



Charter

**Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs - Africa
(CAYE Africa)**

PREAMBLE

DEEPLY CONCERNED that youth unemployment has become a significant crisis in the world. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults, and almost 73 million youth (about 40% of the global labor force) are seeking employment opportunities. Most young people, especially in the developing world, face little prospect of obtaining employment in the formal sector. African countries are ranked poorly in the 2016 Global Youth development index.

AWARE that various governments have concerted efforts to encourage youth entrepreneurship as a pragmatic strategy to address spiraling youth unemployment and to harness young people's potential positively.

CONFIDENT that self-employment/entrepreneurship is a viable alternative to traditional formal employment pathways for many young people. However, this often requires a radical mental shift, especially in Africa, where entrepreneurship can be perceived as the domain of those who miss out on formal education and employment. But this perception is changing as cases of successful young entrepreneurs continue to grow.

FURTHER CONFIDENT that entrepreneurship, especially for young people, is a crucial driver to developing the human capital necessary for the future, unleashing the economic potential of youth, and promoting sustainable growth and development. As the number of young entrepreneurs grows, so does the need for a more prominent voice to articulate their needs and concerns.

DEEPLY CONSCIOUS that young entrepreneurs have limited opportunities and platforms to champion their cause in most African countries, despite the numerous issues they encounter. Significant constraints include limited access to capital due to lack of collateral, lack of adequate skills, knowledge, and experience, and limited exposure to business networks, trade opportunities, and markets.

GUIDED by the existing support given by the Youth Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) to forming alliances of young entrepreneurs to ensure them a more prominent voice on issues that concern them most and provide additional opportunities for learning and trade.

FURTHER GUIDED by the establishment of The Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs - Asia (CAYE-Asia) in November 2011 - A 'network of networks' model, which brings together national networks of young entrepreneurs, and organizations to engage with governments, the private sector, the media, and other stakeholders to champion the cause of youth entrepreneurship at the local, national, regional and international level, and drive trade and good entrepreneurship practice and education within and beyond the region

FURTHER GUIDED by expanding and forming the CAYE network to East Africa, South Africa, the Caribbean, and Canada.

AFFIRMS the formation of the **Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs Africa**, herein referred to as **CAYE Africa**.

FURTHER AFFIRMS that the alliance is intended to: advocate for policy reform on an excellent eco-system for young entrepreneurs, facilitate; intra and inter-regional trade and access to markets for young entrepreneurs; Enhance the culture of entrepreneurship among young people, including the push for mindset shift; Provide a platform for external partnerships, networking, national and organize regional events including awards for young entrepreneurs; Facilitate capacity building, information sharing and mentoring of young entrepreneurs; Work with relevant stakeholders to facilitate access to credit for young entrepreneurs, and act as a unified force for young entrepreneurs and promote social good.

EMPHASIZES the importance of the existence of a functional national youth entrepreneurs' network to the success of the CAYE Africa and affirms our commitment to work on establishing a national youth entrepreneurship network at the national levels.

WHEREAS, all Parties have expressed the desire to collaborate and share all information needed for the successful implementation of this charter by the terms and conditions herein stated;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and representations herein set forth, the following steering committee members agree as follows;

ARTICLE 1: LANGUAGE

The official language to implement the obligations herein created shall be English.

ARTICLE 2: The CHARTER

This Charter serves as the official document that outlines the terms of reference for the strategy and operation of CAYE Africa. It sets out how CAYE Africa will connect with member organizations to connect and promote the cause of young entrepreneurs at national, regional, and international levels. The primary target audience will be young entrepreneurs' networks and private/civil society /public sector agencies/organizations that cater to the specific needs of young entrepreneurs.

This document includes details on:

- a) The Vision, Mission, and Objectives of CAYE Africa
- b) Membership and Governance of the Alliance
- c) Codes of Conduct for Alliance meetings and summits.
- d) Obligations of CAYE Africa to its member organizations
- e) Responsibilities and duties of member organizations to the Alliance
- f) Establishment of working groups, their roles, and applicable terms of reference.
- g) The general guiding principle for engaging with partners and sponsors.

