



✓ In Today's Bulletin

GHANA: "Afro-Optimism" On The Rise Among Continent's Youth, Finds Survey

MALAWI: Africa's Youth On Life, Work And WiFi: I Feel My Future Is Here

SOUTH AFRICA: Young People Must Help Design A Youth Employment Plan

UGANDA: Professors Call For Involvement Of Youth In Gender Issues

ARGENTINA: Can Argentina's Feminists Change Government?

BARBADOS: Certification Alone Is Not Enough

BERMUDA: Antiviolence Art Leaves Haunting Impression

CANADA: Ontario Protecting Children and Youth From Dangers Of Vaping

USA: Youth And HIV Less Likely Than Adults To Achieve Viral Suppression

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM: InnoLab To Help Spawn Innovation Among Youth

INDIA: India's 370 Million Youth Will Drive Its Future

JAPAN: Young Climate Leaders Gather In Tokyo For Inaugural Climate Crisis Youth Summit

MALAYSIA: Jobless Youth

SINGAPORE: 560 Express Interest In Improving Youth Mental Well-Being

THAILAND: LGBT Youth In Vietnam Unprotected

UAE: New Federal Board Appointees Vow To Address Youth Issues

BELGIUM: Paradox: Nordics' Privileged Youth Feel Miserable

ITALY: World Leaders And Celebrities Call For Great Investment

TURKEY: Young Turks In Despair, Blame Syrians, Research Says

UNITED KINGDOM: "No Time For Being Patronized," Say Youth Climate Leaders

AUSTRALIA: New Report Shows Justice-Involved Youth Challenges

FIJI: Transparent Process Followed In Establishment of Youth Council

GUAM: A "Hidden Hand" For Youth Programs In Our Region

NEW ZEALAND: Power 88.3FM Given Youth A Voice

TONGA: Youths Ask Lungu To Discipline PF Anti-Tonga Trio



AFRICA
AMERICA
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✓ UPCOMING EVENTS FOR MARCH 2020

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
1 March 2020	Zero Discrimination Day	Melaka, Malaysia
8 March 2020	International Women's Day	Melaka, Malaysia
20 March 2020	International day of Happiness	Melaka, Malaysia
21 March 2020	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	Melaka, Malaysia
22 March 2020	World Water Day	Melaka, Malaysia
23-29 March 2020	Global Money Week	Melaka, Malaysia



✓ GHANA: “AFRO-OPTIMISM” ON THE RISE AMONG CONTINENT’S YOUTH, FINDS SURVEY

Accra, 19 February, 2020 – YOUNG people across Africa are confident that the continent is heading for an era of success fuelled by technology and entrepreneurship, according to a new survey.

The Africa Youth survey, which claims to be the largest of its kind, said there is growing belief in the concept of “Afro-optimism”, fighting persistently negative stereotypes of the continent.

Though most people interviewed were dissatisfied with the state of their own country, almost half believed the continent as a whole was in a healthier state than previously, and two-thirds thought they were living through a transformative “African century”.

Ivor Ichikowitz, chairman of the Ichikowitz Family Foundation, which commissioned the survey, said the results “are a loud wake-up call to all the Afro-sceptics”. “We have found a youth that refuses to shy away from the very real challenges of Africa, that is honest about what needs to be done and what their role

has to be to achieve this – and they are overwhelmingly keen to make that difference.”

The survey covered 14 countries, and included 4,200 interviews with young people aged between 18 and 24. The average age in Africa is younger than 20, according to the UN, more than 10 years younger than any other continent.

Those surveyed had strong opinions about the importance of technology and business, with 81% saying they believed technology could unlock the continent’s potential. A similar amount believed access to wifi should be a fundamental human right. Three-quarters of young people said they planned to start their own business in the next five years, and many already had ideas they were ready to work on if given funding.

Commenting on the report, Rosebell Kagumire, editor of the website African Feminism, said the internet had opened doors to opportunities beyond national borders and connected young people across the continent.

“Technology has connected Africans in so many ways. Our grandparents were pan-Africanists and understood the struggle for Africa ... but now, more than ever, you’re able to read a story in real time of what’s happening in another country.”

While the report said there were strong suspicions about the influence of foreign powers, most supported pan-African institutions. The African Union was mostly looked upon favourably as a way of uniting countries across the continent.

Kagumire said it was easy to be optimistic about the continent’s future despite localised problems, because some nation states are still relatively new. “When we see ourselves as African, as a people, and what we have achieved together and what we have survived together, that makes a better picture,” she said. “It’s a bigger picture. We are looking at African people, really thinking outside the colonial construct.”

She added, however, that the idea of Afro-optimism was often simplistic, painting a picture of “happy

Africans”. “It assumes a certain lack of complexity. We are allowed to be complex. I don’t think anyone’s in a permanent state of optimism, and certainly not young Africans,” she said.

The biggest concerns were corruption, the creation of new jobs for the continent’s booming young population, and peace and security. Kagumire pointed out that young people were often disaffected by politics, and women, in particular, felt discriminated against in the corporate world. “Even when people are optimistic, it’s pegged to the realities.”

Former South African president Kgalema Motlanthe, who contributed to the survey report, said: “I am encouraged by the youth of Africa’s common vision of a pan-African identity; of a love of their fellows that transcends colour, creed, class or nationality. “I am immensely heartened too by their Afro-optimism, underscored by their belief in Afro-capability.”

[theguardian.com]

✓ MALAWI: AFRICA’S YOUTH ON LIFE, WORK AND WIFI: “I FEEL MY FUTURE IS HERE”

Lilongwe, 29 February 2020 – MPHATSO Elizabeth Gama, a sharply dressed 19-year-old agricultural student in Lilongwe, Malawi’s capital, is certain she has more opportunities than her parents, partly thanks to technology. “This is a new generation with more advanced technology and more access to

information,” she said.

As well as using her Chinese-made phone to talk to friends, download music and search for study-related material, she has turned it into a means of doing business. “We order stuff from Tanzania and South Africa like clothes and shoes and we get orders and

deliver them,” she said, adding that she posted advertisements on WhatsApp message groups and paid some vendors using mobile money.

“Youth have lots of good business ideas, even if the capital is lacking to get start-up loans,” she said.

Ms Gama’s experience is roughly in line with a new survey of African youth, which finds that many 18-to-24-year-olds across the continent are entrepreneurial, optimistic and tech savvy. Nearly four in five of 4,200 young people interviewed in 14 sub-Saharan countries by PSB Research, a US-based



polling firm, believe that WiFi is a human right, while two-thirds say they are witnessing the start of the “African Century”.

In a continent where the median age is 19.4 and 70 per cent of the 1.2bn population is under 30, the survey sought to capture the attitude of young people born after the end of apartheid in 1994 and decades after colonialism crumbled from the late-1950s.

Among the survey’s most surprising findings are that two-thirds of young people have regular access to the internet; that, if given \$100, half would start a business; and that 82 per cent think they will be better off in two years.

The survey, from in-depth interviews with rural and urban youth from a broad income range, found that nearly 90 per cent of young people had a smartphone — a much higher percentage than for the population as a whole, where smartphone penetration is about 40 per cent. PSB claimed a margin of error of +/-2 per cent.

The results are in sharp contrast to a prevailing view of African youth as frustrated at lack of job opportunities and angry with their ruling elites, whom they deem to be corrupt and out-of-touch. Young people, some of them professionals, led uprisings last year in Algeria and Sudan, and youth protests have been a feature of politics in countries including Ethiopia and Uganda.

The Ichikowitz Family Foundation, which sponsored the report said it sought to counter the stereotype that young people felt hopeless and angry, and instead acknowledge that many young Africans were seeking to solve their own problems. The Foundation stressed the independence of PSB and denied that the survey could have been skewed to elicit an optimistic picture of a continent where one in three people lives on less than \$1.90 a day.

Asked about the continent’s biggest challenges, respondents cited the creation of jobs as the

second most important priority. Reducing government corruption was top.

Paul Collier, an Africa expert at the Blavatnik School of Government in Oxford, has warned against the idea that entrepreneurship and “microenterprises” — often single-person businesses — can solve Africa’s problems. Lack of industrialisation and formal-sector jobs, he has argued, will keep productivity low and poverty levels high.

Ms Gama, the student in Lilongwe, made the link between lack of formal employment and the fashion for entrepreneurship. “Jobs are very scarce,” she said. “Business or something like that is the way to go nowadays.”

In Abidjan, Ivory Coast’s main commercial city, Moneka Tai, a 19-year-old student, sells natural hair products on Instagram under her own Mo’Hair brand. She saw opportunity at home and has not been tempted to migrate. “I feel my future is here. If everybody goes, who is going to

contribute to the country?” Ms Tai agreed with the Foundation’s proposition that young Africans were less hung up on colonialism. “We are always blaming the west for stealing from Africa,” she said. “But if our streets are not clean, that’s not the fault of Europe. We as Africans must take responsibility.”

The sense of opportunity is not pervasive. Demeku Kushina, a shy 19-year-old from a poor region of southern Ethiopia, said she had come to work in Addis Ababa as a housemaid to make money. She earns about \$45 a month.

One of seven children, who looked after oxen and cows as a child, Ms Demeku would like to go to school to learn to read and write. “But my brother doesn’t want me to learn,” she said of her 38-year-old sibling, a day-labourer in the capital city. “I am supposed to make money and help my mother. If I go to school, I’m not going to be able to do that.”

