



## **PRESS CONFERENCE**

### **LAUNCH OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> SADC YOUTH FORUM**

**THEME: “ACCELERATING REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AFCFTA”.**  
**GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

**Date:** 29 June 2023

**Issued by:** Ms. Katlego Nawa (5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum Planning Committee Lead)- Botswana, Mr. Mr. Reon Van Der Merwe (SAYoF Regional Programs Associate)- South Africa and Mr. Washington Mumbamarwo (SADC Youth Forum Head of Media, Advocacy and Communications Cluster)-Zimbabwe. In attendance for solidarity- partners: Ms. Shumirai Zizhou (Programmes and Research Associate)- Southern Africa Trust and Mr. Jon Kafuko (Proograms Manager at YTJN)- Uganda.

**Media Houses from SADC and beyond, young people, our partners; its our pleasure to issue this statement on the 5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum.**

We have gathered here to share information with the media about the 5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum which is an annual event hosted before the SADC Heads of States and Government Summit to deliberate on critical issues affecting young people in the region and proffer solutions in line with Development Strategies formulated by SADC and the Africa Union among other key institutions. The Forum is one of the largest youths gathering in Southern Africa convened by Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF).

The Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) is a regional development platform for youth in the SADC region (16 member countries), and works with SADC Secretariat, SADC-PF, SADC-CNGO, African Union Youth Division, national governments, and SAT among other regional organizations to empower young people and ensure sustainable inclusion in developmental processes. SAYoF is the official convener of the SADC Youth Forum the largest youth gathering in Southern Africa convened before the SADC Heads of State and Government Summit to co-create solutions for youth and ensure regional and national development that is youth-centered. SAYoF is the convener of SADC Youth Parliament a regional policy advocacy, engagement arm, and leadership mentorship flagship program for SAYoF which have Members of Parliament from across 16 Member countries. SAYoFsits in the Global Coalition for Youth, Peace, and Security, a UN-CSOs partnership to advance youth for peace, SAYoF sits in the Dengue Advisory Group an international committee to fight Dengue a Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) and was appointed



by Africa Union (AU) to be part of the Africa Youth Front on Covid-19 a high-level policy and advocacy framework by the Africa Union (AU) Youth Envoy for young people to co-lead Africa's response to Covid-19. SAYoF is a Co-Convener for African Youth Commission on AfCFTA and represents Africa in the CPDE Youth Sector.

**Taking note of the achievements** realized since the first SADC Youth Forum in Tanzania, 2<sup>nd</sup> SADC Youth Forum in Mozambique and the 3<sup>rd</sup> SADC Youth Forum in Malawi and the 4<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum in South Africa, we continue to place young people at the center of regional and national development.

**Realizing** that participation of young people as stakeholders and change makers as highlighted in the Youth Development Model remain a corner stone for effective development and youth empowerment. The past four years has seen the Forum reaching more than 1,000 000 young people in the 16 SADC Member States virtually and in-person for a common cause, creating a strong voice and representation for the SADC Youth.

**Noting that** SAYoF's work has been honored by several regional and international institutions on its capacity to push the youth development agenda. These include the selection of SAYoF by Africans Rising as one of the top ten Africa Youth Movements for 2020, appointment to sit in the Dengue Advisory Group, an international body focused on Neglected Tropical Diseases, SAYoF sits in the Global Coalition for Youth, Peace, and Security; UN-CSO partnership to advance youth for peace, SAYoF sits in the Steering Committee for Network for Religious and Traditional Peace Makers, SAYoF won Youth Engagement Award under International Society for Neglected Tropical Diseases (ISNTD) United Kingdom (2022), SAYoF won Youth Organization of the year Award (Think Big Experts) 2022 and recently selected to host the first Regional Conference of Youth (RCOY 28) event in the Southern Africa before the COP 28.

The 5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum will run under the theme, “**Accelerating Regional Integration and Youth Participation in AfCFTA**”. The theme has been influenced by the Aspirations of the Regional Indicative Strategic Plan (RISDP) for SADC and the African Union theme of this year which is “**Acceleration of AfCFTA Implementation**” and the call by AfCFTA secretariat call for effective youth participation in AfCFTA. Effective participation of young people in AfCFTA implementation remains an important element for its success, hence, this year's forum seeks to accentuate the important role of youth in regional economic integration in Africa.

**The 5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum** will be a hybrid event, to allow broader participation of young people, targeting about 80 to 100 participants in person and 5000 others joining on SAYoF and



partners' online live platforms. The Forum is expected to have a total online reach of about 1,500 000 through live virtual hubs across the region and various social media platforms.

