



Southern Africa Students' Union  
Union des Etudiants Sud African  
Unioan de Estudantes da Africa Austral

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## STATEMENT BY THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN STUDENTS' UNION POST ELECTIVE CONFERENCE HELD IN LUSAKA ZAMBIA

***“The education provided must therefore encourage the development in each citizen of three things; an inquiring mind; and ability to learn from what others do, and reject or adapt it to his own needs; and a basic confidence in his own position as a free and equal member of the society, who values others and is valued by them for what he does and not for what he obtains. Julius Nyerere”***

The Southern African Student Union held its national elective congress under the theme “Fostering Academic Freedom, Innovation, and the Development of Education: Shaping the Future of Regional Development,” which resonates deeply with the core mission of SASU. It challenges us to reflect on our role as students in driving academic excellence, technological advancements, and educational reforms that will define the future of our region. The conference received a well documentation of the challenges and insightful presentation into the SADC region through the reports represented by the outgoing president Comrade Alister Through the political report and organizational update through the Secretary general’s organizational report.

Through these reports a clear consensus was adopted onto how SASU has to proceed forward the convergence member countries from across the SADC region was not only reminder of where we are coming from as the SADC region but a renewal of our commitment and continued support on the struggle of students, in particular those from the poor and working class. The sitting marked a historic milestone by amending the constitution since its adoption in Swaziland in 2017. The spirited delegates reflected on the need for a guiding document that is inclusive and that aligns and responds with evolving needs. The amendments focused on the values of the Southern African Students Union as enshrined in Section 3 of its constitution are rooted in democracy, quality, equality, solidarity and transparent leadership thus, this unprecedented step symbolizes a commitment to progress and adaptability while preserving the foundational principles that unite us.

Congress elated the great task for renewal and capacity building in advancing the SADC agent among students and the youth . the firm task and obligation is bestowed upon member countries I the commitment towards students in curbing challenges such as historical student debts, high

fees, high dropout rates , low levels of admission in the region and economic challenges . Noting well the great concern of SADC countries not affording the freedom to launch student unions , greatly infringing the right to association and academic freedom. Congress has noted **Angola ,DRC , Comoros , Madagascar , Mauritius , Mozambique** and **Seychelles** as countries lacking established student unions and top of the agenda . Congress has adopted and welcomed the formation of a ‘rapid student response ‘ in assisting students In exile in foreign countries.

The congress underscored the significance of preserving democratic values while adapting to the current needs to society and those of our constituents which signifies a unified vision for progress. As a Union, we bind ourselves to the commitment for a relentless fight for Academic Freedom and the achievement of equitable living standards of our students. The progressive delegation was innovative in discussing solutions to common challenges faces in the region where as collaboration was accentuated as the most effective strategy to deliver change to the problematic status quo. As a reflection, the congress delegation remarked on the complex array of challenges students across the Southern Region face that significantly hinders their academic freedom and personal development. Issues such as political instability disrupt education system in more ways than tangible effects. The occurrence of frequent political protests and strikes and policy changes creating uncertainty for students and institutions alike, similarly, limiting student funding exacerbates inequalities, affects the access and quality of education and further widens the gap between the rich and the poor.

In declaration as Congress and above all as the collective voice of all learners, students and trainees, it has been declared that the immediate are resolving and implementation on tackling the oppressive challenges of our time with bold and unwavering action, unity and resilience. The fight shall not be declared over until we can guarantee that every student and youth within the region is free from oppression. Our advocacy will remain to guarantee, the safety, stability and interests of our constituents for the realization of academic freedom and economic emancipation.

The steadfast commitment is that of not compromising on academic freedom and the quality of education Congress further resolved upon the rotational presence of the Union Headquarters among the various countries, with Zimbabwe being the home of the 2025/2027 cohort. Congress paused to reflect on the momentous victory and election of H.E Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwa, as Namibia’s 5th President and the first female president in Southern Africa. Her historic election is a significant milestone in the struggle for gender equality in the highest positions of power. This landmark underscores the empowerment of women and ignites inspiration among the girl child and the youth. It is a direct translation that there is hope on a continent that has been regressive in the past.

Congress also noted the importance and noting of the scourge of liberation movements in the region which give concern towards the direction of the SADC region and leftist and liberation movements. The ongoing unrests in Mozambique, Government change in Botswana and coalition government in South Africa. Giving applause to the Government of Botswana led by H.E Duma Boko and South Africa led by President H.E Cyril Ramaphosa on the peaceful transition of power which gives great stability and peace. Great concerns in Swaziland as it remains an absolute monarch with King Mswati holding all powers ,executive, judiciary and legislative powers to himself which increases the repression in Swaziland, the youth remains unemployed, students time and again

persecuted for standing up for their rights Last year's successful national elections were a sign of another 5 years of increased repression and violations of human rights by King Mswati and his undemocratic regime. Nonetheless the youth in Swaziland as well as the student union and the MDM distanced themselves and boycotted the elections and still distance themselves from this government until the change of system to a democratic multi-party system. SASU has noted the unlawful suspensions of eight students from the southern Nazarene University and call for their immediate reinstatement and a fair process in the aid of halting the ongoing protests .The highly contentious elections in Zimbabwe saw Zanu-PF taking 56% of the vote and the main opposition garnering 41% . However, concerns were raised on the fairness and freedom with bodies noting the shortfall of constitutional requirements in the Electoral Act.

Elected secretariat Member countries with respective country delegates guided by the amended constitution elected the following individuals into the executive

1. **PRESIDENT: DENNIS CHIPILI (ZAMBIA)**
2. **VICE PRESIDENT: DORTHEA NANGOLO (NAMIBIA)**
3. **SECTARY GENERAL: JULIA MTSWENI (SOUTH AFRICA)**
4. **DEPUTY S. GENERAL: GABSILE NDUKUYA (SWAZILAND)**
5. **TREASURER GENERAL: EMMANUEL SITIMA (ZIMBABWE)**
6. **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: THEO MONAGENG (BOTSWANA)**
7. **SPOKESPERSON: SAARA EDWARD (NAMIBIA)**
8. **HUMAN RIGHTS: MCONDISI MSIBI (SWAZILAND)**
9. **ADDITIONAL: PASSABLE MAREMUNDZE (ZIMBABWE)**
10. **ADDITIONAL: LUYANDO MAKWAZA (ZAMBIA)**
11. **ADDITIONAL: QUEEN MANAMELA (SOUTH AFRICA)**

END.

Issued by SASU 5<sup>TH</sup> secretariat

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