



# SAIIA YOUNG LEADERS CONFERENCE 2019

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## SAIIA Young Leaders Declaration 2019

Youth recommendations for redefining African Youth participation:

A path to transformative leadership through the implementation of

The Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement,

UNICEF Generation 2030, the African Union Agenda 2063,

the African Peer Review Mechanism African Govern, the African Youth Charter,

the South African National Development Plan and

the South African National Youth Policy

Negotiated and Agreed Upon at the 6th South African Institute of International Affairs Young Leaders Conference Johannesburg, South Africa

As we commemorate youth month we, the children and youth of South Africa declare our continuous investment towards the youth demographic to create a youth dividend as opposed to a youth burden. In remembering the sacrifices of the 1976 youth, we take it upon ourselves to redefine effective youth participation and transformative leadership.

### *Definitions:*

#### Transformative Leadership:

- A form of leadership that integrates youth in policy and decision-making processes
- Includes open access to governing bodies, and youth representation within these structures
- Promotes Afrocentric values
- Reviews, evaluates and holds itself accountable to commitments made
- Emphasises the development of proactive policy-making, implementation, evaluation and monitoring as opposed to reactionary leadership
- Includes intergenerational cooperation

#### Effective Youth Participation:

- The inclusion of youth in policy-making, implementation, evaluation and monitoring processes
- Is one in which youth have been capacitated to participate
- Recognises the diversity of young people and their interests, therefore includes an all-encompassing representation of the youth
- Includes young people as essential contributors to public processes in spaces previously lacking youth voices



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## Section A: National Committee

*Firmly convinced* that the cultivation of youth participation in environmentally sustainable practices and institutionalising youth into these structures will fast-track progress in achieving these commitments,

*Recognising* the increasing demand for effective platforms that include youth when engaging on national issues pertaining to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies,

*Acknowledging* the commitments made by South Africa within the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the National Environmental Management Act,

*Recognising* that management and conservation of the environment directly impacts access to basic services which are ensured by the South African Bill of Rights,

*Recognising* the need for the adoption of cohesion-building values in school curricula by prioritising themes on sexual and reproductive health and rights, racism and Afrophobia and other marginalized groups,

*Recognising* that the need to have youth inclusivity at the center of economic policies is of utmost importance for economic growth and the sustained future development of South Africa,

*Acknowledging* the promise that was made in the National Development Plan 2030 (NDP) to develop youth participation in the creative industries as they can contribute substantially to small business development, job creation, and urban development and renewal,

*Reaffirming* the vision in the NDP to increase economic, social and political participation in rural communities, of which youth are a considerable demographic, and furthermore, stressing the significant benefits of a successful implementation of land reform policy that is youth-centred,

*Acknowledging with concern* the slow progress of the implementation of the National Youth Policy 2020 (NYP) and the various affirmative action policies in addressing inequalities, youth empowerment and skills development of the youth labour force,

*Noting* the valuable role that non-profit organisations play in promoting participation, skills and leadership development for young people,

*Condemning* the unresponsive and overly militarised South African Police Service in its response to lawful youth protests,

*Regretting* the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system in reintegrating previously convicted youth upon release,



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*Drawing attention to the fact that the current capacity of the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) is unable to meet the demand for economic support needed by the youth,*

*Noting with concern the discrimination and lack of support of migrant youth who want to participate meaningfully in economic, political and social activities,*

*Appreciating the expansion of comprehensive sexuality education by the Department of Basic Education, and its potential to mitigate misinformation, risky behaviour and prejudicial sexual practices,*

*Deeply disturbed by high prevalence of new and existing HIV infections among young people, particularly young women from low-income backgrounds,*

We therefore call upon the following actions:

## **Article 1: Environmental:**

1. *Encourage* awareness-raising that is targeted at youth on environmental issues and facilitating greater youth engagement on legislation through creative campaigns, using means such as street art, meaningful use of public figures and 'influencers', their brands and their social media platforms,
2. *Suggest* the provision of more capacity-building programmes for young people to better understand policy development, thus leading to more meaningful and constructive contribution to environmental policy, and
3. *Demand* the urgent provision of reliable electricity to communities that lack access thereof, in realising the grave consequences on youth development in these areas.