[FT.com]

✓ SOUTH AFRICA: YOUNG PEOPLE MUST HELP DESIGN A YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PLAN

Cape Town, 29 February 2020 – ACROSS the country, young people tell us daily about the barriers they face when looking for work. Stuck in the transition between education and jobs, many are without certificates to show for their years of schooling. They lack the psychosocial support and the social capital necessary to find work and are unable to afford the costs of

job-seeking. Young people’s lives are at odds with the far too often top-down, inflexible solutions to unemployment. With the youth unemployment rate at 58.2%, the highest rate in the last decade, the need for a cohesive plan informed by young people’s experiences has become more pressing than ever before.

To ensure that President

Cyril Ramaphosa’s Presidential Youth Employment Intervention, announced during his the State of the Nation address, does not become just another list of lofty plans, we must ensure the experiences of young people are prioritised in its design and delivery.

This six-point plan aims to change the way young South Africans get access to

employment opportunities.

The network, which aims to provide work seekers with access to a basic package of support and work-readiness training to better match them to economic opportunities, does well in recognising how young people struggle to navigate the labour market and signal their skill sets to potential employers.



Likewise, employers struggle to sift through thousands of CVs to find the right young people to match to their jobs. The network needs to support people to also connect to irregular or informal jobs, and help them grow and leverage their skills in the labour market through a range of experiences on the way to a decent job.

We need to also ensure that the support package extends beyond CV writing and interview skills. Many young people are kept out of the labour market because of a lack of childcare, having to look after family members with poor health, and a lack of resources to pay for printing of CVs, transport to interviews or browsing online for jobs. Many have already experienced years of rejection and the mental health burden of this cannot be overstated. If the network and basic package of support are to make a significant dent, it must offer psychosocial and healthcare assistance, as well as a cellphone data allocation. There are a number of organisations whose expertise should be leveraged: JobStarter, for example, delivers data-light work-readiness courses through cellphones, while Action Volunteers Africa offers a holistic journey for volunteers, from training to employment, including support on managing their finances and breaking through negative self-beliefs.

The plan's second priority aims to equip young people with the skills to access opportunities in key growth sectors, such as the food,

green and waste economies. While targeting these skills is crucial, any conversation about upskilling must include discussions about the low rate of completion across all levels of our skills system. Whether it is the 50% of people who leave school without a matric certificate, or the unknown high number who don't complete technical and vocational education and training college qualifications, or the 40% that don't finish their degrees.

We need to develop a catch-up strategy for those who've been left behind. How are our learners expected to excel in subjects like coding and robotics if they cannot read and count? If we are to respond and get all learners and students on-track, we need tools such as the department's Data Driven Districts project, to more effectively track learners through basic education and identify when they drop out, triggering support to get them back on track. The current data systems for the college sector are virtually unusable for gathering intelligence on how students are doing. Reports on the overall performance of the sector are released two years after the fact. We need the right data to ensure we can immediately respond to major issues in our education and skills institutions.

The Presidential Youth Employment Intervention's entrepreneurship support prioritises removing barriers and creating spaces to help businesses thrive by making data affordable and

targeting sectors that are ripe for innovation. We welcome the Competition Commission's recommended deep cuts to data pricing, and the president's announcement of discounts, daily data allocations and the zero-rating of educational websites. Each month, young people spend on average R380 on data looking for work — and with 8.2-million young South Africans not in employment, education or training, this issue requires urgent resolution.

However, beyond removing this constraint, the reality is that innovation-driven entrepreneurship is unlikely to be a panacea for youth employment without also connecting young people to precedent-setting opportunities to gain work exposure. The lack of exposure to the world of work is a major stumbling block for this initiative. Most young people find opportunities through someone they know, yet two out of every five 15- to 24-year-olds live in a household without an employed adult. Youth need guidance as much as they need infrastructure, and so what is needed is a national drive to connect people across the poles of society, and to expose young people to opportunity through simple, powerful, connections.

Funded by the national budget, this initiative includes grant funding and business support by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and the department of small business development for

1 000 young entrepreneurs in the first 100 days after the State of the Nation address. This is a laudable target, but young people don't trust, and are disillusioned with the NYDA. To build trust in its ability to really address the needs of young South Africans, Parliament must ensure that in its process to appoint new NYDA board members, it does not simply reproduce ANC political appointees, but selects independent-minded experts in the field of youth development. Its initiatives must be transparent, with strong tracking of the youth-led businesses and a learning process in place to ensure that the budget allocation for the initiative actually reaches the designated beneficiaries for its intended purpose.

The president plans to scale up the Youth Employment Service (YES), a business-led partnership with government and labour to assist young people to gain work experience to progress into the job market. YES was first announced in the 2018 State of the Nation address, with the promise to place a million young people into work experience internships within three years. Two years on and YES has placed 32 000 young people in 12-month work experience opportunities. This gap may point to the fact that tax and broad-based black economic empowerment incentives are not able to drive a real change in the employment and investment patterns of corporate South Africa. For YES to be truly effective, we need to ensure that we learn lessons from the experience of the corporates



participating in the initiative.

This priority expands on the National Youth Service programme, promoting work opportunities for young people who are willing to give back to their communities. Given the number of socioeconomic issues facing our country, advancing the employability of young people through volunteer jobs in the social and care sector is a win-win. There are examples of

how Community Work Programme workers have been increasing access to early childhood development, and running reading clubs through non-governmental organisations such as SmartStart and Nal'ibali. Participating in such initiatives can be an even greater win for young people if they are provided with strong mentorship, reference letters and support to navigate pathways into future careers.

Addressing a youth dialogue in Cape Town, Ramaphosa said we will only tackle the youth unemployment crisis "if we are willing to change the way that we work and do things differently". We couldn't agree more. Let's work together and use the voices, viewpoints and experiences of young people as the starting point and driving force behind each of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention's priorities to

ensure the intervention goes from plan to progress.

Kristal Duncan-Williams is the project lead on the DG Murray Trust's Youth Capital campaign, which connects research and young people's views and experiences to build a collective driving an agenda for youth employment .

[MG.co.za]

✓ UGANDA: PROFESSORS CALL FOR INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTH IN GENDER ISSUES

Kampala, 29 February 2020 - YOUNG people's involvement in gender issues is to take centre stage at this year's Makerere University organized Gender Identity Week, starting Monday. Organisers announced at the press conference on Saturday that the Gender Identity Week will focus on how young people will be mobilized to own the women's movement. Organised by Makerere University School of Women and Gender Studies (SWGS) in partnership with the Embassy of Sweden, the Gender Identity Week will take place from March 2-7, 2020.

The five-day event will take place at the Auditorium, College of Business and Management Sciences. According to Associate Professor Consolata Kabonesa, the principal investigator of the Gender Mainstreaming project, the week aims at facilitating dialogue among university staff, students, development partners, development practitioners, the media and other stakeholders on the topical issues related to

gender and empowerment.

"We are looking at generational equality where we are reaching out to young people to take a centre stage in women's movement," said Prof Kabonesa told the media on Saturday.

She added that this year they are focusing on Generational Equality as a way of responding to the International Women's Day celebrations running under the theme —'I am Generation Equality: Realising Women Rights'. "We are involving the young people because we believe without them nothing can go on. Since we are growing old and soon leaving the gender, we need these young people to continue pushing the initiative so that we bring gender equality to reality." At the same media briefing, Associate Professor Sarah Ssali, the Dean SWGS revealed why the gender identity week was important as far as gender mainstreaming is concerned.

Ms Ssali, the Dean of the

School of Women and Gender said the week has enabled the School to show the different ways gender inequalities can be addressed. "For example, before we started the gender identity weeks, they were talking about gender equality as femininities, and with this perception, females suffered a lot with discrimination but through the gender identity weeks, people come here and get to know that gender is not all about women, gender is relational and if we are to tackle gender inequality for a gender equal world where do we need to focus. "So the gender identity week is very important for focusing on what the school is doing and how it is meeting its quest in a fight against gender inequality in this country," said Prof Ssali.

Throughout the week, the event will be running under different subthemes such as 'Different shades of empowerment in Uganda', 'Strategies for ending sexual harassment in institutions of higher learning, 'Students experiences of university environment , 'Gender

spaces include performing gender through music and 'Wikipedia and women'.

Key note speakers will include among others the Namasole (Queen mother) of Buganda Kingdom, Florence Lwanga from Nnabagereka Foundation, performing artiste Joanita Kawalya, religious leaders, academia, Ministry of Gender officials as well as students from other universities.

[Monitor.co.ug]



✓ ARGENTINA: CAN ARGENTINA'S FEMINISTS CHANGE GOVERNMENT?

Buenos Aires, 3 February 2020 - FOR Argentine President Alberto Fernández, the decision to don a green tie at a recent meeting of his new government was about more than the aesthetic.

The Irish green hue has become the color of Argentina's abortion rights activists, and Fernández's tie matched the handkerchiefs on the wrists of many officials present at the training on gender issues. His government has only been in power for two months, but such symbolic moves reflect a progressive stance on women's rights in a region where right-wing governments are lately more preoccupied with defending "family values" than expanding women's rights. Turning that symbolism into real change, however, may be the real test of Fernández's feminist bona fides.

Upon taking office, Fernández specifically referenced feminists among the social movements he hopes to include in a "new social contract," along with young people and environmentalists. It was the first time feminists had been mentioned in an Argentine president's inaugural speech, according to some commentators. But far more significant was the president's promise to focus on women's rights. Fernández noted the particular issue of domestic care, and how its unequal distribution creates gender inequality.

