



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**MINISTRY OF SPORT, YOUTH AND NATIONAL
SERVICE**

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SENIOR OFFICIALS AND STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

20 – 22 May 2019

IN PREPARATION FOR THE

SADC YOUTH MINISTERS MEETING

23 – 24 MAY 2019

WELCOMING REMARKS

BY

EMMA KANTEMA –GAOMAS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MINISTR OF SPORT, YOUTH AND NATIONALSERVICE

- Distinguished Senior Officials

- International Cooperation partners

- SADC Secretariat

It's indeed an honor and a privilege to **welcome** you at this very important meeting of senior officials responsible for youth matters in the SADC region. We are delighted to host the meeting that brings together senior government officials (Heads of Delegation) representing the Republic of Angola; the Republic of Botswana, the Kingdom of Eswatini; the Kingdom of Lesotho; the Republic of Malawi; the Republic of

Mozambique; the Republic of South Africa; the United Republic of Tanzania; the Republic of Zambia; the Republic of Zimbabwe. I would like to extend a special welcome. Dear colleagues your presence here today is testimony to the region's commitment to Youth development and empowerment in the SADC Region. Your presence here serves as a reminder to us all just how youth matters are.

I have no doubt that this platform offers a rewarding experience where we will share best practice towards youth empowerment.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome the SADC Secretariat, indeed a strong and committed team of 13 led by Ms Duduzile Simelane, Director of Social and Human Development. In our midst there are observers with interest specific interest in child welfare and youth matters. I am informed that MIET-Africa and Child Rights Network for Southern Africa (CRNSA). A special welcome to you.

At this point, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the Ministry to provide an enabling environment for youth empowerment, and as the Ministry responsible and entrusted with the development of Youth we are

intensifying our efforts to realize that objective. This is further cemented in the 38th SADC theme that of “promoting infrastructure development and youth empowerment for sustainable development.” Hence this meeting comes at the right time as we deliberate and take stock on the operationalisation of the theme.

Ladies and Gentlemen you will agree with me that, the youth are the backbone of any society, hence, youth empowerment is a key agent for achieving economic transformation and social changes required for sustainable development. Investing in youth is a prerequisite for building a sustainable future. It is a high priority to provide young people with the skills and opportunities they need through the mobilization of smart and targeted investments.

According to the Assessment and analysis of the situation of youth innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership produced by SADC secretariat: The population of SADC is mostly composed of youth and the number is growing rapidly. In 2015, 226 million youth age 15-24 years lived in Africa,

accounting for 19% of the global youth population.¹ There was a total of 107 million youth in 2015, from 100.09 million in 2010. The SADC region population (313.5 million) comprises 34% youth.² Africa will account for 80% of the projected 4 billion increases in the global population by 2100. The accompanying increase in its working age population creates a window of opportunity, which if properly harnessed, can translate into higher growth and yield a demographic dividend. The demographic dividend refers to the accelerated economic growth that is initiated by a rapid decline in fertility and mortality that results in a change in the age structure from one dominated by dependent children to one dominated by economically productive working adults. I am pleased to see that on our agenda we will discuss the AU Report on status of youth in Africa. Furthermore, A study conducted by International Labor Office (ILO) (2015) estimated that 88 million youth between ages 15-30 globally are currently unemployed. Furthermore, Sub Saharan Africa and Asia have the highest levels of youth unemployment (ILO, 2015). This are some of the challenges we are faced with.

¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs- Population Development (2015) Population Facts.

² United Nations Population Division (2017) World Population Prospects

Colleagues, we are gathered here as Senior Officials representing various SADC Countries with single aim which is to dissect, discuss and prepare significant documents on youth matters for presentation to our Ministers for decision and further guidance at the official **SADC Youth Ministers** which will officially commence on Thursday, 23 May 2019 at the same venue.

Colleagues, Kailash Satyarthi, an Indian author by profession and an activist once said: *“The power of youth is the common wealth for the entire world. The faces of young people are the faces of our past, our present and our future. No segment in the society can match with the power, idealism, enthusiasm and courage of the young people”*.

It is our sincere hope that the 3 days will grant senior officials who are tasked with youth matters in SADC a chance to a strategic policy dialogue and this is an opportune moment to look at *Policy Development and Harmonisation* as well as strengthening institutional arrangements. Various presentations will be made and SADC Secretariat will offer guidance where needed.

As we mark this important day on our calendar, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia and in particular Ministry of sport, youth & National services I want to say once again welcome. It's wonderful to see so many of you here, may this 3 days matters. I wish you fruitful deliberations. I thank you.