## **Article 2: Economic**

1. *Insist* that government prioritise rapid implementation of rural development in addition to skills training on farming and sustainable land development in order to increase job availability for young people,
2. *Urge* for the shared responsibility of including youth in the consultation, drafting, and monitoring of economic policies pertaining to youth economic empowerment,
3. *Call for* greater co-creation between stakeholders and local youth when designing corporate social investment programs that are geared towards enhancing the livelihoods of young people.

## **Article 3: Social**

1. *Stress* the need for civil society and entities in the health sector to increase collaborative programs with youth for awareness and training to decrease mother-to-child transmissions of HIV/AIDS,



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2. *Call for* greater financial and technical support for youth peer-to-peer development and rehabilitation programs to reduce crime and violence,
3. *Encourage* young people to assist in increasing safety in their communities by joining neighbourhood watches and becoming police volunteers,
4. *Further advocate* for the implementation of 'problem-solving policing' which promotes the diversion of youth and first time offenders of minor crimes to agencies, and programmes geared at preventing crime,
5. *Strongly recommend* that there be less stringent policies and legislation in the obtaining of work permits through the Department of Home Affairs and the Immigration Act of 2002 in order to remove barriers to the inclusion of migrants - particularly youth migrants.

## Section B: African Committee

*Recalling* the commitments made in the African Union Agenda 2063, African Youth Charter (2006) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

*Welcoming* the establishment of the African Union Youth Envoy,

*Noting with approval* the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the African Governance Report (AGR),

*Noting with satisfaction* the commendable effort of organisations who, despite crises in African countries, continue to provide aid to young victims,

*Cognisant* of the importance of education and the contribution that inadequate education systems have on youth unemployment,

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

*Recognising* the lack of effective youth participation and leadership on the continent and the importance of harnessing the youth dividend,

*Realising* that young people are active agents of change and our voices must be heard, creativity engaged and rights respected in fostering inclusion and participation particularly in policy making,



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We therefore call upon the following actions:

## Article 1: Environmental

1. *Applauding* private sector projects that incentivise recycling and urge other companies to learn from this, we encourage the inclusion of young people to find innovative measures to further the range of these projects,
2. *Emphasising* the need for environmental education throughout all stages of schooling, we further encourage all stakeholders within Africa to include initiatives like eco-bricking in their extracurricular and lifestyles,
3. *Encourage* environmentally efficient African countries to share strategies to aid other countries with the implementation of eco-friendly policies and ensuring that youth are instrumental in this,
4. *Emphasising* the importance of including environmental sustainability as a fundamental pillar of the APRM and other similar accountability structures.

## Article 2: Economic

1. *Reiterate* youth entrepreneurship through collaboration with government and the private sector to foster employment growth and decent job creation,
2. *Recommend* that African public and private sectors implement a quota system in which at least a third of individuals that are promoted to executive positions are below the age of 35, the maximum youth age defined by the African Union,
3. *Call upon* the promotion of Pan-African ideals present in Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement of 2018 through the sharing of skills harboured by young migrant workers,
4. *Encourage* private sectors to accelerate Corporate Social Responsibility in the provision of vocational training and further skills development for young people through incentives and penalties.

