

THE 2017 SAIYA YOUNG LEADERS DECLARATION

Youth recommendations for harnessing the African youth dividend through the implementation of the African Union Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, UNICEF Generation 2030 and the South African National Development Plan Negotiated and Agreed Upon at the 5th South African Institute of International Affairs Young Leaders Conference Johannesburg, South Africa

We, the children and youth of Southern Africa declare our continuous investment towards the youth demographic, guided by the UNICEF Generation 2030 report, to create a youth dividend as opposed to a youth burden. We hope to embody the diplomatic and life values of OR Tambo when taking action as well as commit our lives to creating positive change as he did. We commit to carrying out the aims of the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Global Goals for Sustainable Development and the South African National Development Plan.

Preamble

Guided by the findings of the UNICEF Generation 2030 Report,

Affirming the importance of the United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs),

Having *studied* Agenda 2063 of the African Union,

Applauding the continued support for the Paris Agreement,

Bearing in mind the South African National Development Plan,

Emphasising Aspiration 6 in Agenda 2063 which seeks to create an Africa where development is people-driven and unleashes the full potential of its women and youth,

Commemorating the Year of OR Tambo and drawing inspiration from his life and diplomatic legacy,

Noting with approval the powerful youth voice in shaping our future demonstrated by the work done by regional youth initiatives (such as Environment Africa, Citizen Child, Midland AIDS Organisation, Ubuntu Education Fund, United Through Sport, Rede Criança, Coaliton Against Child Labour in Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children, and Youth@SAIIA),

Deeply concerned by the negative effects of climate change in Southern Africa,

Recognising the potential of the youth bulge to develop the African continent if met by adequate policy investment,

Noting with deep concern the treatment of vulnerable populations, alarmingly high youth unemployment rates and the disproportional teacher-pupil ratios.

SECTION 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

Reaffirming the need for inclusive and sustainable economic growth as per SDG 8 and Aspirations 1 and 6 of Agenda 2063,

Recognising the need for skills development and mobility,

Noting with approval the AU and SADC's continuous commitment to industrialisation and the creation of the SADC free trade area,

Noting with approval the strides taken by the AU and SADC heads of states to encourage economic participation of women and vulnerable populations through the cultivation of entrepreneurial ethos.

Article 1: Agriculture and Skills Development

1. *Considering* the dependency of African economies on the agricultural sector, calls for the adoption of modern sustainable farming methods in light of the effects of climate change,
2. *Recommends* the unification of entrepreneurship with sustainable agriculture by promoting jobs with specified skills in agricultural sustainability,

3. *Encourages* equal emphasis on formal and non-formal skills development, such as vocational and technical education, to create opportunity in the informal sector of the economy,
4. *Prioritises* the implementation of practically based subjects such as farming and economics into the learning foundations in order to boost the agricultural sector and interest in food studies.

Article 2: Policy and Youth Involvement

1. *Encourage* more government partnership with civil society to facilitate skills development,
2. *Encourage* African governments to uphold the call for increased economic regional integration as well as interdependence, as addressed in Agenda 2063,
3. *Welcoming* the theme of the upcoming 2017 SADC Pretoria Summit, but demands the inclusion of youth participants within these regional dialogues.

Article 3: Entrepreneurship and Financial inclusion

1. *While affirming the need* for entrepreneurship, and applauding efforts in this regard, we caution governments and the private sector against heavily relying on this as the singular solution to unemployment,
2. *Keeping in mind* the prevalence of the informal sector within Africa, we express our appreciation for the creation of accessible financial services such as MPESA and eWallet and call for an increase in the creation and support of such initiatives.

SECTION 2: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Deeply disturbed by the United States of America's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, but inspired by member states' increased commitment,

Applauding the role that South Africa and the African group played in the drafting of the Paris Agreement and their continued leadership role in this regard,

Bearing in mind the National Environmental Management Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species resolution,

Disturbed by the global food insecurity along with the serious environmental degradation resulting from unsustainable agricultural practices,

Deeply concerned about the detrimental change in weather patterns, induced by climate change, affecting all aspects of life.

Article 1: Youth Education and Training

1. *Encourages* the involvement of civil society organisations in youth based environmental programmes which promote awareness and environmental consciousness,
2. *Emphasizing* the significance of teaching and training the youth about the importance of environmental sustainability,
3. *Supports* the use of social media in increasing awareness of methods to combat climate change.

Article 2: Oceans and Seas

1. *Requests* that the African Union continues to encourage member states to implement maritime policies that promote biodiversity and conservation,
2. *Supports* further governmental investment in sustainable technology and policies in agriculture, aquaculture and ocean practices,
3. *Strongly disapproves* of the formation of new deep-sea mining companies and discourages the expansion of existing companies,
4. *Urges* nations to prioritise the water and sanitation sector, in a transparent and accountable way, with specific regard to water purification and management as well as the extension of water conservation and treatment plants in both urban and rural areas.

