

## **Justification for a National Youth Service and Internship Programme**

Parliament will be considering a Motion for a Resolution urging Government to develop a Policy on National Youth Service and Internship Programmes. The purpose of instituting such programmes is to complement other measures to address the problem of youth unemployment. Hon. Amoding Monicah, moving the Motion, and Hon. Kasamba Mathias, seconding, draw attention to the following as justification for the Motion.

### ***The Demographic Context:***

Uganda has one of the youngest populations of any country in the world with 78% of citizens under 30. The number of Ugandans between 12 and 30 years is the largest in history and those aged 18-30 years number 7.4 million. Uganda also has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (around 18 percent for youth aged 15-24, and 16 percent for youth aged 18-30) and youth are disproportionately affected by high un- and under-employment, making up over 80 percent of the total unemployed in Uganda. Given that context, fighting under/unemployment is a central objective of National Vision 2040 which also recognises that a large youthful labour force that is poorly educated and skilled is one of the factors constraining Uganda's development process.

Government has instituted measures to address the problem with the most recent example being the Youth Livelihoods Programme (YLP) designed to support groups of youth to establish their own enterprises. **National Youth Service and Internship Programmes** would complement programmes such as the YLP by giving young people the opportunity, through structured work-like placements, to gain skills and experience, build their confidence and acquire behaviours required in the work place.

### ***The Policy Context:***

The development of youth service and internship programmes is already called for in existing legislation. One of the objectives of The National Employment Policy for Uganda (2011) is:

‘To promote in-employment skills development, training and apprenticeships and/or internships, especially for the youth’

In its section on ‘Promotion of Youth Employment’ the Policy refers to the development and implementation of a National Action Plan on Youth Employment (NAPYE) which will, amongst other initiatives, ‘promote job placement, volunteer schemes and/or internships to enable young people to acquire the requisite job training and hands on experience.’

The NAPYE has now been formulated with its adoption imminent and it includes as one of its outputs the establishment of an employment geared national service programme for all young people in the country.

One of the interventions in NDP II is to ‘institutionalize internship and apprenticeship for hands-on training in both private and public organizations’.

### ***The Employer's Perspective:***

The Labour Market Survey conducted by the National Curriculum Centre in 2012 and a study entitled 'Navigating Challenges, Charting Hope' undertaken by Youth Map Uganda in 2011 both reported that employers believe young people lack generic/soft skills and appropriate work place behaviours that are vital in today's world of work. These are exactly the attributes young people can gain through youth service and internship programmes. Thus, as employment opportunities are created, graduates from such programmes will provide employers with a pool of talent from which to recruit.

### ***The wider Context:***

Youth service and internship programmes are running successfully in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa some of which are very large with tens of thousands of participants annually. A recent study entitled 'National Youth Service Project on Employability Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa' reported on the contribution 15 such schemes are making to addressing youth unemployment. In Uganda there are programmes being piloted which are demonstrating promising achievements. One such is an Internship Programme being run by the International Youth Foundation 70% of the graduates of which have achieved a positive outcome either finding employment or setting up an enterprise.

### ***Nation Building and Citizenship:***

KCCA is currently piloting a youth service programme entitled 'i-serve' which not only supports its participants to become more employable it provides them with opportunities to contribute to their communities and their city. For example, participants are documenting success stories of urban farmers to inspire others, are working with local CBOs to enable them to become more effective and are supporting market traders to improve their record keeping.

Youth service and internship programmes give young people the skills and confidence to participate more effectively and also help to build a generation of active and engaged citizens. Furthermore, as evidenced by the KCCA programme, they are a means of harnessing the creativity and enthusiasm of youth towards national development.

### ***Development of the Policy:***

The establishment of youth service and internship programmes address a national development priority, have been called for within existing legislation, have been shown to have a positive effect, and can provide the country with multiple benefits. There is therefore need to develop the policy base that will allow such programmes to be designed and implemented successfully to achieve their objectives. Amongst other aspects a policy is needed to define the categories of youth that will qualify and what will be expected of them when they participate, clarify the expectations that will be placed on organisations that will host placements, and set minimum standards with which providers will have to comply.