



Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF)

4TH SADC YOUTH FORUM DECLARATION

25-28 July 2022

Johannesburg, South Africa

Theme: SADC Youth Call for Climate Action: Promoting Peace and Good Governance for Sustainable Environment.

Pre-Amble

We the young people of Southern Africa; from sixteen Southern African Member States: **The Republic of Angola, The Republic of Botswana, Republic of Comoros, The Democratic Republic of Congo, The Kingdom of Eswatini, The Kingdom of Lesotho, The Republic of Madagascar, The Republic of Malawi, The Republic of Mauritius, The Republic of Mozambique, The Republic of Namibia, The Republic of Seychelles, The Republic of South Africa, The United Republic of Tanzania, The Republic of Zambia, and the Republic of Zimbabwe,**

Gathered on the **4th SADC Youth Forum** in Johannesburg, South Africa from 25-28 July 2022 (hybrid) to deliberate on our present, future, and strategies for effective youth participation at national, regional, and international levels.

Driven by the spirit of Ubuntu, Pan-Africanism, preservation of our rich Heritage, the diversity of Cultures, and the zeal for Sustainable Youth Inclusion, Transformative Leadership, Solution-oriented Approaches, Effective Participation, and Sustainable Development,

Cognisant of our role as noted in the Youth Development Model (YDM), that young people are Stakeholders, Stockholders, Leaders for Transformation, and Change Agents. Young people are drivers of a prosperous Africa based on inclusive and sustainable development. We believe that we can do more for Africa as a young generation, more than what Africa can do for us.

Concerned with challenges posed by climate change in the region, the growing youth unemployment, increased pandemics, low level of youth participation, conflicts, corruption, malnutrition, presence of rare diseases, sexual abuse, and child marriages.

Acknowledging and Mindful that young people in Southern Africa are the greatest resource for development and are ready to complement and work closely with the elders, governments other leaders, and other stakeholders that support our vision.

Appreciating the partnership and support of various organizations that are for youth development and empowerment. We appreciate the support given before and during the 4th SADC Youth Forum by the South African Government, and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), the partner support by Southern Africa Trust (SAT), African Union Youth

Division, the Youth for Tax Justice Network (YTJN), ISNTD, Wits Business School among others.

Welcoming the current efforts by SADC and the Member States to strengthen youth policy and engagement and to prioritize youth development, empowerment, and sustainable inclusion.

Guided by the aspirations of the SADC Treaty, Africa Union Agenda 2063, the Africa Youth Charter, the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030, SADC Vision 2050, Declaration on Youth Development and Empowerment in SADC, Agenda 2030, and the Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) Declarations namely: Tanzania, Mozambique, and Malawi.

Taking note of pandemics such as **COVID-19**, and Monkey Pox that has a devastating effect on young people in the region and the need to invest in preventative measures to sustain future pandemics.

Requesting that the Southern Africa Development Community (**SADC**) enacts the **SADC Youth Protocol** an instrument that can be a binding engine towards effective youth participation, inclusion, empowerment, and development.

Realizing the primary role of young people in combating Climate Change and advocating for Climate Justice; the 4th SADC Youth Forum has deliberated and reached important outcomes.

We commit ourselves to take on leadership in the implementation of the outcomes and call upon all stakeholders to complement the youth development agenda in our beautiful region, including but not limited to: Governments in Southern Africa, Youth Organizations, Youth Councils, Young people, Religions, Traditional Institutions, Private Sector, Students, Educational Institutions, Civil Society, Non-governmental Organizations, Regional and International Institutions, and individuals as well:

We, therefore, Declare the following **Forum Outcomes** as key priority areas that need regional and national attention:

Climate Change and Environment Cluster

Taking note of key deliberations under the **Climate Change and Environment Cluster** sessions, which include Climate Financing, Promoting Youth Action in Climate Justice, and Building SADC climate resiliency and adaptation as a contributor to socio-economic transformation at the local level. Saddened by disasters such as cyclones, floods, and droughts that have befallen the Southern Africa region in the past decade.

