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## **REMARKS**

**BY THE MINISTER OF SPORTS, YOUTH AND  
NATIONAL SERVICE**

**HON. ERASTUS A. UUTONI, MP**

**AT THE**

**SADC YOUTH MINISTERS MEETING**

**23-24 May 2019**

**SAFARI HOTEL**

**WINDHOEK**

## SALUTATIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• His Worship, Mr. Mueseke Kazapua, the First Citizen of the City of Windhoek, our own Honourable youthful Mayor</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Hon. Ministers responsible for Youth in the SADC region, this would include the delegated representatives of the Hon. Ministers who could not make it to Namibia.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hon Minister Doreen Sioka of Gender Equality and Child Welfare</li> <li>• Hon. Minister Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi of Higher Education, Training and Innovation</li> <li>• Hon. Minister Dr. Kalumbi Shangula of Health and Social Welfare represented by Ms. Bertha Katjivena, Deputy Executive Director</li> <li>• Hon. Minister Katrina Hanse-Himarwa of Education, Arts and Culture and represented by Her Deputy Minister, Ms. Anna Nghipondoka</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the Diplomatic Corpse present</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Salute to Dr. Thembinkosi Mhlongo, Deputy Executive Secretary: Regional Integration, SADC Secretariat and the whole SADC Secretariat family present here</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Daisy Mathias, Presidential Advisor on Youth Matters and Entrepreneurship Development in the Office of the President</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of the UN Agencies present</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Senior governments (SADC) officials present</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Mandela Kapere, Executive Chairperson of the National Youth Council</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Esther McLeod, Acting Commissioner for the National Youth Service</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I also want to give special recognition to our international stakeholders present here as observers too               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ AU</li> <li>❖ NYDA</li> <li>❖ MIET-Africa</li> <li>❖ Child Rights Network for Southern Africa</li> <li>❖ ILO</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of all others agencies, not specifically mentioned here</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the press</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ladies and Gentleman</li> </ul>

I greet you all in the warmth spirit of Namibia, the Land of the Brave. Good morning and welcome to Windhoek.

**Director of Proceedings;**

**Colleagues, Stakeholders, Distinguish Invited Partners**

We are gathered here in capital city of Namibia, Windhoek at the meeting of SADC Ministers responsible for youth under the theme ***‘Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development’***

Therefore, today many of the issues for our decision will be centred on ***‘Strategic Policy Dialogue’*** and ***‘Policy Development and Harmonisation’***. This will be guided by the adopted Annotated Agenda with recommendations from the Senior SADC governments’ officials who worked tirelessly on deliberating the matters and other issues are for our discussions and noting.

Before I go deep into my official welcoming remarks, Honourable Ministers kindly permit me to express our deepest appreciation to the chairperson of the meeting held by Senior SADC Governments’ officials, Mrs. Emma Kantema-Gaomas, also the Executive Director in the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service and assisted by the SADC Secretariat for an assigned task excellently executed. We thank you collectively as Ministers responsible for Youth.

**Honourable Ministers;**

One of the agenda point for discussion is the overwhelming support for continued vigorous implementation and mainstreaming of the 38<sup>th</sup> SADC Summit Theme across all our sectors nationally.

This is argued against the fact that investing in infrastructure development and youth empowerment immensely contributes to sustainable development. This in fact is securing a better future for generations to come.

### **Director of Proceedings;**

I wish to highlight few major activities which took place in the youth sector ever since His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Namibia took over the chairmanship of the SADC Organ. For example, the SADC Youth Forum was held in December 2018 in Windhoek. Resolutions taken at this very important meeting will be presented to us as Ministers of Youth for our deliberations and perhaps decision taking. The presentation is a voice representation of the youth by the youth.

I further want to inform this respected meeting that the Africa Union Commission produced a report on the Status of Youth in Africa also zooming into the SADC Region in their reporting. This report is an excellent reference document for consultation, planning and resource allocation as we move towards addressing challenges faced by youth in our respective countries.

### **Honourable Ministers and respected Invited Guests;**

The high unemployment rate amongst the youth across the SADC region remains a very explosive situation and a cause for concerns. Thus, one is

most thankful to the SADC Secretariat which commissioned a situational analysis study on youth innovation, entrepreneurship, leadership and participation in the SADC region.

The findings force us as governments to pause and reflect on whether the current youth programmes have any positive impact on youth. Do the programmes we have in place yield the desired outcome or result? Where do we need to change and who needs to change and how? How can we collectively through various sectors deliver on youth empowerment? We cannot and should not expect positive change if we continue to address youth development the same way year in and year out!

Honourable Ministers and senior government officials, I urge you all to carefully dissect the study, the findings and recommendations therein. One of the most appreciated conclusions of the study is that Member States can learn from each other. We can share knowledge, skills and resources where possible. Thus, keeping a regional database which talks to our achievements, challenges and envisaged activities will make it possible for the Region to prosper in our endeavours.

Colleagues, we need to seriously re-think our approaches towards youth development and youth empowerment. We need to seriously lobby our governments for adequate financial allocation toward the development of the youth sector. I must also indicate that we need to do more with the little budget given to justify the request for further funding.

**Director of Proceeding;**

As chair of our Ministerial proceedings later after the official opening remarks, I look forward to much detailed discussions. Thus, allow me at this point to wholeheartedly welcome each and every one of you especially our guests who came from member states. I also wish to express my appreciation to my Namibian counterparts who came to support us as we deliberate on youth matters today and tomorrow.

I sincerely believe that we will have fruitful deliberations and put forth deliverable resolutions.

It is thus my distinct honour to declare this SADC Youth Ministers meeting officially opened.

I thank you.

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