- h) CAYE Africa steering committee member signatories signify their acceptance of membership standards and codes of conduct.

The Governing Council of CAYE Africa is responsible for creating and managing this document. Further to the approval and adoption of the General Assembly, addendum documentation in the form of policies can be developed to implement the mandate presented in this charter effectively.

ARTICLE 3: VISION, MISSION, OBJECTIVES, AND PRINCIPLES

a) Our Vision

To be a foremost community of young entrepreneurs who are fully empowered to actively contribute to economic growth and social development.

b) Our Mission

To link, engage and support young entrepreneurs to build sustainable and competitive businesses by driving trade, advocating for reforms, improving the business ecosystem, and enhancing the entrepreneurship culture in Africa.

c) Our Commitment

We believe that young entrepreneurs can contribute to Africa's economic, social, and political development. As such, we commit to strengthening, advocating, and supporting the dreams of young entrepreneurs in Africa. We reserve the right to engage stakeholders and facilitate the exchange of ideas to remove barriers to enterprise development for young people.

d) Objectives

- I. Advocate for policy reform and implementation to strengthen the youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in Africa
- II. Facilitate intra- and inter-regional trade and access to markets for young entrepreneurs;
- III. Enhance the entrepreneurship culture for young people, including a push for entrepreneurship education and mindset shift; and
- IV. Provide a platform for sharing best practices and resource mobilization, external partnerships, networking, organize regional events.
- V. Facilitate capacity building, information sharing, and mentoring of young entrepreneurs in Africa.
- VI. Work with relevant stakeholders to facilitate access to credit for young entrepreneurs in the region.
- VII. Act as a unified force for young entrepreneurs and promote social good.
- VIII. These objectives will be pursued in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular, SDG 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all) and SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development).

ARTICLE 4. STRUCTURE, MEMBERSHIP, AND GOVERNANCE

CAYE Africa is a continental league of young entrepreneurs and recognized organizations that have agreed to advance shared goals in this Charter.

1) GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

The GA shall be the highest decision-making body of the CAYE Africa. All the powers of CAYE Africa shall, subject to the provisions of the Charter, be vested in the GA.

The composition of the GA shall be made up of **all members**; however, only **Ordinary members** have voting rights. The coordinator and country leads shall also be general assembly members but with no voting rights.

a. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

- a) Scrutinizing the long-term organizational strategy, Reports, etc.
- b) Review External Audit Report.
- c) Together with the Governing Council shall appoint an External Auditor to Audit the organization's Account(s).
- d) Constitute the Governing Council
- e) The Chairperson of the Governing Council shall preside over all meetings.

b. MEETINGS

- a) Annual General meetings
- b) Emergency meetings shall be convened as and when necessary.
- c) At least fifty (50) percent of members present shall form the quorum at all meetings.

2) GOVERNING COUNCIL (GC).

A **Five (5)** Member Governing Council (GC) will oversee the organization's affairs. The Governing Council will oversee the implementation of recommendations from the **GA**. It shall be the overall authority and last point of call on all issues concerning the functioning of the **CAYE Africa**. The GC will work together with the **Coordinator** to ensure the vision, mission, and objectives set out in this charter are achieved.

For the interim reorganization period (2022-2024) of CAYE Africa, the membership of the GC will be constituted by the Commonwealth Secretariat. Subsequently, the membership of the GC shall be determined by an election or consensus by the General Assembly.

At the start of a new session of the Governing Council, the Chairperson will set their agenda along with other members, setting the terms of reference for each office and the strategies to achieve their goals.

a) **The Governing Council's** composition is as follows;

The governing council members shall be made up of 5 selected/elected by the GA into the following portfolios;

- I. Chairperson
- II. Vice-Chair (Membership)
- III. Vice-Chair (Communication)
- IV. Vice-Chair (Partnership and Resource Mobilization)
- V. Vice-Chair (Programs)

b. The coordinator shall be a member of the GC with no voting powers.

c. Governing Council members will serve for two years and be eligible for re-election.

d. A person can only serve a maximum of 2 terms on the Governing council.

e. Country leads shall not have voting rights. However, they can be nominated for election as governing council members.

