



Southern Africa Youth Forum

Second SADC YOUTH FORUM DECLARATION

Mozambique 2020

“Catalyzing Youth Agency in Regional Processes: Our Future Starts Today !”



2nd SADC Youth Forum
12-14 August 2020
Mozambique

13 August 2020
1500-1600hrs
(CAT)

Facilitator: Babu Juma (Tanzania)

Panelists: Ms. Wandira Tanya Luthindo (Zimbabwe), Ms. Ndlovuwa Dlamini (Eswatini), Dr. Tshilo Chabal (Mozambique), Ms. Tshilo Amon (Eswatini)

Session: Governance, Leadership, Political Inclusion & Youth Policy

Catalyzing Youth Agency in Regional Processes
Our Future Starts Today!

Logos: actionaid, African Union, CAPSI, SAYoF, SADC, SAGOV

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2nd SADC Youth Forum Declaration

WE the young people from 16 SADC member states; gathered virtually from 12th to 14th August 2020;

GUIDED by the 35th Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government held on 18th August 2015; which adopted the SADC Declaration on Youth Empowerment and Development as a high-level commitment to address youth issues with renewed determination and the operationalization of the Strategy and Business Plan on Youth Empowerment and Participation for Sustainable Development, which emphasizes the implementation of development-oriented interventions related to employment creation, socio-economic and political governance and various SADC Instruments whose goals are to foster Regional Integration, achieve Economic Development, Peace, Security and Growth, Alleviate Poverty and enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa, and the urgent need to locate the role of young people in execution and implementation of the instruments from local to national, to regional and international level;

RECALLING the array of challenges that young people in the SADC region are currently faced with which include unemployment, limited access to social services such as education and health, marginalization, poverty and hunger, harmful cultural and religious practices that are harming youth and the urgent need for the region to harness the youth demographic dividend which largely remains untapped to drive development and growth within the region;

CONVINCED that the Southern African Development Community's greatest resource is its Youth and that the regions prosperity and posterity lie on the potential of its youth to create solutions working together with Elders, Governments, State and Non-State Actors in the region;

BEARING IN MIND the role of young people in the Developmental Agenda set by Southern African Development Community (SADC) and its organs on youth and the African Union through the African Youth Charter Article 26 which establishes responsibilities for Youth and recognizes youth as 'custodians of their own development' and its clarion call on Youth to 'contribute to the promotion of the economic development of States Parties and Africa by placing their physical and intellectual abilities at its service, realizing the power of unity in defining our developmental path, whose future starts today;

ACKNOWLEDGING the work undertaken by more than 100 young people within the region who voluntarily came together to constitute the 11 SADC Youth Working Committees for the organization of the 2nd SADC Youth Forum;

RECOGNIZING the support provided by the SADC Secretariat, SADC Member States, the Africa Union Youth Division, AU Office of the Youth Envoy, SADC-CNGO, Youth Councils, Young People, Youth Organisations and Development partners in realizing the need to invest in young people given the demographic dividend within the region;

COGNISANT of the urgent need to establish a Regional Youth Framework in SADC in the name of the **SADC Youth Protocol** which defines the: Aspirations, Developmental Goals, Political, Social and Economic Inclusion, Empowerment and Sustainable Participation at the regional and national level for Youth in line with the African Youth Charter, SADC strategies and frameworks on Youth and other frameworks on youth to which member states are party to;

PERTURBED by the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which has further worsened the lived realities of youth to dire conditions placing serious strains on Government abilities to protect and provide for its Youth; worsening the effect of poverty on marginalization of Youth within the region and the urgent need on Member States to curb the spread of the pandemic by investing in responsive, robust and comprehensive health systems that cater for all;

MOTIVATED AND INSPIRED by the demographic presence of youth within the SADC region whose strength in innovation and zeal to contribute towards sustainable development is assisting Governments in fighting COVID-19. We salute our fellow young people; **#OurCovidIcons**, taking the lead in fighting COVID-19 as Frontline Health Workers and Volunteers;