"Ni una Menos must be a banner for all of society and

GAMBIA: NEDI TRAINS all of the republic's powers," Fernández proclaimed, in reference to the Argentine anti-femicide movement that has spread around the region. "The state must drastically reduce violence against women until its total eradication."

Gender and women's rights provide Fernández a space to make some immediate changes, which might help appease his base at a time when other problems, like inflation or unemployment, may prove more intractable.

While his cabinet is only a fifth female, women occupy important positions, including Sabina Frederic, an anthropologist heading the Security Ministry, and Marcela Losardo in the Justice Ministry. A prominent feminist lawyer, Elizabeth Gómez Alcorta, heads a new Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity. Her cabinet includes a phalanx of women with green-wrapped wrists and the country's first transgender appointed official. Feminist influence appears to be far reaching across the cabinet: The minister of economy added feminist economist Mercedes D'Alessandro to his team and Fernández also named a well-known feminist theorist, Dora Barrancos, as a presidential advisor.

A novel WhatsApp group called "Women Governing" reflects the new gender perspective present in Fernández's administration, with 150 women in high-level

YOUTH ON FOOD PRO- decision-making roles making up the impromptu chat group's ranks, including ministers and senior advisers. In fact, emboldened by Fernández's embrace of feminism, some of them have publicly called the president out when he appears in meetings overwhelmingly dominated by besuited white men. They are determined to challenge what they consider to be male-oriented governance practices, like late night meetings, which have broader implications for social policies touching women, particularly when it comes to childcare.

The main question for the new government, perhaps, is what the rhetorically ambitious gender agenda will actually look like in concrete terms – and what might happen when the diverse governing coalition is asked to back actual policies rather than offer lip service. Though green seems suddenly omnipresent, several cabinet members and numerous lawmakers that back Fernández hold far more conservative views.

Indeed, Fernández is known for his ability to mix strange bedfellows. He won last year's election with a broad coalition of Peronists, who span the ideological spectrum, and more leftist supporters of his vice president, former president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Abortion rights, the most emblematic of the Argentine feminist demands, might be an indicator for how the

CESSING administration will approach controversial issues more broadly.

The president has tempered his pro-legalization stance with promises to move beyond a binary debate between "progressives and conservatives, between revolutionaries and retrogrades." Instead, Fernández proposes a public health perspective. Tie notwithstanding, he urged Argentines to move beyond the green handkerchiefs and the light-blue ones favored by anti-abortion activists.

"There shouldn't be two handkerchiefs," said Fernández. "We have one problem."

The bill the president plans to send to Congress would reportedly legalize abortion, while attempting to placate critics by including better care provisions for women who want to continue their pregnancies. Those measures, which would facilitate adoptions and improve education about contraceptives, could make the legislation more palatable to more conservative members of Congress whose votes Fernández will need to pass the Senate, where anti-abortion votes have a slight majority.

Fernández's balancing act goes beyond internal politics. Pope Francis is an influential figure in his home country, and a stalwart opponent of a bortion's legalization. And the government has been leaning on the pontiff to



influence crucial sovereign debt negotiations with the IMF, with the Pope hosting Fernández at the Vatican on Jan. 31.

How Fernández navigates the tension between tradition and progress is and will remain under a close microscope, in policy debates and elsewhere. For example, weekly soccer matches between the president and his male ministers and staff – a longstanding tradition –

have raised questions about how much of a boys' club his government will be going forward. On the other hand, the recent participation in the government matches of Macarena Sánchez, the country's first professional female soccer player and the new head of the National Youth Institute, has been received as a sign of change.

Gómez Alcorta, the women and gender minister, seems

to share the conciliatory approach the president has taken in the debates over abortion and other topics.

The men may have their soccer matches, but “we women officials have our (WhatsApp) group,” Gómez Alcorta told *La Nación*.

Ultimately, she and others in the new government say progress on gender will be measured not by rhetoric or players on a soccer pitch, but by long-term economic

and societal changes that level the playing field for the genders. That starts with bridging progressive policies with effective implementation.

“The gap (between laws and implementation) is still enormous,” Gómez Alcorta said at the January gender training with the president.

“That is the task we have to accomplish.”

[americasquarterly.org/

✓ BARBADOS: CERTIFICATION ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

Bridgetown, 28 February 2020 - ONE senior government official believes that certification alone is not enough as people must possess certain natural skills, attitudes and qualities to help them to be good workers.

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Youth and Community Empowerment, Yolande Howard, said this during the break session of day two of the “Get Hired” – Construction – Employability Workshop at the SKY Mall Seminar Room 1, Sky Mall, Haggatt Hall yesterday.

She admitted that the school cannot do it all as it relates to training the youth. Howard said that there is a need for employability programmes to help young people develop their skills when they leave school.

“They need [training] not just to obtain a job, but to retain a job,” said Howard. She added that the Ministry is working with the private sector to meet the demand. She said in the case of construction, there has been an increase in capital

investment in programmes which require more workers in this industry.

She highlighted that her department has had persons who have come into employment in retail and logistics companies.

Howard said that people from the “Get Into” programme (another initiative of the Ministry) got job placements and subsequently secured permanent jobs.

Senior Youth Commissioner in the Ministry of Youth and Community Empowerment, Elizabeth Bowen, told *The Barbados Advocate* that yesterday, the participants focused on a team-building exercise within a time frame to produce a finished product.

“This is also part of the soft skills and personal development skills that we are looking to impart in the young persons. We recognise that sometimes young persons fail because they do not have sufficient information on what it takes to succeed or what it takes to retain a job or make

themselves marketable,” said Bowen.

She noted that going forward, efforts will be made to help young people improve their personal development skills. Yesterday, 45 persons between the ages of 18-25 attended the workshop – six females and 39 males.

Bowen, who is the coordinator of employability programmes in the Ministry, expressed her satisfaction with participant turnout. She said the young people learnt about communication skills, job search skills and interviewing techniques.

“Our role here is to ensure that we expose them to the necessary skills that would make them employable and let them leave here with a positive outlook and set some goals for themselves, so that they can move towards a level of independence,” said Bowen.

The “Get Hired” programme is the third of its kind and it is being hosted in conjunction with Prince's Trust International (United

Kingdom). There were past workshops for the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF) and Barbados Defence Force (BDF).

[barbadosadvocate.com]



✓ **BERMUDA: ANTIVIOLENCE ART LEAVES HAUNTING IMPRESSION**

Hamilton, 28 February 2020 - A Student painter's "haunting" artwork on the impact of violence has been commended by the Masterworks Museum of Bermuda Art.

Austin Dowling, 14, a year ten student at Saltus, said he created He Will Rescue Them after his parents told him about the antiviolence Live. Love. Life. exhibition at the Paget gallery.

The show, which opened on Wednesday, features 199 submissions on the theme of anti-violence and was organised with the Ministry of National Security.

Austin said he had been "unsure at first" on the visual aspect of the theme.

The painting depicts a young man looking through a broken window above a red-daubed wall, designed to evoke images of blood, with a quote from the Bible's Book of Psalms: "He will rescue them from oppression and violence."

He said: "I used broken glass; glass is an innocent

thing, delicate, and when it's broken you can't get it back. You have to replace it.

"I thought the boy would be relatable. You're seeing a child looking sad — you just feel for him.

"You feel empathy. You can understand how violence has its effect just by looking at a face."

He created the work with acrylic paint on a watercolour base.

Austin, who said he enjoyed drawing, explained he had "always had problems with painting" but had learnt new techniques in his art class. Tom Butterfield, the founder and creative director of the gallery, said he had organised exhibitions for 45 years — but found Live. Love. Life. "one of the most significant things we've put together".

He added that Austin's painting was "a haunting image. I can't go a day without thinking back to it".

Mr Butterfield said: "No

matter what the interpretation, whether it's broken lives or as shattered glass, it's fitting.

"It's that stare out into the world that asks, why does it have to be like this? I'm really impressed with this."

He added that the idea for the collaboration with the Ministry of National Security happened after a conversation with Wayne Caines, the minister, on how to raise the gallery's profile.

Mr Butterfield said: "In a heartbeat I thought this is exactly where we need to go so that kids can exorcise on paper or canvas the things they're thinking about, the issues we try to sweep under the carpet because it's not in our face."

He added that the submissions from young people were a testament to changed times in Bermuda.

Mr Butterfield said: "For many of Bermuda's youth, you can see that violence in all forms, whether in the home or in the streets, is

suddenly part of our lives.

He added: "Making a slingshot is not part of the fun any more; something like that takes on a much more sinister implication."

The exhibition, featuring work by artists of all ages, is on display at the Rick Faries gallery at Masterworks until March 4.

It features mixed media, digital media, animation and photography, as well as traditional painting.

The winning entries will be announced by the ministry at the end of the show and prizes worth a total of \$9,000 will be awarded.

[mobile.royalgazette.com]

✓ **CANADA: ONTARIO PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM DANGERS OF VAPING**

Toronto, 28 February 2020 - FOLLOWING extensive consultation, Ontario is taking further action to protect children and youth from the health risks of vaping, while maintaining adults' access to smoking cessation options.

Today, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, announced that Ontario is proposing regulatory changes that, if approved,

would limit where flavoured and high nicotine vapour products are sold at retail. At the same time, the province will expand prevention initiatives and services to quit vaping.

