



YOUTH FOR
TAX JUSTICE
NETWORK

The Pan African Creative Arts Youth Competition

Youth Creatives Shaping Africa's Economic Future

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Youth For Tax Justice Network

Introduction

With a population exceeding 1.4 billion people, over 60% of whom are under the age of 25, the continent holds the world's youngest demographic. This powerful youth bulge presents both an extraordinary opportunity and a pressing responsibility. If meaningfully engaged, Africa's young people can accelerate economic transformation, deepen democratic governance, and drive social justice. Conversely, if neglected, this demographic advantage could translate into heightened unemployment, inequality, and social frustration.

Against this backdrop, Africa's economic trajectory and sustainable development depend heavily on effective domestic resource mobilization, prudent debt management, strategic trade integration through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), innovative climate finance, and robust public finance management systems. Addressing these issues requires bold thinking, fresh perspectives, and inclusive civic participation. Youth and creative artists possess an unparalleled ability to communicate complex economic and governance issues in ways that resonate with the public. Through storytelling, visual arts, poetry, and policy imagination, they bridge the gap between technical policy debates and community-level understanding, thereby shaping informed dialogue and influencing policy outcomes.

In 2025, YTJN launched the Pan-African Creative Arts Competition as one of its flagships. The initiative aims to empower and inspire African youth across different age groups to creatively explore and propose innovative solutions to Africa's key economic and governance challenges through artistic expressions.

The competition is encouraging artistic and policy-centered expression around critical economic governance themes including sovereign debt, AfCFTA, climate finance, asset recovery, and the emerging UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation.

