

2022 SAIIA Young Leaders Conference



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SAIIA YOUNG LEADERS DECLARATION 2022

We, the youth of South Africa, guided by our visions, hopes, and aspirations for a just, inclusive, and equitable future are driven by the indefatigable spirit of *ubuntu*, and committed to being active stakeholders in policies and decisions that affect us. We are cognisant of the role of youth in leading and catalysing transformative change while upholding principles of transitional, distributional, procedural, and social justice. Working together with relevant stakeholders at national, regional, and global levels, we take it upon ourselves to be implementers of the change. Using lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are committed to building back better put forward the following recommendations.

SECTION 1: GLOBAL CHANGE

Recognising that the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC), as of 2022, has prescribed a deterrent for lack of compliance to greenhouse gas mitigation reporting parameters;

Noting with disappointment that South Africa is 38th in the world in terms of per capita emissions which were 8.2 tonnes of CO₂ emission;

Recognising with concern that the issue towards developing specified renewable energy goals lies in our power retainment infrastructure and energy storage according to the Integrated Resource Plan 2019;

We applaud the progress in incremental reporting in the National Adaptation Strategy and Plan;

Emphasising the urgency of creating practical and ambitious goals that are time sensitive;

Recognising the detrimental effects that the fossil fuel industry has on marginalised people and communities;

Emphasising the importance of the youth in driving social dialogue and stakeholder engagement concerning Climate Change;

Recognising the importance of creating climate and energy resilient communities;

Recognising the contribution of the rampant culture of corruption, abuse of public funds, poor and degrading infrastructure, and lack of proper housing in amplifying loss and damage, especially in historically disadvantaged communities, further deploring the systemic failure of the South African government and their delay in implementing disaster and risk management strategies;

Recognising the need for an iterative process of implementation where we act, evaluate, and monitor progress regularly using innovative technologies which will allow for transparency;

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We further recognise the need for youth to be included in Just Transition, Climate Mitigation, and adaptation policy writing, in addition to being engaged and included in legislative processes and the implementation of such strategies and policies. We, therefore, strongly suggest the following actions:

ARTICLE 1 - NATIONAL

Encourages the creation of a practical learning guide at all levels of education, within schools that focuses on environmentally conscious development and environmental sustainability.

Calls upon the Department of Basic Education to centralise the importance of civic action in climate education.

Calls upon relevant government departments to collaborate with climate organisations and communities to create toolkits aimed at providing career guidance for green jobs, environmental literacy, and policy implementation training for local governments.

We demand the climate commission to adopt the [South African Youth Climate Action Plan](#) and the [Climate Justice Charter](#).

We encourage the increase in implementable information on renewable energy within the current energy mix report of Integrated Resource Plan 2019.

We welcome the establishment of the Just Transition Framework; further, call on the government to urgently implement this framework.

Solemnly reaffirm the need for the government to strengthen efforts towards increasing investment for the mobilisation of natural resources such as wind, solar, and hydropower towards a just transitional energy shift.

Encourage the sustainable usage of abandoned mines for ecosystem restoration.

Strongly urge the Department of Mineral Resources to remove the 100MW limit for renewable energy supply from Independent Power Producers.

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ARTICLE 2 - REGIONAL

We applaud the establishment of the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan and emphasise the need for urgent implementation.

We encourage the increase of safe regional and cross-border reliable public transport with the belief that it will assist in the reduction of the emission of greenhouse gases.

We demand the creation of better regional coordination councils, consisting of member states, civil society, private sector, and academia to lead projects and incentivise regional restoration of ecosystems, with a mandate of ensuring that they are not destroyed again.

ARTICLE 3 - GLOBAL

Noting with regret the disproportionate effect that climate change has on the Global South, we strongly encourage the international community to advance strategies of restorative justice.

We demand that the private sector decarbonise and increase its commitments toward a sustainable greener society.

Noting that the marginalised gender is unfairly affected by climate change, we suggest a marginalised gendered inclusive approach when dealing with the just transition.

We encourage greater public advocacy and promotion of civic interest on a broad scale to stimulate discourse around implementation gaps.

Emphasising the importance of incorporating principles of non-exploitation and regeneration in the creation and implementation of environmental policies.

We demand there to be a greater link between policy and scientific research concerning clean energy options when developing a list of potential new energy sources.

We call for the establishment of climate change as a paramount consideration to develop sustainable systems over volatile political conditions.

