



DECLARATION

ON

**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
AND EMPOWERMENT IN SADC**

PREAMBLE

WE, the Heads of State or Government of:

The Republic of Angola

The Republic of Botswana

The Democratic Republic of Congo

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 Kingdom of Swaziland

The United Republic of Tanzania

The Republic of Zambia

The Republic of Zimbabwe

RECOGNISING that the objectives of the Southern African Development Community as enshrined in the SADC Treaty are, inter alia, to:

- (a) promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development that will ensure poverty alleviation with the ultimate objective of its eradication, enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration;
- (b) combat HIV and AIDS and other deadly or communicable diseases;
- (c) ensure that poverty eradication is addressed in all SADC activities and programmes;
- (d) mainstream gender in the process of community building; and

- (e) promote and maximise productive employment and utilisation of resources of the Region.

ACKNOWLEDGING that the African Union African Youth Charter is a comprehensive policy framework which contains provisions relevant to the implementation of SADC priorities on youth development and empowerment;

EMBRACING the African Union Framework of Agenda 2063 which among others focuses on social and economic development, African identity and renaissance, self-determination, peace and security, role and position of Africans in international community, and democratic governance;

CONFIRMING all other commitments on youth development and empowerment among which are the UN General Assembly World Programme of Action for Youth (1995), Declaration by the African Union Assembly of the years 2009 to 2018 as the Decade on Youth Development in Africa (2009), African Union Summit Declaration on Creating Employment for Accelerating Youth Development & Empowerment (2011);

CONCERNED at the many persistent challenges affecting the youth among which are:

- (a) high unemployment, under-employment and poverty,
- (b) high levels of school drop outs and out of school youth, and very low progression to tertiary education that leaves youth with little or no skills,
- (c) under developed rural economy, infrastructure, and agrarian sector that is unattractive to the youth leading to their migration to urban areas where they also meet other challenges to their development and empowerment,
- (d) recurrent food and nutrition insecurity; crime and delinquency among the youth,
- (e) poor health outcomes, persistently high levels of HIV and AIDS, and ignorance of HIV status, among the youth,
- (f) alarming levels of teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse, child marriages and adolescent motherhood resulting in high maternal mortality, and
- (g) unprecedented levels of orphaning and child and youth vulnerability reinforcing a cycle of inter-generational poverty;

ALSO CONCERNED at the low levels of youth participation and of support for their development and empowerment, which translate into forgone opportunities for their contribution to the social, economic and political development of the Region;

AWARE that young people constitute the largest and most vibrant population group of SADC and a "demographic window of opportunity", with 76% under the age of 35 years, while potentially productive youth 15-34 years constitute 35%;

COGNISANT that the current situation of marginalised and despondent youth poses a serious threat to social cohesion, political stability and the future socio-economic development prospects of the Region;

ACKNOWLEDGING that adequately empowered youth can play a major role to "consolidate, defend and maintain democracy, peace, security and stability" and sustainable socio-economic development through regional integration;

CONVINCED that:

- (a) children and youth are the greatest resource available to address the many challenges facing SADC, and that sacrificing scarce resources and investing to develop and empower them into responsible and productive citizens, will bring about unprecedented socio-economic development;
- (b) youth development requires a holistic-multi-sectoral approach, including: coordination, collaboration and partnership among all sectors and stakeholders for regional co-operation, integration and national development; and mainstreaming of youth development and empowerment in the implementation of all SADC policy commitments and areas of co-operation to ensure synergy and complimentarity in addressing the many challenges of the youth;
- (c) promoting youth participation and co-operation from an early age, in national and SADC socio-economic and political agenda will ensure their ownership and commitment to sustain development gains and plans long after current generations of adults, with a common sense of responsibility, patriotism and unity; and
- (d) development policies and programmes should be informed by context specific realities of youth marginalisation and poverty, and of available opportunities at regional, national and community levels, in order to target vulnerabilities, build on existing good practices and lessons learnt, and to address inequalities.

WELCOMING on-going efforts by Member States to prioritize youth development and empowerment acting in accordance with their domestic laws and policies;

WE THEREFORE:

1. **REAFFIRM** our commitment to the implementation of SADC policy and regional co-operation instruments all of which have a bearing for youth development and empowerment, inter-alia, protocols on: Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking (1996); Trade (1996), Energy (1996); Education and Training (1997); Mining (1997);

Refugee Protection within Southern Africa (1998); Health (1999); productivity (1999); Shared Water Courses (2000); Culture, Information and Sport (2001); Politics Defence and Security (2001) Against Corruption (2001); Science and Technology Innovation (2006); Finance and Investment (2006); and Gender and Development (2008); and Declarations on: Information and Communication Technology (2001), HIV and AIDS (2003), Agriculture and Food Security (2004), Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development (2008), Competition and Consumer Policies (2009);

