



THIRD SADC YOUTH PARLIAMENT

27TH MARCH 2025

TIME: 10H20 – 10H35

WELCOME ADDRESS

**TALKS TO BE CENTRED AROUND “1 MILLION NEXT
LEVEL INITIATIVE OF AU”, “SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE”**

***Distinguished Hon. Members, delegates, and
participants to this August 3rd SADC Parliament,***

***Today we meet for the purpose of developing
parliamentary activism for the youth around the
theme of sustainable development and inclusive
governance.***

***The SADC Youth Parliament has always been and
remains the sanctuary for youth-led initiatives on***

legislation, budgetary support and representation in view of holding Government to account and accentuating checks and balances on the Executive.

With only 5 years before we evaluate progress made on the sustainable agenda in 2030, there is a need to pick up the pace to meet our desired targets whether it is about gender equality, youth development, climate change, public health or inclusive governance.

We strongly believe that the youth can behave as a super catalyst, pulling all the stops on the sustainable development agenda.

They can promote civic partnerships, develop collaborations with CSOs, liaise with youth MPs, as well as empower parliament to promote oversight mechanisms on the Executive.

Today, we will receive reports from the Standing Committees of the Youth Parliament which have met earlier in March and different themes will be deliberated under the umbrella of sustainable development and inclusive governance. You are encouraged to interact as animatedly as possible on the reports to ensure that lessons learned are shared

and recommendations are promptly made through informed peer reviews.

However, the key reflections that we must decant from the deliberations are this: How do we ensure that the youth truly accelerates the sustainable agenda? What actions should be carried out immediately for the youth to be included in governance at all levels in the next 5 years?

As we exhaust the agenda today, we need to develop realisable action points that can be immediately implemented to set the wheels in motion.

While the AU's 1 million next level initiative alludes to the empowering of 300 million African youth in the next decade, we applaud this ambitious plan and vouches to do our part for the empowerment of the 200 million or so youth living across the SADC region.

With a focus on education, health, gender equality as well as access to socio-economic rights such as food, housing and employment, the 1 million next level initiative demonstrates the need to deliver a holistic empowerment through youth-friendly policies made by the Government and overseen by Parliament.

The 1 million next level initiative also galvanises the need to domesticate the various youth instruments for Africa, including the African Youth Charter, which specifies in its preamble the significance of empowering the youth and ensuring that they participate at all levels of decision-making.

This is predicated on the premise that a successful unified Africa made up of individual sovereign states will depend on its youth not only as a working force, but also to share fresh experience, innovation and new skills, such as information technology which is mostly the dominion of the rising youth.

Indeed, the Sustainable Agenda 2030 calls upon the youth to be critical thinkers, change-makers, innovators, communicators as well as leaders in their own rights. Youth empowerment intersects with all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and can help to fasten the pace for their timely achievement. It is trite that the synergy between the youth and the elder population is the ideal recipe for a country's success.

This 3rd SADC Youth Parliament is thus the ideal platform to discuss youth initiatives which can be integrated to a Roadmap for the AU 1 million next level initiative. Later during this session, the 6th SADC Youth Forum Harare Declaration will be debated and adopted, which will reinforce the framework of concrete actions to be taken to realise the next level initiative.

As I conclude, I wish state that Parliamentarism around the world is perhaps the most important ingredient for the survival of a democracy nowadays. Parliamentarism brings transparency, checks and balances, and above all, the accountability of those holding public functions.

Now, inclusive within the notion of parliamentarism, is youth parliamentarism, which is equally important to the perennial life of a democracy.

Youth parliamentarism is the antidote to democratic lethargy which can settle in when leaders do not innovate in finding solutions that may bring about progressive change.

Let us cheerfully celebrate youth parliamentarism under the aegis of this 3rd SADC Youth Parliament,

and let us debate the themes which can actually empower the youth for the decades to come.

Inclusive governance should be governance that includes the youth and governance that responds to the youth's needs and demands. It is only then that the sustainable development agenda will be complete.

As youth representatives, be the change that you want to see in your country and entourage.

With these words, I wish you a pleasant session.

Thank you

Ms. Boemo Sekgoma,

Secretary General

27th March 2025