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**ECOSOCC SECRETARIAT**

7<sup>th</sup> Floor, New Government Complex, Independence Avenue, Lusaka, Zambia

Email : [ecosocc@africa-union.org](mailto:ecosocc@africa-union.org) | Website: [www.auecosocc.org](http://www.auecosocc.org)

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**AFRICAN UNION ECONOMIC, SOCIAL & CULTURAL COUNCIL**

**YOUNG AFRICANS WRITING CONTEST**

**YAWC 2021**

**‘MY AFRICA MY FUTURE’**



**CONCEPT NOTE**

**MAY 2021**

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# YOUNG AFRICANS WRITING CONTEST

## ‘My Africa My Future’

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

ECOSOCC is a civil society advisory organ of the African union (AU), established as a policy development interface that harnesses civil society expertise to the work of various departments of the African Union Commission and the AU at large. ECOSOCC is composed of NGOs; cultural, social and professional groups duly registered in AU Member States and contributes, through advice, to the effective translation of the objectives, principles and policies of the Union into concrete programmes.

In acknowledging that **young people** are at the very heart of **Africa's** development agenda, the African Union had declared 2017 around the theme “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investment in the Youth.” One of the key engagements of ECOSOCC is to champion the AU’s Agenda 2063 that is the strategic framework for socio-economic transformation of the African continent. Aspiration 6 of AU Agenda 2063 is centred around an Africa where development is people driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth. ECOSOCC is that interface par excellence to translate the African Union’s vision to echo the voice of the African citizenry in the development of the continent.

ECOSOCC relocated to Zambia from the AU Headquarters in December 2019, with its own dedicated Secretariat. Building on this new momentum, ECOSOCC is now implementing a number of initiatives to connect Africa’s youth to the African Union.

### 2. YAWC- SHORT ESSAY CONTEST

The Young African Writing Contest (YAWC) is one of the initiatives that ECOSOCC is introducing to bridge the gap between African Youth and the Union. It is predicted that the population of young Africans will double from the current 480 million to reach 840 million by 2050 and Africa will have the youngest population in the world. By acknowledging the innovative thinking that they bring to the table, YAWC aims to encourage the youth to reflect on the crucial role they play by providing them with a space to express themselves freely. **“My Africa, My Future”** will articulate their aspirations and ideals for the kind of future they want for the continent.

ECOSOCC is pleased to partner with Access Bank Zambia for the inaugural edition of YAWC. Access Bank Zambia is a subsidiary of Access Bank Plc Nigeria, a multinational pan African Commercial Bank. Access Bank Plc is the largest bank in Africa by customer base, currently 31 million and is one of the top three banks in Nigeria in terms of assets, loans, deposits and branch network. The operations of Access Bank Plc, span three continents and 12 countries with subsidiaries in Zambia, Ghana, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, DR Congo, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Cameroon and the United Kingdom as well as Representative offices in Beirut, Mumbai and Shanghai. The Bank positions itself as Africa’s gateway to the world. Access Bank Zambia, which started operations in 2008 in Zambia, recently finalized a historic acquisition and merger with Cavmont Bank, thereby

increasing the bank's footprint from 8 to over 20 branches, increasing the workforce to over 300 skilled employees, more than doubling the customer base. Access Bank Zambia offers a wide bouquet of innovative products and services to its customers and provides financial support to help grow businesses in the economy.

## **2.1 Contest Rules**

**The rules and requirements for this short essay contest are outlined below:**

**The essay writing topic is “My Africa, My Future”.** Participants are hereby invited to submit their innovative ideas through a short essay format. The title is purposely crafted to allow young Africans to express themselves freely on various themes related to the continent’s future. They are invited to spin the theme **“My Africa, My Future”** in any direction they choose, and they are welcome to give their piece of writing its own title. The set of sub-themes below are meant to guide entrants when responding to the above subject:

- Education
- Healthcare
- Inclusive Governance
- Job Opportunities
- Smart Cities
- Infrastructure
- Gender Equality
- Sustainable growth
- Digital Revolution
- Conflict and Violence

Contestants are **not** expected to reflect on **all** of the above sub-themes.

**The essays will be assessed on the following criteria:**

- 1) Content – Originality: 50 %
- 2) Relevance in terms of the continent’s development: 30 %
- 3) Structure: 10 %
- 4) Overall impression: 10 %

Essays will be judged on their ability to engage readers, their thoughtfulness, and rhetorical effectiveness. The quality of language will not be a decisive factor, as long as the essays retain their clarity and coherence.

