

*By Jeje Muhinde;*

In the attempt to consider young people as equal partners in shaping the future of the Commonwealth to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, support for youth-led start-ups is still a challenge.

The declaration was revealed at a ceremony marking the installation of the new Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC) executives who will act as a recognized voice for the 1.2 billion under-30s living in the Commonwealth.

Speaking during the forum, CYC Chairperson, Papua New Guinean Kim Allen, urged young people to be solution-focused and action-oriented.

He said, “Let us reflect on our past efforts and mistakes, assess current situations, identify our strengths and refine our vision and objectives to move forward. Be adaptable! Build and equip yourself and also help others to elevate them. Focus on people always! Take time for reflections but don’t wait long to act.”

The declaration makes recommendations under six categories: ‘The Rule of Law’, ‘Human Capital Development’, ‘Facilitate Trade, Boost Entrepreneurship and Tackle Unemployment’, ‘Information, Technology and Communication (ICT)’, ‘Health and Covid-19’ and ‘Environment, Climate Change, and Sustainability.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Commonwealth Secretary-General Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC said, “I see young people with courage, determination, talent, vibrancy, and innovation. You are not tomorrow’s leaders. You are the leaders of today.

She added, “I watched with such joy in my heart what you have done in the last three days. You have led, you have created and you have also made great friends.

“If you look at what you have done... The 12th Commonwealth Youth Forum has been a resounding success.

“Young people are making a difference in every country in our Commonwealth. We know with the right support and the ability to shape decisions you have the potential to transform the future of our Commonwealth. You have everything we need to build a better world.” She pointed out

Young leaders representing the 54 Commonwealth countries have presented a six-

point action plan on youth development to Heads of Government gathered for a seminal meeting in Rwanda on Thursday.