

## **Southern African Youth Declaration at SAPSN 2022**

We, the young people of Southern African region, gathered in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo ( DRC) round the notion that democratic societies can only be based on peace, freedom, justice and respect for human rights,

Confirming the conclusions and values of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs), World Program of Action for Youth (WPAY) and African Youth Charter,

Fully supporting the youth aspirations, struggles and efforts of the Southern African region

Disappointed by the short-sightedness and inconsistency of the SADC policies and action towards youth empowerment, development, inclusion and full participation in decision making processes.

Noting with concern that Early Childhood Development is not included in the SADC Education and Training Protocol and is only mentioned without any detail in the current Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP).

Aware of shrinking democratic space, deteriorating human rights situation, dire socio economic situation, extractivism of the natural resources and climate crisis in the Southern African region,

Concerned about the escalating political crisis in Eswatini and lack of decisive intervention by SADC, war in the eastern part of DRC, threats to security and peace in Mozambique, political instability in Lesotho and continued human rights violations in Zimbabwe,

The Southern African region youth therefore resolve to;

Support the call for the inclusion and prioritization of ECD in the SADC Education and Training Protocol or a separate children protocol to guide member states in addressing children's issues, create standardized approach, implementation and promote accountability within the region. Immediate action required for states to allocate no less than 5% of national education budgets to ECD and increasing access to quality inclusive universal ECD by 2030 as expected in Sustainable Development Goal Number 4 Target 2 (SDG 4.2).

Retaliating the importance of the full and effective participation of youth and youth organisations at the local, national, regional and international levels in politics, leadership and decision-making processes.

Emphasized, the need for strong and decisive intervention in Eswatini for inclusive political dialogue to unlock the political crisis and usher in a democratic dispensation. The Southern African youth will run a well-coordinated campaign to offer solidarity to the people of Eswatini and call upon SADC and AU to act against King Mswati's dictatorship.

Highlight the need to fight back, push back and resist the shrinking civic space and rise of authoritarian regimes in the SADC region

Challenge extractivism, demand climate justice and take ownership of the regions natural resources for people centered development.

Demand quality, accessible and affordable decolonized education in the Southern African region relevant to the needs of the region.

Engage in building democracies, the rule of law and respect for human rights in our countries, establishing regional cooperation and strengthen peoples to peoples solidarity allowing for free movement of people and goods in the SADC region.