



YALI Africa Online Cohort 1 Graduation Ceremony

November 12, 2021

Press Release

YALI Africa celebrates 159 leaders in a virtual graduation ceremony!

In August this year, YALI Africa welcomed its very first Africa-wide Online Cohort. The programme is realizing the vision of what YALI Africa intends, which is to create harmonization across the four Regional Leadership Centers (RLCs) based in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, and Senegal. Selected from a pool of over 7000 applicants, the 159 leaders drawn from 49 sub-Saharan African countries were celebrated in a virtual graduation ceremony on Friday, 12 November as they successfully completed the eight-week training programme.

Angela Cardenas, USAID, YALI Coordinator delivered a message of hope for a future led by “resilient and innovative leaders who will practice empathy and gratitude”. As the already skillful and talented leaders officially become part of the YALI family, Angela is excited that the additional skills acquired through YALI are already being used to amplify their voices. She commended leaders like Halid Mohammed from East Africa who used the acquired skills to motivate for his participation in the Climate Change Pre-Conference of the Parties COP26 events in Milan, Italy and consequently the COP26 in Glasgow, UK.

Representing the YALI Africa community, cohort 1 graduates Akeza Nkunuzwanda Germaine, Ramaabele Beverley Maphakane, Migress Jeremiah and Sefakor Ahiagble all delivered a powerful message of hope and solidarity to address Africa’s leadership challenges. Their messages focused on the value of inclusion, self-mastery, teamwork, and co-creation as critical requirement for effective and efficient leaders who will move Africa forward. In keeping with the theme, artists from the YALI Africa community showcased their diverse and multiple talents, with a Jazz performance from Terrence Mpanza, a spoken word performance from Ndlovu Godfrey and a musical performance from Kubisibwa Nkubonage Esther.



Achim Chiaji, the Chief of Party for the YALI Regional Leadership Center East Africa expressed his gratitude during the ceremony to USAID and all YALI sponsors for implementing a successful youth leadership development programme. “It will foster social and political stability when young people have meaningful opportunities to positively contribute to their countries’ development” says Achim. He further encouraged the leaders to use this experience to continue to transform their communities through a “new era of transparency, accountability and good governance”.

Additional speakers included Amma Aboagye, USAID West Africa, Aleta Musvoto, USAID Regional Coordinator RLC Southern Africa, George Khisa, USAID Regional Coordinator RLC East Africa and Derrick Manyisa, Curriculum Manager RLC Southern Africa.

Press inquiries can be directed to James Anquandah (YALI RLC West Africa, Accra) – janquandah@yaliwestafrica.org

Background Information

[YALI Africa](#) unifies the four Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Regional Leadership Centers (RLCs) based in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, and Senegal, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The RLCs mission is to invest in the next generation of young African leaders across Sub Saharan Africa through leadership training, collaboration, and networking opportunities. Over the past six years, YALI RLCs alongside USAID, The Mastercard Foundation, Dow, and other partners, have invested in over 22,000 leaders from 49 African countries.

The 159 leaders aged 18 to 35 successfully completed an eight-week virtual training programme from August 23rd to October 15th in Business and Entrepreneurship, Public Management and Civic Leadership. The leaders will have ongoing professional development, networking, and collaboration opportunities to further develop professionally and personally.