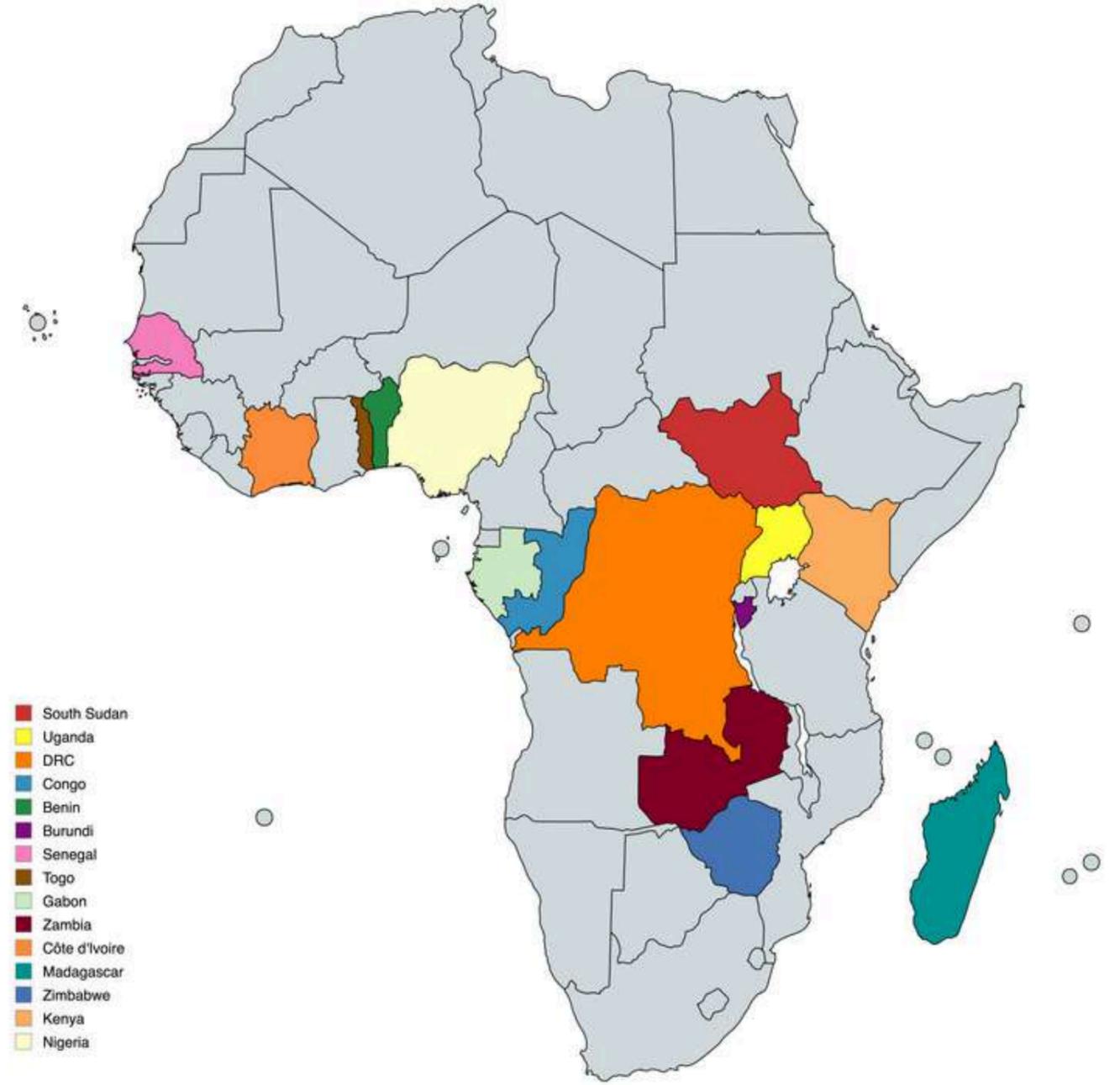
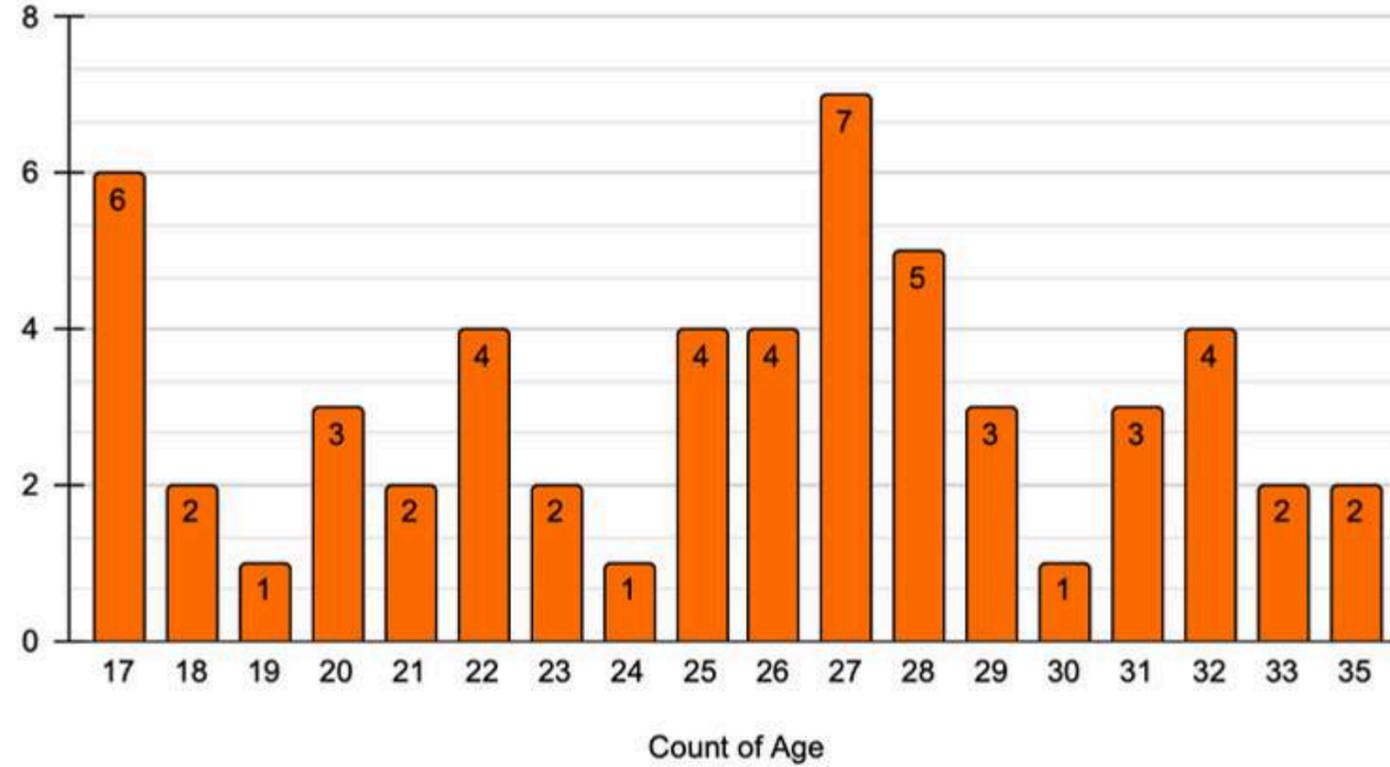


