

Foreword by the Minister for Youth and Sports, Ghana

Government recognises the growing potential of Ghanaian youth in our nation-building efforts, especially as we strive to pursue H.E. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's vision of a Ghana Beyond Aid. However, in view of the challenges and the incipient issues, as well as the growing needs and aspirations of Ghanaian youth in a lower-middle-income economy, it has become imperative to understand the current needs and experiences of this group. This is essential if we are to be able to design appropriate and responsive evidence-based interventions to improve the conditions of our youth.

It is in this regard that the Ministry of Youth and Sports, through the National Youth Authority with funding and technical support from the Commonwealth Secretariat, has pioneered this first-ever comprehensive overview of youth development in Ghana. This report tracks the story of youth development in the country in greater detail, pointing to where progress is being made and the areas that require more attention and investment.

In addition, this report represents a response to the urgent need to understand the everyday lives of young people in Ghana. In line with key development frameworks like the African Union's Agenda 2063, it offers insights that can contribute to the transformation of Ghana's youth population and subsequently allow the country to harness the demographic dividend concomitant with successful population transitions through childhood to adulthood, and to achieve the global 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Ultimately, the report presents a baseline evaluation or situational analysis that can inform revisions of current policies or support the creation of new policies on priority issues for youth development. Specifically, I am glad to note that the content of this report informed in large part the situational analysis chapter of the Reviewed National Youth Policy of Ghana (2021–2031).

The Government of Ghana led by H.E. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo is fully determined to ensure the comprehensive development of youth. This is being enabled through coordinated efforts to ensure that national development policies, programmes and projects across all sectors mainstream youth issues. This effort has been given special attention in the Government's Medium-Term Development Framework – namely, the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies 2017–2024 as presented to Parliament and the Ghana Beyond Aid Charter. The aim is to ensure that the youth of the country are fully equipped with employable skills; to strengthen the link between education and the labour market; to build the capacity of youth to discover opportunities; and to bolster key national

structures to bring up competent and responsible young people who enjoy moral and physical health and who are capable of integrating into the international youth arena and participating in global economic, political and humanitarian development.

As the Ministry responsible for youth development, we have learnt through this report that social integration of young people with disabilities and other disadvantaged youth living in troubled families is still a very acute issue. The Ministry has recognised the importance of developing and effectively implementing policies aimed at improving the condition of these categories of young people. As such, a thematic area under the Reviewed National Youth Policy has been devoted to dealing with cross-cutting issues, with the appropriate policy objective and strategies to address youth needs.

In this respect, this *Overview of Youth Development in Ghana*, initiated by the National Youth Authority and the Commonwealth Secretariat, makes a vital contribution to youth development programming, clarifying targets and directions in finding solutions to the various challenges confronting youth. It is worth reiterating that the publication of this report is very timely in the measure that it has given great inspiration to the content of the Reviewed National Youth Policy, which is in its final stages.

The report contains a thorough analysis of the condition of Ghanaian youth based on statistical data and on the results of research. The Ministry of Youth and Sports agrees with the overall conclusions and recommendations of the report and considers them well founded and of undeniable practical interest to the work of Government.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, and also to the author of this report for preparing this very informative and up-to-date document on the state of Ghanaian youth.

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