



# JUSTRAC

JUSTICE SECTOR TRAINING, RESEARCH  
& COORDINATION PROGRAM

## **Youth and the Rule of Law in Sub-Saharan Africa**

A Justice Sector Training, Research and Coordination Symposium  
The Rule of Law Collaborative at the University of South Carolina  
Taj Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa  
March 6-8, 2017

The shift toward younger populations is a global phenomenon, but nowhere is the phenomenon – and the accompanying youth bulge – more pronounced or has the growth been faster than in Sub-Saharan Africa. Recognizing this reality along with the role that youth played in shaping the Arab Spring, the African Union has made youth empowerment a top priority in its planning.

With countries across Sub-Saharan Africa facing crises in their justice systems, security sectors, and economies, young people bring into focus the challenges to development and security that these countries face, such as high unemployment levels, increased urbanization, and strained relations with the state. Youth also offer the greatest opportunities in these areas: youth can drive economic growth, serve as a force for innovation, be partners in building a robust rule of law, and offer support for governance and for political reforms.

This three-day, invitation-only, roundtable symposium will examine the particular issues that relate to youth and the rule of law by bringing together thought leaders and stakeholders from within the U.S. Government, regional governments, multilateral organizations, NGOs, academia, and the private sector to focus on the specific nexus between youth and the rule of law in Sub-Saharan Africa. The symposium will organize participants into three thematic Working Groups: (a) Youth and Justice, (b) Youth and the Security Sector, and (c) Youth and the Economy. Working Group A will examine such issues as access to justice for youth and rights-based education. Working Group B will look at issues like policing and corrections, as well as youth engagement with security sector institutions. Working Group C will discuss economic opportunity for youth and the role of corruption, among other topics. Within its area of focus, each Working Group will consider ways in which youth can present opportunities and challenges for rule of law programs, as well as ways in which that area of focus interacts with those of the other two Working Groups.

At the end of the symposium, each Working Group will present to the plenary a set of recommendations addressed to governments in the region, international donors including U.S. Government agencies, multilateral organizations, and civil society organizations inside and outside the region. The recommendations will consider ways that rule of law programming can be shifted in light of the challenges and opportunities identified during the Working Group discussions. Those recommendations will be compiled in a symposium Final Report, which will be made publicly available on the JUSTRAC website.

## Day I

08:00      **Registration**

08:45      **Welcoming Remarks**

09:15      **Plenary Session I: Why Youth?**

Rule of law deficiencies affect various segments of the population across Sub-Saharan Africa, but they affect youth disproportionately. In school, at home or on the job market, youth most acutely feel the effects of ineffective public service delivery, weak state institutions, corruption, a lack of security, and ineffective mechanisms for redress. Moreover, the region's prosperity depends on the prosperity of its youth. The harmful effects of inadequate access to education and employment opportunities grow as the region's youth bulge grows. This session will examine the unique circumstances that such problems present for the region's youth. It will also address the deeper dynamics of this issue, including ways in which girls and young women are affected, as well as ways in which conflict affects youth. At the same time, this session will examine ways in which youth can be a force for positive change, through engagement with state actors, their schools, and their local communities, as well as across borders. Recognizing that there are many definitions of "youth," this symposium will consider "youth" as those persons between 10 and 24 years of age, akin to the United Nations Population Fund definition of "young people."

10:45      **Coffee Break**

11:00      **Plenary Session II: Relations Between Youth and the State**

This session will examine how the state deals with youth. It will also investigate the effects of urbanization and unemployment on youth and opportunities for state institutions to mitigate the risks that come from increased urbanization. Further, the session will consider the factors that facilitate or hinder access to justice for youth,, including ways in which state actors can provide increased access to state institutions for marginalized young people, and whether informal justice mechanisms can fill the void when youth lack access to formal institutions of the state.

12:30      **Lunch**

14:00

## **Working Groups Convene**

### **Working Group A: Youth and Justice**

This working group will focus on how youth access and engage the justice system as a whole, including physical, economic, social, cultural, and other barriers to access, as well as reconciliation in transitional and post-conflict states. This working group will also consider how youth and justice sector actors can both strengthen and undermine protections for the rights of youth, including how youth can be contributors to changing culture, as well as how a rights-focused education can cultivate a culture of lawfulness. Access to justice, particularly for girls and young women, and how youth can be partners in strengthening access to justice will be key areas of focus for this working group.

### **Working Group B: Youth and the Security Sector**

This working group will focus on the intersection of youth and core institutions of the security sector, in particular police and corrections, with attention to issues of juvenile justice, alternative measures, and pre-arrest diversion programs. Taking account of issues such as gangs, radicalization, and child soldiers, this session will seek to identify innovative solutions to security sector engagement, including solutions driven by youth. This working group will also investigate ways in which a lack of trust among youth in these institutions both exacerbates problems in these areas and puts solutions further out of reach.

### **Working Group C: Youth and the Economy**

This working group will focus attention on the intersection of youth and the economy. The group will consider ways in which youth have become disconnected from the economy in their countries and in the region. In addition, the group will consider how corruption and, in particular, a culture of corruption can affect youth, for example by diverting resources from investment in education and professional training. The session will explore ways in which youth and private sector actors from within and outside the region can incentivize positive change, partner with governments and civil society organizations, and invest in the prosperity of the region's youth. It will also examine the influence that social and economic policies have on youth's ability to engage in their economies.

17:00

## **Reception**

## Day II

### 08:30 **Working Groups Report**

Working Groups will report regarding their meetings from the previous day.

### 08:45 **Plenary Session III: The Role of the Private Sector, Civil Society, and other Non-Governmental Actors**

This session will look beyond state institutions to private sector, civil society, and other non-governmental actors, including youth themselves, for solutions to rule of law problems. It will devote attention to opportunities for non-governmental actors to combat corruption and cultures of corruption, as well as ways for non-governmental actors to empower girls and young women. The session will explore opportunities for cooperation among these various actors and between these actors and governments, for example how NGOs can partner with corporations or governments to provide rehabilitative services for youth.

### 10:00 **Plenary Session IV: Social Media, Mobile Money, and the Spread of Technology**

This session will take a critical look at ways in which technology – including social media and mobile money – and the ways in which youth use that technology can advance or hinder rule of law in the region. The revolution in social media presents unique opportunities and challenges in the context of a youth bulge, ranging from creating opportunities for young whistleblowers to providing avenues for youth radicalization. The session will also examine ways in which a lack of trust can hinder the adoption of technology that can bring positive change, such as mobile money technology, and how to overcome that challenge.

### 11:30 **Coffee Break**

11:45      **Plenary Session V: Youth and the Environment**

This session will focus on the environment and extractive industries as they relate to youth concerns. Corruption and other governance challenges contribute to environmental impacts that affect youth in the long-term. These impacts can divert resources away from investment in education and training for youth, generating discontent and leaving unemployment high. The session also will consider how deforestation and pollution affect health and development in light of international outcomes and guidelines on governance, with a focus on the impact on youth.

13:00      **Lunch**

14:30      **Working Groups Convene**

### **Day III**

09:00      **Working Groups Reconvene**

During this session, the Working Groups will achieve a consensus on a set of practical recommendations for the issues they have been charged with handling.

13:00      **Lunch**

14:30      **Plenary Session VI: Working Groups Report Recommendations to the Plenary**

This final session will offer an opportunity for the Working Groups to present their findings to the larger plenary of participants and speakers for adoption by the entire group of Symposium attendees.