



**GUEST OF HONOUR SPEECH  
BY H.E B.SEKGOMA, PATRON  
OF SADC YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

**7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2023**

**0910 TO 09:20 AM (CAT)**

***Honourable Members of the Youth Parliament,  
Youth from our beloved SADC;  
Youth Leaders living with disability and diverse portfolio's  
Mentors, Chief Mentors;  
Colleagues and distinguished attendees;***

***It is with immense honour that I address you virtually in my new capacity as Patron of the SADC Youth Parliament***

***As you may be aware, the SADC Parliamentary Forum is directly involved in spearheading the development agenda for the youth of the region, whether it is in the fields of gender equality, education, housing, employment or in attaining an adequate standard of living.***

***The Forum is constituted of democratically elected MPs and their Presiding Officers or Speakers from Member Parliaments of SADC.***

***It was thus natural for me to accept to be the Patron of the SADC Youth Parliament as I firmly believe that the Youth Parliament aims to achieve similar objectives as the Forum, from a youth perspective.***

***Furthermore, it is clear that in the decades to follow, the youth will have a momentous role to play in the socio-economic empowerment of***

***Southern Africa and the African continent as a whole. With almost 60% of Africa's population under the age of 25, Africa is the youngest continent on the planet. This also means that Africa has the unique ability to furnish a competent workforce to man industries and developing sectors of the world's economy.***

***The youth of Southern Africa is thus an invaluable asset and window of opportunity for the world.***

***It is thus clear that the youth will constitute a powerful driving force for mushrooming industries and it is poised to be the medium for effervescent ingenuity and innovation.***

***I am confident that the youth will be actively involved in tapping fully into new fields such as mechanisation of agriculture, artificial intelligence, robotics, aeronautic engineering and others, which will benefit their motherlands.***

***With a vibrant youth, Southern Africa can dare to dream.***

***Southern Africa can dream of a society which is just for all, where employment is full, where hunger has disappeared, and where everyone has shelter.***

***We can dream of a society where gender disparities have disappeared and all children are literate. We can also dare to dream of a society where atrocities such as child marriage and domestic violence have vanished and where the human right to physical integrity is universally respected.***

***From a developmental perspective, we can dream of a society where the sustainable development goals have been fully implemented and where Africa Agenda 2063 is realised.***

***Nevertheless, the attainment of these noble objectives requires careful planning and targeted actions.***

***To reach these noble objectives, we need to empower the youth of today.***

***We need to elevate the youth to encourage them to acquire the requisite competencies that they will need to compete on the world stage.***

***Sitting back in terms of policies and legislation will not help the youth.***

***We need Parliaments to promote youth empowerment and advancement in the relevant fields, from sports to ecology to innovative industries. The youth are the ones who will be entrusted to actively implement long-term plans of actions and be part of succession planning as they usher senior citizens to retirement at the appropriate working age.***

***We need an educated youth who is ever-ready to tackle the challenges that lie ahead and to find prompt solutions to emerging issues. African ingenuity must be reborn and renewed through the rising youth.***

***There is a need to heighten African expertise and inventiveness so that the “Einsteins” “Kwame Nkuruma’s” or “Steve Jobs” of tomorrow come from Africa, from our universities, from our Institutions, from our cities and our villages.***

***This is the dream that we covet for the region.***

***As I end, I wish to reiterate that it is an honour for me to be the Patron for the SADC Youth Parliament. There is much that we can do together and much that the Youth Parliament shares with the SADC-PF.***

***Together, we can ensure that national Parliaments of the region bring youth advancement to the forefront of parliamentary interventions.***

***We also look forward to implementing joint initiatives together, such as activities around the International Youth Day, which is celebrated on the 12<sup>th</sup> August every year by the Forum through a statement to partners and through activities of its Standing Committee dealing with the youth portfolio.***

***As Patron of the SADC Youth Parliament, I also wish to invite partners to work closely with the organisation to achieve the regional developmental agenda where youth involvement is a cross-cutting theme that deserves a consistent engagement from stakeholders. Provide Resources and capacities that will allow them to soar.***

***If we are here today, its because we all have faith in our youth. We are proud of them and what they represent for society.***

***I thus wish to dedicate this first speech that I deliver as Patron to the youth of the SADC region.***

***May the youth of the SADC region always stand tall. Let the Youth of SADC be the rule makers not Rule takers.***

***Thank you for your kind attention.***

***Ms B.Sekgoma,  
SG, SADC-PF and Patron to the SADC Parliament,  
7<sup>th</sup> June 2023***