



# THE ACCRA YOUTH DECLARATION ON PEACE AND SECURITY

## JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ – WEST AFRICA YOUTH SUMMIT ON PEACE, PEACEBUILDING AND SECURITY

Accra, Ghana | 27 March 2026

We, representatives of youth-based and youth-focused organisations and NGOs from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte D'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo, convened at the West Africa Youth Summit on Peace, Peacebuilding and Security in Accra, hereby issue this Joint Communiqué. Guided by UN Security Council Resolution 2250 and the African Union's Agendas 2030 and 2063, and representing the lived realities of border communities and conflict-affected spaces, ***we assert that investing in young people is an essential strategy for lasting peace.***





## TEN-POINT DECLARATION

We call on governments, AES, ECOWAS, the African Union, regional institutions, and international partners to take immediate and sustained action on the following ten priorities:

### 1. Institutionalise Meaningful Youth Participation in Peace and Security Decision-Making

Commit to integrating youth voices across key decision-making platforms and institutions. Establish parliamentary quotas for youth involvement in peace processes. Ensure young people are active participants — not mere consultees — in national and regional security frameworks.

### 2. Develop Inclusive Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) National Action Plans

Actively recognise and respond to the diverse and intersecting needs of all young people, including young women, persons with disabilities, youth from religious and ethnic minorities, and young people across the political spectrum. Support the development and renewal of National Action Plans (NAPs) on YPS that substantively address the experiences of marginalised groups. Inclusion must be real, not symbolic.

### 3. Dedicate Funding and Resources to Youth-Led Peacebuilding Initiatives

Allocate dedicated national and regional budget lines for youth peacebuilding activities in line with NAPs on YPS. Create transparent mechanisms allowing young people to review and contribute to peace and security budget allocations. Explore innovative financing, including the establishment of a Pan-African peacebuilding fund.

### 4. Invest in Public-Private Partnerships to Address Youth Unemployment as a Root Cause of Insecurity

Encourage public-private partnerships and support the private sector to create youth economic opportunities through skills training, entrepreneurship programmes, and scaling of youth-led start-ups. Treat the NEET crisis in border and conflict-affected areas as an urgent peacebuilding imperative — not merely a development concern. In border areas between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire alone, 1.5 million youth are not in education, employment, or training.

### 5. Guarantee Timely and Reliable Access to Information

Develop and support platforms to disseminate accessible information in local languages and formats reaching both literate and illiterate youth. Strengthen fact-checking institutions, improve regulation, and leverage regulated AI tools to counter information disorder. Invest in digital literacy and youth-led community-based information networks.

### 6. Engage Traditional and Community Authorities as Partners in Youth Inclusion

Support structured collaboration between traditional leaders and youth organisations to bridge intergenerational divides. Facilitate the institutionalised participation of young people — especially young women — in traditional governance and community decision-making, recognising their agency as peacebuilders.



## 7. Invest in Human Capital to Strengthen Youth Voice and Agency

Build the capacity of young people to lead peace processes at community, sub-regional, and regional levels through investments in education, training, and facilitated partnerships. Work closely with organisations committed to strengthening youth leadership capabilities.

## 8. Create Safe Spaces to Facilitate Social Cohesion Among Young People

Support and create neutral spaces — such as community homes or youth-led cafés — where young people can safely express grievances, build mentorship networks, and find community support. Encourage transborder cooperation, including supporting young peacebuilders to serve as cross-border community leaders.

## 9. Embed Youth Considerations in Trauma-Informed Peacebuilding

Integrate mental health and psychosocial support into all peacebuilding and reconciliation processes. Young people carry not only the direct impacts of conflict but also the often-forgotten burden of inherited trauma. Particular attention must be paid to the unique experiences of young women and other marginalised youth.

## 10. Prioritise Social Investment in Young People for Long-Term Conflict Prevention

Social investment must not be crowded out by short-term increases in security budgets. Sustained investment in human security indicators — access to water, education, health, and employment — yields long-term dividends by preventing conflict and radicalisation. Create youth human rights advocacy groups to facilitate legal programmes, human rights education, and the monitoring of violations.

# OUR COMMITMENT

*We, the young peacebuilders of West Africa, commit to leading peacebuilding initiatives that promote social cohesion and resist terrorism. We will amplify youth voices across the region, hold accountable all those who make commitments to us today, and continue these conversations across borders. Youth are not the leaders of tomorrow; we are the leaders of today. The problems we face are shared across the region, and so must be our solutions.*

Issued in Accra, Ghana | 27th March 2026

Adopted by Youth Council Presidents from Seven National Delegations: Benin • Burkina Faso • Côte d'Ivoire • The Gambia • Ghana • Nigeria • Togo