## **2.2 Essay Instructions/ Specifications**

Essays must be typed in Microsoft Word (version Word 2003 or higher) format and submitted in pdf on A4 paper size;

All entries must include a cover page containing the following basic information, namely (a) Full Name, (b) Country, (c) Name of Institution & Grade; a template, which participants may wish to use, is available for reference/download on our website.

Entrants should use 12-point font (preferably Times New Roman or Arial); pages should be sequentially numbered.

The essay shall be no longer than 1000 words. There is no down limit, although essays shorter than 500 words are not encouraged. Please enter all your personal details in the participation form.

Languages: Entries can be submitted in any of the African Union (AU) official languages namely: Swahili, English, French, Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese

All contestants must submit a completed and signed version of the participation form, which can be downloaded at [www.auecosocc.org/yawc](http://www.auecosocc.org/yawc)

Only original essays will be considered for the contest. Previously published essays are therefore excluded. Any form of plagiarism will result in instant disqualification of the essay. Winning essays may be subject to further verification of their originality.

The decisions of the jury panel are final. Essays will not be returned, so participants are advised to keep a copy for their own reference if they wish to have a record.

Submissions must not include any obscene, violent, racist, religiously intolerant or defamatory content. Incomplete entries or entries that do not comply with the formal specifications will be automatically disqualified.

### **2.3 Submission of Entries**

All entries must be submitted electronically to the email address [essay.yawc21@auecosocc.org](mailto:essay.yawc21@auecosocc.org) (the essay and participation form should be attached in pdf format); only ONE entry will be accepted per participant

Participants will receive an acknowledgement email within one week of submission; in the eventuality that no acknowledgement is received; participants are requested to write to the organizers with proof of submission.

### **2.4 Eligibility**

The participant must be a:

- Registered student in an education institution at secondary (high school) level in an African Union Member State
- Citizen and resident of an AU Member State

### **2.5 Entry Dates, Deadlines and Announcement of Winners**

This contest opens on Africa Day, May 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 and closes at midnight 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Winners will be announced during a Virtual Awards Ceremony on Africa Union Day (September 09<sup>th</sup> 2021). Modalities for Prize Giving Ceremony will be communicated to the participants in due course.

### **3.0 Prizes**

The ten best entries/participants will be rewarded as follows:

- Grand Prize:
  - Fully sponsored Educational Trip to the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and a Guided Tour of the AU Complex and Meetings with Senior Officials of the AU Commission
  - Laptop Core i7
  - Official African Union Winner's Plaque
  - Official African Union Gift Bag
  
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize:
  - Laptop Core i7
  - Official African Union Plaque
  - Official African Union Gift Bag
  
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize:
  - Laptop Core i5
  - Official African Union Plaque
  - Official African Union Gift Bag
  
- Consolation Prizes: 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> ranked participants will receive an official African Union Plaque
- All participants meeting the submission criteria will receive a digital certificate of participation from AU ECOSOCC
- The Top 10 essays will be published in a special booklet entitled 'My Africa My Future'

### **4.0 Right of Publication:**

All essay submissions will become the property of AU/ECOSOCC. Announcement of winners, photographs and essay content will appear in print and/or electronic media - at the sole discretion of AU/ECOSOCC.

### **5.0 Jury Panel:**

Essay submissions shall be evaluated and scored by an independent panel of five judges. The panel will review the essays and will select the Top 10 submissions for the awards and publication.

### **6.0 Methodology and Promotion**

Promotional materials and Concept Note of the essay competition in all AU working languages shall be sent through Note Verbale to relevant line Ministries in African Union Member States.

Online promotion of the YAWC will be via ECOSOCC's social media platforms (including paid adverts) and the official African Union website.

## 7,0 Launch Event

The launch event will be held on Tuesday 25 May 2021 as from 15.30 UTC/17.30 CAT/18.30 EAT. The event will be livestreamed on

- ECOSOCC's Facebook page # africanunion.ecosocc
- Zoom @ <https://zoom.us/j/97107934126>

Simultaneous interpretation in AU working languages will be available on Zoom

## 8.0 Contact Information

ECOSOCC Secretariat  
7<sup>th</sup> floor, New Government Complex  
Independence Avenue, Lusaka, Republic of Zambia  
Phone: + (260) 211429405

### General Queries & Help Desk

E: [help.yawc21@aeecosocc.org](mailto:help.yawc21@aeecosocc.org)

For further information, please visit [www.auecosocc.org/yawc](http://www.auecosocc.org/yawc)

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