Thematic Overview

PROMPT	THEME	SUBMISSIONS
Imagine you are the President/Minister of Finance of your country. What practical, creative and radical solution would you implement to solve the public debt crisis in your country?	Sovereign Debt Justice	18
Imagine you are the Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat. What bold, inventive and practical solution would you implement to eliminate tariff barriers to unlock new opportunities for young entrepreneurs across the continent?	Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)	7
As a young climate activist, design imaginative and actionable solutions to finance Africa's just energy transition?	Climate Finance & the Green Transition	17
How can your creative vision transform the recovery of assets/money lost to corruption into a tangible reality for the current and future generations?	Reclaiming Africa's stolen wealth (Asset Recovery)	17
If you could re-write the rules of global finance, what bold, innovative and practical idea would you put in the UN Tax Convention to ensure Africa's wealth benefits Africans?	United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation	3

Submissions by Age and Geographical Focus

Submission Count by Age



A Round Up of the Numbers

60 Total Submissions

4 Languages
English, French,
Swahili &
Luganda

15 Countries Represented

42 Male

14 Female

17 Youngest Entry



2025 - BEST OF THE BEST

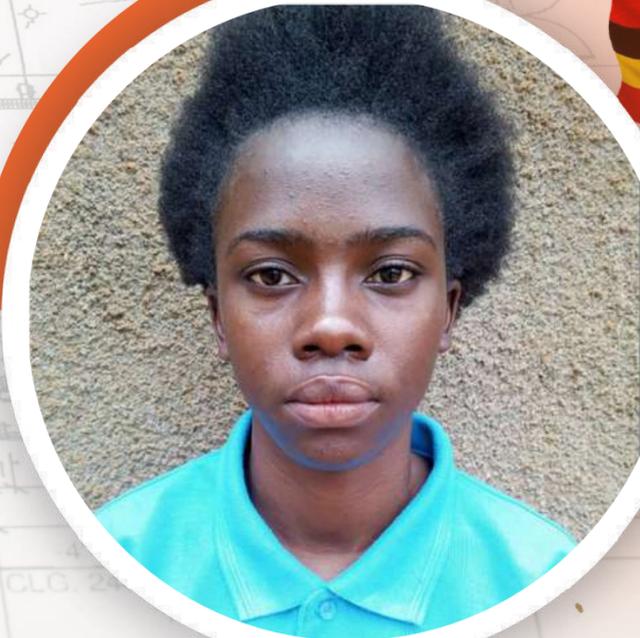




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Essay: A Creative Vision For Transforming Asset Recovery Into A Tangible Reality

The stolen funds—when recovered—hold the potential to transform economies, reduce inequality, and inspire a legacy of prosperity for generations. The challenge lies not only in tracing and reclaiming the wealth but in creatively converting recovery into a lasting development engine.