"Young Ontarians are increasingly using and becoming addicted to nicotine vaping products, putting their health at risk," said Elliott. "I've heard directly from concerned parents who grow more

worried each and every day about the health of their kids. As a mother myself, I know there's a clear case for action to curb the alarming increase in youth vaping. That's why we are taking a balanced approach that protects our children and youth while also avoiding fuelling an underground market for unsafe vapour products." Ontario has consulted with health care experts, industry partners, parents and youth to develop protective

measures to help keep children and youth safe. The proposed changes include:

Increasing access to services to help people quit vaping by expanding Telehealth Ontario; Restricting the retail sale of flavoured vapour products to specialty vape stores and cannabis retail stores, which are restricted to people aged 19 and over, with the exception of menthol, mint and tobacco.



Restricting the retail sale of high nicotine vapour products (more than 20mg/ml) to specialty vape stores; Working with major online retailers of vapour products and stakeholders to ensure compliance with age-based sales restrictions for online sales; Requiring specialty vape stores to ensure that vapour product displays, and promotions are not visible from outside their stores; Enhancing mental health and addiction services and resources to include vaping and nicotine addiction; and Establishing

a Youth Advisory Committee to provide advice on vaping issues.

Ontario is also calling on the federal government to implement a national tax on vaping products.

"Vaping and the associated risks are a national health concern," said Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance. "I have strongly advocated to the federal government to work with Ontario and other provinces and territories on a national approach to taxing vapour products.

Keeping kids safe is a national health concern and the evidence is clear - a tax could be an effective way to deter young people from vaping."

A national vaping tax would minimize regulatory burden and ensure a consistent tax treatment across the country.

Ontario expects the proposed regulation changes, if approved, would come into effect on May 1, 2020, except for the regulatory amendment to

restrict the retail sale of high nicotine vapour products, which the province expects would come into effect on July 1, 2020, if approved, to align with the federal changes to labelling of nicotine on products.

[News.ontario.ca]

✓ USA: YOUTH WITH HIV LESS LIKELY THAN ADULTS TO ACHIEVE VIRAL SUPPRESSION

Maryland, 10 February 2020 – DESPITE similar rates of enrollment into medical care, youth with HIV have much lower rates of viral suppression — reducing HIV to undetectable levels — compared to adults, according to an analysis funded by the National Institutes of Health. Among more than 1,000 youth, most of whom were newly enrolled in care at treatment centers throughout the United States, 12% had attained viral suppression, far lower than the 32% to 63% observed in studies of adults over age 24. The findings suggest that after they enroll in an HIV treatment program, a low proportion of youth adhere to care regimens. The study appears in the *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*.

"Our findings indicate an urgency for research on how best to tailor HIV intervention services to the needs of youth," said the study's first author, Bill G. Kapogiannis, M.D., of the Maternal and Pediatric

Infectious Diseases Branch at NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). The analysis was funded by NICHD, the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute of Mental Health.

The researchers analyzed data from the Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions (ATN), an NIH-supported network of 13 sites dedicated to the health and care of youth with and at risk for HIV. The youth were enrolled in care through the SMILE (Strategic Multisite Initiative for the Identification, Linkage and Engagement in Care of Youth) Collaborative, a network of clinics at each ATN site that offers diagnostic services and referral to treatment facilities.

Among the 1,411 youth ages 12 to 24 years who were referred to the ATN sites, 75% were enrolled in care, with 34% remaining in

care and beginning anti-HIV (antiretroviral) treatment and 12% achieving viral suppression after a median interval of nearly five months. Viral suppression occurs when antiretroviral therapy reduces a person's HIV in the blood to an undetectable level. Maintaining viral suppression for at least six months after a person's first test finds no detectable levels of the virus prevents the sexual transmission of HIV and allows people with HIV to remain healthy.

On average, youth who were referred to care within a shorter time frame after an HIV diagnosis were more likely to achieve viral suppression. Compared to youth referred to care after three months, those referred within one to six weeks were 2.5 times more likely to reach viral suppression. Those referred from six weeks to three months were roughly twice as likely to reach viral suppression.

To ensure the shortest possible time to enrollment in care, the study authors

stressed the importance of enlisting trained peer counselors and of maintaining frequent contact with youth through text and social media messages. They added that additional strategies to ensure that youth enroll and remain in care are urgently needed.

The ATN is funded by NICHD, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. SMILE is a collaboration between NICHD, ATN, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Services and Resources Administration.

[nih.gov]



✓ BRUNEI DARUSSALAM: INNOLAB TO HELP SPAWN INNOVATION AMONG YOUTH

Bandar Seri Begawan, 28 February 2020 - THE Datastream Digital Sdn Bhd (DST) launched its very own Innovation Lab, InnoLab, during an event at DST's headquarters in Jalan Tungku Link on Thursday (Feb 27) in its bid to spawn innovation among individuals, the youth, businesses and organisations.

Minister of Transport and Infocommunications Dato Seri Setia Awang Abdul Mutalib Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Setia Dato Paduka Haji Mohd Yusof was guest of honour.

Chief executive officer of DST Radin Sufri Radin Basiumi highlighted that the initiative is geared to contribute to the society, through access to the InnoLab to nurture creativity and putting it into practice.

"Aligned with the vision of the Digital Economy Masterplan 2025, we have set up InnoLab with the sole purpose built to inspire innovation," he said.

"DST believes that innovation is not just about the use of technology, but it is the transformation of an individual's knowledge to create a new product or

service which can be useful for the society.

"With the right mindset and approach, DST believes that an individual's dream can be realised," the telco said in a press release.

Through this initiative, DST is introducing 'Innovate@Programs' that specifically caters for students, businesses and government bodies.

Through Innovate@Uni: Catalyst, DST together with their academic partner, Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) and their entrepreneurship partner, DARE (Darussalam Enterprise) provides students with the chance to be exposed to opportunities of entrepreneurship.

The InnoLab will provide a platform for the students to cultivate their own creations to develop new and innovative products and services.

The Innovate@Biz: Innovate or Get Left Behind programme will introduce businesses and the government agencies to the fundamentals of innovation by raising awareness on the needs of innovation, and identifying effective strategies to create, cultivate

and enhance innovation - focussed cultures which will then encourage growth.

The Innovate@Biz: Market Access, will provide businesses with a 'go-to-market' programme which consist of education, expertise and distribution channels.

This programme will give support to the businesses to reach local and international markets and also spur growth.

In Innovate@Biz: Industry 4.0, the programme is designed to support the government and businesses to understand the strategic, commercial and technical aspects of new technologies, the potential impact on 'business-as-usual' and also the sustainability of the company.

Innovate@Gov: Innovate with Government meanwhile allows government bodies to utilise innovative methodologies and frameworks which can assist them in identifying the key problems and issues that they are most likely to face and they will also be able to co-develop and set up innovative solutions. Prior to this initiative, DST had partnered with Google

Developers Group last November 2019 to host the annual DevFest Brunei at DST Headquarters.

Developers nationwide had convened to help realise the Sultanate's digital transformation by enhancing human capital and their skills, with over 100 participants in the one-day event. DST had also participated in UTB's Technopreneurship Student Pitch Fest in the same month.

With the launch of the InnoLab, DST will be addressing two key areas; Innovation in Digital Technologies, and Manpower and Talent Development.

"The InnoLab will be the start of a wonderful journey and opportunity in creating and cultivating innovation in all forms.

"DST believes this will aid in creating new opportunities and solutions to ultimately inspire the communities in Brunei towards the vision of the Digital Economy Masterplan 2025," the company added in a press release.

[Borneo Bulletin/Asia News Network]

✓ INDIA: INDIA'S 370 MILLION YOUTH WILL DRIVE ITS FUTURE

New Delhi, 29 February 2020 - TATA Group Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata on Friday called for focus and investment in education and the well-being of millions of Indian youth, who will drive the country's future to ensure the goal of \$5 trillion

economy by 2024.

In his address at an event commemorating the 50th year of the Population Foundation of India, he said: "There is no doubt that the future of India will be driven by the young population of more than 370

million people.

"If we are to meet our commitments to achieve population stabilisation and contribute to the national aspirations of \$5 trillion economy by 2024, we must focus and invest in the young citizens of the

future."

Ratan Tata also stressed the need to create employment opportunities for the youth as well as address the issue of gender discrimination that denies women equal opportunities in every sphere.



On the occasion, he felicitated Rani Bang and Abhay Bang with the first J.R.D. Tata Award for Excellence in Public Service, instituted to mark the PFI's golden anniversary and honouring an individual's contribution to promoting social justice, gender equality, women's empowerment and well-being of the society.

The Bangs, known for introducing the successful Home-Based Newborn Care (HBNC) model to reduce

maternal and child mortality in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli and pioneering several initiatives for the youth and adolescents in the state, dedicated the award to the people of Gadchiroli.

"We also dedicate this award to our co-workers who inspire and enable our work," Rani Bang said. Outlining their vision for public health in India, Abhay Bang said: "The Indian word for health is 'Swa-stha', which is being self-reliant. Hence, our

vision is 'Aarogya-Swaraj' which means that people's health must remain in their hands."

FI Executive Director Poonam Muttreja said that the organisation -- founded in 1970 by a group of industrialists led by J.R.D. Tata and Bharat Ram to support and promote gender-sensitive and people-friendly population, health and development programmes and policies - is committed to giving youth knowledge and

resources to help them make the right choices about their health and well-being, thereby ensuring that they become a powerful driving force of change.