2. **COMMIT** to invest in youth development and empowerment (including a special focus on young women, youth with disabilities, and marginalised rural and peri-urban youth); supporting their participation and integration in all sectors of development, in ways that will realise the "demographic dividend", and consistent with the SADC Strategies and Business Plans on Youth Empowerment and Participation for Sustainable Development; and
3. **DECLARE** the following as the key priority areas that require our urgent attention and action:

(a) Economically empowering the youth by inter-alia:

- i. Developing conducive policies and programmes to promote and support youth innovation, entrepreneurship and competitive business enterprises;
- ii. Providing conditions and incentives for private sector and training institutions to build capacity of youth entrepreneurs through incubation, mentorship, internship and skills training programmes in key areas of the economy;
- iii. Strengthening youth partnerships with the public, private and civil society sectors to support and scale-up youth business and decent employment opportunities;
- iv. Putting in place mechanisms to: enhance youth access to capital and credit to start and sustain business enterprises; increase youth access, ownership and effective utilisation of natural resources such as land, minerals, gas, solar, forests and water; provide subsidies to attract young men and women to participate in industrial development and agricultural productivity; and to develop the rural infrastructure and services such as internet and communication technology, dams, roads, among others, and other economic and business opportunities;

- v. Promoting social protection oriented preferential employment opportunities for the most vulnerable youth such as those heading households in accordance with defined national criteria of youth vulnerability in order to break the cycle of poverty and vulnerability;
 - vi. Promoting models on labour intensive enterprises, and socio-economic development programmes that boost employment opportunities and decent jobs for the youth, and documenting and sharing best practices;
 - vii. Promoting comprehensive, multi-sectoral youth decent employment creation approaches, including integration of youth livelihoods and employment creation in policies and national development plans of all social and economic sectors;
 - viii. Enhancing wealth creation by imparting sustainable economic and business culture and practices among the youth at an early, and establishing conditions that attract youth investment and savings;
 - ix. Leveraging partnerships between government sectors, with private sector, civil society, international co-operating partners to support youth economic development capabilities and empowerment; and
 - x. Supporting national and regional forums to coordinate youth entrepreneurial and investment activities inter-alia, youth chambers of commerce and business-fairs for the youth to share opportunities, lessons learnt, and experiences.
- (b) Enhancing the improvement of social development and competencies for the youth through:**
- i. Supporting the provision of quality education and skills that are aligned and relevant to the needs of the labour market, national and regional productivity and economic development, including putting in place mechanisms to encourage the participation of the private sector, organised labour, and civil society in the review, development and improvement of education and skills development;
 - ii. Developing national standards, regulatory mechanisms and capacity for scaling up and accelerating technical and vocational education and training (TVET) including integrating TVET, entrepreneurship and business skills at all levels of formal and informal learning and training from pre-primary to tertiary levels;

- iii. Promoting and supporting innovation, science and technology, nurturing and translating youth innovation into business enterprises and socio-economic development opportunities, motivating and creating equal opportunities for girls and boys to take up maths, science and other practical disciplines as preferred subjects and career choices;
- iv. Putting in place appropriate policies and programmes conducive to enrolment, retention, and furthering education and training opportunities, career advancement and professionalism for out-of-school youth including children with disabilities such as second chance education, recognition of prior learning, distance learning, e-learning, internships, schools without walls among other responsive programmes;
- v. Promoting youth health and healthy lifestyles such as putting in place youth friendly services and social protection initiatives that enhance access and uptake of health and social services among the youth, and behaviour change communication programmes;
- vi. Accelerating the combating of HIV and AIDS together with the provision of culturally appropriate comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education and services for the youth;
- vii. Developing and strengthening policies, mechanisms and programmes to eliminate harmful social, cultural and religious practices that promote child marriages, teenage pregnancies, stigma and discrimination; protect children and youth from sexual abuse; and harmonise local statutory and customary laws;
- viii. Protecting children and youth from exploitative labour, dangerous and unsafe working conditions and human trafficking, and safe guarding their human rights, dignity and well being in accordance with international commitments on children and youth;
- ix. Putting in place special measures and programmes to address challenges faced by young people with disabilities to address stigma and discrimination, and access to social services and economic opportunities;
- x. Promoting social protection programmes for vulnerable youth and children to address inequalities and access to social services;
- xi. Developing programmes to strengthen psychosocial support services for children and youth to build lifeskills and cognitive

competencies; and to enhance mental, spiritual and emotional well being, including those affected by conflict and abusive experiences; and

- xii. Supporting youth sports development and recreation services for economic opportunities, physical and psychosocial development, and regional integration.