b. If a country lead is elected to GC, they shall be replaced as the country lead.

c. Decisions at the Governing Council can be reached through consensus, and where this is not possible, an election will be conducted using the simple majority principle. The decision of the Governing Council is final on all matters. The decision process must be well documented and transparent. For the decisions of the Governing Council to be valid, a quorum of at least five members must be present. Decisions made at any Governing Council meeting where a quorum is formed through a simple majority of quorum meetings remain binding.

d. The primary means of communication is virtual as well as an in-person meeting where applicable and as such, formal meetings can be conducted through telephone, skype, google, WhatsApp, email, etc. All formal meetings must be called by the coordinator in consultation with the Chairperson, and sufficient notice given to allow participation by all GC members. It is expedient for all members to use email and virtual communication channels to ensure an easy flow of information.

e. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GC**

- I. Determine the policy of CAYE Africa.
- II. Determine programs of the CAYE Africa whose focus shall be to promote and protect the interests of the young business community in the Common Market.
- III. Make recommendations to the various governments' policy organs regarding policy issues that affect the interests of young entrepreneurs.

- IV. Review and approve work plans and budget of the coordinator.
- V. Appropriately evaluate the work of the coordinator.
- VI. Monitor the performance and growth of the organization.
- VII. Assist in strategic partnership and lobbying.
- VIII. Funds mobilization for national and continental programs.
- IX. The Chairperson shall preside over all meetings.
- X. Report to the General Assembly.

f) **MEETINGS**

- I. Quarterly meetings
- II. Emergency meetings shall be convened as and when necessary.

3. SECRETARIAT

There shall be a permanent secretariat that will be the driver of the CAYE Africa, which works to keep all member organizations engaged and to keep the organization operational. **The administration shall be headed by the coordinator, whom the GC will appoint in consultation with the Commonwealth Secretariat.**

a) **MANDATE OF THE SECRETARIAT.**

- I. Served as secretary to GC.
- II. To Monitor and appropriately evaluate the work of the Country Leads.
- III. Approval of national programs and budgets.
- IV. Funds mobilization for programs.
- V. Organize Continental programs and support national programs.
- VI. Facilitate selection of country leads, establish Governing Council, and ensure easy transition of power.
- VII. Determine the admission of new organizations in consultation with the GC
- VIII. Serve as a link between the organization and its sponsors, donors, partners, Government authorities, and other stakeholders.
- IX. Implement the Organization's long and short-term plans by its strategy.
- X. To be responsible for CAYE Africa property and ensure its proper safeguarding.
- XI. To ensure adequate internal controls and management information systems are in place.
- XII. To represent on committees where appropriate as determined by the GC
- XIII. Convey meetings of the Governing Council and the General Assembly.
- XIV. Report to the Governing Council and ComSec

b) **TERM OF OFFICE**

The coordinator shall be on a **three-year** appointment contract and eligible for re-appointment where applicable.

4. **COUNTRY LEAD**

The Secretariat will appoint country Leads in consultation with the **GC and the Local Youth Councils/Authorities**. The Country Leads shall oversee all the affairs of CAYE Africa at the Country level. **Each member country shall have a Lead**. Country Leads can be any individual who meets the set-out criteria or requirements.

a) **MANDATE OF COUNTRY LEAD.**

- I. Drive Membership Enrolment
- II. Represent the CAYE Africa at the country level
- III. Work with the coordinator to do background checks on Ordinary members who apply to join CAYE.
- IV. Liaise and work with local government on behalf of the GC and Secretariat

b) **REQUIREMENTS**

- I. At least be a young entrepreneur running their own business in the country.
- II. Have a reasonable level of expertise in project management or network leadership
- III. Willing to work on a pro-bono basis

c) **TERM OF OFFICE**

Country Leads shall serve a two (2) year term of office and be eligible for re-appointment but cannot do more than two terms in office.

d) **APPOINTMENT/SELECTION OF COUNTRY LEADS**

The Coordinator shall advertise for country leads among members for a period of not more than three weeks. He will then collate and vet the CVs of applicants. The coordinator will interview shortlisted applicants, and the GC and finalist will be granted an appointment by the secretariat.