The celebrations premiered Feroz Abbas Khan's highly acclaimed new romantic musical "Raunaq & Jassi", based on Shakespeare's "Romeo & Juliet".

[Livemint.com]

✓ JAPAN: YOUNG CLIMATE LEADERS GATHER IN TOKYO FOR INAUGURAL CCYS

Tokyo, 24 February 2020 - LEADERS of Japan's youth climate movement gathered in Tokyo over the weekend to attend the inaugural Climate Crisis Youth Summit (CCYS).

The three-day event brought together more than 80 young climate activists representing groups from all over the country. They met to coordinate and organize ahead of the Global Climate Strike in April and the United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP26, which will be held in Glasgow, Scotland, in November.

"Of course we want more people to take part in marches and understand the urgency of the climate crisis," said Saori Iwano, 16, a member of Fridays For Future Tokyo. "But what's more important is that everyone questions why climate change isn't talked about in Japan, and examines the societal mechanisms that are keeping it that way."

The weekend's summit marked one year since

members of the group — the local branch of a global movement started in August 2018 by now 17-year-old Swedish activist Greta Thunberg — first staged a demonstration in front of the Diet building, in February 2019. Around 10 protestors showed up for the demonstration, and were outnumbered by reporters, organizers recall.

"Nobody was paying attention to us at first," said Hanae Takahashi, 26, from Friends of the Earth Japan. Less than a month later, about 200 people attended a march in Shibuya. Roughly 250 took part in a protest in May and, in September, more than 2,800 took to the streets of Tokyo and 5,000 across Japan during the Global Climate Strike. Worldwide, 7.6 million people gathered across 185 countries in what organizers say was one of the largest coordinated protests in history.

"I never expected it to reach this scale," Takahashi said. "We're creating a new kind of movement; one Japan has never seen before."

At COP26, in November, U.N. member nations have been asked to submit a revised plan to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, to prevent global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to preindustrial levels. Leading up to the conference, environmental groups across Japan share one primary goal: convincing the government to raise its nationally determined contributions, or NDCs, which are at the heart of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

During the three-day summit, organizers held workshops to discuss how best to spread awareness of issues such as plastic waste, fossil fuel consumption and the viability of renewable resources in Japan.

They also coordinated plans for further demonstrations leading up to the Global Climate Strike, which will be held worldwide on April 24. In Tokyo, the march will start in front of the United Nations University in Shibuya Ward, with related marches also being planned in other parts of the

country.

Experts, academics and veteran activists were invited to the weekend's summit to give lectures and take part in workshops. Many of them have been involved with environmental protest for decades, and have pointed out that Japan's new wave of environmental activism is highly educated and markedly global in its way of thinking.

"These young activists are moving forward at a pace and in a manner people like me can't understand," said Seita Emori, deputy director of the Center for Global Environment Research at the National Institute for Environmental Studies, adding that "it would be a waste to imprint adult sensibilities upon this movement."

"I'll help as best I can, but I won't get in their way."

[Japantimes.co.jp]



✓ MALAYSIA: JOBLESS YOUTH

Kuala Lumpur, 19 February 2020 - TO be young is such a wonderful thing, but not when you are jobless. Khazanah Research Institute (KRI) provides a snapshot of why our young ones are not so happy being young. Of the estimated 500,000 unemployed in 2018, close to 294,000 (56 per cent) were from the 15 to 24 age group.

The previous year, 283,000 of them were unemployed. Last year, the International Labour Organisation data point to an increase, with youth unemployment registering 11.6 per cent. In 2018, it was 10.9 per cent.

Would it get worse before it gets better? It depends on what we do and don't do. Granted youth unemployment is a global problem — 13.1 per cent of the world's young are jobless. This doesn't mean we should measure ourselves against it and feel complacent.

But first why this growing youth unemployment? There are at least two

reasons. One, there seems to be a mismatch between what the youth come armed with and what the employers want. This has been an old lament of employers, at least the Malaysian kind. If KRI is right — as uncovered by its "2018 School-to-Work Transition of Young Malaysians" report — the mismatch is a subtle one.

It is not the lack of professional qualifications that is being lamented, but the lack of soft skills.

Happily, this can be taught and learned. For this to happen, the world of education and employment must get closer.

Shouting from different premises never works. Employers, too, need to train fresh graduates instead of rejecting them for having no work experience. Fresh graduates will never have work experience if employers keep rejecting them.

Lamenting without doing

something will harm employers, youth and, in the end, the nation in terms of gross domestic product squandered. Being three times a loser isn't wise.

BCG, one of the big four management consultants, may just have an answer. It worked for Germany's disadvantaged youth. It may very well work for our youth. Joblinge, as it is called, is a collaboration between the private, public and volunteer sectors. Partner companies come in various sizes, and they offer a vast array of vocational opportunities.

Joblinge's goal: fast but sustainable job placements. Here is how it works. After assessment, the youth are put through six months of practice, probation and follow-up that arms them with what is needed to land a job. And the results are telling. More than 65 per cent of Joblinge trainees land a job, with 80 per cent staying at their jobs for at least six months.

And it doesn't end when the youth land a job. Joblinge continues to coach its "graduates" for up to three years to ensure sustainable employment. What this tells us is this: with focused attention and training, youth can bloom.

Two, the private and public sectors need to get cosier. The government has set aside RM6.5 billion under the 2020 Budget to create 350,000 jobs as part of the Malaysia@Work programme. Under this umbrella programme, graduates, women and apprentices will be incentivised. So will employers.

Employers, too, need to do their bit. As Peter Cappelli of Wharton business school put it to The Economist, companies think filling a job is like buying a spare part: they expect it to fit. Employee-job fit won't happen without training. This the employers must provide.

[nst.com.my]

✓ SINGAPORE: 560 EXPRESS INTEREST IN IMPROVING YOUTH MENTAL WELL-BEING

Singapore, 27 February 2020 - MORE than 560 people have expressed their interest in improving youth mental well-being here, said Minister for Social and Family Development Desmond Lee on Thursday (Feb 27).

He announced in a Facebook post the formation of a Youth Mental Well-being Network, which would bring together all their different views and coordinate efforts to help.

Through this collective, the Ministry of Social and Family Development

(MSF), together with the Health and Education ministries, can identify opportunities and gaps to "dive deeper into, and work on together", said Mr Lee.

The MSF said that in the Government's engagement with young Singaporeans, many of them gave feedback that mental well-being mattered to them and their peers, and asked how they could contribute to promoting mental wellness for their generation.

Earlier this month on Feb 7, Mr Lee had invited those keen to drive change in the area of youth mental well-

being to step forward with their ideas and contributions.

Mr Lee said he then started meeting, in small groups, youths, professionals and practitioners who are involved in the area of mental well-being.

He added that some good ideas included looking into enhancing mental health literacy, stepping up efforts against mental health stigma and having more youth-centric mental health research.

Among those who had expressed interest in helping

were students, young working adults, parents and caregivers.

"Some may have personal, lived experiences - thank you for courageously sharing your difficult journeys and the insights you have gained.

Others are professionals and practitioners in this space and you want to share your feedback and play a part," said Mr Lee.

The network will build on the existing work done by many agencies and community organisations, and Mr Lee said that



working together could synergise and amplify efforts to better support the mental well-being of youth.

express their interest and views at www.reach.gov.sg/youth-mental-well-being

Those interested can still

[\[straitstimes.com\]](http://straitstimes.com/)

✓ THAILAND: LGBT YOUTH IN VIETNAM UNPROTECTED

Bangkok, 12 February 2020 – PERVASIVE myths about sexual orientation and gender identity in Vietnam contribute to violence and discrimination which is felt strongly among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today.

The 65-page report, “‘My Teacher Said I Had a Disease’: Barriers to the Right to Education for LGBT Youth in Vietnam,” documents how LGBT youth in Vietnam face stigma and discrimination at home and at school over myths such as the false belief that same-sex attraction is a diagnosable, treatable, and curable mental health condition. Many experience verbal harassment and bullying, which in some cases leads to physical violence.

Teachers are often untrained and ill-equipped to handle cases of anti-LGBT discrimination, and their lessons frequently uphold the widespread myth in Vietnam that same-sex attraction is a disease, Human Rights Watch found. The government of Vietnam should fulfill its pledges to protect the rights of LGBT people.

“The government of Vietnam has indicated support for the rights of LGBT people in recent years, but tangible policy change has lagged,” said Graeme Reid, LGBT rights director at

Human Rights Watch. “LGBT youth are especially vulnerable due to inadequate legal protection and widespread misinformation about sexual orientation and gender identity.”

The report is based on in-depth interviews with 52 LGBT youth as well as teachers and other school staff in Vietnam. It analyzes existing government policy and planning documents and pledges the Vietnamese government has made to improve the situation of LGBT people.

Inaccurate information about sexual orientation and gender identity is pervasive in Vietnam and has a particularly harsh impact on youth. While Vietnam has several laws that prohibit discrimination and uphold the right to education for all children, the current national curriculum and sex education policy fall short of international standards and do not include mandatory discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity. While some teachers and schools take it upon themselves to include such lessons, the lack of national-level inclusion leaves the majority of students in Vietnam without the basic facts about sexual orientation and gender identity, Human Rights Watch found.