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SECTION 2: INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

Alarmed by the violence faced by victims of domestic abuse in South Africa;

Recognising the social exclusion of people who identify out of the gender binary system and the inequality faced by them within social policies, laws and regulations;

Deploring the unjustified increase in ministry salaries in South Africa;

Noting with appreciation the Department of Education for continuing with the implementation of the [Fundza Lushaka Bursary Scheme](#) and welcomes the extension of the scheme to include foreign students;

Expressing great dissatisfaction with the Department of Education in their minimal increase of teacher's salaries;

Taking into account the flaws of our current socio-economic and political system in South Africa;

Alarmed by the rapid deterioration of the education system;

Acknowledging the work of the civil society forums to counteract the gender inequality of the LGBTQIA+ community in South Africa;

Noting with concern the lack of diversity within the educational curriculum in Africa;

Alarmed by the rapid rise in cases of xenophobia and Afrophobia in Africa;

Alarmed by the magnitude of the gender gap in land/housing ownership in the majority of African countries.

Noting with concern the lack of funding assigned for the participation of marginalised groups of the Global South in positions of power;

Noting with deep concern the miseducation regarding menstruation and continued implementation of the 'pink tax;'

Deeply concerned by the oppression faced by women globally;

Acknowledging the work of the [United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation](#) in their promotion of cross-country relations those of the Global South;

We, therefore, put forward the following actions:

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ARTICLE 1 - NATIONAL

Demanding the increase and strengthening of services for victims of domestic abuse and violence as well as appealing to the government to intensify legislative laws regarding rape and abuse perpetrators.

Calling for the use of universally inclusive pronouns in social policies, laws, and regulations.

Calls upon the national government to redirect the salary increase to public servants.

Further recommends that the government, private sector, and international donors invest in steam education and extend it to the entire education system.

Calling upon the government to increase teacher salaries following the drastic increase in living costs.

Calls for the creation of a government-funded youth driven research council to review and research best practices and present them to the government.

Imploring the Department of Basic Education to urgently provide essential school resources to impoverished communities to stabilise the national pass rate.

Calling upon the government to uphold the constitution by assisting organisations with funding for the advocacy of LGBTQIA+ rights in South Africa.

ARTICLE 2 - REGIONAL

Calling for the decolonisation of regional educational curriculums by:

- a) Diversifying course work and material
- b) Diversifying teachers
- c) Acknowledging cultural and history

Condemning the lack of action to combat xenophobic and Afrophobic attacks as well as additional forms of discrimination against any identities present in Africa.

Imploring governments to create policies that ensure WOC (women of colour) receive equal access to the ownership of land and property, regardless of:

- a) Marital status
- b) The presence of the last testament from a deceased spouse

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ARTICLE 3 - GLOBAL

Requesting funding allocation to sustain the participation and leadership of marginalised communities of the Global South in programs at UN agencies, governments, NGOs, and other organisations.

Calling for a global commitment to promote menstrual health by:

- a) Condemning the continued implementation of the pink tax
- b) Seeking the eradication of the stigma behind menstruation and female anatomy
- c) Appealing to governments to ensure all menstruators have adequate access to sanitary products

Advocating for the protection of the rights and welfare of women by:

- a) Calling equal access to female education
- b) Calling for the inclusion of women in positions of power
- c) Condemning the influence of traditional and cultural ideologies in government that hinder the development and growth of women and girls

SECTION 3: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Recognising that the objective of Cities and Urban Development is to develop and design urban areas to meet the needs of communities, as well as, effective environmental, climate-friendly, resilient, and inclusive infrastructure;

Emphasising the need for preventative rather than solely corrective healthcare approaches to allow the healthcare sector to curb the spread of diseases and viruses;

Noting with concern the effect that water and sanitation have on the production of food and energy which have a substantial impact on social, environmental, and economic well-being;

Reaffirming the importance of developing cost-efficient and effective ways to provide filtration and sanitation nationally, regionally, and globally.

We, therefore, encourage the following:

ARTICLE 1 - NATIONAL

Recommends the addition of natural environments in urban areas such as public parks, community-led food gardens, learning institutions, youth centres, municipalities, and activism groups.

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Calls upon the Transport Industry to provide accessible, environmentally friendly public transport and encourages the training of transport personnel to aid the elderly, the disabled, and others in need of assistance.

Recognising the six pillars of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security & Nutrition (GSF) accessibility, availability, agency, sustainability, stability, and utilisation to ensure adequate food security.

Insist on increasing the range of zero-taxed food, for all food groups.