Article 3: Policy and its Implementation

1. *Encourages* the collaboration of scientists and broader society to create solutions which are both economically and environmentally beneficial,
2. *Strongly endorses* stricter environmental policies and regulations that hold governments and the private sector accountable for their actions with possible repercussions,
3. *Approves* of the Paris Agreement's decision to keep the increase in Global Average Temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius, whilst encouraging countries to take measures to ensure the Global Average Temperature does not exceed a 1,5 degrees Celsius increase,

4. *Expresses its appreciation* of the establishment of the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund; however we request that the fund be easily accessible to all and that both rural and urban areas are equally targeted.

Article 4: Agriculture and Food Security

1. *Strongly encourages* the development of more community based farms (especially the new innovation of vertical farms in urban environments),
2. *Endorses* capacity building in climate change and the active involvement of the youth in mitigation and adaptation policies,
3. *Recommends* the establishment of stricter global standards of sustainable agricultural practices, guiding countries in sustainably revolutionising their food production systems,
4. *Promote* the investment, research and implementation of GMOs, whilst acting with caution, acknowledging the potential food security benefits and possible biodiversity and health detriments,
5. *Deeply concerned* about immense global food waste and recommends the urgent further research into waste-reducing methods,
6. *Emphasising* the importance of projects tackling land degradation in order to promote health, and protect biodiversity and ecosystems, such as the efforts taken up by Sobantu Secondary School, South Africa, and the lead-removal project by Environment Africa in Kabwe, Zambia.

Article 5: Energy and Waste Management

1. *Proclaims* the urgent need to continue expanding the methods of sustainable, renewable energy production, such as solar, wind, geothermal and biofuels, particularly in African countries,
2. *Strongly condemning* the proposed plans to begin fracking in the Karoo Shale Plains, South Africa,
3. *Discourages* the development of nuclear energy in economically-inviable countries,
4. *Requests* that governments invest in industrial waste recycling companies in order to reduce water-source contamination and aid in economic development,
5. *Further recommends* the development of infrastructure which is required for the utilisation of waste in order to create substantial biofuel, including new pipe systems to direct human, industrial and agricultural waste to the creation of biofuel.

SECTION 3: SOCIAL COHESION

Deeply concerned by the prevalence of societal rifts along the lines of gender, race, sexual orientation, nationality, religion and disability,

Aware of the UN Declaration on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

Having considered the Promotion of Children's Rights in South Africa: A Handbook for Members of Parliament.

Article 1: Migration

1. *Noting with approval* the creation of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants by the international community,
2. *Urging* African states to adopt progressive, anti-xenophobic migration principles,
3. Requesting that these migration principles should set-up streamlined processes that are accessible and transparent for legal migration throughout the African continent,
4. *Calling upon* all countries to implement the Comprehensive Refugees Response Framework,
5. *Encourages* increased awareness on the "African Passport", prior to its 2018 roll out,
6. *Requests* tougher anti-corruption mechanisms within the Departments of Home Affairs in order to curb exploitation of migrants.

Article 2: Women and Youth Rights

1. *Calls for* increased monitoring by civil society on the high levels of gender based violence, sexual exploitation and drug abuse of children,
2. *Demands* the adoption of legal reforms, policies and programmes to promote the girl child's advancement in society,
3. *Recommends* collaboration of the health sector and rehabilitation programmes to reintegrate gender based victims into society.

Article 3: Vulnerable Populations

1. Noting with deep concern the difficulties faced by the youth in culturally and religiously conservative countries to openly discuss LGBTQ+, Albinism and disabilities; however we applaud the youth who live in these conservative communities who are making an effort to mitigate their plight,

2. Urges governments to acknowledge sensitivities with regards to LGBTQI+ and vulnerable communities with the increased awareness of non-discriminatory stance towards vulnerable groups.

SECTION 4: BASIC NEEDS

Emphasising that education is a basic human right that should be accessible and affordable in order to have active youth participation in both economic and human development,

Recognising the intrinsic link between human dignity and the provision and access to basic infrastructure,

Acknowledging the fundamental role played by social media as a medium for youth dialogue.

Article 1: Education

1. *Deeply alarmed* by the current shortage of teachers, and the further predictions around the increasing student-to-teacher ratios which undermine the quality of education,
2. *Calls upon* increased interaction between various stakeholders, including education institutions, private sectors and other external actors, to invest in addressing the issue of funding tertiary education; caps on family contribution, and further funding support,
3. *Recommends further* negotiations between unions and institutions to revise salaries and benefits for educators to secure the field of teaching as an employment prospective that drives development of the youth,
4. *Calls for* the implementation of civic education in primary and secondary education by all member states on the African continent,
5. *Calls for* the creation of programmes and organisations dedicated to addressing the quality and functionality of services in schools, such as the Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure,
6. *Encourages the creation* a formalised and practical learning component within African schools which focus on agricultural development and environmental sustainability in order to incorporate the youth into the agricultural sector,
7. *Strongly commends* the institutionalisation of African discourse in international tertiary institutions, and calls upon the international community to incorporate African discourse into their curricula.

