

OUTCOME STATEMENT

NATIONAL WATER AND SANITATION YOUTH INDABA 2023

We, the Youth of South Africa within the Water and Sanitation Sector, joined by our counterparts from the Southern Africa Region and across Africa, met at the National Water and Sanitation Youth Indaba 2023, under the Theme: *The Future We Want: Accelerating Change in the Water Sector*, held in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, from 26 – 30 July 2023:

Informed by presentations and robust discussions on the Importance of Organized Youth in resolving SA's water and sanitation-related issues, Opportunities for Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector, and the State of SA's Water and Sanitation Sector- How can the Youth Contribute? during the National Water and Sanitation Youth Indaba Indaba.

Mindful of the Minister's call to channel the spirit of the youth of 1976 – the spirit of courage, determination, and resilience – to serve as a catalyst for action as well as champions of water and sanitation towards driving progress and transforming our communities.

Recognizing opportunities that abound for our youth in the water and sanitation sector for career paths and professional development.

Noting the government's commitment to resuscitate the Blue, Green, and No Drop programs, with a focus on the quality of drinking water, safety of wastewater, and water conservation and demand management, respectively.

Reiterating that the SADC Hygiene Strategy 2021-2025 (2020) and all the other existing and relevant political frameworks, protocols, declarations, strategies, and agreements adopted at the regional and continental levels are central in addressing the WASH and climate-related challenges that we are currently facing.

Cognizant of the African Agenda 2063, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6 to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all and other related goals.

Further Noting the African Ministers' Council on Water Governing Assembly's decision to adopt the AMCOW Youth and Gender Inclusion (YoGI) Strategy 2023-2030 and to revitalize implementation of the 2013 AMCOW Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa.

Inspired by the South African Water Sector Youth development strategy as adapted from the AMCOW Policy and strategy for mainstreaming Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa.

Aware of the need to raise the profile of the water and sanitation sector at the political level and to contribute to the development of the post-Africa Water Vision 2025 framework.

Affirming the need to create employment opportunities for the youth, as well as develop their technical and skills capacities to contribute to sustainable services delivery across the continent.

Further Aware of the importance of increasing water availability, and improved sanitation and hygiene to strengthen Africa's response in preventing and/or the fight against COVID-19 and future pandemics, as well as restoring economic growth, health, and food system shocks.

Acknowledging that climate change is affecting the African continent more than any continent felt largely through changes in the availability and quality of water resources, threatening its economic and social development and making climate resilient infrastructure an imperative for survival.

WE HEREBY DECLARE our unwavering commitment to contribute and seize existing opportunities to drive action towards water security, sanitation, and hygiene development, within the framework of governments' policy priorities and strategies, in line with the Africa Union's "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want".

In this regard, we commit as follows:

1. On Water and Sanitation Governance (Policy, legal and institutional frameworks)

- Advocate for political prioritization and improved efficiency, transparency, and accountability in addressing inequalities, and equally by our governments and key stakeholders for improved water resources development and sanitation as well as hygiene service provision across local, national, and transboundary levels.
- Call on Governments and stakeholders to strengthen youth-responsive policy, legal and institutional environments by ensuring context specificity; intra- and inter-sectoral coherency; and upholding the principles of universal social inclusion and equity.
- Call for the formulation and implementation of inclusive sanitation policies that cover sewerage and non-sewerage sanitation systems as the foundation for delivering safely managed sanitation.
- Advocate for the availability of commensurate material, financial and human resources to national and local government institutional mechanisms for water resources management and delivery of water, sanitation, and hygiene services to all. Special emphasis shall be placed on ensuring high-level political leadership to motivate action on sanitation and hygiene.
- Promote and raise the profile of social accountability and transparency with the full awareness that it is vital to recognize women and youth as change agents for planning and implementation of the water, sanitation, and hygiene agenda across countries.
- Call for sustainable services delivery by developing the requisite human resources capacity – especially among women, girls, people with disabilities, and marginalized communities.
- Call on the government to adopt the proposal and make "Water Security and Sanitation for Peace and Socio-Economic Development" the African Union (AU) Theme for the year 2026.

2. Multi-stakeholder Collaboration and Partnerships:

- Mobilize widely through our social media outreach muscle and creative arts opportunities to influence behavior change for WASH in our communities,
- At our various local levels, we will work to foster relationships and engagement with the local business communities to play a more active role in supporting WASH programs in the communities that they depend on for the survival of their local businesses,
- Foster close collaborations with various stakeholders such as traditional leaders, local school authorities, and faith leaders in our communities for inclusive, sustainable water and sanitation.

3. On Climate Change and WASH:
 - Conceive local climate resilience WASH initiatives. By speaking up and getting to join in various actions including mobilizing and educating our communities, students, colleagues, friends, and families.
 - Lead and champion local interventions to curb the effects of climate change in our communities and localities through various local actions to ensure that youth can play an active role in both contributing to combating climate change and mobilizing local communities for action.
 - Forming WASH and climate youth clubs that can be active in the local communities to raise the voice of the youth.
4. Water Conservation and Innovations:
 - As active water and sanitation Champions, within our means, to promote and foster local innovations and initiatives for WASH behavior change in our local communities and especially in schools and health care facilities,
 - Facilitate peer learning, sharing, and exchange of knowledge, skills, and information to ensure that our voices and actions are visible and impactful.
5. Sanitation and Hygiene services
 - We commit to seize the opportunity of playing our part to contribute to fighting pandemics and the ongoing cholera outbreak in our SADC region by raising the profile of sanitation and hygiene and encouraging our governments to strengthen pandemic and outbreaks preparedness and response capabilities.
 - Call on governments and delegates to elevate the current WASH issues and challenges in the global landscape during and after the United Nations 2023 Water Conference
6. Finance and Resource Mobilization
 - Call on our governments to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability in addressing inequalities, and equally improve WASH sector funding within the functions of water resources management, and water supply, sanitation, and hygiene services provision: a key element of this being to integrate the agenda for water, sanitation, hygiene and climate action in development processes and

frameworks. These are critical components of a strong, resilient WASH which is key to the well-being of the region's citizens.

- Call on SADC governments to create a conducive business and learning environment and mobilize more resources for the water and sanitation sector and specifically target creating opportunities for youth employment and skills development within the sector
- Encourage our governments to revitalize the implementation of both the 2003 PANAFCON commitment to allocate at least 5% of national budgets for the water and sanitation sector; and the commitment to establish public sector budget allocations of a minimum of 0.5% of GDP per annum for sanitation and hygiene programs.
- Call on governments and regional banks to leverage climate funds to support WASH national development strategies under the climate management systems – the funds should create special opportunities for youth innovation projects, initiatives, and programmes.