WE endorse the following set of solutions and recommendations to challenges faced within the region and we trust that the SADC Member States, the SADC organs including the Secretariat, Youth Organisations, Youth Councils, Young people, Religions Institutions, Private Sector, Students, Educational Institutions, Civil Society, Non-governmental Organisations, Regional and International Institutions, Traditional Leaders and individual well-wishers will support and complement the **#SADCYOUTH** in realizing set developmental aspirations whose prefix are within the dictates of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **These are as follows:**

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Peace and Security

- ◆ In line with the SADC Treaty and the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and Africa Union Silencing the Guns Initiative; Youth call for an end of all sorts of Violent Conflicts, end of Electoral and Gender-Based Violence in SADC; by supporting, enhancing existing Regional Frameworks and building sustainable inclusion of young people in Peace and Security processes.
- ◆ Given the frequent of Xenophobic attacks in the region mainly caused by youth migration; seeking employment in neighbouring countries; youth implore governments in SADC region to take immediate action to stop the violent extremism, protect rights of migrants and address the need for increased Economic and Social Development within the member states.
- ◆ We call for the integration of UN Resolution 2535 (2020) into the SADC Youth Development Programme, by coming up with **Regional and National Action Plans for Youth, Peace, and Security**; to create opportunities for Southern African youth both locally and regionally to be actively involved in promoting sustainable peace and security as decision-makers.
- ◆ To recognize and support youth as development partners in peacebuilding; SADC leaders, Stakeholders, Regional and International Institutions must facilitate resource mobilization to strengthen youth and youth organizations' capacity to contribute to the maintenance of peace and security in the region by the year 2030. State parties must employ different instruments at the national and regional levels to ensure that the youthful population is well informed and acquainted with policies and legislative instruments of maintaining peace, more importantly, the youths and young people in the marginalized areas.

Governance, Policy and Political Inclusion

- ◆ We implore SADC Member States to domesticate and implement Regional Frameworks that foster youth participation in governance processes such as the African Youth Charter, SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, Africa Charter for Democracy, Election and Governance (ACDEG), Agenda 2063 aspiration number six which talks about an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African People, especially its women and youth.
- ◆ We call for the establishment of a SADC Youth Strategy/Framework; inform of **SADC Youth Protocol** to harness the aspirations of youth and foster sustainable participation and empowerment at the national and regional levels.
- ◆ The SADC Member States must promote political inclusion by supporting young people in Electoral Processes; by guaranteeing enabling environment, providing adequate resources, and lower the age of eligibility for public offices. The youth inclusion must be at all levels including at Regional and National level structures, Economic and Decision-Making Processes.
- ◆ SADC must take an immediate step towards the Members States that are abusing Human Rights and the Rule of law, particularly the case of our motherland Zimbabwe, whose young people live in fear of expressing themselves.
- ◆ We call on Governments in SADC to effectively deal with the corruption that is rampant in the region and allow young people to be part of established Anti-Corruption Mechanisms and Structures at the National and Regional level.
- ◆ SADC member states should have well established/strengthened youth engagement and leadership programs. SADC Secretariat should strengthen regional coordination aimed at accelerating youth participation in socio-economic and political matters, and ensuring that the youth take part in policy and decision-making processes of government and SADC.

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Environment and Climate Change

- ◆ We call upon SADC countries to accelerate the adoption and harnessing of Renewable Energy especially solar as SADC countries are endowed with sunshine as a means to mitigate climate change risk as well as counter energy insecurity.
- ◆ SADC region has been recently affected by natural disasters such as Cyclones; we call for SADC Member states to prioritize Policies that protect the environment and prioritize disaster preparedness, regularly review National Disaster Frameworks in line with the changing climate change context taking into account indigenous knowledge and regional strategies, also strengthening Regional Emergency Response Fund or SADC Disaster Fund to support member states affected by disasters in line with Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction.
- ◆ We appeal to governments in SADC to ensure that there is adequate Climate Financing, especially investing in disaster preparedness, Information dissemination at Community, National, and Regional levels.
- ◆ SADC collaborates with other international institutions to domesticate emission reduction strategies, human rights-based climate change adaptation, and disaster risk management frameworks.
- ◆ We call on SADC to emphasize young people's engagement and adoption of **the 'SADC Youth Climate Change Negotiator Program'** in every member state, this allows young people to participate in Climate Change Mitigation and Environmental Protection at national, regional and international level.