Article 2: Infrastructure

1. *Calls on* the expansion of urban farming in cities as a way to ensure food security, job creation, sustainable human settlements and environmental sustainability,
2. Expressing appreciation and emphasising greater implementation of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programmes in vulnerable communities across Africa,
3. *Calls for* substantial investment, from the public and private sector, in terms of the creation of safe, accessible transport and roads, and industrial corridors to aid in mobility and growth,
4. *Recommends* the improvement and coordination between national, provincial and local South African government in enforcing RDP policies thus improving the efficiency in planning and allocating of houses in close conjunction with the National Norms and Standards which outlines the minimum physical requirements for standalone dwellings.

Article 3: Health

1. *Noting with deep concern* the lack of medical personnel and facilities in isolated rural areas,
2. *Demands* a prioritisation of maternal health care in all African states,
3. *Strongly requests* an increase in funding and dissemination of information about mental health care for young people,
4. *Urges* the expansion of existing youth focused health programmes that are led by youth in order to promote sexual and reproductive health in an unintimidating manner,
5. *Encourages* high school and university students to play an active role in the development of innovative low cost sanitation solutions,
6. *Demands* the collaboration between departments of health and education in providing free sanitary pads to girls in schools.

Article 4: Technology and Social Media

1. *Having considered* that technology is a significant aspect of modernisation, we are deeply concerned by the outdated technological infrastructure on the African continent and the lack of computer literacy amongst youth,
2. *Recommends* the improvement of internet access in least developed countries as less than 30 per cent of the rural population have access to internet via third generation (3G) mobile broadband networks.

SECTION 5: CIVIL PARTICIPATION

Noting with concern that less than 20% of the world's policy makers are youth,

Drawing attention to the importance of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), such as Non-Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations and Faith Based Organisations,

Applauding the work of CSOs in advancing the development agenda.

Article 1: Public participation

1. *Requesting* for more meaningful engagement through authentic African youth forums,
2. *Endorses* the use of social media and other ICT channels to deliver policy knowledge and share ideas on policy formulation, implementation and monitoring amongst the youth,
3. Further recommends increasing the availability of information and visibility of government programmes targeted at youth.

Article 2: Civil Society Organisations

1. *Insisting* on transparency within civil society,
2. *Recognising* the role Youth Led Civil Society Organisations can play to hold governments accountable for lack of implementation of policies,
3. *Encourage* the partnership between civil society organisations, the government and traditional leaders in order to address and raise awareness regarding gender inequality.

SECTION 6: PEACE AND SECURITY

Deeply concerned with the lack of implementation of Article 4J of the Constitutive Act of the African Union that speaks of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P),

Noting with deep concern the infringement of children's rights in conflict areas and high number of child soldiers involved in active conflicts on the continent,

Alarmed by the decline in good governance, shift in power dynamics, rise in terrorism, civil conflict and disregard for the rule of law,

Recognising the restrained African voice in the setting of the international development agenda further hindering the continents development and the realisation of the youth potential of the burgeoning youth demographic on the continent.

Article 1: Civil Conflicts and Terrorism

1. *Calls for* better efficiency of the African Union Peace and Security Council in combatting terrorism on the continent,
2. *African States are strongly encouraged* to implement Article 4J of the Constitutive Act of the African Union to resolve both interstate and intrastate conflicts.

Article 2: Youth Political Representation

1. *Recommends* African states implement Resolution 2250, of the United Nations Security Council, which calls for increased representation of youth in decision-making at all levels,
2. *Calls on* youth to be proactive and be supported in fighting against corruption,
3. *Urges* African youth to see themselves as active citizens and run for public office and for Africa leaders to support youth in this endeavour.

Article 3: Multilateral Representation

1. Further recommends that international institutions, like the UN Security Council, be restructured to represent the interests of all member states equally,
2. National Governments must reaffirm their commitment to advancing SDGs through allocating resources in national budgets, instituting and aligning legislation for easy implementation.

Article 4: Justice and Awareness

1. We demand unrestricted access to justice without fear, favour or prejudice for the youth and also the sensitization and education of African youth about their constitutional rights.

Our Youth Pledge

We, as young people, pledge to:

1. Be committed to promoting the best interests of the growing youth demographic in order to ensure that a youth dividend is present rather than a youth burden
2. Enshrine the life values of OR Tambo and adopt his diplomatic ways in all our activities
3. Be at the forefront of implementing the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2063
4. Empower our local communities by being informed and educated active citizens and by participating in public forums
5. Ensure that the community is aware of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development
6. Enforce sustainable and renewable sources of energy production along with the efficient management of waste in our communities
7. Use water wisely and sparingly, in light of recent drought across Southern Africa
8. Reduce our Carbon Footprint
9. Educate and train our communities in methods of sustainable agricultural practice
10. Spread acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community within our own communities along with preventing the exclusion of and discrimination against women
11. Take full advantage of global migration in order to develop our communities and economies

The 2017 SAIYA Young Leaders Declaration was submitted to Deputy Minister, Ms Nomaindiya Mfeketo of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation on 13 July 2017 at the official handover ceremony in the OR Tambo Room, DIRCO, Pretoria, South Africa.

The 2017 SAIYA Young Leaders Conference was made possible by the generous support of terre des hommes.



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Department:
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