Encourages supermarkets to donate foods that have reached the sell-by or use-by date to homeless shelters, community kitchens, and orphanages instead of disposing of them.

ARTICLE 2 - REGIONAL

Urges the increase of regional medical production facilities for greater medication accessibility in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Emphasises the eradication of exploitative trade policies which strip SADC countries of their products and resources to prioritise Africa.

Emphasises the importance of access to nutritious foods regionally while also combating wasteful consumption by making use of food that is already available.

ARTICLE 3 - GLOBAL

Strongly condemns the dependence on the One Health framework which inhibits the spread of zoonotic diseases by culling animals who are not categorised as vectors.

Encourages a pathogen discovery programme designed to characterise the epidemiology, pathogenesis, and ecology of each zoonotic disease.

Calls for the greater public involvement of World Water Day and World Toilet Day campaigns that aim to provide information and inspiration to highlight and implement cost-efficient and effective ways to provide filtration and sanitation nationally, regionally, and globally.

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SECTION 4: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Note with deep concern the impact of load shedding and civil unrest in creating a harsh environment for businesses of small and medium enterprises while also disrupting national and regional supply chains;

Applaud countries at the UN Environment Assembly for developing a legally binding treaty on plastic pollution;

Draws attention to the establishment of the Hong Kong Convention by the International Maritime Organisation which promotes safe and environmentally friendly recycling of ships, and calls for immediate ratification of the convention by member parties;

Applaud the World Business Council for Sustainable Development for establishing the Circular Cars Initiative to eliminate and minimise total lifecycle emissions with a special emphasis on manufacturing emissions;

Deeply concerned by the widening gap in vaccine distribution between wealthy and low- and middle-income countries;

Note with grave concern Europe's phase back to coal and the role this plays in derailing progress towards achieving significant progress on Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement while accelerating and worsening impacts of the climate crisis;

Note with concern the lack, of rail, road, and sea infrastructure to unlock the potential of localised African supply chains;

Express with appreciation the role that young African farmers have played in improving and scaling local agricultural supply chains while improving local employment and food security;

Commend the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement;

Applaud the collaboration between the African Development Bank and the European Investment Bank to meet the Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy;

Acknowledge the significant contribution of the informal sector to employment in Sub-Saharan Africa and its role in providing crucial livelihoods to the most vulnerable of the urban poor;

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Welcome the Department of Labour's amendments to the Labour Relations Act (LRA), Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), and the Employment Equity (EE) Act;

Recognise that when we invest in women and work to abolish inequalities, they will have a greater capacity to contribute to the development of society;

Welcome the incorporation of the Department of Basic Education's E-Cubed initiative in training teachers to provide broad-based project learning for learners to work on relevant, extended projects that enable preparedness for further studying, employment and, entrepreneurship in the real-world

Recognise the value of the digital supply chain in helping enterprises navigate disruptive forces and respond faster to volatile supply and demand;

Noting the role of digital solutions and data sharing across global supply chains in helping actors manage disruptions better;

Guided by the Broad Commission for Sustainable Development, note the role of emerging technologies in promoting connectivity and the digital economy, as they can help to provide, monitor, and finance Internet connectivity;

Further, note the importance of coherence of existing digital policies and strategies at regional and national levels to mobilise effective cooperation between institutions;

We, therefore, put forward the following recommendations:

ARTICLE 1 - NATIONAL

Call for implementation of transparent food system regulations that will encourage the production, distribution, and processing of nutritious food.

Call for integration of informal traders into the country's food systems.

Encourage public-private partnerships to upscale existing food system solutions in South Africa.

Recommend the establishment of an action plan to promote the integration of informal traders into the supply chain.

Emphasise the need to improve and develop infrastructure in rural areas to connect agribusiness supply chains and move goods efficiently.

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Call for the Department of Science and Innovation to work together with the Department of Basic Education to further increase outreach programmes aimed at promoting the entry of young women and girls into STEAM fields.

Taking into account that global demand for coal is steadily shrinking and guided by the [Just Transition Framework](#), we call for urgent upskilling of workers in mine affected communities.

Recommend the government to implement tax rebates for companies that have gender parity in management positions to encourage the inclusion of women in senior positions.

Further reaffirms the need to address discrimination against women in the workplace and address income disparities between different racial groups with specific emphasis on Black women.

Strengthen existing initiatives or programmes, such as *bringing a girl child to work*, to encourage the public and private sector to empower and expose female students across the country to the world of work, especially those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Call for the national treasury to increase the budget to upscale and implement programmes aimed at equipping youth with entrepreneurial skills.