Mirembe Praise

Transforming Asset Recovery Into a Tangible Reality



The vision begins with a **Pan-African Asset Recovery and Development Authority (PARDA)**—a transparent, independent body mandated to trace, litigate, and repatriate stolen wealth. Unlike ad-hoc recovery efforts, PARDA would employ cutting-edge digital forensics, blockchain-based asset tracking, and international cooperation agreements to dismantle the financial secrecy shielding corrupt wealth. It would work hand-in-hand with Interpol, financial intelligence units, and whistleblower protection mechanisms to ensure evidence is actionable and credible.

However, the creative leap lies in what happens after recovery. Instead of absorbed into opaque government budgets, repatriated assets would be deposited into National Future Funds—ring-fenced accounts jointly managed by civil society, government, and youth representatives. These funds would have a clear legal mandate: finance projects with measurable intergenerational benefits. Recovered billions could seed Innovation and Skills Hubs in every African capital, funding scholarships, technology incubators, and green infrastructure projects. Imagine wealth once hoarded in Swiss bank accounts now powering solar energy grids in rural areas, building hospitals, or financing Africa’s own vaccine manufacturing plants.

A significant portion could be invested in sovereign wealth portfolios, ensuring that the returns rather than the principal finance long-term social programs, insulating future generations from political instability or commodity price shocks.

To safeguard against re-theft, PARDA’s disbursement process would be fully transparent, using open-access digital dashboards where citizens can track every recovered dollar from seizure to project completion. Community scorecards and annual public audits would anchor accountability.

Finally, the initiative would be tied to education and civic ethics programs, so that future leaders understand the value of integrity, reinforcing a culture where corruption is socially unacceptable and asset protection is a shared responsibility.

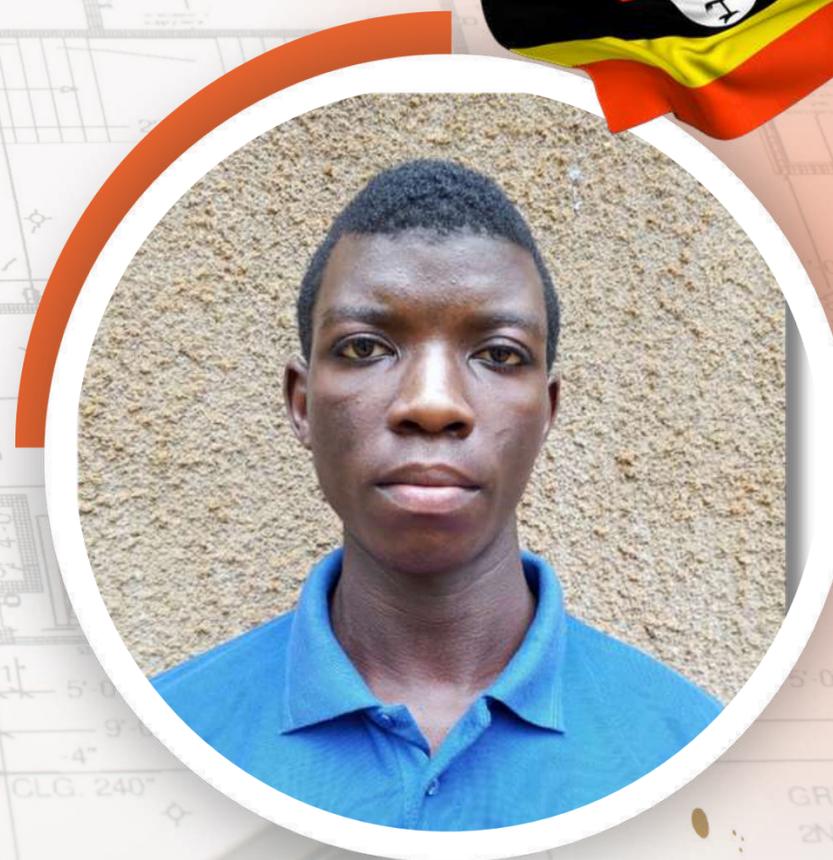
By marrying high-tech asset recovery with transparent, youth-centered investment, Africa can reclaim not just stolen money but stolen opportunities—transforming a history of loss into a future of shared prosperity. This is not only justice for the past; it is an investment in the continent’s rightful destiny.



