



COMMUNIQUE OF THE 7th SOUTHERN AFRICA YOUTH FORUM (SAYoF) ANTANANARIVO, REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR 15–17 AUGUST 2025.

THE 7TH ANTANANARIVO YOUTH DECLARATION

Preamble

1. The 7th Southern Africa Youth Forum, hereafter called the Forum, was convened in Antananarivo, Republic of Madagascar, from **15–17 August 2025**, under the theme: **“Pan-Africanism in Action: Mobilizing Youth for Sustainable Development and Civic Engagement.”**
2. The Forum was hosted by the Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) in partnership with the Government of Madagascar, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (Madagascar), SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), African Union Commission Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate (WGYD), SAf-CNGO, Equality Now, Women of the South Speak Out, Afro-Centric Locale, AMREF, Y-ACT, SADC Youth Parliament, and other regional and international partners.
3. The Forum brought together youth leaders from 16 SADC countries, other African countries, namely: Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Rwanda, and Nigeria. The Forum was also attended by policymakers, parliamentarians, and civil society actors from SADC Member States, alongside continental and global partners, to deliberate on youth priorities for Southern Africa’s transformation.
4. The delegates thanked the Ministry of Youth and Sports (Madagascar) for facilitating the hosting of the 7th Southern Africa Youth Forum and the commitment to take forward the resolutions to the SADC Chair, the President of the Republic.
5. The Forum congratulated **His Excellency President Andry Rajoelina** on assuming the Chairperson of SADC. The Forum affirmed its commitment to hand over the 7th Southern Africa Youth Forum Antananarivo Youth Declaration to the Chair of SADC. Taking note that His Excellency Mr. Andry RAJOELINA, President of the Republic of Madagascar and President of the SADC, is young and has a vision for the Malagasy youth and the youth in the region.
- 5.1 The Forum congratulates **His Excellency Alias Mpedi Magosi** on his re-appointment as the SADC Executive Secretary.



Opening and Deliberations

6. The Forum was officially opened by **His Excellency Abdoulah Marson Moustapha, Minister of Youth and Sports of Madagascar**, on behalf of **His Excellency Andry Rajoelina, President of the Republic of Madagascar**.

7. The Forum appreciates the presence and presentation of Ms. Prudence Nonkululeko Ngwenya, the Director for Women, Gender, and Youth of the African Union Commission and the AUC Delegation, Secretary General of Afro-Arab Youth Council (AAY), H.E. Huzyfa Elhassan, the representatives of SADC-PF, other Government officials, and the Madagascar Parliament.

8. In their remarks, youth delegates emphasized that Pan-Africanism is not merely a historical idea, but a living force that must be put into action today. They stressed that Africa's transformation requires urgent youth-led initiatives in governance, innovation, and development. Young people emphasized that Pan-Africanism must be a tool for youth to own resources and be at the decision-making table, side by side with the elders.

9. Delegates recalled the metaphor of the bird extinguishing a raging fire drop by drop, underscoring that every young person has a role to play in combating poverty, exclusion, injustice, inequality, and intergenerational dialogue. Together, small acts of courage, unity, and consistency can extinguish the region's greatest challenges.

10. The Forum deliberated on effective youth participation, youth entrepreneurship, public health, digital transformation, responsible use of Artificial Intelligence, climate resilience, digital Skills and Content Creation, Organizational Leadership and Inclusive Engagement, Youth Employment, gender equality, Pan-African solidarity, democratic participation, One Million Next level, African Youth Charter, the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls and advancing Digital Rights and Legal Reforms to End Technology Facilitated Gender based Violence and Protect Women and Girls in Southern Africa.

Key Outcomes and Resolutions

11. The Forum commended the historic signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) and SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) during the 57th Plenary Assembly in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe,



institutionalizing youth participation in parliamentary processes as a landmark achievement.

12. The Forum acknowledged the space being opened by regional policy making institutions to youth, and the adoption of the recommendations presented by the Southern Africa Youth Parliament, among them: Institutionalization of the Parliamentary Youth Caucus within the SADC-PF, participation of youth in the SADC-PF Standing Committees, and Public Hearings, proposal to institute the SADC Youth Protocol among other Model Laws, and presentation of youth issues and solutions before the SADC-PF plenary sessions.

12.1 The Forum acknowledges the commitment by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Madagascar in its capacity as Chair of the Council of Ministers of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), that the voices of African youth articulated during the 7th Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAyF) are amplified and duly reflected at the commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth in New York.

13. The Forum adopted the following Resolutions and Recommendations:

On the African Youth Charter at 20 (AYC@20):

- ✓ The Forum calls upon all Member States of the African Union, particularly within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to accelerate the ratification, domestication, and implementation of the African Youth Charter. The Forum further underscores the importance of aligning national youth policies with the ongoing AYC@20 review process to strengthen youth rights and policy coherence across the continent.