5. **STANDING COMMITTEES**

Three Standing Committees will be set up to assist the Governing Council in discharging some works. The terms of reference of the Standing Committee will be determined from time to time by the Governing Council. The following Standing Committees will be operational at all times.

- a) **Membership** Committee (*chaired by Vice-Chair, Membership*).
- b) **Partnership and Sponsorship Committee** (*to be chaired by Vice-Chairperson (Partnership and Resource Mobilization)*)
- c) **Communication Committee** (*to be chaired by Vice-Chairperson Communication*)
- d) **Programs Committee** (*to be chaired by Vice-Chairperson Programs*)
- e) The Standing Committees will be composed of at least two (2) members from the Governing Council. Non-Executive Committee members will be co-opted to the Standing Committee at the discretion of the Standing Committee Chairs but in consultation with the Chairperson of the GC.
- f) The maximum number of Standing Committee members should not be more than seven at any given time, and membership of non-Governing Council Members of the committee can only be terminated by the GC either solely or on the recommendation of the Standing Committee Chairs.
- g) The Standing Committee reports to the Governing Council through the Chairs.

6. RESIGNATION AND REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

A CAYE Africa official can be removed from the position by the Governing Council where a case of failure to perform duties and responsibilities as assigned is established or when there is a clear-cut case of commission of an act of dishonesty or breach trust.

In the case of negligence of duties, a warning notice will be served to the official in question. If no changes were observed after a reasonable period, the Governing Council could pass a motion for suspension or removal.

- a) Before an official is suspended/removed based on dishonesty or breach of trust, an investigation will be conducted by a panel raised from the Governing Council. The panel report will be taken into account before a decision is reached.
- b) *Vacant* position(s) can be filled through co-opting, where it is practical but must be approved by the Governing Council.

7. GENERAL PRINCIPLES ON LEADERSHIP AND OPERATIONS

At any point of leadership appointment, each member organization shall ensure that it has an internal process to nominate the most appropriate persons to assume CAYE Africa GC leadership positions. The member organizations must submit detailed nominee profiles (s) to the coordinator in writing.

For the Governing Council

- a. **Selection of Chairperson and vices:** The Coordinator shall present the CVs/Profiles of nominated candidates at the first meeting of the General Assembly. Members will do secret voting and the winners by a simple majority.
- b. **Profiles of Leadership:** All leaders shall be actual young entrepreneurs within the age range of 18-40 years at the time of their appointment to their positions.
- c. **Decision-making/Voting Procedures within Committees:** Any decision-making meeting must have at least 70% quorum. A decision requires a vote of the simple majority (50% + one) of the Committee members present, except where a supermajority is required. If polls are 50-50, the Chair's vote will count as two votes.
- d. **Changes to the fundamental principles of the Alliance** (e.g., adoption of amendments to the Charter) will require a super-majority (two-thirds) of the General Assembly.
- e. **Decisions may be made in person or through remote means** (e.g., teleconference, email, webinar), provided that those participating in such a discussion can hear and are privy to the discussion around the issue.

8. MEMBERSHIP

1. The membership of CAYE Africa shall consist of networks of young entrepreneurs, individual young entrepreneurs, developmental organizations, and or agencies that are national in focus, supporting and championing youth entrepreneurship. The members shall include:

- a) **Ordinary Members** - Youth entrepreneurship-focused/led Organizations. E.g., National Young Entrepreneurs Associations, non-for-profits, etc. **This**

membership category can vote at GA and can nominate persons to the Governing council.

- b) **Individual Members** - Individual young entrepreneurs in the Commonwealth African countries who own and run businesses. They may be invited to GA but have no voting rights or can take up positions at GC.
- c) **Associate Members** - The GC may invite private, public institutions or individuals interested in working with or supporting CAYE's mission. E.g., Successful business leaders, Incubators, Youth Councils, and Development partners. This category may be invited to the General Assembly but have no voting rights or take up positions.

