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STATEMENT FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE SADC-PF ON INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

12 AUGUST 2024

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

It is with overwhelming pleasure that we present this Statement to partners and stakeholders on International Youth Day 2024.

While the Forum has consistently advocated for the full implementation of rights adumbrated in the African Youth Charter and other youth-related instruments, this august occasion is yet another opportunity to manifest and reiterate our unwavering commitment to youth education and empowerment.

In this respect, we fully associate ourselves with the UN theme "From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development" which unpacks the significance of youth digital education and capacity-building that can undeniably translate into socio-economic progress and an upgrading of the quality of life of citizens at large.

The youth represent the new generation of individuals who have grown up with exposure to digital systems, be it in the form of desktop computers, smartphones or laptops, and have been trained to acquire digital and web-based skills. At this stage of Africa's progressive development, it is imperative that the full potentials of digital learning and transformation are tapped by the youth such that both men and women, boys and girls, are equally conversant in digital skills and partake equitably in the gains of the ICT sector.

To surf on the opportunities which the ICT sector represent for Africa, there is a need for the youth to be trained in Artificial Intelligence, cybersecurity, software coding, web design and other essential IT skills which scaffold the ICT sector. The Forum encourages national Parliaments to promote dedicated Committees that can examine digital legal and policy initiatives and make recommendations to the plenary assembly for comprehensive deliberations that should be inclusive of the voices of the youth.

The integration of youth digital pathways to government agendas and sustainable development is a continuous exercise which should be prioritised by all stakeholders.

In this respect, the Forum is profoundly committed to universal youth development and empowerment and will continue to support its Member Parliaments and partners to work towards the achievement of that noble objective.

Happy International Youth Day 2024!

Yours faithfully,

Boemo SEKGOMA (Ms)
SECRETARY GENERAL