## Article 3: Social

1. *Encourage* other nations to follow the example of African states with existing youth ministerial posts as they serve in leadership development and mentorship programmes,
2. *Further recommend* for the creation and review of national youth policies in African nations collaborating with other stakeholders,



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3. *Facilitate* the introduction of the AU youth charter and other internationally signed and ratified agreements supporting youth participation,
4. *Recommend* that the APRM engages the youth through frequent youth conferences reflecting the best practices to encourage knowledge sharing and for youth to have a stronger voice in monitoring the implementation of the suggestions in the progress report of the APRM,
5. *Note with deep concern* that there is no mention of mental health issues on Agenda 2063 thus we recommend African states that employ youth-inclusive methods to address mental health issues and encourage other member states to follow suit,
6. *Further recommend* that the African Union facilitates intergenerational conversation to redefine gender equality in a manner that reflects Afrocentric values,
7. *Condemning* Afrophobia, xenophobia and any other forms of discrimination against any identities present in Africa, and therefore we extend a call to all member states to actively enforce protection of the youth identities,
8. *Recognising* the unacceptable infringement of sexual and reproductive rights prevalent in Africa, we denounce the dehumanisation of vulnerable populations and demand the respect and protection of these groups,
9. *Implore* stakeholders to give sufficient financial support to young people when inviting them to participate at consultations, conferences and other events.

## Section C. Global Committee

*Applauding* the decisive action taken by young people around the world to address the climate crisis, including but not limited to the school climate strikes and the attention drawn through the media with regard to climate action,

*Noting with deep concern* the lack of implementation of countries adherence to the goals of the Paris Agreement,

*Noting with concern* the role climate change plays in fuelling conflicts around the world and exacerbating various global migrant crises,

*Recognising* the capacity of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to provide for more jobs, better quality education and opportunities for youth,

*Commending* the United Nations Population Fund for committing to 'ensuring the rights of women and girls to sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning',



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*Concerned* by the lack of measures on how young people can be incorporated in ensuring the successes of efforts to strengthen national institutions through international cooperation,

*Recognise* the value that migrants, particularly youth migrants, play in developing economies of host nations. Particularly migrants possessing critical skills and unique perspectives,

*Express appreciation* for programs that promote dialogue among youth of diverse backgrounds in efforts to increase multiculturalism and broadened perspectives,

We therefore call upon the following actions:

## Article 1: Environmental

1. *Endorse* the United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) and reaffirm the necessity of greater investment in adequate resource management and monitoring, while encouraging youth to refer to this framework in mitigating and adapting to climate change,
2. *Call upon* the global youth to familiarise themselves with their country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in order to hold their governments accountable and help them achieve these goals,
3. *Call upon* youth to further champion the use of renewable energy sources, especially in countries that still produce most of their energy through non-renewable methods,
4. *Call upon* the international communities to promote the education of youth on indigenous knowledge systems and biodiversity preservation methods.

## Article 2: Economic

1. *Encourage* the development of rural areas worldwide that create economic opportunities specifically targeting young entrepreneurs,
2. *Recognise* the need for an increase in developing support interventions for homeless youth given the large number of homeless youth,
3. *Demand* that governments mandate the proportional inclusion of youth representation in companies to stimulate youth participation in the economy,
4. *Insist* on transparent, accessible and user-friendly information to migrants and the provision of adequate documentation, a common barrier to education and self-development of youth migrants,



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5. *Call on* the member states of the UN to commit to adopting an 18th informal SDG on youth participation, and to execute Generation Unlimited.

## Article 3: Social

1. *Recommend* a universal definition of youth that is defined as being between the ages of 15 to 30,
2. *Reaffirm* SDG 5 in ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive rights by using the youth as a catalyst for change,
3. *Urges* the international community to lessen and eliminate the participation gap between young and old by involving youth in policy making,
4. *Acknowledge* the value of intergenerational dialogue in achieving common goals through redefining traditional gender roles and breaking down the gender-related stigma,
5. *Urges* healthcare professionals to become more sensitive when dealing with young people seeking mental and sexual healthcare services.

