

# Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme

## YEEP Africa 2023



### PRESS RELEASE

#### **SOMALIA AND UNOCT CONVENE A YOUTH FOCUSED NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE ON PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN KENYA**

**Nairobi (Kenya), 13 August 2024** - Following the successful completion of the Kenyan National Policy Dialogue on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) on 8 August, the Somali PCVE National Policy Dialogue was held today to meaningfully engage Somali youth, empowering them to foster safer and more resilient communities. This dialogue gathered 16 young leaders from across Somalia, providing them with a platform to share their experiences, make recommendations, and explore practical opportunities for future partnerships with government representatives, civil society organizations, and other key policymakers.

This event was organized as part of the UNOCT/UNCCT Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme (YEEP) in collaboration with Somalia's National Counter-Terrorism Centre (TUBSAN), the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Management Institute for National Development (MIND), and supported by the United Nations Peace and Development Fund (UNPDF),

Despite misconceptions that youth are disengaged or uniform in their needs, this dialogue demonstrated the diversity and readiness of young Somalis to engage with key stakeholders, especially in PCVE policy formulation to help effectively address issues that directly impact their lives and the ones of their peers. Often viewed merely as beneficiaries of policies rather than as collaborators and leaders, the dialogue, which was organized back-to-back with the commemoration of International Youth Day, successfully allowed to shift this narrative, proving that youth are also to be considered as critical partners in PCVE and policymaking efforts.

One participant noted, *"UNOCT YEEP initiative has given me a platform to advocate for the issues affecting young people in Somalia. I found my voice and could also bring perspectives of more youth from my own community. This dialogue has been a catalyst for change, empowering us to contribute meaningfully to our country's peace and security".*

The Somali National Policy Dialogue marked the conclusion of the last phase of YEEP Africa's implementation at national level, following prior successful engagements in Nigeria and Kenya. The programme has engaged 75 young African leaders, equipping them with skills to contribute to PCVE efforts and take prominent roles in their communities. YEEP Africa will culminate in a regional policy dialogue on 14-15 August 2024, where young leaders from all three countries will gather, share experiences with their counterparts and explore regional collaboration opportunities with key decision-makers from across the continent. The outcomes are poised to help inform the upcoming 'Pact for the Future', highlighting the crucial role of youth in shaping sustainable peace and security initiatives.

# Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme

## YEEP Africa 2023



### Background

After years of instability, Somalia remains in conflict, burdened by threats and attacks carried out by violent extremist and terrorist groups. Al-Shabaab, in particular, continues to control and influence communities in the southern and central region of the country, using vigorous propaganda campaigns to lure youth and other vulnerable groups to their membership and build community support. With the coordinated assistance of the United Nations and other stakeholders, the Federal Government of Somalia has initiated activities aimed at restoring peace and stability in the country, including the development of the 2016 National Strategy and Action Plan on Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism.

Somalia, together with the United Nations and the international community are promoting initiatives to ensure conflicts are addressed politically as opposed to through violence and are supporting the implementation of the National PCVE strategy through targeted and relevant interventions aligned with the National Development Plan (NDP) 9, such as programs promoting inclusive politics (including Women Peace and Security, Youth Peace and Security agenda). Under this rationale, Somalia has been selected as one of the three countries to benefit from YEEP Africa, which aims at empowering young leaders to achieve their full potential as individuals, and in the CT/PCVE space, by recognizing their value and contributions as agents of change in their communities, regions, and beyond.

Since its inception in 2020, YEEP has already reached 1000 youth from 50 countries, equipping them with increased awareness of violent extremism trends and vulnerabilities, as well as soft skills of leadership, facilitation, negotiation, mediation, self-initiative, empathy, respect and communication with a view to engage peers, as well as form a collective voice and influence PCVE policymaking.

### More Information:

- The UNOCT-UNCCT Global [Programme](#) on PCVE
- The UNOCT-UNCCT Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme (YEEP) [brochure](#)
- The YEEP Africa [Web story](#)

\*\*\*\*

For more information: Laurence Gerard ([gerardl@un.org](mailto:gerardl@un.org)), Public Information Officer, UNOCT [@UN\\_OCT](#) | [#UNCCT](#) | [UNiteToCounterTerrorism](#)