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Essay: Radical Strategies For Uganda's Fiscal Renewal

Institutionalize pre-borrow audit mandates: every loan proposal must include independent forensic audit of similar past projects, feasibility studies, and cost-benefit analyses, with citizen-review panels empowered to veto irresponsible borrowing. This directly addresses systemic mismanagement and shadow debts like PPP contingent liabilities.



Bwogi Aaron

Sovereign Debt Justice: Radical Strategies For Uganda's Fiscal Renewal.

1

Development Bonds

Launch "Ugandan Future Bonds" debt instruments directly sold to citizens tied to tangible projects (schools, roads, solar farms). With transparent tracking and returns linked to revenues (e.g. tolls, fees), ordinary Ugandans become co-owners of development, creating public accountability and demystifying borrowing.

2

Partnerships

Expand traditional PPP models into PPCPs (Public-Private-Community Partnerships), where communities, private capital, and government co-invest in infrastructure. This lowers risk, expands buy-in, and ensures that infrastructure (e.g., solar micro-grids, agro-processing hubs) aligns with local needs enhancing revenue generation and social trust.

3

Transparency

Institutionalize pre-borrow audit mandates: every loan proposal must include independent forensic audit of similar past projects, feasibility studies, and cost-benefit analyses, with citizen-review panels empowered to veto irresponsible borrowing. This directly addresses systemic mismanagement and shadow debts like PPP contingent liabilities.

4

Debt swaps

Propose debt-for-climate adaptation swaps with creditors (IMF, bilateral partners). Channels part of Uganda's external debt into climate resilience projects—smart irrigation systems, flood defenses, solar infrastructure. Modeling suggests adaptation investments can slash GDP losses from shocks by two-thirds and close fiscal gaps.

5

Technology

Fast-track digital tools EFRIS invoicing, broadband-enabled tax compliance, e-government platforms to widen the tax base and eliminate leakages. The IMF and World Bank identify domestic revenue mobilization and better public investment management as pivotal to debt sustainability.

6

Debt Review

Establish an Independent Sovereign Debt Advisory Commission, a multidisciplinary body empowered to audit, renegotiate, and contest odious debt, and recommend asset-backed debt restructuring where possible. In extreme cases, prosecute misfeasance and channel recovered assets toward debt repayment.



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Essay: Tax Justice for Africa's Future.

If I could rewrite the rules of global finance, I would start with one truth: Africa is rich, but Africans are poor because our wealth is stolen before it reaches us.



Imran Umar Ujih

Tax Justice for Africa's Future.



If I could rewrite the rules of global finance, I would start with one truth: Africa is rich, but Africans are poor because our wealth is stolen before it reaches us.

Every year, billions leave this continent through tax dodging, illicit financial flows, and unfair profit-shifting by multinationals. Our schools remain underfunded, our hospitals lack medicine, and our youth face unemployment not because Africa is broke, but because the system is designed to keep us broke.

That is why my bold idea for the UN Tax Convention is simple: a Global Minimum Extractive Tax of 25% on all profits made from Africa's natural resources, collected at source before the money leaves our shores.

This would mean no more hiding profits in tax havens. No more sweetheart deals where corporations pay crumbs while communities suffer. Instead, that 25% would be locked into an African Wealth Fund transparently managed and reinvested in education, healthcare, clean energy, and technology for Africans.