“I’ve never been taught about LGBT,” Tuyen, a 20-year-old bisexual woman, told Human Rights Watch.

“There are very few people who think that this is normal.” A school counselor said “There’s a lot of pressure on kids to be straight. It’s constantly referenced that being attracted to someone of the same sex is something that can and should be changed and fixed.”

In a promising step in 2019, the education ministry, with the assistance of United Nations agencies, produced guidelines for an LGBT-inclusive comprehensive sexuality education curriculum, but such a curriculum it has not yet been created.

Human Rights Watch found that verbal harassment of LGBT students is common in Vietnamese schools. Students in various types of schools – rural and urban, public and private – said that students and teachers commonly use derogatory words to refer to LGBT people, sometimes targeted directly at them and coupled with threats of violence.

Other studies, including research by UN agencies and Vietnamese groups, have included similar evidence. In a 2014 report, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) noted: “[E]ducation institutions are not safe for LGBT students due to the lack of anti-bullying and non-discrimination policies. Furthermore, sex and sexual orientation and gender identity education is still limited in Viet Nam

and are considered sensitive topics that teachers usually avoid.”

While it appears to be less common, some LGBT youth report physical violence as well. “[The bullying] was mostly verbal but there was one time when I was beat up by five or six guys in eighth grade just because they didn’t like how I looked,” one person interviewed said.

In cases of both verbal and physical abuse, school staff respond inconsistently. The majority of the LGBT youth interviewed who had experienced bullying at school said they did not feel comfortable reporting the incidents. This was sometimes because of overt, prejudiced behavior by the staff. In other cases, students assumed that it was unsafe to turn to the adults around them for help.

Even in cases in which students did not face verbal or physical abuse, many reported that their families, peers, and teachers implicitly and explicitly alienate and exclude them. This occurs in classrooms, where teachers refer to anything other than procreative heterosexual relationships as “unnatural,” as well as at home, where parents threaten their children with violence, expulsion, or medical treatment if they are gay or lesbian.

In 2016, while serving on the UN Human Rights



Council, Vietnam voted in favor of a resolution on protection against violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, saying “The reason for Vietnam’s yes vote lay in changes both in domestic

as well as international policy with respect to LGBT rights.” Other governments in Asia have recently changed their policies to include and protect LGBT youth, including Japan, Cambodia, and the Philippines.

“The government’s stated alignment with a global shift toward respecting the rights of LGBT people signals some political will to make much-needed law and policy changes,” Reid said. “Protecting young people from violence and

discrimination and ensuring their education is based in fact instead of prejudice is an important first step.”

[Hrw.org]

✓ UAE: NEW FEDERAL BOARD APPOINTEES VOW TO ADDRESS YOUTH ISSUES

Dubai, 3 February 2020 - THE young men and women who were recently appointed to federal boards in the country promised to listen to the youth and help them achieve their full potential.

In an Instagram video - published by the UAE Government soon after the youths' appointment was announced by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai - some of the young directors spoke about what their new roles meant to them.

They were one in saying they would "listen to the needs of people as young as they are". Some pledged to create solutions to the youths' needs and problems - from helping them develop their skills and providing them with better higher education opportunities, to training them on how to become good citizens and productive members of society.

Sheikh Mohammed approved the federal appointments of the 33 young men and women on Sunday.

The youngest board member is an 18-year-old girl and the oldest is aged 30. The term for each member will be two to three

years. They will receive the same privileges as other board members. They will receive extensive training about government work.

Congratulating the youths, the UAE Vice-President said: "You have our full support and your responsibilities start today. Youths are the pillars of the present and the creators of the future. I trust our youth to develop services, share their ideas to improve the country's position globally."

[Khaleejtimes.com]

NEWS



✓ BELGIUM: PARADOX - NORDIC'S PRIVILEGED YOUTH FEEL MISREABLE

Brussels, 5 February 2020 - YOUNG people in the Nordic countries are among the most privileged in the world - yet many of them feel miserable. This is such a paradox, that the Nordic countries are now going to look into the phenomena and try to find out what is going wrong.

Realising that youth is an essential resource in society, Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands have decided to focus on the psychological well-being of Nordic young people during their joint chairmanship of the Nordic council of ministers in 2020.

The Nordic welfare states can ill-afford to overlook that their youngest citizens do not feel good.

"Demography is a joint challenge. We are getting more old people and at the same time a smaller workforce. It is adding pressures on our welfare systems and on how we can finance them in future", Danish minister for Nordic cooperation, Mogens Jensen said when presenting the "State of the Nordic Region 2020", a statistical overview of the region's performance in Copenhagen on Tuesday (4 February). "Young people are around

the clock mirroring themselves in role models and many are feeling pressured to live up to certain ideals. It contributes to stress and adds pressure on people to perform and often beyond ability", the Danish minister said.

Despite having very generous provisions for parental leave, the Nordic countries are moving towards a China-like situation with the latest figures showing birth rates at historic-low levels in three Nordic countries, Iceland, Norway and Finland.

Only the Faroe Islands have enough children born to sustain the existing population.

"Youth is the most important resource we have," said Kaj Leo Holm Johannesen, the Faroe's co-chairman of the Nordic council of ministers.

"One misfit young person costs our society 2.5-2.8 million crowns per year (€350,000)", he pointed out and invited everybody to come to his islands to study fertility trends.

"If you are able to change the system and get one misfit young person into the labour force instead, then he

or she will become a resource contributing to society instead of being an economic burden," he said.

Social media was named as number one culprit for the lack of well-being among young people, but it is not the only one.

"It is a result of the competitive global society where you must be world champion at all times and in everything. If you don't make it as a space engineer or a doctor, then you are useless. We need to say instead, that each profession is of value. Whether you are craftsman, an academician or whatever you are, you are of value to your society," Kaj Leo Holm Johannesen said.

The trend of dissatisfied youth goes across the Nordic region but it is also observed in Canada and elsewhere.

"It is very complex. We can't point out one single factor for the young generation's feeling miserable. But we need more focus on this and more research to figure out, what to do about it", said Chris Holst Preuss, chairman of the Danish Youth Council, an umbrella organisation with more than 70 children and youth organisations as

members.

The Danish Youth Council published last June a study, showing that one-in-three young people experiences a high level of stress, almost a fifth of young people have poor mental health, and about one-in-ten youngsters feels unwanted and alone.

This is higher than for any other age group and it hits girls harder than boys, the study found.

It also found that 77-percent of young people preferred to be with their friends in real life rather than online, and that half of young people wanted to spend less time on social media.

Youngsters' self-esteem is built on their achievements, and they assume responsibility for how they manage in life, increasing their concerns about not doing well enough.

But there is no room to show weakness in such a performance culture, according to the study which was conducted by Epinion among 1,500 representative young people.

[euobserver.com]

✓ ITALY: WORLD LEADERS AND CELEBRITIES CALL FOR GREATER INVESTMENT

Rome, 11 February 2020 – HEADS of state, ministers, development leaders, and celebrities today called for greater investment in rural areas to accelerate progress to achieve a world free from poverty and hunger in the next 10 years.

The call was made at the 43rd Session of the Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) attended by its 177 Member States. This comes at a time when hunger is rising. More than 820

million people go hungry every day, 736 million people still live in extreme poverty, and the wealth gap continues to widen.

IFAD President Gilbert F. Houngbo called reaching the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger in 10 years "an abstract vision, a distant mirage" unless serious commitments are made to invest more in rural areas where 79 percent of the world's poorest people and



the vast majority of the hungry life.

“The road ahead is clear: the road to achieving the SDGs must run through rural areas,” Hougbo said. “We must travel to the end of that road and invest in the most marginalized people – small-scale producers, women, youth and indigenous peoples – to deliver on our SDG commitments.”

The President of the Republic of Mali, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, opened the two-day event. Like other countries in the Sahel region, Mali is struggling under the dual scourge of conflict and climate change, which is making bumper harvests practically insignificant against the food shortages the country faces, as farmers abandon their fields to escape the crisis.

“Mali will never give up. Neither us nor the other countries of the Sahel. We are bleeding but we shall prevail,” Keïta said, adding that “IFAD has enabled a people faced with the worst kind of attacks to uphold their values and keep their dignity.”

Roberto Gualtieri, Italian

Minister for Economy and Finance said the commitment to achieving a world without poverty and hunger was more urgent than ever because of climate change. He said the solution is in the unique mandate of IFAD working in the “last mile of the value chain, improving economic prospects and food security in the most difficult contexts.”

Aksel Jakobsen, State Secretary of International Development for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also made an impassioned plea for immediate action calling IFAD “a crucial partner to bend the curve of hunger.”

“From Tonga to Timbuktu, smallholder farmers are struggling each day and this is totally unacceptable,” Jakobsen said. “Without food, there is no development. Together we need to take immediate action.”

This was echoed by Rodger Voorhies, who leads the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s efforts to alleviate hunger and poverty, who said “we need to move from an aspiration of change, to an action of change that we have

promised to smallholders around the world.”

“We have an obligation to focus our efforts and an opportunity to take action and change people’s lives,” Voorhies continued.

IFAD’s Youth Advocate, award-winning choreographer Sherrie Silver and Afrobeats music star Mr Eazi, who are using their fame to give voice to rural young people and to “make farming cool”, delivered the results of their Dance for Change campaign — a virtual dance petition calling for more investment in rural young people which became a viral sensation with 102 million views.