The following key issues have been deliberated and prioritized for action:

- Mitigation and adaptation of climate change risks require financing. The fight against illicit financial flows and bolstering efforts to promote domestic resource mobilization is key to availing resources required to tackle the harmful effects of climate change in the Southern Africa region.
- Countries in the global north should give more grants, not loans to countries in the global south to repair the loss and damage occasioned by climate change and adapt to climate change impacts since they are responsible for over 50% of emissions that cause climate change in Africa. In the same vein, countries in the global north should give reparations to countries in the global south to compensate them for the amounts already spent on repairing the damage caused by climate change going forward.
- Rulemaking on matters of international importance such as climate finance and tax justice has been led by the global north to the exclusion and detriment of global south countries. Therefore, countries in the Southern Africa Region should keep up the pressure on the United Nations to start negotiations on a UN tax treaty that would promote democratic reforms of the international taxation framework by allowing for genuinely inclusive consultations to ensure that the interests of countries in the global south are represented, especially those around Financing for Climate Justice.
- SADC member states should harmonize their taxation regimes, starting with Tax incentives; if they are to raise enough resources to respond to the climate change crisis.
- Mining companies must contribute to climate financing and adopt the use of renewable energy and young people must complement the governments to hold the mining companies to be climate smart.
- Young people and youth-led organizations in Southern Africa must take a leading role in afforestation and re-afforestation.

- Technical and financial support must be accessible to youth initiatives to fight climate change and ensure environmental sustainability.
- Climate Change encompasses food security, cyclones, droughts, health impacts, and many more as such young people must advocate for policy protection.
- Young people must engage in campaigns that will adequately ensure mitigation of crises, carry advocacy interventions where leaders should be held accountable, track financial commitments made towards climate financing, understand national policies on the environment, be part of policy implementation, empowered to research, and track financial flows and national climate plans.
- Southern Africa Youth and stakeholders must pay attention to the preservation of the oceans and come up with ways to end the pollution of our oceans and other water bodies.
- We commit to the Institutionalisation of Southern Africa Climate Change Youth Envoy.

Governance, Peace, and Security Cluster

Climate change has become a driver of instability and conflicts, as a struggle for resources persists for example water, land, and grazing areas coupled with rising population; the nexus between farmer-herder conflict and high levels of desertification causes conflict for resources which leads to the insurgency of terrorist or extremist groups.

The following key issues have been deliberated and prioritized for action:

- Collective inputs and complementary efforts among the youth in the region to tackle the security threat of climate change are equally important to cope with these devastating effects.
- Young people can play different roles in climate change advocacy, and they should be at the forefront of tackling the security threat brought by climate change by coming up with innovative ideas.
- The positive use of social media spaces such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tiktok among others can be used to promote and engage in meaningful advocacy work around climate change awareness.
- To ensure good governance and accountability, initiatives must be responsive to local needs and better coordinated across all sectors.
- The youth need to get involved in initiatives that are aimed at climate change adaptation to foster a sense of ownership, as this is an intergenerational conversation.
- There is a need to institutionalize youth inclusion in the call for climate action and youth should be a key stakeholder in the climate action.

- Leaders must address corruption, account for resources meant for climate mitigation, and include youth in the implementation and monitoring process.
- We commit to the use of platforms such as the SADC Youth Forum to collaborate and cross-pollinate ideas as a youth to incorporate climate change mitigation in peace-building processes.
- We commit to supporting youth Activism in the region and building and capacitating young leaders that are ready to lead and hold leaders to account.

Disability Cluster

Taking note of the discussion on the Effect of Climate Change on Albinism. The effects of climate change are even worse for persons with albinism when it comes to adaptation for example extreme temperatures because of global warming have resulted in heat waves and skin cancers for people with albinism. Climate change has also resulted in the change of weather patterns where most African countries now experience flooding, and many have been displaced due to the excessive floods and persons with albinism have not been spared. Most students with albinism have dropped out of school because of poverty and an environment which is not conducive for them to learn.

The following key issues have been deliberated and prioritized for action:

- An inclusive human rights-based approach to climate change adaptation is important to counter challenges faced by persons with albinism.
- Capacity building for persons with albinism to be able to participate in decision-making processes and leadership positions will make them meaningfully contribute to these processes.
- Affirmative action: where governments, communities, and families need to foster affirmative actions for the support, welfare, and development of persons with albinism as part of the climate justice funding.
- Enhancing communication and digital technology that is easy and user-friendly for people with albinism, especially for those that are visually impaired.
- Physical protection through availing appropriate skin and eyes protection in public spaces, schools, and workplaces for persons with albinism.
- Upscaling education, information sharing on albinism, and the need for special books with large font size letters for persons with albinism.
- Establishing a quota system for persons with disabilities in the various sectors of the economy and political spaces.
- There is a need for enhanced awareness of the policymakers and the climate movement on the requirements of persons with albinism.
- Evidence-based response to the needs of persons with albinism is very crucial, there is a need to carry out research and studies where analysis is made and policy gaps on the effects of climate change on albinism.

- Equality and non-discrimination: when governments are coming up with financial budgets, they need to consider the human rights-based approach to persons with albinism and make provisions for their needs such as sunscreen lotions.

Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship Cluster

Key submissions were made on the Implication of Climate Change to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), Effects of Climate Change on Trade, and the role of youth in the Blue Economy.

The following key issues have been deliberated and prioritized for action:

- Young people must engage in Climate Change Entrepreneurship, have access to mentorship programs and take sustainable farming as a business to boost food security.
- There is a need to facilitate trade by allowing easier movement of goods and services within countries especially those with surplus and to address issues of quality and quantity when buying, and for the regional value chain.
- Southern African countries must de-colonize climate change, consult the citizens on policies, prioritize drought-resistant crops, embracing and investing in new technology.
- The SADC Industrialization Strategy and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) must embrace environmental concerns.
- Southern African countries must invest in infrastructure, connectivity, technology, research, human capital development, and clean energy.
- The region must prioritize creating new employment opportunities, enabling entrepreneurial activities within the region that contribute to sustainable development through climate-friendly lenses.
- A call for member states to develop conducive policies and programs that supports innovation, entrepreneurship, and competitive business ventures and enterprises.
- Blue Economy can be a catalyst for youth employment and economic growth; we should pay attention African Integrated Maritime Strategy and the Decade of the Oceans which amongst others seek to: Identify, reduce, and remove the sources of pollution, which have retarded progress, Establish, protect, and restore healthy and resilient oceans, waterways, and marine systems, increase community awareness, and facilitate for productive oceans and waterways in an environmentally friendly manner.
- We commit to take lead in the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA).

Education, Science, and Technology Cluster

Deliberations were made on Gender Transformative Education:

The following key issues have been deliberated and prioritized for action:

- There is a need to invest in emotional intelligence, creativity, innovations, and adaptability in case of pandemics.
- There is a need to fund quality education and create equity and equality in our education systems in the region.
- Gender Transformative Education contributes to the eradication of certain toxic social norms; early marriages, gender-based violence, and mutilation.
- The curriculum must address society's needs and the empowerment of both girls and boys.
- The Ministries of Education, the Civil Society Organisations, and the Private Sector must unite to empower communities against harmful social norms and at the same time empower and equip teachers.

Gender and Young Women Development Cluster

Important issues were deliberated across sessions during the 4th SADC Youth Forum.

The following key issues have been deliberated and prioritized for action:

- The youths need to focus and push for the skill revolution, skill development, and gender equality in all sectors.
- Realizing the inequalities in some Southern African countries the youth resolve to advocate for equal pay for equal work and pay attention to the empowerment of women to take leadership positions including the Presidency.
- Sustainable development will not be arrived at unless gender equality and equity are reached. We also realized the growth of unpaid internships in the region that must come to an end.
- Youth in rural areas should be supported and be able to participate in policy and national activities as equal stakeholders.

Media, Advocacy, and Communication Cluster

Taking note of the growing use of social media in the region and the need to create a responsible generation where all tools for communication are used for sustainable development; the forum discussed Hate Speech and Cyberbullying. Hate speech can start or escalate conflicts this can be furthered using various media channels.

The following key issues have been deliberated and prioritized for action:

- Strengthening of the digital economy as part of advancing towards the 4th Industrial Revolution.
- Encourage the promotion of media literacy and civically educate the public on issues of hate speech and the negative impact it can result on society.
- Propagate legislation to deal with law offenders, at the same time paying attention to digital rights, media freedoms, and freedom of people (expression).
- Governments in Southern Africa must not use cyber laws to silence the voices of Activists, Opposition Parties, and Civil Society but for the preservation and advancement of rights.
- There must be counseling facilities and mental health institutions due to the growing number of victims of cyber-bullying.
- We recommend that media literacy programs in schools, educate the youth on social media for development, cyberbullying, and hate speech.

Health Cluster

Taking note of the past work done by the SADC Youth Task Force on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) under the SAYoF Health Cluster and the recently formed Coalition for organizations working on Rare Diseases in Southern Africa, which SAYoF is part of the coordination:

The following key issues have been deliberated and prioritized for action:

- Ministries of Health in all Southern African countries should meaningfully engage youth in identifying opportunities for effective youth participation, to address different Health challenges affecting our region.