Health and Covid-19

- ◆ There is a need for SADC and Members States to establish Safety Nets and Health Facilities for young people; recognizing the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to increased mental health challenges, an issue that needs to be prioritized.
- ◆ SADC must prioritize nutrition in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts in the region.
- ◆ We call for adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the SADC Member States to the essential Front-Line Health Workers most of them are young people, to prevent them against COVID-19 and the need to create a mechanism to raise awareness and sensitize rural communities and hard to reach areas on COVID-19 in the SADC Member States.
- ◆ he SADC Members States must strengthen health service delivery, including Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights to prevent problems such as child marriages, teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse among others, and to ensure youth well-being.
- ◆ Member States must effectively comply with the new WHO Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) Roadmap; that shows how youth involvement is an essential part to combat NTDs by 2030, in line with this SADC must accelerate mechanisms to eliminate Malaria.

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Disability

- ◆ The SADC Member States must sign, ratifying and domesticating the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure a standard approach in the inclusivity of youth with disabilities in the social, political and economic progress of the sub-region.
- ◆ SADC and the Member States must put a mechanism to protect young people with Albinism from killings and abduction; there should be a robust criminal justice system to deal decisively with attacks on young people with albinism.
- ◆ We call for inclusive education with a transformed curriculum and the necessary infrastructure and human resources to allow for young people with disabilities the option to learn in mainstream schools. All workplaces should be equipped as part of compliance with labor law; this will encourage employers to employ young people with disabilities.
- ◆ Transparent and democratic institutions must start from the micro-level, characterized by a shift towards allowing young persons with disabilities to decision making roles in government, private sector, civil society, and other sectors.
- ◆ The SADC Youth Forum is a strategic platform for young people to meet and exchange ideas; however young people with disabilities remain on the sidelines. For an increase in participation of young people with disabilities in both the SADC Youth forum as well as all SADC processes.

Education, Science, and Technology

- ◆ The SADC Member States need to ensure inclusive, equitable access to education for all and make efforts to close the digital divide by 2025
- ◆ Member states need to develop common standards for remote learning more equitable and more inclusive education systems that include the needs of girls.
- ◆ SADC needs to safeguard education financing and build better; more resilient and inclusive education systems post Covid-19 and improve the working conditions for Educators with Teachers involved in plans to improve the education system.
- ◆ There is a need to increase funding in research and development for science and technology; the need for countries to safeguard financial resources for education: Increase the size of the budget through action on fair tax and debt.
- ◆ SADC countries need to change the curriculum to align it with the industry's expectation and produce internationally competitive graduates. Ensure the curricula is responsive to 21st-century skills and prepares the youth to be innovative and competitive in the job market globally as well as being self-reliant by being job creators.

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Gender Justice and Women's Rights

- ◆ There must be an increased effort of commitment by SADC member states to reduce the rate of gender-based violence (GBV) in the region.
- ◆ SADC must emphasize on gender equality in politics and decision making. There is also a need to implement gender equality framework from local level political structures.
- ◆ Encourage gender equality in the education sector. There is a dire need to break down gender stereotypes and barriers in the education sector and foster a learning environment that is not heavily reliant on gender norms. More girls and young women should be encouraged to pursue STEM subjects.
- ◆ Taking note of the SADC Gender Protocol and Barometer; SADC must change the economic environment to be supportive of gender equality. Economic programs must be gender-sensitive to empower marginalized women through capacity-building in areas such as the agricultural sector.
- ◆ There is a need to prioritize gender-mainstreaming in the COVID-19 response. Women must be involved in the COVID-19 decision-making processes.