The Convention must also include mandatory public reporting of company payments and contracts, so citizens can see who pays what. Sunlight is the best weapon against corruption.

Africa doesn't need charity. Africa needs justice. And justice begins when our wealth finally works for us, not against us.

That's the rule I'd write into global finance. Bold. Fair. African.



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Essay: Et s'il L'Afrique Ecrivait sa Propre Facture?

Imagine an Africa demanding justice, not only financial, but moral, ecological, and cultural. For every mine plundered without compensation, for every agreement imposed without consent, for every project financed through corruption, we would issue a solemn bill.



Fodé Fouémou Christophe

Justice de la dette souveraine : et si l'Afrique écrivait sa propre facture?

Jeunesse africaine, prêtez l'oreille : au cœur des couloirs feutrés de mon ministère, j'ai découvert un visage insoupçonné, celui de la Dette. Pas un simple chiffre au bas d'un tableau, mais un fantôme du passé qui nous hante, une somme de promesses non tenues, de traités signés dans l'opacité, de richesses arrachées sans merci. À chaque naissance, un enfant naît lourd d'un héritage qu'il n'a pas choisi : rembourser des emprunts dont il n'a même pas usé.

J'ai donc tourné la page des rapports froids pour écrire un récit nouveau : et si, au lieu de subir, c'était nous qui adressions la facture ? Imaginez une Afrique qui réclame justice, non seulement financière, mais morale, écologique et culturelle. Pour chaque mine pillée sans indemnité, pour chaque accord imposé sans consentement, pour chaque projet financé au prix de la corruption, nous délivrerions une facture solennelle : « Remboursez-nous l'épuisement de nos terres, la dilution de notre patrimoine, la souffrance de nos peuples. »

Ce geste, loin d'être purement symbolique, deviendrait le socle d'une souveraineté restaurée. À la place d'une dette toujours plus lourde, naîtrait une conscience collective : celle de ne contracter que ce que l'on peut porter ensemble, de voter tout emprunt au grand jour, de lier chaque centime dépensé à un chantier de vie, écoles, cliniques, routes durables. Plus aucune signature ne franchirait nos frontières sans l'aval des citoyens. Chaque emprunt deviendrait un pacte, chaque remboursement, un investissement partagé.

Et quand les créanciers s'étonneraient de cette facture renversée, nous répondrions avec fierté : « Nous ne refusons pas le dialogue ; nous exigeons l'équité. » Nous proposerions un tribunal populaire de la dette, siégeant sous les baobabs, où griots et économistes, rappers et juristes, jugeraient en public de la légitimité de chaque prêt. Là, la dette odieuse serait annulée, la dette utile célébrée, et la responsabilité répartie, y compris celle de nos propres dirigeants, pour que rien ne se négocie plus dans l'ombre.

Ce texte n'est pas un rêve vain, mais un manifeste pour une génération qui ne veut plus être captive de chiffres écrits par d'autres. Car la justice de la dette, c'est avant tout la liberté de choisir, de décider ensemble ce que nous voulons

construire et avec qui. Alors, à vous la jeunesse africaine : prenez la plume et rédigez la facture de votre avenir. L'Afrique n'est pas uniquement débitrice; elle est créancière de sa propre dignité.



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Essay: Contre la dette stérile

**To tame the debt, I wrote
This gentle beast, I conquered
Ten commandments, I gave life
And with strength, they sprang forth.**



Syvine Marina Elsa

Contre la dette stérile

Je couche ma plume pour peindre un savoir
La connaissance qui m'a été léguée pour avoir
Oui, j'ai demandé pour enfin voir
Et petit à petit, ne jamais devoir.

Présidente ou Ministères des Finances,
L'essentiel n'est pas titre mais décision
J'arriverai à suivre la parfaite danse
Pour ne pas finir en dérision.

Pour apprivoiser la dette, j'ai écrit
Cette douce bête, j'ai conquis
Dix commandements, j'ai donné vie
Et avec force, ils ont jailli.

