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**STATEMENT BY
H.E. AMB. BANKOLE ADEOYE,
COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY -
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**THIRD AFRICAN UNION REFLECTION FORUM ON UNCONSTITUTIONAL
CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT (UCGs) IN AFRICA: YOUTH INCLUSIVITY FOR
AFRICAN STABILITY**

Accra, Ghana – 3 July 2026

Excellency, President of the Republic of Ghana, Represented by the Chief of Staff, Office of the President,

Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament of the Republic of Ghana,

Excellencies, Chairperson of the AU Peace and Security Council for the month of July 2026, Ambassadors and Members of the Peace and Security Council,

Chief Representatives of Regional Economic Communities, Regional Mechanisms and International Organisations,

African Union Youth Ambassadors for Peace,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, to convey our sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Ghana for their warm hospitality and for once again hosting this important continental reflection.

The African Union expresses deepest sympathies and solidarity with the Government and people of Ghana, following the recent devastating floods. We stand with Ghana and have every confidence that the country's resilience will once again prevail.

Excellency,

This Reflection Forum was established at a critical moment in our continent's history. The forum has evolved into a strategic platform for renewing Africa's commitment to constitutional governance, peace and democratic resilience.

When we first gathered here in 2022, Africa was witnessing a troubling resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government. The African Union Peace and Security Council responded by convening governments, regional organisations, civil society, academia and young people to collectively address both the symptoms and the root causes of democratic backsliding.

That first meeting produced the Accra Declaration, reaffirming the African Union's unwavering zero-tolerance policy against unconstitutional changes of government while calling for stronger democratic institutions, constitutionalism, good governance and accountable leadership.

When we reconvened in 2024, we acknowledged that despite our collective efforts, the challenge had become even more complex. We renewed our determination to strengthen constitutional order while recognising that insecurity, terrorism, violent extremism, governance deficits and the exclusion of citizens continue to undermine democratic stability across parts of our continent.

Today, while six Member States remain suspended from the African Union, we are aware that restoring constitutional order requires more than responding to crises. It requires rebuilding trust between institutions and citizens, particularly our young people.

Excellencies,

It is therefore both timely and appropriate that this Third Reflection Forum focuses on Youth Inclusivity for African Stability. Africa is the world's youngest continent. This is our greatest strategic advantage and asset! This is provided we invest in the African youth not merely as beneficiaries of development but as active partners in governance, peacebuilding and democratic renewal.

The question before us is straightforward:

How can Africa's youth become the strongest defenders of constitutional democracy?

First, our young people must become guardians of Africa's shared values and constitutional principles.

Second, they must serve as ambassadors of civic responsibility by promoting democratic culture, peaceful dialogue and active citizenship within their communities.

Third, the African youth should harness digital innovation and Artificial Intelligence to strengthen civic education, promote transparency, counter

misinformation, expand citizen participation and ensure that the benefits of democracy become visible in the daily lives of our people.

If democracy is to endure, it must deliver hope, opportunity and inclusion for youth in particular.

Distinguished Guests,

The African Union is determined to move beyond declarations to measurable action.

One immediate objective is to significantly increase youth participation in African Union Election Observation Missions. We are working to attain 60 to 70 per cent youth representation among election observers in 2026. This is an ambitious but achievable goal that reflects our confidence in the capabilities of Africa's young people.

At the same time, we encourage the Peace and Security Council, Regional Economic Communities and Member States to take practical steps.

These will include expanding institutional opportunities for meaningful youth participation in decision-making at national, regional and continental levels and investing in youth leadership, civic education and peacebuilding capacities so that young people possess the knowledge and skills to contribute effectively to democratic governance and conflict prevention.

We must also ensure that youth perspectives genuinely inform policy decisions, recognising young Africans not merely as participants but as valued partners in shaping our continent's future.

Excellencies,

To the young people of Africa, I wish to conclude with this message.

From the Sahel to Sudan, from the Horn of Africa to Madagascar, your generation has the opportunity to become the strongest force for constitutional order, accountable leadership, peaceful political transitions and lasting peace.

Do not surrender your future to the politics of division or the disruption of constitutional governance.

Be the generation that strengthens democracy.

Be the generation that rejects violence.

Be the generation that demonstrates that inclusive governance remains the surest foundation for peace, security and sustainable development.

Africa's youth are not spectators in our democratic journey. They are its driving force, its innovators, its bridge-builders and its greatest source of hope.

The youth are the custodians of constitutional democracy.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Ghana headed by His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama for its steadfast commitment to the African Union, to democratic governance and to advancing the inclusion of young people and women in Africa's development.

Your Excellency, we thank you for your leadership and your enduring commitment to the African cause.

I thank you for your kind attention.