Highlight the role of youth innovation in developing sustainable solutions to global challenges through technology.

Further call on governments and businesses to mobilise public-private cooperation to provide youth entrepreneurs with access to financial resources, business development skills training, mentorship opportunities, and better information on market opportunities.

Recommend the establishment of a national flagship programme to provide waste pickers with skills and knowledge to grow their businesses, protective clothing, tools for the trade, and designated city lanes; further, call for local governments to develop a centralised system to record the number of waste pickers in each city and integrate them into solid waste management systems of cities.

Recommends the Department of Small Businesses to establish a strategic framework aimed at promoting the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises and better integrating them into South Africa's formal economy.

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Note with concern that the lack of funding and access to finance creates a challenge for young people aspiring to become entrepreneurs; thus, we call for entities such as the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to facilitate a more efficient system to ensure that payments are speedily processed.

Call upon the Department of Basic Education to integrate entrepreneurship education into the national curriculum which is crucial to empowering young people to become problem solvers.

Further call on relevant government departments, private sector, and civil society to further develop and create programmes aimed at promoting entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to empower communities.

ARTICLE 2 - REGIONAL

Calls for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and flagship projects to address regional challenges with greater finance opportunities from bodies like the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Call for governments across Africa to work together with the AfDB to provide technical, financial, and technological resources for organisations that are community- and youth-led.

Further call for gender mainstreaming in implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

Encourage civil society across member states to support movements like the *buy Black* movement to increase support for Black-owned businesses.

Call for the African Union to implement a system of quotas to promote absorption of youth and women in public sectors, and further call for the private sector to adopt these quotas.

Encourage African member states that have not ratified the Employment Policy Convention to act with greater urgency.

Guided by the Social Policy Framework for Africa, reaffirm the need for African governments to focus on giving the informal sector the necessary support by removing administrative, legal, fiscal, and other obstacles to its growth, and facilitating its employment creation function with access to training, financial resources, advisory services, appropriate legislation, productive inputs, social protection, and improved technology.

Further, call for the Social Policy Framework to extend social security and protection to cover informal workers as well as their families.

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Guided by the African Union's Agenda 2063, call for the development of macroeconomic policies aimed at creating jobs for women and youth, and further highlight the need for implementation of appropriately timed career guidance for youth as part of the schooling and post-schooling education system.

Reaffirm the need for mobilisation of financial resources for skills development across the continent.

Call for formalised guidance and mentorship programmes to be made available for new entrepreneurs through public-private partnerships to provide them with information on existing legislation, and potential funding opportunities.

Call for establishment of finance mechanisms to provide finance for women entrepreneurs in Africa, with a focus on women in rural areas.

Emphasise the need for strengthening Africa's manufacturing capacity to build a strong African supply chain; further calling for increased support aimed at growing small, medium, and micro enterprises.

Supports the creation of broad-based programmes for regulatory reform to eliminate barriers to accessing financial resources, business development and skills training, mentorship opportunities, and better information on market opportunities in the informal economy.

Note the importance of inclusive consultations with informal traders to understand their constraints and generate buy-in.

Call for the creation of one-stop shops for business registrations by deploying user-friendly IT-based systems to eliminate transport and administrative burden for informal traders.

Promote connectivity for Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises, including regulations aimed at creating an enabling environment for smaller-scale providers, including broadband cooperatives, municipal networks, and local businesses, by putting in place practices such as facilitating license exemption and tax incentive schemes.

Guided by the Digital Transformation Strategy, promote the creation of a harmonised environment necessary to guarantee investment and financing by setting up a digital sovereignty fund aimed at closing the digital infrastructure gap to achieve accessible, affordable, and secure broadband.



ARTICLE 3 - GLOBAL

Call for regulation of plastic production and consumption through extended producer responsibility to invest in shifting to production of bioplastics.

Call for increased infrastructure investments to expand and automate key ports to accelerate container throughput; further call for countries to upgrade the road, rail, and warehouse infrastructure to allow goods to reach markets quicker.

Encourage increased impact investments to strengthen the participation of smaller and more vulnerable actors in global supply chains

Urge countries to act with greater urgency to diversify global supply chains to foster supply resilience from volatile disruptive forces.

Highlight the need for the development of global sustainability and reporting standards to integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria into global supply chains.

Further call for the development of initiatives in the shipping industry to promote circularity and a global framework for sustainable shipping.

