By Jejje Muhinde;

The Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF 2022), kicked off on Sunday at Intare Arena, Kigali with the challenged youth from the 54 member states to take the lead on matters that the world faces today.

The three-day forum, the first of the four Commonwealth Head of Government Meetings, opened under the theme “Taking Charge of our Future’ and has brought over 350 young people together to network, exchange ideas, build skills, and generate solutions to the most pressing youth-related challenges.

In her opening remarks, the Minister of Youth and Culture, Rosemary Mbabazi Who was the guest of honour, said that the forum will not set a comfortable slot for you to share ideas, exchange and network with others but also will leave concrete actions regarding youth active involvement in decision-making, trade entrepreneurship , environment information technology among many others,”

Minister Mbabazi said that the youth should set their demands to the state leaders, and promised that whatever is agreed in the forum will be presented to leaders when they convene in the coming.

“I encourage you to build networks that will turn into long-term markets needed for your innovations. Create innovations that respond to the problems within our communities,” Mbabazi said.

She pointed out that, the COVID-19 disrupted all our plans and goals, buy we have comeback stronger and more devoted to achieve more together,”

The Commonwealth accounts for 2.5 billion people out of which 60% constitute youth below 30 years of age.

Minister Mbabazi challenged the youth to take matters in their own hands and to ask themselves if they have their own future in their hands.

Dr. Arjoon Suddhoo, Deputy Secretary General, Commonwealth Secretariat, on behalf of the Secretary General, said the youth forum serves as an apt platform to discuss policies with the full involvement of the youth.

He said that what is going to be discussed in these coming days will affect young people’s lives and prospects for the future,” Adding that today’s theme, is a call for

action and urged the youths to have a fighting sprint to change things while continuing to be involved in innovative projects.

During the forum, priorities will be cemented in a Youth Declaration at the end of the three-day event and will be presented to leaders The six-point plan will be implemented by the Commonwealth Youth Council and youth-led organisations across the Commonwealth.