**The 5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum will** be graced by youth representatives from 16 SADC countries and communities, key stakeholders: Government representatives, SADC Secretariat, SADC-PF, African Union, AU Youth Division, Representatives of National Youth Councils, Youth Organizations, Students, Youth from marginalized communities, the Media, Religious groups, international and regional institutions.

### **The Objectives of the 5th SADC Youth Forum**

- To provide a policy platform, and proffer youth oriented-action plans and initiatives that ensure effective youth participation at national and regional levels.
- To formulate AfCFTA Youth Implementation Strategy for the region.
- Receive updates and presentations on progress on AfCFTA, GCM acceleration, RISDP, SADC Youth Protocol among other initiatives to inform youth interventions for SAYoF Clusters, Stakeholders, and young people in the region.
- Take stock of previous forum outcomes, progress, challenges, and recommendations.
- Formulate a youth position on key policy issues to be submitted to the SADC Heads of State and Government, National, Regional and International Institutions in form of a Declaration.

### **The expected outcomes of the 5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum are:**

1. AfCFTA Youth Implementation Strategy for the region.
2. 5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum Declaration and recommendation to be submitted to SADC Member states and stakeholders in the region.
3. Thematic Position Papers or Call for Actions on the theme of the year.

**The 5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum will be guided by SAYoF Clusters, covering the following sessions but not limited to:**

#### **1. Business, Innovation & Entrepreneurship**

##### **Session Topics:**

- I. Harnessing innovation and research to drive the development of new products and services that are essential for the success of AfCFTA.
- II. Supporting youth-owned businesses in realization of the AfCFTA.



III. The importance of trade policy coherence and coordination among SADC Member States in implementing the AfCFTA.

### **2. Environment and Climate Change**

#### **Session Topics**

- I. Analyzing the environmental implications of increased trade and economic integration facilitated by the AfCFTA.
- II. Assessing how the AfCFTA can contribute to the growth of green industries and clean technologies in Africa.

### **3. Education, Science & Technology**

#### **Session Topic**

- I. The Importance of Curriculum change in Innovation and Entrepreneurship development in SADC.

### **4. Disability**

#### **Session Topics:**

- I. Access to Trade Related Information for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

### **5. Gender & Young Women Development**

#### **Session Topic**

- I. Inclusiveness of Trade Agreements: AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade.

### **6. Health**

#### **Session Topics:**

- I. The Impact of Trade Liberalization on Food Security and Improving Nutrition.
- II. Addressing Tobacco Use among SADC Youth to Promote Health and Well-being in the AfCFTA Era.

### **7. Media, Advocacy & Communication**

#### **Session Topic:**

- I. Leveraging Digitalization and Innovation to Speed up the Implementation of the AfCFTA.
- II. Role of CSOs in implementation of the AfCFTA agreement, role of youth organizations.

### **8. Pan-Africanism, Arts, Culture & Heritage**

#### **Session Topics:**



- I. Pan-African Youth Power: Role of Youth in advancing Pan-Africanism and Implementation of the AfCFTA.
- II. The AU Youth Charter and the AfCFTA: Empowering Young Africans to overcome challenges and seize opportunities presented by the AfCFTA.

## **9. Governance, Peace, and Security**

### **Session Topics:**

Locating the role of Youth in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

**Ladies and Gentlemen, it important to note that the 5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum** is made possible through the partnership and support of various organizations keen on driving youth participation and development on the continent.

Allow me to announce the 5<sup>th</sup> SADC Youth Forum Partners:

1. Southern Africa Trust (SAT)
2. SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF)
3. SADC-CNGO
4. Youth For Tax Justice Network (YTJN)
5. International Idea
6. Wits Business School-CAPSI
7. WWF
8. CJ-JT Donor Collaborative
9. International Organizations for Migration (IOM)
10. Afro-Centric Locale
11. ISNTD,
12. African Union

**Let me invite two of the Partners from to give solidarity remarks : Youth for Tax Justice and Southern Africa Trust.**

*Thank you all for attending the Regional Press Conference*

*Kindly follow and check the following SAYoF social media handles and website for more information.*



- Website: <http://sadc youth forum.org> / Organization Website: <https://sayof.org/>
- Twitter: SAYOF\_SADC
- Facebook: @SAYoF\_SADC
- #SADCYouth #SADCYouthForum

**Thank you all!**