# BUILDING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA:
## THE YOUNG AFRICAN WOMEN LEADERS FORUM

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***"When you connect with other young people …when you share your thoughts and ideas and take the time to listen to theirs…you begin to realize just how much you have in common. You see that whether you live in New York, New Delhi, or Nairobi…so often, we share the same values, the same goals, and the same dreams."***

***– First Lady Michelle Obama***

The Young African Women Leaders Forum, a two-day workshop and conference for women from across Africa, will take place in Johannesburg and Soweto, South Africa, June 21–22. U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama will address the conference and participate in some of its activities. The forum is being sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Embassy in South Africa, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the White House.

### Objectives of the Young African Women Leaders Forum

- To use the activities as a platform for young Africans to express their aspirations and values
- To help empower young African women
- To learn how to become better partners in building a more just, democratic and prosperous future for all of Africa's peoples

### Programs and Activities

The forum is designed to promote the role of women in all spheres of life in Africa. Approximately 76 young African women leaders, including 44 from South Africa and 32 from 23 other African countries, will explore the themes of leadership and community service during workshop sessions. The young women leaders range in age from 16 to 30 and represent the fields of education, health, civil society, business and the media.

Participants will interact in breakout groups that will focus on education, entrepreneurship and health. Community service projects will constitute an important part of the forum. These projects will give the young women leaders first-hand experience with community issues, as well as the opportunity to work together with local leaders to address urgent needs and challenges.

### Online Discussion

To expand the discussion of young women's leadership in Africa, the Department of State's Bureau of African Affairs dedicated its Facebook page to a discussion of the forum's themes, challenges and solutions. A private Facebook Group Page entitled, "First Lady's Forum with Young African Women Leaders," was also created for forum participants to introduce themselves and get acquainted before the actual forum. Facebook participants on both pages are enthusiastic about the American First Lady's involvement, and support her agenda of helping empower women across Africa.
www.facebook.com/DOSAfricanAffairs

### *Voices of Young African Women Leaders*

***"It's a clarion call to many young women and men across the continent to begin to think about the continent differently, and to begin to take the little actions that will truly reform and revolutionize the continent for the better."***

***– Shamima Muslim, Ghana***

***"When you use resources in the community to help people in need, what you create is something that ripples out and has larger, long-term consequences."***

***– Palesa Shongwe, South Africa***

***"It is up to every African to be the change they want to see in the continent."***

***– Lesego Sekano, South Africa***