



**Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) Communique on the upcoming Africa Day 2023 Commemoration: Accelerating AfCFTA: Voices of youth, social enterprises, and businesses!**

The Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) is pleased to partner with the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) at Wits Business School, Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS) and African Philanthropy Network (APN) for the Africa Day 2023 hybrid Commemoration running under the theme “**Accelerating AfCFTA: Voices of youth, social enterprises, and businesses.**”

The African Union theme for the year 2023 focuses on the acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) which came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021, bringing about the dawn of a new era and possible future where people and goods can move freely across the continent. This is in line with the Agenda 2063 plans to integrate the continent based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the visions of Africa’s renaissance. However, urgent ownership and passion is required from the continents youth, trade and industry in order to fulfil the vision of the AfCFTA agreement.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) carries the potential to harness the power of women and youth to realize their true potential. The hybrid intergenerational discussion will be hosted with a specific focus on the roles and contributions of young people, social enterprises, and businesses in fulfilling the visions of the AfCFTA agreement.

Young people can play a critical role in the achievement of the free trade zone by initiating youth-led initiatives in financial technology, agriculture, IT and in the creative industry. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is an opportunity for young people to accelerate Africa’s industrialization and economic transformation, unlocking Africa's immense potential.

We commit to explore the acceleration of the AfCFTA in the context of Pan-Africanism as the foundation to take Africa forward and address our current challenges as well as enhancing the knowledge on developments being made to unite us all, creating a deeper value for the continent we call home.

**Issued by the Media, Advocacy, and Communications Department**

**On behalf of the Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF)**

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**#SADCYOUTH**

**26 April 2023**