Business and Entrepreneurship

- ◆ SADC member states and stakeholders should promote and establish supportive mechanisms (such as subsidy program) young engagement in agribusiness and technological innovations through business innovation accelerators programs.
- ◆ There is need for an establishment of SADC Youth Fund which will serve as a financing mechanism for youth initiative within the SADC region; contributing to member states action-oriented initiatives to support young entrepreneurs while at country level there must be transparent and non-partisan criteria to support young entrepreneurs, a clear policy framework that ensures an equal distribution of funds.
- ◆ The region must create opportunities for young people to acquire skills through training, workshops, or a SADC Trade Fair to create networking opportunities and markets for youth businesses.
- ◆ The SADC Member States must intervene and provide support to Universities, Schools, and Vocational Training Centers to make sure that business and entrepreneurship is set as a priority and taught in all educational programs.
- ◆ SADC and Stakeholders must support youth participation in policy-making to amplify their voice, on areas such as Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), Trade, Regional Integration, and Entrepreneurship. SADC must strengthen the coordination and implementation of the Youth Empowerment Strategy and Business Plan at the Secretariat and in Member States level.

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Media and Communication

- ◆ Effective Communication must allow young people to be part of the decision-making processes in SADC
- ◆ The media has been persecuted in some SADC Member States for playing their accountability role, there must be a sustainable mechanism to protect Media Freedoms.
- ◆ Young people must be supported to effectively use modern technologies to advance innovations in the sectors of the economy.
- ◆ Young people in SADC must take a leading role in promoting a free and conducive media environment that speaks of peace, development, empowerment, equality while condemning human rights abuse.
- ◆ SADC member states should develop a mechanism or framework that protects young people from Cyber Crimes.

Pan-Africanism and Heritage

- ◆ Youth must carefully deliberate about whom they elect into power, with the majority of votes being a youth in Africa, young people have the power to place responsible, credible leaders who can move the region forward.
- ◆ A call to be transparent and credible in industries and work occupied by Africans, the need to support each other for service and products rendered.
- ◆ A call to be unapologetic about being an African; going beyond wearing traditional clothes, but know the continent and invest in it.
- ◆ Africa must be proud of its languages and utilize its customs; it can be global in an African way.
- ◆ Africa must embrace diversity, preserve Ubuntu, protect the rich heritage, and promote unity by not paying too much attention to the borders. Africa is one and must view itself that way in all aspects.
- ◆ We call upon some western countries to honour our cultural property; by repatriating our cultural heritage/ artefacts which are kept in their museums among other places.

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SADC Youth Parliament

Theme: Born into Debt: Young People's Future under Threat

- ◆ We, the young people in the SADC region are requesting that our governments come together and push for debt relief or cancellation across the SADC, and to collectively take caution on IMF Austerity Policies that prevent our governments from hiring frontline workers who are essential in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. Taking note that Debt cancellation in this context is not prescribed as a charity, but indeed reparations for colonialism, illicit financial flows, illegitimate debt, and the climate crisis.
- ◆ In the middle of the Covid-19 Pandemic, governments require resources to strengthen their health systems, hire public sector health workers, and provide people with economic relief packages. This calls for debt cancellation so that the resources are directed to productive and social services delivery.
- ◆ The SADC Member States must be open and transparent when borrowing; parliaments and citizens including young people must have the right (information) to know the intention of borrowing and how the resources are being utilized.
- ◆ The SADC Member States must stop corruption and illicit financial flows; this will allow resources to be efficiently utilized. The mechanism for the efficient utilization of domestic resources must be in place to avoid unnecessary borrowing.
- ◆ SADC and the Member States should institute Debt Audit to establish the performance of debts and identify possible illegitimate and unsanctioned national debts borrowed on behalf of the citizens.
- ◆ The SADC Member States should prioritize directing resources from debt to capital projects that have the ability to payback and also towards productive sectors of the economy that would also help create jobs for young people, contrary to funding recurrent expenditure.
- ◆ There is a need to strengthen the soundness of fiscal position through the promotion of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policies and capacity utilization across all key sectors of the economy.
- ◆ The SADC Member States should create a conducive and supportive environment for the role of the private sector in stimulating economic growth to achieve economic independence by prioritizing growth and long-term solutions.

The End

Our 2nd SADC Youth Forum Partners



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