2. Member Application:

Organizations wishing to join CAYE AFRICA shall submit detailed membership applications to the GC through CAYE Africa Web Portal. Current members shall be provided with an opportunity to present views on their eligibility, which shall be considered when deciding on their admission. The Governing Council members sitting in plenary with a quorum will approve membership applications based on clear membership criteria. The decision shall be made by a super-majority (two-thirds) of members present.

3. Membership Termination:

Membership may be terminated for reasonable grounds at a meeting of the Governing Council, subject to a supermajority vote (two-thirds of the quorum). The grounds for termination may include:

- I. Persistent non-performance of activities versus plans submitted to the CAYE Africa
- II. Absence from three consecutively scheduled CAYE Africa Annual Summits
- III. Conduct that is not aligned with CAYE Africa's Code of Conduct and reasonable ethical standards.

4. Membership Cancellation and Resignation:

Any member organizations may voluntarily resign or cancel membership from the CAYE Africa by providing three (3) months' written notice to the Governing Council through the Secretariat. The resignation correspondence must spell out the reasons for resignation. Any member organization which ceases to exist shall be automatically deemed to have resigned its membership of CAYE Africa.

5. MEMBER OBLIGATIONS TO CAYE Africa

Each member shall make every effort to contribute, plan, and direct its programs to ensure the promotion and attainment of the objectives of CAYE Africa. In particular, each member shall:

- I. Abide by the provisions of the Charter and cooperate in all activities to ensure the promotion and attainment of the objectives of the Alliance
- II. Support and carry out decisions of the General Assembly and the Governing Council
- III. Actively take part in CAYE Africa's activities and projects
- IV. Submit a rep to take up Executive leadership of the Alliance.
- V. Serve as an ambassador to the Alliance by promoting its projects.

Note: In the meantime, members of the Alliance are **not** required to make any financial obligation to the Alliance.

6. CAYE AFRICA OBLIGATION TO MEMBERS

CAYE Africa shall work closely with partner institutions to ensure members who join CAYE Africa can/may access the following:

- I. Information, tools, resources, and educational materials on Entrepreneurship will Strengthen member organizations through collaborative engagement and advocacy and the provision of flow through services to their constituent members.
- II. Have their views and opinions reach decision-makers in Africa.
- III. Access to information on investment opportunities and other funding opportunities.
- IV. Access to Letters of Recommendation from the Alliance
- V. Profiling of CAYE Africa Members for partnership development with Donor Partners, International Development Partners, and other relevant organizations across the continent.
- VI. Trade fairs and missions in Africa and abroad.
- VII. Practical tailor-made Business Development Services and capacity building through mentoring and attachment to local and overseas

ARTICLE 5: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS.

CAYE AFRICA will explore effective ways to raise and receive funds, enter into partnership arrangements within its network and leverage the resources of its member organizations to advance the agenda of the Alliance. The member organizations will continue to follow their mandates and function autonomously within their respective countries but report to the top leadership of CAYE AFRICA on matters of regional collaboration.

CAYE AFRICA will serve as one of the platforms from which business support organizations and other stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to the social and economic development of regional economies through youth entrepreneurship. CAYE Africa will seek

to develop and implement its programs through partnerships with entrepreneurs' networks, public/civil society/private sector development agencies, and other stakeholders across the world.

CAYE AFRICA will also seek to establish long-lasting relationships with other Governments. Therefore, CAYE AFRICA shall have a credible relationship and history of dialogue with its national governments and business sectors around young entrepreneurs' issues.

2. MEMBER ENGAGEMENTS AND EVENTS.

Summit/Meetings and Communiqué Development

CAYE AFRICA shall host a **Commonwealth Africa Young Entrepreneurs Summit** every year. The Summit will bring together Alliance members and dynamic entrepreneurs from the member countries. The Governing Council will ask member organizations to send invitations to their members and encourage attendance.