On the 1 Million Next Level (1MNL) Initiative:

- ✓ The Forum urges Member States to institutionalize the 1 Million Next Level reporting framework in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism, as a tool to measure progress on the five thematic areas of Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship, Engagement, and Health and Well-being. The Forum emphasizes the need to prioritize youth-led monitoring and accountability mechanisms in line with Agenda 2063 Aspiration 6.

On Digital Transformation and Innovation:



- ✓ The Forum recommends that Member States and partners invest in the development of digital skills for young people, including support for innovation hubs and safe digital spaces. The Forum further emphasizes the importance of inclusive digital governance that addresses technology-facilitated gender-based violence and ensures affordable and equitable access to digital tools and services for all youth, with a particular focus on young women and rural populations.

On Gender Equality and Young Women's Leadership:

- ✓ The Forum calls for the integration of gender-responsive budgeting and policymaking at both national and regional levels, to enhance the leadership, participation, and empowerment of young women in governance, peacebuilding, and entrepreneurship. The Forum reaffirms the centrality of young women in advancing regional integration and achieving the objectives of the African Union Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy.

On Youth Engagement in Decision-Making Processes:

- ✓ The Forum urges the institutionalization of structured mechanisms for youth participation in governance processes, including youth observer roles in elections, parliamentary youth caucuses, and sustained intergenerational dialogue platforms. The Forum further recommends that outcomes of the Southern Africa Youth Forum be systematically integrated into AU Specialized Technical Committees, SADC Summits, and continental initiatives such as the YouthConnekt Africa Summit, thereby strengthening synergy between Regional Economic Communities and the African Union.

On Pan-Africanism and Leadership:

- ✓ Establish Pan-African Young Leaders Institutions to mentor and shape the next generation of transformative leaders. Implementation of the outcome of the 6th Southern Africa Youth Forum.
- ✓ Redefine Pan-Africanism from its liberation-era vision (Nyerere, Nkrumah, Mandela, Kaunda, Mugabe) to address current youth realities, including economic emancipation, electoral participation, advancing human rights, climate justice, and digital inclusion.
- ✓ Reform education systems to integrate Afrocentric curricula, ensuring African youth write and own their history.

On Ending Gender-Based Violence and Advancing Digital Rights:



- ✓ The Forum calls upon all Member States of the African Union, particularly within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to accelerate the ratification, domestication, and implementation of the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG).
- ✓ Harmonize laws with the SADC Model Law on Gender Based Violence (GBV), integrating protections against Technology-Facilitated GBV (TFGBV). Ensure concrete commitments to close the youth digital divide through accelerating legal and budget reforms for rural and disability inclusive digital access, supported by education reforms to teach digital skills early, with gender equality in all learning institutions.
- ✓ Enact, enforce, and strengthen laws to ensure legal and policy frameworks that protect the digital rights of women and girls and marginalized groups against GBV, misinformation, and cyberbullying, guided by the AU's 2024 Child Online Safety and Empowerment Policy. Also, ensure effective and inclusive youth and gender-responsive oversight.
- ✓ Guarantee freedom from technology-facilitated gender-based violence.
- ✓ Promote universal rights to freedom of expression, privacy, peaceful assembly, and participation of women and girls in all their diversity in all aspects of life.
- ✓ Ensure universal, affordable, accessible, and safe internet access for all.
- ✓ Demand strict action against harmful surveillance applications and high-risk AI systems, and set safeguards to prevent discriminatory biases.
- ✓ Increase and expand young women's participation and leadership in digital governance at all levels and in technology.
- ✓ Prioritize strategies that reduce the environmental impact of new technologies
- ✓ Implement measures for states and transnational corporations to ensure data privacy, governance, and consent.
- ✓ Adopt Equality-by-Design principles and a human-rights-based approach throughout all phases of digital technology development.
- ✓ Re-shape women's participation and role in their diversity in accessing and using digital technology, and address its potential impacts on Labour and Entrepreneurship.
- ✓ Advance Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Economies and prioritize green digital strategies to reduce the environmental impact of new technologies.