“Investment in rural agriculture equals investments in eradicating gender inequality, equals investments in eradicating unemployment,” said Mr Eazi who recently had two of his songs selected by Beyoncé and featured on the latest Lion King soundtrack *The Gift*. “This one point of action goes towards reaching our goals for the decade,” he added.

Sabrina Elba, the Canadian actress and model of Somalian descent, closed the day saying that along

with her husband, actor Idris Elba, “we are taking action and championing IFAD and zero hunger because we fully believe small-scale farmers can feed the world and should be at the forefront of the world’s attention.”

“We can’t change policy, but you can,” she told the Member States. “We can’t invest more in IFAD but your governments can. We can all raise our voices and speak out for the poor rural people who are too often left behind. Investing in the future of rural people is an investment in our own future too.”

IFAD operates in remote rural areas and highly vulnerable regions, where few aid agencies or international financial institutions venture. Today IFAD launched its Twelfth Replenishment - a year-long consultative process during which IFAD’s Member States come together to agree on strategic directions and mobilize funds for IFAD to provide as concessional loans and grants to developing countries.

[modernghana.com]

✓ TURKEY: YOUNG TURKS IN DESPAIR, BLAME SYRIANS, RESEARCH SAYS

Istanbul, 11 February 2020 - YOUNG people in Turkey are not hopeful about the future of the country, blame politicians, society and Syrian refugees for their problems and want a less precarious working life giving them more independence and a more fulfilling social life, new research shows.

“I mean it is getting worse, it is obvious from the economy,” said an unemployed 25-year old university graduate who participated in focus group discussions organised by the independent think-tank Istanbul Political Research Institute (IstanPol) for the study “The Precarity of Youth in Turkey: The Perception of Work,

Subsistence and Life”.

The study included employed and unemployed university and high school graduates, and those neither in employment, nor in education. It showed young people particularly blame politicians for their situation.

“When I say politics, I do

not only talk about the government for example, I am also talking about the incompetence of the opposition party,” said a 24-year-old unemployed university graduate, who also criticised society as a whole.

“On my behalf, I should say that I am tired of politics. In our company, in our sector,



there is always politics, including my boss,” the study quoted a 29-year old man as saying.

In local elections last year, an alliance of opposition parties won mayoral seats in five of the six most populous provinces in Turkey. In Istanbul, opposition candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu focused his campaign on young people and children to clinch victory in the city of 15 million people and end the 25-year dominance of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its predecessors.

“There is excitement for the next elections. For example, in large cities like Istanbul the other party won. Now there is a chance that it can win the presidential elections,” said a 21-year old working man.

Young people in their early twenties represent a different generation that has spent most of their lives under an Islamist government, in a country that has become politically polarised. But instead of referring to such factors, those in the Istanbul focus group discussions heaped blame on the roughly 4 million Syrian refugees now living in Turkey.

“They are trying to send them from our country, but I mean sometimes we talk, I get some information from what Syrians say, they say ‘why would we leave here?’, said a 26-year old woman. “The state’s assistance is enough (for them), lots of job opportunities, no need for insurance, nothing. They will not leave here,” she said.

“I look at them and say ‘is it me living in their country?’. They live so comfortably, I mean I would be wary if I went to their country, but they live freely. I at the moment live like a refugee in the place I live,” said another male participant.

Young people complain their Syrian peers distort the labour market by accepting jobs below the standard wages.

“While we ask for 2,500 (lira), they work for 1,200, 1,100,” a woman said.

The economic downturn in Turkey that started in 2018 has particularly hit young people. The latest data published this week by the Turkish Statistical Institute shows that some 24.5 percent of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed.

While the level of youth unemployment is high, what is more alarming is that participation in the labour force among young people is declining and the percentage of those neither in employment, nor in education is increasing - 25 percent as of November 2019.

Some 2.5 million people between the ages of 15 and 34 are unemployed, according a report by the Young Unemployed Platform, a group working on young people’s economic rights. Unemployment among university graduates is at 18.6 percent.

In many ways, young people in Turkey and their peers in other countries face similar problems; a more precarious working

environment due to greater flexibility in the labour market, more difficult paths in transition from school to work, an increasing dependency on the family as a safety net.

The Istanbul findings indicate the problems of young people in Turkey have remained almost the same over the last five years, comparing them to the results of a more comprehensive study in 2014 conducted by pollster Konda and Istanbul Bilgi University.

Some 71 percent of 2,508 young people in 2014 said that they had found their latest job through family, friends and acquaintances, while 69 percent said their main source of income was family or a spouse.

The Istanbul study shows that financial help from family is crucial for young people. Those who are unemployed are dependent on allowances from their families, but even who do have jobs say they cannot make ends meet without help from their families.

For many, private sector employment means working in small or larger family businesses, which implies less institutionalised and more unstable forms of work. As a result, finding a job in the public sector has always been regarded by Turks as a way to ensure a more stable life.

Istanbul’s study shows this perception has been changing since a coup attempt in 2016, as some 130,000 public servants were sacked during two years of emergency rule that followed.

“They thought that once you entered into the public sector, your place would be safe, but ... they can turn you upside down, I mean it does not work that way,” said a 22-year old woman student.

Young people complain about political favouritism in the public sector, but in the private sector they also talk about bosses asking them for personal favours, informal working relations and promotions based on family relations rather than performance levels.

The 2014 study showed 91 percent of young people had never travelled abroad, only 27 percent went to summer resorts for holidays. For many, social life meant going to a movie with friends, or going shopping.

“Of course, holidays, social life,” a 27-year old woman told the Istanbul survey when asked whether she had postponed something she had wanted in her life.

“I mean I can put it like this, most of the time you postpone going to the places or postpone spending time for yourself,” said the 29-year old man.

Young people say they lived with depression, in constant anxiety for the future, and trying to cope with feeling they had failed their families.

“I have been depressed for a long time,” said a 24-year old high school graduate, who said he was anxious both about his own future and the future of the country.

A 22-year old participant said she felt empty



“A bit anxious, because of the economic situation and unemployment, but I am trying not to be pessimistic. And, this may be a bit political but, when you feel like everything is going worse continuously ... I mean when there is nothing

going well, you miss the old days.”

[ahvalnews.com]

✓ UNITED KINGDOM: “NO TIME FOR BEING PATRONIZED” SAY YOUTH CLIMATE LEADERS

Bristol, 27 February 2020 - YOUTH organizers of a Friday climate protest in Bristol, United Kingdom said they have "no time for being patronized" after local police sent a letter to parents warning of inadequate safety measures for the upcoming demonstration, which teenage activist Greta Thunberg and thousands of others are expected to attend.

"Social media has gone viral with interest, which leads me to believe it will be thousands of people," wrote Bristol police commander Andy Bennett. "We have confirmation of people traveling from across the U.K. by car, bus, coach, and train. I am told in Hamburg approximately 60,000 came to see Greta speak. Whilst I am not suggesting it will be this big, you can see the scale of the potential attendance." Bennett warned of the "potential for trips, slips, falls, and crushing" and urged attendees to take extra precautions.

Bristol Youth Strike 4 Climate, which organized the demonstration, tweeted Thursday that authorities' safety concerns are exaggerated.

"But of course," the group added in a follow-up

tweet, "in a public event everyone should also be aware of their personal safety at all times. Be kind to others and look out for each other."

Thunberg announced her plans to attend the demonstration in a tweet last Saturday.

The Telegraph reported Thursday that the world renowned 17-year-old climate activist "had originally intended to visit London, but as the area planned for the protest in the capital was too small the organizers had recommended Bristol instead."

In a joint statement Wednesday, Bennett and Bristol City Council executive director Mike Jackson said the youth-led demonstration will likely cause "major disruptions."

"We have seen a number of protests over the last year. However this one will be significantly larger," said Bennett and Jackson.

"Please do not underestimate the scale of this protest."

Willow, a 15-year-old activist from Gloucestershire who plans to skip school to attend the protest, told The Guardian

that the expected size of the demonstration "shows that young people should not be underestimated—we have a voice and we are strong."

(Common Dreams)

NEWS



✓ AUSTRALIA: NEW REPORT SHOWS JUSTICE—INVOLVED YOUTH CHALLENGES

Sydney, 20 February 2020 - THREE quarters of Australian young people who come into contact with the justice system have experienced some form of abuse, according to a new report released today by the Kirby Institute at UNSW Sydney. High levels of trauma, extremely poor mental health, and a lack of connection to support services suggest that these young people are not receiving the help they need.

“These ‘justice-involved’ young people may have committed small offences or they may be detained in juvenile detention for a more significant or repeated offence,” says Professor Tony Butler head of the Kirby Institute’s Justice Health Research Program and chief investigator on the study.

“So, at the point that these youth become engaged with the justice-system, there is a real opportunity to offer mental health care and support. Sadly, the data from this survey suggests that this isn’t happening, and these vulnerable young people’s health needs are

being neglected.”

The survey found that two thirds of respondents are experiencing serious mental health issues such as depression, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and alcohol use disorder, whilst three quarters had experienced some form of non-sexual abuse. Despite the level of need however, two thirds had not used health services in the past year.

“The system appears to be failing these young people,” continued Professor Butler. “Three quarters of the youth in our survey had experienced some form of abuse, while 44% reported that they had experienced head injury that resulted in loss of consciousness. Almost a quarter had attempted suicide; a figure six times higher than their peers in the general population.”

