



SADC YOUTH STATEMENT ON UNEMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION

We, the youth of SADC, meeting on the sidelines of People's Summit and SADC Summit of Heads of states and governments. The Summit took place in Lilongwe from 17-20 August 2021; due to Covid 19 the meeting was hybrid (with young people meeting face to face in Lilongwe and connecting virtually with our fellow youth in SADC)

NOTING WITH CONCERN that more than sixty-eight percent (60%) of the SADC population are youth but they are largely affected by the high levels of unemployment and poverty which has led to migration to different countries seeking for green pasture thereby being exposed to poverty and inhuman treatment such as xenophobic attacks.

CONCERNED THAT Young Africans and particularly those in SADC, are faced with many problems, problems of employment, education, and many others. Most of them result from a region characterized by underdevelopment, bad leadership, proper planning, and weak collaboration between SADC countries.

SADDENED BY the fact that youth are still being sidelined and not allowed to fully participate in governance as recent events in Eswatini, Northern Mozambique, Zimbabwe, DRC, and recent unrest in South Africa have shown.

COMMENDING some signs of hope and where youth stood up to fight for their voice through elections and other means such as Malawi and very recently Zambia.

TAKING time to congratulate Youth in ZAMBIA for their massive participation in the election; also **THANKING** the outgoing Zambian President HE Edgar Lungu for accepting the election outcome and commit to peaceful transfer of power which has been like a miracle in Africa to accept defeat and allow a peaceful change of leadership

NOTING WITH CONCERN that Youth entrepreneurial activity in the SADC region is low, Entrepreneurial skills remain low among youth; as a result, youngest entrepreneurs find it difficult to access business opportunities. In many SADC countries, the economic development of young people is not a priority.



BEARING IN MIND that SADC is faced with the challenge of limited and poor participation of young people in the economy. A salient feature of this flawed economic participation is high persistent youth unemployment, which means that young people are not acquiring the skills and work experience they need to drive the economy forward. It is also difficult for youth to secure business opportunities to develop their own businesses because of corruption.

SADDENED THAT the overall determinants of the high levels of youth unemployment are a lack of skills for jobs required by the economy; many young job seekers believe the probability of finding a job is so low that they do not even look or have stopped looking; lack of work experience; lack of job search capabilities and networks; companies finding it risky and costly to employ young people; the rate of population growth among youth far exceeds the number of jobs created by the economy and, in certain instances, the low levels of economic growth.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT the Covid 19 pandemic exposed the deep levels of socio-economic inequality in the SADC Region, which deepened the pre-Covid socio-economic challenges faced by large sections of our population and mostly youth. While the pandemic posed significant health risks, considering the large number of people who suffer from some form of the immune-compromised condition, the lockdowns initiated in SADC country members to fight the pandemic caused further challenges and had severe consequences for many. These include challenges in accessing health care, education, food, employment, income, physical and emotional impacts.

NOTING THAT even the youth who were working before Covid-19 are concerned of their job security. It is being noted that the devastation that the pandemic would wreck on an already weak economy and feared for their jobs and their abilities to contribute financially to their households.

NOTING THAT one of the causes of refugees in AFRICA is lack of democracy, intolerance in some countries leading to displacement of citizens including young people.

NOTING the founded fear of some refugees caused by the military presence in SADC regions of those soldiers that they have fled; **CONCERNED** that some governments even come to hunt refugees that have fled them and kill them in SADC countries of where they sought refuge.

CONCERNED THAT some SADC countries have been ignoring International Laws and treaties including *the principle of non-refoulment*. Sadly, Refugees and have been even sent back into their respective countries where they fear persecution and death.

AWARE that Covid-19 does not choose people according to nationalities or races.



WE THEREFORE,

ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

1. **CALL UPON** on SADC governments to ensure that numerous policy interventions are geared towards bringing youth into the mainstream of the economy.
2. **URGE** all SADC member states to implement at the national level existing policies and frameworks that foster youth economic participation by deliberately enhancing youth entrepreneurship, ignite the starting youth-owned and managed enterprises, and increasing youth self-employment and innovation.
3. **CALL UPON** all governments in SADC to implement and enforce inclusive policies that would empower the youth and create a conducive environment for innovation and entrepreneurship. Our governments should **INITIATE** Entrepreneurship Development Programmes aimed at creating a conducive environment for young entrepreneurs to access relevant entrepreneurship skills, knowledge, values and attitudes for their businesses
4. **CALL** on SADC YOUTH to take advantage of many existing opportunities to create self-employment
5. **WE CALL** our SADC Youth to consider Agriculture and Climate change (recycling, planting trees) as viable economic activities; our governments should make these programmes exciting for the YOUTH by investing in them as well as help youth with innovation and technology in these sectors.
6. **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** to SADC member states that the land issue and land reform can no longer be ignored. Member States should initiate as soon as possible land reforms that will facilitate youth and women to have easy access to the land for commercial farming and other productive activities.
7. **RECOMMEND** that the corporate companies in Southern Africa collaborate with the member states to create an enabling entrepreneurial environment such as seminars, workshops, mentorships that involve the youth
8. **URGE** governments to ensure that the educational systems incorporate relevant practical and “hands on” teaching methods in the curriculum that guides the young African to identify the appropriate career path; Review education curriculum system (including technical and vocational) that would enhance skills development and vocational training.
9. **URGE** SADC Governments should reinforce commitments and manifestos that address youth unemployment. Enhance structural transformation through investment in industrialization, IT, and facilitation of market linkages.



10. URGE SADC Youth to speak out, create space to engage duty bearers and participate in the decision-making process in our own countries, regional and continental.

ON MIGRATION

1. **CALL ON** SADC member states to protect migrants and refugees- treatment of refugees in camps and urban in SADC countries is still sadly bad; we have refugees who have spent decades with no proper documentation, which has cut short youth's hopes for the future.
2. **URGE** SADC member states to enhance sustainable natural resource management and governance, which has led to conflicts in most African countries' regions.
3. **REQUESTS** SADC member states to promote Ubuntu concept and human rights in the SADC member states
4. **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** SADC Governments to consistently monitor the refugees living conditions that degrade human dignity in camps and those in the urban area
5. **URGE** SADC Member states to promote peace and have respect for Human Rights and the rule of law.
6. **RECOMMEND** Refugees and migrants should not be ignored in the roll out of Covid 19 vaccine in the region because **NO ONE IS SAFE UNTIL EVERYONE IS SAFE.**

Conclusion

Having considered the situation of unemployment and migration in the SADC region and being presented to the people's summit and Heads of States and Governments in SADC, the Youth in SADC believe that the above recommendations will be taken into consideration and implemented.

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