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**MESSAGE FROM**

**H.E Jean PING,  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE AFRICAN YOUTH DAY 2011**

**Theme:**

**« Accelerating youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development »**

**1<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 2011**

**Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Continent,**

**Dear Youth of the Continent,**

On the occasion of the commemoration of the African Youth Day 2011, it is my great pleasure to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to all young Africans of the continent and of the Diaspora.

This is an opportunity for me to repeat solemnly, Africa's faith in its Youth, as it was expressed and witnessed by the 17th African Union Summit held in Malabo and devoted to the theme of ways to **"accelerate youth empowerment for sustainable development"** for Africa. During that important meeting, the Heads of State and Government discussed and debated with representatives of our youth, after listening to their concerns. This intergenerational and frank dialogue was a first of its kind on the continent. It has enriched all the participants and turned out to be the highpoint of the celebration of Africa's successful International Year of Youth 2010-2011: a year that enabled us to celebrate the core values of dialogue and mutual understanding, identify measures to be adopted to facilitate continental integration based on leadership and good governance, alongside a variety of activities that show support for the development of young people.

The success of this event is still in our minds, and I personally hope that we can use the same experience to address other development at issues in Africa. It also fits into the pursuit of tireless efforts provided by our leaders in the direction of our youth to lay the foundation for mutual understanding, facilitating the rapid implementation and effective programs empowering youth, effective

participation of the youth in the creation of wealth, and in the decision-making process. These efforts to put the African youth in the centre of society did not start yesterday but have taken shape through measures taken at national level by Governments, with the adoption at the continental level, in July 2006 in Banjul, of the African Youth Charter and of the African Youth Day, the fifth edition of which we celebrate today.

In less than 20 years, 9 out of 10 young people will live in developing countries, making young people not only the builders of tomorrow, but above all the players of the present. For my part I remain convinced that our youth must be effectively engaged and involved in efforts to achieve sustainable development of Africa. To do this, the youth must be adequately prepared, which sharply imposes the need to invest sufficiently in human capital development.

Many of our Member States, if not all share, this view and do not hesitate to work and invest in that direction. It is clear, in fact, as pointed by out one of our contemporaries, that **"even if the youth is not always right, the society that mistreats and ignores its youth, is always wrong"** because **"it is the fever of the youth that keeps the world at normal temperature and when the youth cools down, the rest of world has chattering teeth"**, as Bernanos loved to repeat. It is therefore the perfect time to share equally with African youth, the responsibilities for the development of a vibrant Africa and, especially to be looking in the same direction!

So, on behalf of the African Union, I re-invite all young African players to be involved in development and I particularly invite the authorities to reassess their political, economic and financial

paradigms in order to help young people better to integrate themselves in the development process of their continent to consolidate lasting peace and prosperity.

I also wish to encourage all our Member States and the African youth to build on this momentum to accelerate the ratification, the appropriation and the implementation of the African Youth Charter, for the rise and the assertion of a young generation, dedicated to Peace, special shared values of integration, good governance and African renaissance.

From this podium, I wish to greet all the youth of Africa who are meeting in Accra today, invited by the Ghanaian government to launch the Ghanaian Youth Parliament as well as and all those who have planned and organized events to mark this anniversary.

Finally, dear African Youth, I challenge you to strengthen your ability to take on active be part in a true understanding and constructive dialogue around issues of capacity building. Lifelong learning, meaningful participation in values sharing, effective and efficient leadership are key in the construction of Africa development.

One Africa, one voice!

**Long live the African Youth Dream,  
Long live the Pan African Youth Union and  
God bless Africa!  
I thank you.**