The survey was the first of its kind conducted to address critical knowledge gaps in understanding the mental health of justice-involved young people in the community who are

often underrepresented in, or excluded from, community surveys. The report analysed responses from 465 justice-involved young people aged 14-17 years in Queensland and Western Australia.

Results were compared to existing data on young people in the general population of the same age. “There is no doubt that young people in contact with the justice system represent some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians.

A further challenge is the overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth in this group,” says Dr Jocelyn Jones, an Aboriginal epidemiologist from the University of Western Australia. “In these cases, intergenerational trauma is significant. Promoting good mental health for this group is critical to stop the revolving door of justice system involvement.”

Researchers hope that the information presented in the report will inspire health service providers, justice agencies, policy makers and community organisations to

plan appropriate public health responses for young people who are at risk of becoming involved in the adult justice system.

“By being aware of the severity of these issues, we can work towards enhancing trauma-informed service delivery to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities and enable them to fully and actively participate within society,” says Dr Jones.

Professor Butler says that these sobering data, particularly when taken alongside the health outcomes of young people in the general population, should encourage strong action. “Ultimately, we owe these vulnerable young people the opportunity to improve their health so as to reduce the chances of them encountering the justice system in the future.”

[newsroom.unsw.edu.au]

✓ FIJI: TRANSPARENT PROCESS FOLLOWED IN ESTABLISHMENT OF YOUTH COUNCIL

Suva, 21 February 2020 - AN open and transparent process was followed in the establishment of the Fiji Youth Council.

Responding to Opposition on the criteria and processes in the appointment of the council members, Youth and Sports Minister Parveen Kumar says requirements included an existing set of achievements in the youth initiative.

Kumar says the appointment of members was done through an expression of interest in the newspaper and on the Ministry’s website.

“My Ministry had applied best practice approach in a transparent manner in ensuring that we appointed the right fit youth leaders to match the requirements of the role to be the members of the new Fiji Youth

Council. The national youth council and bio data and their achievements are impressive to say the least and this means they have been selected from a wider of applicants who all had merit but as the council is composed of a set membership to ensure that their operational and logistical capacity is at the optimum.”

Opposition MP Ratu

Suliano Matanitobua questioned the Minister on why most of the council members are from the urban centres.

“My question to the Minister is can you select members from the provinces. We have 14 provinces so for the betterment of the youth committee council – I think you have to include them too.”



Minister Kumar says the council was formed in line with the National Youth Policy.

“The National Youth Council that has been

formed they will be policy makers and that is why recently we have appointed 29 assistant youth officers who will spread out throughout the country”.

That includes the maritime, peri-urban and urban centres Minister Speaker sir.”

Those appointed to the council are leaders who

have the capacity to assist the country in youth development work.

[FBCnews.com.fj]

✓ **GUAM: A “HIDDEN HAND” FOR YOUTH PROGRAMS IN OUR REGION**

Hagatna, 27 February 2020

- I AM faced with the same question every day. Life is easy and opportunities fall out of the sky on Guam. This is simply not the truth. On Guam, like anywhere else, we have to work to make opportunities happen. Often, opportunities on Guam and in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are a product of many years of hard work. When a person works hard, outsiders may view their efforts as “lucky” or “connected.” In reality, opportunities are more likely the product of hard work.

In 1998, I was assigned to work with the Truman Foundation with our young students at the University of Guam. Between 1999 and 2015, I had eight young people earn this scholarship. All had no support from UOG. Each success is a

testament to both the University of Guam and the individual drive of our students. When I first had to interview students for this program, I asked business and public administration UOG faculty to serve on a selection committee to help me. I was pulled aside by three professors who told me to not waste my time. Our students, in their view, were not good enough for this program. This really ticked me off. We have wonderful and smart students. What did that say about us, the UOG faculty, if they weren't? Our Truman scholars are changing Guam even today. I told Helen Whippy, the senior vice president at UOG that I wanted to have UOG named a Truman Honor Institution. This happened, but UOG never acknowledged these efforts. It is as if the regents believed these things dropped

out of the sky. By the way, the only faculty who helped me in the early years with the Truman Program were the members of the Army ROTC faculty. Their experience with promotion boards set a model we followed in other years.

The secret to my success with the Truman Program was the effort our Guam Rotary Clubs played in these efforts. When I needed to fund student travel, I asked helpful Rotary members or clubs. They helped to fund students often in these programs. They never asked for credit. CNMI and Guam Rotary Clubs are often the “hidden hand” for youth programs in our region.

On Feb. 24 and 25, I attended a Rotary District 2750 event in Tokyo. We had an international dinner that is posted on my public

Facebook site. The empress of Japan attended this event. These kinds of opportunities are the epitome of networking for Guam and our primary tourism market.

On this trip, I worked with Saipan Rotary President Ruri Ayuyu. She has done a lot for Saipan youth in her role. We were hosted by Jun Kuroda and Mr. Iwaki of the West Tokyo Rotary Club. On this trip, we talked about how to increase our efforts for youth on Guam and in the CNMI. The model we will likely use is the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards Program. We can use RYLA in conjunction with the Congressional Awards program to help youth both in Guam and the CNMI.

[postguam.com]

✓ **NEW ZEALAND: POWER 88.3 FM GIVES YOUTH A VOICE**

Wellington, 25 February 2020 - THE future of radio is in good hands, thanks to initiatives like Rotorua's Power 88.3fm - a radio station run by the youth, for the youth.

"Young people are struggling a lot with a whole lot of things," Youth development manager Steve Holmes said. "For them to be able to put messages and content together about things that are important

and valuable to them - I think that's really important,"

"Also, because we can!

"I mean, there's not many 'for youth, by youth' radio stations around New Zealand. We can do it, we can give young people an amazing opportunity to reach out to their community and have the experience of a lifetime. So why not?"

Rotorua's Community Youth Centre has run three weeks of a radio course, giving young people experience both behind the mic and behind the scenes. The programme is run by industry veteran Gus Te Moni.

I've been in the radio industry for a long time," said Te Moni. "I had family members that worked in the radio industry so it was inevitable for me to move

into the industry.

"I wanted to grow my repertoire of skills and learn how to build a radio station from scratch. It was an eye-opening experience, but it taught me a lot of great things that helped me build the radio station here at the youth centre."

The programme gives young people the courage to push past their fears and for Gus, a chance to relive his



past.

"They're really nervous and I'm laughing because I remember my first time going in to do my first voice break and I was feeling the exact same way. You know?"

"You can literally see the fear in their eyes, before

they turn the mic on, because there's a lot to do," said Te Moni. "A lot of buttons to push, a lot of memory skills to put into action.

"But once they turn the mic off, you actually see them go 'woah, that was pretty cool!'

In the future, Steve Holmes is looking to develop more opportunities to get local young people involved in extracurricular activities.

"We've been really focused on creative arts as a tool to be used to develop young people. We have a dance studio, recording studio, we've got all this potential

to be able to develop more creative content with a whole lot of skills," Holmes said.

[nzherald.co.nz]

✓ **TONGA: YOUTHS ASK LUNGU TO DISCIPLINE PF ANTI-TONGA TRIO**

Nuku'alofa, 14 February 2020 - VIOLENCE Free Election World Youth Organisation says it will protest if the PF does not discipline the officials who engaged in tribal talk during the run-up to the Chilubi by-election.

Organisation president Robert Chansa in a statement condemned the tribal line of campaigns which some PF members engaged in.

"We strongly condemn the barbaric evil remarks, the tribalism against our brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers and our wives who happen to be Tongas by the three PF officials namely Professor Nkandu Luo, Bizwell Mutale and Chanda Nyela who seem to be intoxicated with power," he stated.

"As youths, the owners of this country, therefore we demand the three PF officials retract their statement and apologise to the nation and we appeal to the police to move in to investigate and prosecute these perpetrators of tribalism for these remarks can cause violence in form of tribal conflicts in our country."

Chansa appealed to the PF

leadership to deal with the perpetrators to deter other would-be offenders.

"We are also appealing to His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu and the secretary general of the PF [Davies Mwila] to take stiff measures against these perpetrators of tribalism by expelling them to pave way for investigations if they are to demonstrate to the Zambian people that they are against tribalism.

"These three PF officials have proven that they don't have qualities of leadership and they are not fit to lead the people of Zambia by even disrespecting and insulting the Tonga-speaking people who voted for them in their constituencies."

Chansa said if no action would be taken by the PF and the police, then "we youths the owners of this country will apply for a peaceful demonstration to de-campaign these leaders and will tell our youths not vote for such leaders in our country for they do not mean well for our country because they can set our country on fire."

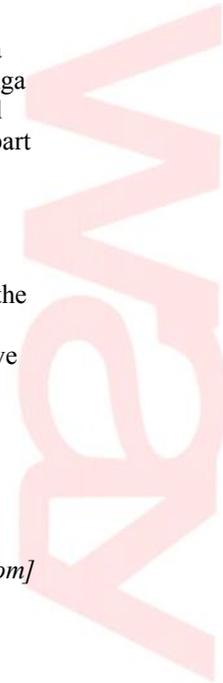
He wondered what was

wrong with having leaders from the southern part of Zambia.

"What is wrong to have a Tonga president or a Tonga MP in Chilubi? Who told them that Chilubi is not part of Zambia where Tongas are not part of?" asked Chansa.

"We need answers from the PF. Why are they giving you sleepless night? Leave the Tongas out of tribal politics."

[themastonline.com]



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