbas with the delegation and Comrade Enanga at Katakwi(top). Celebrants at Boma Grounds in Katakwi (left) and women led by the Vice President present a gift to the President (right).



# Closing Ceremony of the AAYC 20th Anniversary at Islamic University in Uganda Females Campus Kabojja.



*Arrival of the AAYC Delegates at the Islamic University in Uganda.*

The AAYC Secretariat normally observes an anniversary week spacing from the start of March and climax on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March, the actual founding day of the AAYC chosen to remember the date of the last Afro Arab Summit which had been held in 1979.

This year, the Afro Arab Youth Council commemorated the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary closing ceremony at the Islamic University in Uganda Kabojja Females Campus under the theme, **'Youth employment, skilling and participation in trade in the social media era'** with Hon. Ahmed Bening, the Secretary General of the Pan African Youth Union as guest of honor.

## Opening remarks

Hon. Dr. Agaba Abbas welcomed all participants at the closing ceremony of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Afro Arab Youth council. He appreciated the Islamic University in Uganda Kabojja Campus fraternity for hosting the closing ceremony of the anniversary adding that this will build into a lasting partnership following the launch of the AAYC-IUIU Chapter.



*Hon. Dr. Agaba Abbas (above) and Ms. Amina Hilmi, the AAYC Deputy Secretary General (below).*

*Dr. Eya Essif as the main speaker, emphasized the need for youth entrepreneurship...*

He recognized the presence of the Secretary General of the Pan African Youth Union (PYU) as a guest of honor at the closing ceremony and intimated on the essence of the AAYC partnerships which is to work together and lay out expectations and responsibilities in order to achieve mutual future goals.

Ms. Amina Hilmi acknowledged the presence of different AAYC member states representatives who have walked the journey of success since 2004 and highlighted the major values of AAYC as Peace, Unity, and Development.

Ms. Amina emphasized the need for the African and Arab worlds to come together in order to increase exchange knowledge and technical skills, boost trade in their economies thus global efficiency.

Lastly, she beseeched all the youth of the African and Arab world to pursue peace as the major source of development.



*Dr. Eya Essif (right) at IUIU.*

## **DIALOGUE ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT, SKILLING AND PARTICIPATION IN TRADE IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA ERA.**

Dr. Eya Essif as the main speaker, emphasized the need for youth entrepreneurship, which creates jobs and employment opportunities, enabling new markets to grow in form of goods, services, and technology. She also emphasized that the employability of youth relates to handy competencies and qualifications that enhance their capacity to make use of education and training opportunities available to secure and retain decent work.

Lastly, she urged youths to stay in school, complete their education adding that the world is evolving towards technical skills and innovation.



*Left: Mr. Olivier Bampendi Mufuta (AAYC founding member) from DRC. Right: Mr. Alioune Ndiaye, the Head of Peace Division, ICESCO.*

## Other Discussants

Mr. Olivier Mufuta, opined that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have struggled to find skilled employees needed to be competitive so as to promote exports. He concluded by calling upon all youths to take on opportunities available whether volunteering in organizations so as to acquire skills.

Mr. Alioune Ndiaye, congratulated the Afro Arab Youth Council upon its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the partnership with ICESCO, highlighting ICESCO's involvement in strengthening women in leadership; training for peace and security intended to qualify young people for leadership and developing



Mr. Muktar Akoshile, the Head of the Nigerian Delegation (left) and Hon. Ebenezer Oyetakin, the Chairman Audit & Supervisory Comiittee at AAYC(right).

young people's sense of innovation and entrepreneurship as the basis for change and a better future.

Mr. Muktar Ademola Akoshile, the Vice President National Youth Council of Nigeria appreciated the Afro Arab Youth Council for hosting the Nigerian delegation and other partners on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. He recognized the council for its efforts to improve the livelihood of the youths at large mentioning that most developing countries have a bulging number of youths and increased unemployment, the rising unemployment rates will also hinder the regions sustainable development especially in cases where their future knowledge and skills are not harnessed.

Hon. Ebenezer expressed gratitude to the Director General of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), H.E Dr. Salim AlMalik, for the strategic partnership graciously fostered between the AAYC and ICESCO.

He also stressed the failure of the leaders to provide the youth, who constitute the largest segment of our society, with appropriate training, indoctrination, empowerment, and encouragement, pointing out that this neglect would inadvertently turn them into liabilities, thus destroying all we ever hoped for as a society.

*He recognized the council for its efforts to improve the livelihood of the youths at large mentioning that most developing countries have a bulging number of youths and increased unemployment...*

## LAUNCH OF THE AAYC - IUIU STUDENTS CHAPTER.

Afro Arab Youth Council has a number of chapters in different Universities including, Makerere University, Kampala International University among others. This year's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Afro Arab Youth Council launched the Islamic University in Uganda Chapter on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The vision of the Afro Arab Youth Council is to realize an Afro Arab world representing absolute peace and co-existence among local and international students of the University.



## SPEECH FROM THE GUEST OF HONOR

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Pan African Youth Union, H.E. Ahmed Bening Wiisichong expressed his deepest gratitude to the AAYC and the Government of Uganda for their continued efforts towards amplifying youth voices and scaling up advocacy on youth engagement and inclusion. Addressing the congregation at IUIU, he highlighted the need for Africa-Arab cooperation and the possibilities of delivering a potent south-south partnership resilient enough to guarantee global peace, economic prosperity, and the enormous prospects of sustainable industrialization and inclusive economic transformation to drive our shared aspirations.

Furthermore, he cited that a resilient and capable AAYC holds immense significance for the future of both Africans and Arabs, a future of great possibilities where our shared goal to improve the quality of life of our citizens



*Hon. Ahmed Bening, the Secretary General of the Pan African Youth Union.*

can be achieved together. He urged both governments and citizens to dedicate their energies, skills, and resources towards building resilient and progressive societies because Africa has abundant natural and mineral resources and a better climate, which are catalysts for economic growth, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development.

## SIGNING OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN AAYC AND PYU.



The Secretary General PYU Ahmed Bening Wiisichong and Secretary General AAYC append their respective signatures on the MOU.



AAYC group photo moment at IUIU Kabojja Campus



The Students of IUIU Kabojja Campus Attending the 20th Anniversary of AAYC.



Departure of the Delegates at IUIU Kabojja Campus.



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