



Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) Statement on the International Women's Day

The Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) joins the world in commemorating International Women's Day 2023, a significant observance to reflect and honor the remarkable contributions that women have made and continue to make in our region, Southern Africa, and all over the world.

Women play an important role in building the region as leaders for transformation, economists, doctors, mothers, teachers, security services, and our communities among other developmental platforms.

As we commemorate this day, empowering women, and girls, and preventing violence against them, must be an absolute priority. We must ensure that all women and girls are free from discrimination and violence and can reach their full potential.

This year's theme for International Women's Day 2023, **"DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality"** provides an important opportunity to honor and commit to the advancement of transformative technology and digital education amongst women and girls, and promoting gender equality, meeting the health and developmental needs of women and girls through innovative technology.

Despite some notable and striking women's progress in championing the advancement of transformative technology, women and young girls still face barriers on the road to true equality. Online spaces have brought immense suppression of women's rights through gender-based violence, sexual harassment, cyberbullying, and other forms of abuse that are harmful to women and young girls, widening the digital gender gap.

Women's ability to embrace technology adequately is a critical building block for peace and gender equality and a major step towards closing the digital gender gap on widening economic and social inequalities. SAYoF is committed through its Gender and Young Women Cluster to complement the empowerment and effective participation of young women and girls in the region.

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On behalf of the Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) Gender and Young Women Development Cluster.

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