Further call for increased funding and patent waivers for low- and middle-income countries.

Further guided by Immunisation Agenda 2030, draw attention to the need to secure funding for vaccines for developing countries to ensure the well-being of their citizens.

Further, reaffirm the need for countries to comply with their fair emission in line with objectives set in the Paris Agreement.

Demand for immediate halting of Europe's new fossil fuel investments.

Further endorse the International Labour Organisation's Employment Policy Convention which aims to protect rights of Labour Unions while promoting freedom of choice for workers.

Support organisations that promote entrepreneurship among youth across the world.

Reaffirm the need for governments to create enabling and resilient environments for entrepreneurship to allow Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises to grow their businesses while also allowing for more entry of youth- and women-owned businesses.

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Highlight the need for governments to work with the support of multi-stakeholder cooperation to conduct local and regional assessments of connectivity needs in order to develop comprehensive connectivity plans.

Promote for the initiation of ambitious regional infrastructure aimed at connecting every school in the world to the internet.

OUR YOUTH PLEDGE

We the youth pledge:

- To uphold the values of integrity, inclusivity, and empathy in order to sustain and develop our communities;
- To respect our physical environment and maintain its resources for present and future generations;
- To promote awareness of the issues impacting our communities and finding realistic solutions;
- To commit ourselves to the implementation of our declaration in our respective communities;
- To hold ourselves accountable in our actions towards creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society for all.

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EDUCATORS' DECLARATION

We, the 2022 SAIIA Young Leaders Educator Delegates, pledge and commit ourselves towards assisting our youth in the implementation of change so that they can be the voices and activists to create a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable future for all in our country, region, and the world.

Our role as educators is to proclaim the responsibility to make sure that our learners obtain the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to shape their future. Our declaration as teachers is to create a sound mind so that youth will not only think of these ideas but write these ideas and implement them in the form of policies. We seek to show that social stratification does not define them, but what they do together is what defines them. Hence, unity in decision making is strength.

Guided by the South African Schools Act, Employment Equity Act, and the South African Council of Education (SACE);

Committed to ensuring that youth share their thoughts and participate in forums locally, nationally, regionally, and globally;

Acknowledging the importance of encouraging youth to participate in community organisations
Recognising the need to emphasise societal norms, values, and standards so that the youth can accomplish their goals in society;

Driven by the need to see youth exercise their voice in various platforms created by the institutions.

We, the educators, are guided by the following principles:

1. Holistic youth development regardless of race, colour, gender, creed, culture, and language
2. Parental and community support and intervention
3. Ensuring security of facilities and our youth
4. Guidance through the vision, mission and policies of the institution and government
5. Support from all educators with regards to curriculum planning
6. LTSM support

We, as educators commit ourselves to empower our youth to commit themselves to create and implement decisions they make as a collective:

1. To provide the youth the opportunity to engage in developing policies.
2. Exposing the youth to be part of national, regional, and global structures to explore and develop their ideas.
3. To commit as professionals to collaborate with colleagues, parents, youth, and community structures to set clear attainable standards for society.
4. To introduce youth to various civil society organisations and initiatives at school and in the community.
5. To call upon the youth to be involved in the governance of their education system whether it be the RCL or SGB or SRC or various councils in the tertiary institutions.
6. To urge the youth to get involved in the electoral processes in the country as well as becoming accustomed to the organisation and administration of elections at the institution and country.

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7. To empower the youth to gain the authority and urgency to make decisions on their own.
8. To encourage youth to participate in decision making through building and applying problem - solving skills.
9. To help youth to realise that recognising a good law allows them to develop themselves and the broader community.
10. To teach proper morals, values, and attitudes to promote a responsible youth.
11. To give a platform for the youth to develop strong and practical leaders for the future.

To accomplish the above undertakings, educators require the following support:

1. A safe and secure working environment
2. Partnerships with SACE, Government (Local, Provincial and National), NGOs, business, and other relevant stakeholders
3. The involvement of IEC for electoral processes and elections in the institution and country.
4. Certification for attendance of developmental workshops for educators and Youth.
5. Youth and educator testimonials
6. Educators to mentor youth to prepare them to empower youth
7. To embrace technological changes and support with regards to internet, projectors, tablets, cell phones.

The 2022 SAIIA Young Leaders Declaration was delivered at the official handover ceremony at Freedom Park Heritage Site and Museum on 14 July 2022. The 2022 SAIIA Young Leaders Conference was made possible by the generous support of the Embassy of Finland.