Premier, tu ne craindras pas la dette
Avec clarté, tu la comprendras
Elle n'est que piège pour ceux qui n'ont
pas compris Maîtrises tous ses petit outils
Pourquoi? Comment? Pour qui?
Maîtrises toutes ses petites facettes
Et elle te permettra de faire la fête.

Second, tu ne contracteras le dû Pour créer d'immenses richesses

Pour financer des projets grandioses
Des projets pour ceux qui osent
Et non par pour financer des privilèges.

Quatre, la transparence est ton arme.
Chaque ligne d'emprunt, tu rendras visible
Le peuple, c'est le boss à qui tu rends des comptes
À qui tu rapportes sans honte,
Vers qui tu monte
Il a le droit à tous les détails:
Qui prête? À quelles conditions? À quel prix?
Car après tout, c'est pour lui
Que tout est fait.

Cinq, la jeunesse surveillera la créance
Ils seront tes alliés et,
Au sein du Conseil Citoyen de la dette,
Veilleront à une bonne gestion de cette dette.

Six, la manipulation humaine tu limiteras
Automatiser les processus, tu imiteras
La transparence en tout,
Pour tout et partout
La sécurité pour tous.

Sept, le principe "pas de remboursement sans impact"
Tu défendras de toute ton âme
Pas de résultats
Pas de remboursements
Une nécessité de renégociation
Ainsi, l'excellence sera recherchée
Et le succès sera assuré.

Huit, les partenariats gagnants-gagnants: Oui!
Les dépendances: Non!
Ne privilégie jamais l'exploitation
Car, tout le monde a horreur des mendiants,
Qui, sales et sans-dents,
Croupissent en lambeaux et haillons.

Neuf, la souveraineté financière
Tu renforceras
Des fonds souverain, l'épargne nationale
Tu creeras
La souveraineté entraîne la dignité
Et tout ceci débute par la volonté.
Une génération qui comprend la dette,
Tu formeras

Une génération éduquée aux finances,
Tu privilégieras
Ce sont des trésors légués dès le jeune âge
Afin de combattre la manipulation
qui est dommage.

Voici les dix pierres angulaires de ta nation
Implémente les le plus tôt possible
Cultive les au quotidien
Passe-les de générations en générations
Et tu seras riche, sage et souverain
Pour des siècles et des siècles.



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Essay: Trade Like A Girl

**I write a new protocol with my mother's name stitched in its clauses.
Because economic justice is gender justice.
Because the market must finally make room for us
The barefoot economist, the marketplace poet,
the tech girl with calloused hands.**



**Bridgette Kyalimpa
Babigumira**



Trade Like A Girl

I stand at the border not with weapons, but with words,
Not with tariffs, but with trust.
They said commerce was for the bold;
I say it's for the girl who dreams across maps they didn't draw for her.
I am the Secretary General, ink in one hand, fire in the other,
And I decree: let no customs gate silence the currency of creation.

Let trade flow like a river unbothered by fences,
Let goods move like our ancestors walked free,
barefoot, bold.
Why must a girl from Gulu wait months for clearance,
When her beadwork tells stories ready for the world?
In Dakar, a brother codes an app with no visa for his vision.
In Lusaka, a sister sews dresses that defy borders but not beauty.
We are the makers, the movers, the voices ignored in rooms lined with tariffs.
But we are done asking for permission.



I write a new protocol with my mother's name stitched in its clauses.
Because economic justice is gender justice.
Because the market must finally make room for us
The barefoot economist, the marketplace poet, the tech girl with calloused hands.
Let the AfCFTA mean this: that no dream must pay bribes to pass.
That no youth must smuggle hope through loopholes.
That a new Africa trades not just goods but power, knowledge, and dignity.

So trade like a girl
Unapologetic. Fierce. Free.
Break the barriers. Rewrite the terms.
And let every border remember your name.



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