On Public Health and Tobacco Control:



- ✓ Commit to recruiting, strengthening the capacities of, and providing sustained support to youth champions on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in SADC countries where such champions are not yet established.
- ✓ Strengthen youth-led advocacy in public health and tobacco control, particularly addressing the rise of novel nicotine products marketed to youth.
- ✓ Ensure cross-border cooperation between governments, civil society, and youth organizations to protect regional health and well-being.
- ✓ Continuous engagement with Regional Policy Makers for the Model Law on Tobacco Control.
- ✓ The Forum called on Heads of State and Government, Health, and Finance Ministries in NTD-endemic countries in Africa to: a. Increase investment in the research of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), supporting cross-sectoral interventions that address poverty as the root cause, and supporting medical and social interventions to end NTDs.
- ✓ Leveraging tools such as the Kigali Declaration on NTDs, Kigali Declaration Impact Tracker, and the World Bank's IDA21 fund, introduce national policies that prioritize the allocation of resources to tackle NTDs effectively, and support improved infrastructure such as clean water and sanitation.
- ✓ The Forum urged Multilateral Partners, including the African Union, WHO-AFRO, and Africa CDC, to: Recognize NTD elimination as not just a health investment, but a socioeconomic investment that is needed for achieving the SDGs.
- ✓ To the inheritors of the global health system- our fellow youth champions and civil society, let's unite and mobilize resources for the elimination of NTDs.

On Youth Civic Engagement:

- ✓ **Policy Recommendations:** Participants proposed recommendations to governments to create inclusive policies that prioritize youth voices in decision-making processes.
- ✓ **Collaboration and Networking:** The forum facilitated partnerships among youth organizations, fostering collaboration on regional issues such as unemployment, climate change, and governance.
- ✓ **Digital Engagement:** Emphasizing the importance of technology, the forum highlighted strategies for utilizing social media and digital platforms to engage youth in civic activities.
- ✓ **Mental Health Awareness:** Recognizing the challenges youth face, mental health was identified as a critical area for support and advocacy.



- ✓ **Follow-up Mechanisms:** Plans to be established for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of discussed initiatives, ensuring ongoing commitment to youth engagement.
- ✓ **Youth Participation in Election and Election Monitoring:** Facilitate youth participation in governance, peace building, and electoral processes. Advocate for the inclusion of youth observers in electoral processes to ensure transparency and fairness. Provide training on monitoring techniques and reporting mechanisms.

On Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation:

- ✓ Invest in digital literacy, youth innovation hubs, and entrepreneurship programs to harness the demographic dividend.
- ✓ Encourage youth-led civic campaigns, community organising, and policy dialogues aligned with SADC Vision 2050, AU Agenda 2063, and the SDGs.

On Disability Inclusion:

- ✓ Integrate assistive technology into national education policies
- ✓ Governments must mandate the inclusion of digital accessibility tools in schools
- ✓ Train educators in inclusive teaching methods – Teachers should be equipped with the skills necessary to support students with disabilities.
- ✓ Strengthen regional collaboration –Member states must share best practices and jointly develop strategies for implementing assistive technologies.
- ✓ Foster public-private partnerships–Partnerships between governments, tech companies, and civil society can help scale digital accessibility solutions.
- ✓ Support Innovative research on Disability Inclusion.

Acknowledgments

14. The Forum acknowledged the Government of Madagascar for facilitating the visit to the Cultural Center, SADC Bazar, and the Royal Palace to learn about the history and cultural heritage of Madagascar.

15. Delegates expressed gratitude to the Government and People of Madagascar for their warm hospitality and for hosting the Forum alongside the 45th SADC Heads of State and Government Summit, ensuring that youth voices were integrated into regional deliberations.



17. The Forum acknowledges the Master Classes offered to youth by the African Union Commission (AU), namely: How to become a DJ, Master Class on Organizational Leadership and Inclusive Engagement- AU Commission, and Mass Class on Digital Skills and Content Creation.

18. The Forum also welcomed Madagascar's role as host of the upcoming YouthConnekt Africa Summit 2025, to be held in November, committing to linking SAYoF outcomes with continental and global platforms.

19. The Forum acknowledges the time taken by **Her Excellency Boemo Sekgma, the Secretary General of SADC-PF**, to meet and receive updates on the outcomes of the Forum.

19.1 The Forum acknowledges the words sent by **H.E. Alias Mpedi Magosi, the Executive Secretary of SADC**, to the 7th Southern Africa Youth Forum delegates that youth should take up leadership spaces and be central to policy-making in the region.

19.2 The Forum appreciates the briefing given to the **Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Hon. Lejone Mpotjoane**, and his work with the youth to take an active role in leadership and regional integration.

Conclusion

20. The 7th Forum reaffirmed that youth are not leaders of tomorrow, but leaders of today, and called on SADC Heads of State and Government to institutionalize youth participation in all policy processes.

21. Delegates pledged to act as agents of Pan-African unity, building an Africa defined not by rhetoric but by collective action, innovation, good governance, and solidarity.

22. SAYoF reaffirmed its interest in setting up a Sub-regional Office in Madagascar and working closely with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and stakeholders to empower youth, facilitate regional integration, and enable effective youth participation.

23. The Forum concluded with the rallying call: "We are the small birds carrying water; each drop counts. Together, we will extinguish the fires of poverty, exclusion, and injustice, and build the Africa we want."

21 August 2025, Antananarivo, Madagascar.