## Our Youth Pledge

### We, as young people, pledge to:

1. Recognise that there are different forms of youth participation.
2. Hold our government accountable for policy documents that directly affect us such as the South African National Development Plan, South African National Youth Policy, the African Union Agenda 2063, and the African Youth Charter and The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. Take a lead in showing respect for non-human life and engage in preservation of the natural environment.
4. Familiarise ourselves with our country's NDCs in order to hold our governments accountable and help them achieve these goals.
5. Encourage youth to utilise mainstream and social media to deconstruct the discriminative culture and the stereotypical portrayal of females and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.
6. Urge the youth to engage in current affairs, the policies set, so as to be aware of how they can contribute in water, hygiene and sanitation management.



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8. Empower other youth through raising awareness by using all forms of media to engage in public participation and spur further conversations.
9. Take targeted immediate action to scale up effective youth inclusion and participation by:
  - 1) Taking advantage of existing capacity building programmes which enhance necessary skills for effective public involvement,
  - 2) Aligning ourselves with existing youth programmes that evaluate and seek to improve youth participation.
10. Encourage one another to produce and consume local products to increase job creation in these industries.
11. Take on recycling and further encourage environmentally sustainable projects.
12. Hold ourselves accountable for the clauses in this declaration within our own capacities and practise active youth participation and transformative leadership to accelerate implementation processes; in conjunction with this, we seek response and progress evaluation from the stakeholders to whom this declaration is presented.

## TEACHER'S DECLARATION

*We, the 2019 SAIIA Young Leaders Conference educator delegates declare our commitment towards the transformation of our learners into morally upright, holistic individuals that will contribute constructively to society as responsible citizens. To involve our learners in meaningful and developmental activities within the school, local community and broader environment. This will form the basis for a renewed commitment to engaging youth in different aspects of the education process.*

### PREAMBLE

*Guided by the South African Schools Act (1996) and the Employment of Education Act (1998) and the South African Council of Educators (SACE)*

*Committing ourselves to involving the youth in decision making.*

*Affirming the power and potential of youth in making meaningful contribution as demonstrated by youth leadership conferences and summits.*

*Emphasising the importance of harnessing the voice of the youth.*

*Engaging the youth in civic responsibilities.*

*Prioritising youth participation in a local, national and global context*

A. *We, as educators are committed to strengthening youth participation through the following initiatives:*

1. *Fully engaging our learners in policy making processes.*
2. *Actively involving the learners in decision making processes within the Student Governing Body structure*
3. *Having effective and functional Learner Representative Councils whose voices are heard and not merely being there as tokens.*
4. *Inviting local government to address learners in school assemblies*
5. *Encouraging learners to participate in community projects.*
6. *Linking up with non-governmental organisations to allow learners greater involvement in their community.*
7. *Exposing learners to new and different environments to enhance the learning experience.*
8. *Providing a platform for young leaders to become ambassadors and pass on their expertise to other learners*
9. *The formation of working Professional Learning Communities so that resources and best practise can be shared.*
10. *The strengthening of teacher, learner and parent relationships.*

B. *In order to accomplish the above commitments, we as educators require the following:*

1. *A safe and secure environment*
2. *The redesigning of the school curriculum, especially Life Orientation, to be geared towards greater youth participation.*
3. *Sace/ Municipality/ Government/ NGO partnership*
4. *Sace accreditation for any additional yet relevant programmes teachers undertake.*
5. *Workshops/ information sessions*
6. *Acknowledgment through certification*
7. *Database of human resources*
8. *Incentivise youth participation through testimonials*

C. *We are guided by the following principles:*

1. *Inclusivity of all learners regardless of ability, gender, culture, race, language*
2. *Parental support and involvement*
3. *Safety of our learners*
4. *Clear and transparent goals*
5. *Integration of all learning areas*

**The 2019 SAIIA Young Leaders Declaration was delivered at the official handover ceremony in the SAIIA Hall, Johannesburg, South Africa. The 2019 SAIIA Young Leaders Conference was made possible by the generous support of the Embassy of Finland.**