



South African Institute of International Affairs

African Perspectives. Global Insights

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The 2014 SAIIA Young Leaders Declaration

Recommendations for the Sustainable Development Goals

Negotiated and Agreed Upon

At the 3rd Annual South African Institute of International Affairs Young Leaders Conference, Johannesburg, South Africa

Having deliberated the proposed Sustainable Development Goals, we the children and youth of South Africa declare the following principles to be considered as part of the Post-2015 Development Agenda:

THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC ISSUES

Section 1

Article 1

Poverty Eradication, Food Security and Health

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Supporting the ideas put forward by the proposed SDG 1 and 2;

1. Recommend that they should be combined in order to achieve a more cohesive agenda and targeted effort to address the problems.

Recognising the commitment to social welfare from proposed SDGs 1,3,5,6,9 and 11;

2. Recommend governments commit to infrastructural, administrative and skills development in the health sector to ultimately have a healthier, productive population, in order to decrease mortality rates, and improve employability and sustain economic growth.

Article 2 Education

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Recognise Goal 4 of the proposed SDGs and the strides that the South African government has made in both accessibility and quality of education;

1. Recommend that government commit to ensuring that public and independent academic institutions strive for accessible, affordable, and equitable education;
2. Endorse the use of education to combat poverty, hunger, and contribute towards the development of marginalised communities;
3. Encourage sustainable partnerships between government and independent schools to share resources and facilities;
4. Recommend that educators be provided with sufficient training and development, better labour conditions, and job security to attract youth to the teaching profession;
5. Promote the integration of technology in delivering the curriculum for a more beneficial and personalised learning experience;
6. Demands high quality, sustainable facilities to reach equal and improved education standards.

Article 3 Economic Infrastructure

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Commend African governments and civil society organisations for their efforts to improve infrastructural frameworks that promote sustainable economic development;

Noting with deep concern the structural challenges pertaining to implementation of a resilient infrastructural framework;

1. Recommend the combining of the proposed SDGs 7, 9,12 and 13, to be targeted in unison;
2. Encourage the continuation of government efforts in creating an environment that enables and encourages private actors to invest in the necessary research and development;
3. Recommend the utilisation of these innovations to set an example to both industries and citizens therefore alleviating the pressure and depletion of natural resources;

4. Encourage governments to review current service delivery systems to ensure that they are more sustainable.

Article 4 Employment

We the children and the youth of South Africa:

Acknowledge the high rate of youth unemployment,

1. Urge governments to work with financial institutions and civil society organisations to develop employability and entrepreneurial skills of young people;
2. Urge governments to further recognize the role played by the informal sector in economic development;
3. Calls for increased access to financial services and support for informal traders to make their businesses more integrated within the economy at large;
4. Emphasise the need to empower marginalised groups who have suffered from institutionalised oppression in order to achieve economic growth that is inclusive and sustainable;
5. Advocate for an intersectional approach that addresses inequalities and economic oppression across the board:

5.1 Race

5.1.1 Ensure affirmative action benefits the entirety of disadvantaged communities and that empowerment programmes do not create a small elite.

- i. 5.1.2 Employ affirmative action policies in the work place until such time that institutionalised inequalities have fully been redressed.

ii.

5.2 Gender

- iii. 5.2.1 Encourage the education of all women regardless of race, socio-economic group, culture, age or sexual orientation.

iv.

- v. 5.2.2 Promote legislation that ensures women, men and other gender identities receive equal remuneration for equal work and are granted equal employment opportunities.

vi.

5.3 Disability

- vii. 5.3.1 Commit to enhancing the accessibility in the workplace for all disabilities.

5.4 Sexual Orientation

- viii. 5.4.1 Note with regret the prevalence of discrimination based on sexual orientation within certain political contexts, we endorse the formulation and/ or maintenance of policies that promote the economic inclusion of the LGBTI community at a global scale.

Article 5 Governance and Accountability

We the children and the youth of South Africa:

Endorse proposed SDG 16, to encourage transparency and justice across all level of state in the hopes of curbing corruption and building trust for sustainable economic growth;

Recognise the importance of social movements in holding state institutions accountable;

1. Urge the government to protect their civil liberties;
2. Remind governments to act as reliable, unbiased and just mediators when economic instability arises.

Article 6 Rural Development:

We the children and the youth of South Africa:

Note with regret that limited job opportunities in rural areas force young people to migrate to urban cities;

1. Call for the effective and corruption-free implementation of economic policies that promote the economic inclusion and participation of young people in rural communities;
2. Call for enhanced development of economic infrastructure to make areas more accessible and conducive to business, and to in turn promote investment and job creation for young people within such communities.

Article 7 Trade and Globalisation:

We the children and the youth of South Africa:

Recognise the crucial role of institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in debt relief;

1. Call for a review in the loan criteria so that it favours a debt relief program that will economically benefit the indebted government.
2. Encourage the transfer of knowledge, expertise and technology between countries in lieu of often ineffective development aid.

THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Section 2

Cognisant of the current invaluable discussions taking place at COP 20 hosted by Lima, Peru, we the children and youth of South Africa express the need to incorporate the youth voice at this level so as to ensure a holistic foundation in the conceptualisation of the SDGs.

Article 1

Climate change

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Note with alarm the severe effect that releasing greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide, have on the environment thus causing global warming and climate change;

Bearing in mind the target of the proposed sustainable development goals, encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;

Acknowledge deterioration of environmental conditions, such as water scarcity, climate change and greater pollution which erode natural resources and thus hampers development;

Understand the urgency of combating climate change pertaining to SDG 13 and recognising the importance of the UNFCCC.

Furthermore, we call upon the International community to:

1. Acknowledge that emerging economies need to advance economically, but stress that it should be done in a manner which creates a balance of sustainability and development, and does not hinder the environment.

2. Increase the exchange of expertise and sharing of sustainable technology among different nations to promote global development.

Article 2 Communication

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Recognise the enormous impact that technology can have on the dissemination of information in an increasingly interconnected world;

Furthermore, we call upon the South African government to:

1. Improve public access to digital information regarding national and international environmental policies and laws, so that the public are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
2. Increase the exchange in information between Government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the private sector and community based organisations in order to increase awareness in environmental issues.

Article 3 Energy

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Guided by SDG 7 and its importance to South Africa, recognise the plans made by government to invest in nuclear power;

Furthermore, we call upon the South African government to:

1. Encourage improved management of industrial processes to utilise more energy efficient methods of production.
2. Increase funding into research surrounding alternative, renewable, sustainable energy sources to ensure their future development and integration in conjunction with nuclear power.
3. Bear in mind the importance of ensuring the safe, efficient disposal of nuclear waste to avoid environmental degradation.
4. Increase transparency between Eskom and the public regarding our energy crisis so that more solutions can be generated.

Article 4 Education

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Recognise that school committees and community based organisations play an important role in sustainable development;

Furthermore, we call upon the South African government to:

1. Improve the dissemination of information from experts to the general public, through methods including, but not limited to:
 - 1.1. Holding in-depth talks and workshops to educate people regarding:
 - 1.1.1. Food security as pertaining to SDG 2, by informing citizens about environmentally sustainable and practical ways of farming;
 - 1.1.2. The sources and effects of un-sanitized water, as pertaining to SDG 6, and methods which can be used to sanitize this water;
 - 1.1.3. The importance of hygiene.
 - 1.2. Making use of a range of technological and media platforms that use more impactful campaigns that relate to the specific context of a situation and thus heighten awareness, on a national scale, regarding:
 - 1.2.1 The exploitation of the environment and negative results that will follow if such actions persist;
 - 1.2.2 Provision of necessary contact details and procedures for disaster relief;
 - 1.2.3 What constitutes as a violation of environmental law, and where such violations should be reported;
 - 1.2.4 Which companies subscribe to green labelling schemes and encourage the public to favour companies that comply.

Article 5
Government and law

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Endorse Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and the National Environmental Management Act;

Acknowledge the provision of, maintenance and improvements to sanitation facilities by the South African government.

Furthermore, we call upon the South African government to:

1. Expand the scope of EIAs to be inclusive of all construction and development projects, and improve the implementation of Geographical Information Systems technology during these processes.
2. Consider a shift towards prioritising the inclusion of environmental indicators of growth and development.
3. Ensure that sewage does not affect water sources through the continuous provision, maintenance and improvement of sanitation facilities.
4. Implement stricter enforcement of the National Environmental Management Act and an amendment of the act to include:
 - 4.1. Exponentially harsher repercussions for violations of environmental law, such as, over- fishing, water pollution, deforestation, and poaching;
 - 4.2. The appointment of more environmental management inspectors to improve the reporting process of such offences.
5. Integrate climate change adaptation into development planning and assistance.

Article 6
Land degradation

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Note the importance of healthy ecosystems as a means of generating income;

View with alarm the increasing levels of land degradation, and the negative impacts this has on biodiversity and sustainability in line with SDG 15;

Note with deep concern the increasing levels of land degradation in the forms of the destruction of wetlands, habitats, ecosystems as well as deforestation;

Recognize the importance of agriculture within the African context as a main source of income;

*Note with concern the detrimental effect that climate change has on agriculture;
Further draws attention to the fact that the majority of agricultural workers are women;*

Furthermore, we call upon the South African government to:

1. Increase rehabilitation of damaged ecosystems, and the protection of stable ecosystems, which will boost eco-tourism and further add to sustainable development.
2. Encourage local municipalities to play an active role in creating programmes to combat land degradation.
3. Improve efforts for the prevention the pollution of oceans, as pertaining to SDG 14.
4. Introduce innovative, sustainable technology that extracts pollution from oceans, with specific attention to ideas and projects generated by the youth.
5. Increase focus on gender equality within the agricultural sector.
6. Improve natural resource management.
7. Implement the rehabilitation of land and oceans surrounding areas of extraction, especially mineral deposits.

