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KENYAN YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS ASSOCIATION SECRETARIAT



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10th April, 2018

### Senator Chebeni: CFTA a Boost for Kenya's Youth

Young Kenyans will gain from last month's CFTA agreement according to Hon. Senator Mercy Chebeni.

"Youth would be the greatest beneficiaries of the CFTA (Continental Free Trade Agreement)," said Hon. Senator Chebeni today at the 1st Regional Youth Forum of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly held at USIU-Africa.

The Forum, which focused on the role of youth in economic transformation, was co-hosted by the African Caribbean Pacific Young Professionals Network (ACP YPN), the Kenyan Young Parliamentarians Association Secretariat (KYPA), the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), COLEACP, European Youth Summit, East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and the Hoja Youth Summit.

75 percent of Kenya's population is under 35 years of age, according to World Bank data. However, a burgeoning youth does not automatically guarantee a seat at the decision-making table.

"Youth are powerful, they matter and despite this, we are underrepresented," said Hon. Kennedy Musyoka Jr. who spoke at the Forum.

"You are important, you matter and you have a crucial role to play in the national economy and our region," he said.

Yentyl Williams, founder, ACP YPN, made reference to 'Harambee,' which means 'pull together' in Swahili and a way to promote international youth solidarity. The term was first used by Kenya's first President, His Excellency Jomo Kenyatta to unite Kenyans following its independence in 1963.

"Today we cannot rest on the sidelines of history without action."

Let's pull together, let's move together and let's work together, " she said.

Other guest panelists included Dr. Fatima Ahmed Ali, Director of programs, International Relations, USIU-Africa; Lucy Mbaye, Youth SACCO and Kenyan Private Sector Alliance; Eddy Musoke Daniel, Coordinator, Hoja Youth Summit; and Nancie Amunga from the Commonwealth Association of Young Entrepreneurs.

The Forum was held one day before the biannual ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA), which this year takes place April 11-13 in Nairobi. The JPA will convene members of Parliament from ACP countries with their counterparts from the EU.



The ACP Young Professionals Network (ACP YPN), which is based in Brussels, Belgium, co-organised the Forum in partnership with the Kenyan Young Parliamentarians Association Secretariat (KYPA), the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), COLEACP, the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), the European Youth Forum (EYF) and Hoja Youth Summit.

The purpose of the Regional Youth Forum is to fully integrate the regional youth voice in the regional meetings of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly meetings. The aim of the event is to give young people a permanent forum, on a regional basis, to exchange directly with Parliamentarians at the regional sessions of the JPA.

Topics to be addressed at the JPA, which the youth also discussed and made recommendations on, include:

1. Regional integration and cooperation
  - State of play of regional and inter-regional cooperation
  - Regional cooperation with regard to security and its consequences on migration
2. Trade, investment promotion and private sector development
3. Energy and infrastructure needs
4. Tourism and wildlife management – progress, prospects and challenges
5. Agriculture and food security
6. ACP-EU relations Post-Cotonou

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