



Communique of the SADC Youth Forum

“Human and Financial Capital: The Key Drivers for Sustainable Industrialisation in SADC”

3 July 2024

Luanda, Angola

1. The Government of the Republic of Angola and the SADC Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), convened a meeting of the SADC Youth Forum on 3 July 2024, in Luanda, Angola. The main objective was to give youth an opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the 43rd SADC Summit Theme on the importance of human and financial capital for sustainable industrialisation in the region.
2. The Forum was attended by youth representatives from National Youth Councils/Agencies and technical experts from the Ministries responsible for Youth in SADC from fifteen (15) SADC Member States, that is, Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Other participants included young leaders and entrepreneurs, officials from the SADC Secretariat and United Nations Agencies, and representatives of Diplomatic Missions in Angola.
3. The Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Angola, His Excellency, Dr. Rui Falcão Pinto de Andrade, officially opened the Forum. He highlighted that SADC was a youthful region, with those aged between 15 and 35 years accounting for about 35% of the population, and those under 35, including children, comprising approximately 75%. The Minister mentioned that this demographic landscape presented a significant opportunity for Member States if youth are actively integrated into regional and national development initiatives. He addressed the challenges faced by youth, particularly unemployment, noting that around 50% of youth are unemployed in some Member States, with young women being the most affected. He also called upon the National Youth Councils/Agencies to be more representative and inclusive, embracing the diverse voices of youth.
4. On behalf of the Governor of Luanda Province, His Excellency, Eng. Manuel Homem, the Vice-Governor for Political and Social Sector in Luanda, Dr. Manuel

Gonçalves, underscored the importance of broad citizen participation, as exemplified by the development and conservation of Luanda under the theme, "Luanda Needs You". The representatives of youth, that is, the President of the National Youth Council of Angola, Mr. Isaiás Kalunga, and the President of the International Youth Forum (FIJE), Mr. Clinton Matias, highlighted that youth presented immense potential for the development of the region and called on them to play a meaningful role. These messages were echoed by the SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for Regional Integration, Ms. Angele Makombo N'Tumba and the UNFPA Officer in Charge/UNAIDS Director for Angola, Dr. Hege Wagan.

5. The Forum featured interactive panel discussions on peace and security, climate change, HIV and AIDS, trade, and innovation. The discussions acknowledged and expressed concern that youth, especially young women, were disproportionately affected by the region's development challenges. In this regard, SADC youth:
 - a) called upon SADC Member States to maintain peace and security in the region, urging them to uphold democratic principles and to promote the peaceful resolution of disputes on the basis of existing SADC Protocols and other relevant instruments and guidelines;
 - b) noted that SADC youth face significant challenges related to climate change, and called upon Member States to implement economic growth pathways that are environmentally sustainable, while ensuring youth participation;
 - c) noted initiatives towards the development of a SADC Investment and Innovation Agency for Young Entrepreneurs, with the objective to transform the region's business sector, create new jobs and contribute significantly to the region's economic growth; and
 - d) urged young entrepreneurs, including those in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), to organize effectively, access information, and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the SADC Free Trade Area to contribute to regional development; and
 - e) noted the strides being made to end HIV and AIDS as a public health threat in SADC. However, they noted with concern that youth were most affected by the HIV epidemic and urged them to remain vigilant and play a leading role in awareness raising and prevention efforts.
6. Accordingly, the Forum adopted key recommendations with a view to ensuring the greater integration of young people in decision-making processes as follows:
 - a) establishment of a dedicated office to coordinate youth issues at the SADC Secretariat (SADC Youth Desk) as a matter of urgency;
 - b) establishment of offices to coordinate youth issues within the Office of the SADC National Contact Points;

- c) development of public policies that encourage active youth participation in the economy, as well as the representation of young women in development processes;
- d) implementation of economic growth pathways that add value to environmental preservation and conservation, ensuring youth participation; and
- e) implementation of HIV and AIDS awareness campaigns earmarked for youth, focusing on prevention to stop the spread of the virus.

End.