Article 7 Waste management

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Noting the importance of SDG 9 in generating innovative solutions to waste management problems;

Support landfill re-claimers and their efforts with regards to reducing, reusing and recycling as a means of economic growth that is not detrimental to the environment.

Furthermore, we call upon the South African government to:

1. Use sustainable means of disposing of waste.
2. Research waste management methods, in accordance with already existing methods, to reduce environmental harm, such as:
 - 2.1. Using vermi-compost;
 - 2.2. The use of maggots to decompose organic waste.
3. Recognise, legally protect, and support the organisation of landfill re-claimers.
4. Implement further restrictions for companies on the amount of plastic packaging used and encourage the use of recyclable materials where possible.

Article 8

Disaster management

We the children and youth of South Africa:

Recognise the efforts made by the government and civil society organisations that address both the preparation for, and aftermath of, natural disasters in and around South Africa.

Furthermore, we call upon the South African government to:

1. Develop an effective and sustainable disaster management framework prioritising environmental rehabilitation and community rebuilding.

THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Section 3

Article 1

We, the children and youth of South Africa, call upon the international community to:

1. Encourage dialogue between humanitarian organisations, governments, faith leaders, and community based organisations;
 - 1.1 To promote the prevention of conflict and violence in ensuring that there is neutrality through effective mediation and intervention;
 - 1.2 To improve humanitarian assistance by including the rehabilitation of victims of conflict and disaster.
2. Mobilise governments to spread information on international topics via all forms of social media in order to include children and youth on important issues.
3. Further create awareness and fully educate the international society on the existence and progress of the Millennium Development Goals as well as the proposed Sustainable Development Goals in order to encourage active participation in achieving these goals.

Article 2

We, the children and youth of South Africa, call upon the African community to:

1. Further implement policies that combat inequality and gender-based human rights violations by:
 - 1.1 Introducing gender inequality themed lessons to both girls and boys starting at primary-level education;
 - 1.2 Supporting the efforts of community based organisations in assisting the eradication of inequality.
2. Challenge the stigmatisation of refugees through educating and creating awareness about the rights of refugees in foreign countries.
3. Call for efficient collaboration between government, NGOs and CBOs that provide comprehensive support to refugees.
4. Encourage African states to use their abundant natural resources in a more sustainable manner to further their economic and social development.
5. Urge the responsible use of water to ensure sufficient sanitation for current and future generations by:
 - 5.1 Educating the public on safe collection, storage and conservation of water;
 - 5.2 Highlighting the importance of water security through workshops and awareness programs.
6. Uphold the principle of transparency in local, regional and national structures.
7. Encourage that more awareness is raised regarding the unequal distribution of food nationally, regionally and globally, and calls for increased participation from NGOs and government to promote more youth participation in food distribution programmes.
8. Support the ongoing work of the AU in the research being carried out on genetically modified organism to combat the issue of food insecurity.

Article 3

We, the children and youth of South Africa, call upon the South African government to:

1. Urgently address the growing inequality in the quality of education that is received by young South Africans - particularly in rural areas.

2. Create an inclusive society, with particular reference to marginalised groups such as disabled persons, by:
 - 2.1 Introducing inclusive facilities and institutions such as schools and transport that accommodate both able and non-able persons;
 - 2.2 Encouraging the development of spaces that allow for the interaction of diverse groups of people from our society.

3. Call upon the national government to accelerate current policies that ensure that the disparities between men and women are reduced with regards to financial compensation in the workplace.

4. Strongly recommend that the interaction gap between government and the youth be narrowed by:
 - 4.1 implementing local and national child and youth advisory boards;
 - 4.2 establishing a UN child and youth delegation to sit in and, in the future, participate in global political institutions;
 - 4.3 encouraging active children and youth participation in policy formulation on issues affecting children and youth.

5. Encourage youth development and self-sufficiency by implementing obligatory community service at all levels of education in schools.

6. Further encourage the government to make use of social media as a primary means to disseminate information to children and youth.

7. Affirm that health services become more youth friendly to allow for the youth to receive proper medical attention by:
 - 7.1 including young people on the hospital/clinic board
 - 7.2 further enhancing the use of peer education initiatives such as *Love Life* and *Soul Buddyz* to address the issues of stigmatisation surrounding health and infectious diseases such as HIV/Aids and STDs.

Article 4

We, as the children and youth of South Africa, call upon fellow youth to:

1. Challenge gender stereotypes and traditional gender roles in society.
2. Encourage and participate in environmental responsibility programmes.
3. Promote respect and unity amongst South Africans in order *to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development* as envisioned by the proposed SDG 16.

4. Encourage our peers to be more involved in matters that affect us as children and youth.

We pledge to:

1. Continue to engage with local policy-makers on pertinent issues affecting children and youth such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, as well as the lack of resources in disadvantaged communities.
2. Further utilise social media platforms to create awareness about community roles in achieving the SDGs.

The 2014 SAIIA Young Leaders Declaration was submitted to representatives of the Department of Environmental Affairs, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, the Department of Basic Education, the United Nations on 4 December 2014 at an official handover at the Department of Environmental Affairs, Pretoria, South Africa

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