

**CELEBRATING A VIBRANT YOUTH VOICE  
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UCDP  
10 JUNE 2009**

Mr Speaker

The sweet and fast talking, the clear and energetic, the powerful and demanding. That's the vibrant voices of our youth.

How many of us are giving an ear to them? Are we really listening to give help? Or just criticizing because they are young? It's high time that we adults adopt the listening skills for our youth. Times have changed youth are just not youth like in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Taking them to the highest esteem and not just taking them for granted would be fruitful for our country. This is not just a vibrant voice, but their high-class actions, their taste, art, sport, music compel us adults to support their institutions, so that they can be a force to be reckoned with.

Are we considering them in society communications? Do we share ideas with them? Mold them in their speech and acts? Accepting, letting them belong to everything we do? Tell and teach them beautiful things in life? Let know what is wrong and right?

Authority is an awesome word that can be intimidating for young people as well as adults. How-ever without authority the youth's voice is a hollow-cry

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in a loud argument.

Building the skills of children and youth and engaging in democracy, adults can provide practical steps towards empowerment instead of just words. They must involve young people in activities that are actual, powerful, purposeful, and rewarding.

Things have now changed. Our country is at a stage of rebuilding from its ugly past. We are faced with so many challenges that require participation of youth. Their agenda for better life is more pronounced even than before. The youth are not only in majority, they are the one's mostly affected by socio-economic and political ills of the past.

Youth unemployment, their underemployment, and employability will remain a primary policy challenge in all Sub-Saharan countries for decades ahead.

Our youth are seemingly faced with a multiple of powerful enemies, ranging from HIV/AIDS, rising unemployment, poverty, homelessness and lack of education – BUT STILL THEY ARE VIBRANT. Their active involvement in the economy will with no doubt lead to the sustainable development of our country. The economy will grow meaning more revenue for the Government and better social services for all.

Mr Speaker lets keep on and keep on listening to these vibrant youth voices.  
Thank you