(c) Creating opportunities for political development and participation of the youth by:

- i. Establishing conducive conditions and supporting youth to participate in regional and international policy and decision making forums and processes through inter-alia, providing for permanent seats for youth representation in SADC sector committees of Ministers, Council and Summit; and youth quotas in government, business, social, and political delegations to national, regional and international forums;
- ii. Considering youth development and empowerment as a permanent item on the agenda of SADC Summit meetings;
- iii. Promoting and supporting child and youth dialogue, consultative processes and forums such as junior parliaments, and youth quotas in national parliaments and national administrative structures;
- iv. Developing and strengthening policies and programmes on youth volunteerism, national and regional youth service to impart and nurture regional co-operation and solidarity, peace and responsibility, and socio-cultural integration;
- v. Promoting the preservation, sharing, adoption and adaptation of indigenous knowledge systems for the benefit of the youth;
- vi. Raising awareness, supporting and promoting child and youth responsibility for the management and conservation of public goods, in particular climate change, mineral wealth, water, forests, air and other natural resources, and on food and nutrition security;
- vii. Facilitating youth cross border mobility and co-operation for educational and economic opportunities, networking and exchange programmes to address language and socio-cultural barriers and foster integration among youth in SADC, and with the international community;

- viii. Capacitating youth on national and regional peace building and conflict resolution, and disaster risk reduction and management efforts; and
- ix. Putting in place measures to combat child and youth trafficking, and addressing the negative impact of migration such as xenophobia, and welfare needs of child and youth migrants, displaced populations and refugees.

(d) Promoting Youth leadership development, participation and governance by:

- i. supporting professionalisation of youth work as an examinable and certifiable discipline of study and a priority area of research, including the establishment and strengthening of tertiary institutions on child and youth development studies;
- ii. Establishing and supporting regional institutions, centres of excellence and specialisation on youth leadership development and training on aspects such as management, accountability, good governance, coordination of national youth councils and organisations, and competencies for sectoral integration and mainstreaming of youth development and empowerment;
- iii. Increasing financial, human and infrastructure resources and strengthening capacity of government Ministries, National Youth Councils/national youth coordination bodies and institutions responsible for youth to coordinate integration of youth development and empowerment across all sectors of development;
- iv. Developing and promoting implementation of regional guidelines, standards and training programmes to strengthen youth coordination, and monitoring compliance;
- v. Supporting establishment and strengthening of SADC youth coordination body, regional structures and institutions for the coordination and inclusive participation of youth, males and females equally, and from all walks of life (civil society, public society, cultural and religious spheres and business);
- vi. Domesticating and implementing international, continental and regional policies, programmes and guidelines on youth development and empowerment;

- vii. Supporting youth internship programmes at the SADC Secretariat and other regional organisations and institutions, and high school competitions to inculcate the spirit and practice of regional co-operation at an early age; and
 - viii. Mainstreaming and integrating children and youth development and empowerment in all priority policies and programmes of SADC regional integration and co-operation, and at national level.
- (e) Strengthening knowledge management, institutional support, monitoring and evaluation of youth development and empowerment through:**
- i. Promoting and supporting specialised research and needs assessment studies on the situation and vulnerabilities of youth, and improving availability and use of sex disaggregated data on youth to inform responsive policies and programmes;
 - ii. Building capacity for, and supporting youth- led research and monitoring, evaluation and reporting on priority areas of regional co-operation and integration;
 - iii. Establishing and strengthening national and regional data bases profiling youth organisations, private sector and civil society organisations supportive of youth; documenting and sharing information, lessons learnt and experiences on youth;
 - iv. Establishing and strengthening systems and mechanisms for effective monitoring and evaluation at national, regional, continental and international levels;
 - v. Establishing and ensuring effective management of Youth Development Funds at SADC (regional) and national levels, and increasing national budgets, technical and human resources, and infrastructure for youth development; and
 - vi. Fostering and monitoring partnerships and networks on youth development and empowerment at national and regional levels.
- 4. DIRECT** the SADC Ministers responsible for youth to coordinate implementation of this Declaration, and to monitor and evaluate progress; and other SADC sector and cluster Ministers to ensure integration, mainstreaming and implementation of the priorities of this Declaration in collaboration with other sectors and clusters.

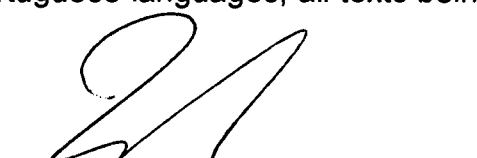
5. **ENCOURAGE** all stakeholders, including private sector, civil society organisations, academic and research institutions, and international community to facilitate and support implementation of this Declaration at national and regional levels.
6. **ALSO ENCOURAGE** the youth to, within their capabilities, effectively participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Declaration.
7. **UNDERTAKE** to review implementation of this Declaration on a regular basis during Summit meetings.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, WE the Heads of State or Government, or our duly authorised representatives have signed this Declaration.

Done in GABORONE, BOTSWANA this 18TH day of AUGUST 2015 in three (3) original texts in the English, French and Portuguese languages, all texts being equally authentic.



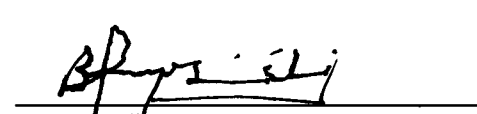
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