- We commit to increasing efforts in engaging Ministries of Health in Southern Africa and champion the establishment of a Youth Advisory Council within the ministries of Health to bridge the Ministries of Health and the work youth.
- We are calling on all SADC countries to endorse the Kigali Declaration on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) and to deliver the targets set out in the World Health Organization's Neglected Tropical Disease Roadmap (2021-2030). NTDs cause untold suffering and misery to billions of people.
- Southern Africa Youth commits to engaging and supporting international, regional, and local decision-making bodies in carrying out advocacy and delivery of the WHO 2030 roadmap.
- Southern Africa Youth commits to bringing our creativity, energy, sense of innovation, and skills with new technologies, thinking, and talent in the fight against these diseases while promoting and adopting healthy practices that prevent NTDs.
- We propose the adoption of a unified approach to the management of Rare Diseases across the Southern Africa region by adopting common policies and measures aimed at improving the health and livelihood of people living with rare diseases.
- We are committing to supporting the empowerment of rare disease advocates through knowledge exchanges, awareness raising, policy promotion, networking, international collaboration, and joint action.
- We are committing to ensuring disability support, access to information, and social support to persons living with rare diseases.
- We will continue to gather leaders in the healthcare space across Southern African countries to discuss public health policies that can improve the lives of people living with rare diseases.

Pan-Africanism, Arts, Culture, and Heritage Cluster

As young people of the Southern Africa region, we commit to shaping our future and leaving this region in a state for future generations of youth to thrive and not to amend. We are Africans and we respect ourselves, our craft, African music, our languages, our food, our attires, and young people will uphold our customs:

The following key issues have been deliberated and prioritized for action:



- We declare to own our future by taking charge of opportunities in entrepreneurship and business. Where there are no opportunities, we will not make excuses but pursue other avenues that enable us to prosper in a Pan-African manner.
- No longer will we frown upon our languages and cities. No longer will we uphold Western customs above our own. Through an Imbizo we acknowledged the challenges faced by youth in embracing Pan-Africanism but more importantly commit to change within our networks to support other African youth initiatives and celebrate those preserving our arts, culture, and heritage.
- We are no longer declaring the future as our future is now. In our spaces and networks, we have begun to influence and take pride in who we are as young Africans.
- We declare as young people that our voices must be recognized, and as Africans, we should not be dictated on how to deal with our issues.
- As we engage on the matter of climate resilience and socio-economic transformation, we must be ever conscious of this truth and the need to first and foremost decolonize our minds, approaches, institutions, and education and invest in Africa Indigenous Knowledge Systems as a complement to the global solutions.
- We want growth and sustainable development that is embraced with a strong cultural identity, ubuntu, common heritage, and values.

4th SADC Youth Forum Young People's Commitments

We the Southern African Youth; commit to the following important issues from the 4th **SADC Youth Forum**. We, therefore, re-affirm our commitment to take action as young people on the key issues above and those summarised below:

- A common Youth Position towards the Conference of Parties (COP-27) to be hosted in Africa (Egypt).
- Championing Climate Justice by establishing the Southern Africa Climate Change Youth Envoy.
- Capacitation of Young People on Climate Change, Blue Economy, Sustainable Agriculture, and Sustainable Environment.
- Enable effective participation of young people in Agriculture to boost nutrition and ensure food security in the region.
- To increase the number of SADC Youth Climate Change Youth Negotiators that work with the Members States.

- Foster effective participation of young people with disabilities in Climate Change and developmental agenda in general.
- Ensure the realization of Climate Smart Education in the region.
- Advocating for Gender Transformative Education.
- To ensure all our programs are guided by Pan-Africanism Approach to development as in the Youth Development Model (YDM), with the view to protect our rich African Heritage.
- To engage the youths, regional leaders, SADC Secretariat, member states, and stakeholders for the enactment of the SADC Youth Protocol.
- We commit to taking leadership roles in Governments, Participation in National and Local Elections, Political Parties, Private Sectors, Religious and Traditional Institutions, and Communities and complement the elders in delivering a prosperous Southern Africa.
- Use social media for development to counter hate speech and cyberbullying.
- Work with stakeholders to combat Rare Diseases, Neglected Tropical Diseases, and Malaria.
- Taking a leading role in Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA).
- Effective participation of young people in evidence-based products through research on various issues affecting young people.
- Youth taking a leading role in the preservation of the oceans and coming up with ways to end the pollution of oceans and other water bodies.
- Support SADC Peace and Security efforts at the same time supporting the Southern Africa Ambassador for Peace (AYAP) and building the capacity of young people on peace and security in the region for a stable region and the realization of UN Resolution 2250 (2015), 2282 (2016), 2419 (2018), and 2535 (2020).
- We commit to making information about climate change attractive, simple, and understandable to all and using local languages.
- Committed to skills development and education as well as the mobilization and educating of the masses of young people in our region for effective participation.
- We commit to fighting for young women's rights, equal wages, and women to be in positions of leadership.

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