- b. The annual summit will include the annual meeting of the **General Assembly** and standing committees, including a selection of new office bearers for the following year if only it is election time for CAYE Africa.
- c. **Hosting of Summit:** The General Assembly shall jointly nominate the country to host the annual Summit. The hosts of the next summit shall be announced after each summit.
- d. **Summit Theme:** The Theme for the Summit will be set through a process of consultation among all CAYE AFRICA member organizations. The programs and communication committee will collect views on the theme from all Alliance members and submit the collected opinions to the GC. The theme will be finalized at a scheduled meeting of the GC by a supermajority (two-thirds) vote of members present. This vote can be done electronically, depending on the wish of the current chairperson.
- e. **Organization of Summits and Member Events:** The host country member organizations shall jointly be responsible for delivering the Annual Summit and member events, working in partnership with the Events and Communication Committee on planning, coordination, and management and the Resource Mobilization and Partnership Committee on sourcing of funds to cover expenses.
- f. The member organizations or individual delegates will be responsible for flights, accommodation, and other travel costs for delegates.

3. ANNUAL SUMMIT COMMUNIQUÉ

Every member organization will contribute to preparing a formal communiqué for the CAYE AFRICA annual summit. This communiqué will be a set of constructive recommendations to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem in all CAYE AFRICA economies and beyond. In developing the communiqué, the following guidelines shall apply:

- I. The development of the communiqué must be through a process of member consultation.
- II. The theme of the communiqué must be aligned with the theme of the annual CAYE AFRICA summit.
- III. The communiqué must be finalized by obtaining member organizations' consensus agreement during the annual summit.

4. REPRESENTATION AND MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENTS

CAYE AFRICA members should constantly engage their governments throughout the year and advocate for youth entrepreneurship development. The Coordinator of CAYE AFRICA will be the primary spokesperson of the Alliance in the media and at high-level meetings. The outcomes of such meetings must be reported to the Governing Council through the Coordinator, and the minutes disseminated online to all members within 14 days of the meeting(s). Any confidential information may be excluded from online posts. It is the responsibility of member organizations to ensure timely follow-up of all action items and commitments made on behalf of the Alliance.

- b. *Issuing Press Statements in Member Countries:* The Events and Communications Committee will give standard text on CAYE Africa, pre-approved by the GC, which should be included in all press releases and social media concerning CAYE AFRICA made by members in their respective countries. Periodic official communications on CAYE AFRICA and associated activities will be sent out by the Events and Communications Committee to all member organizations for circulation to the media within a prescribed period.
- c. For all major external communication beyond the scope of the standard text and official CAYE Africa releases, the contents must be approved by the Communications Committee before release. Any press/media coverage on CAYE Africa in respective countries must be shared with the Events and Communications Committee within two (2) weeks of publication. A copy/online link must also be uploaded to the CAYE Africa online repository.

ARTICLE 6: DURATION OF CHARTER

- a) This Charter shall become effective upon signature by the authorized parties commencing on the effective date mentioned above and shall be reviewed as deemed necessary by the members at least once every three years.
- b. This Charter is at will and may be modified at the request of the Member organizations but subject to the consensus agreement of all signatories.
- c. We hereby agree to the terms and conditions described in this Charter and commit to ensuring that the intent of this Charter is scrupulously observed and signed on behalf of the Founding Member organizations.
- d. *Force Majeure*: Member Organizations shall not be liable for the failure to perform any of their obligations under this Charter as a result of a Force Majeure event or situation, which for this Charter means any circumstance or situation which makes it impossible for a member organization to perform its obligations and includes but is not limited to acts of nature, national emergencies, war, or civil conflict

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF CAYE AFRICA

COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION	Representative	Contact Details
Ghana	Ghana Chamber of Young Entrepreneurs (GCYE)	Sherif Ghali	shefghali@gmail.com +233245095553
Nigeria	Alliance of Young Nigerian Entrepreneurs (AYNE)	Olalekan Oshunkoya	me@olalekan.me +1 (202) 656-9614
Zambia	Youth Entrepreneurs Association of Zambia	Mbuyoti Chola	mbuyoti@yeaz.org
Ghana	Business Woman Africa	Gonaya Monei Sethora	sethoragonaya@gmail.com
Kenya	Women In Business Kenya	Nancy Amunga	nancieamunga@gmail.com
Uganda	COMSEC -Coordinator	Joel Bamwise	bamwisej@gmail.com