

SAPSN

Southern African People's
Solidarity Network



People Centred & People Driven
Regional Challenge to Globalisation

2019 SADC PEOPLE' SUMMIT NEWSLETTER



13 – 17 AUGUST, 2019

***THEME: REBUILDING PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS WITHIN SOUTHERN AFRICA'S CLIMATE,
POLITICAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC EMERGENCIES TOWARDS RADICAL DEMOCRATIC
ALTERNATIVES AND A JUST TRANSITION***

National Museum of Tanzania, Dar es Salam, Tanzania

THE 2019 SADC PEOPLE SUMMIT ROARS TO LIFE...

The National Museum of Tanzania has seen the flocking in of people of Southern Africa who convened for the 2019 SADC People Summit from the 13th to 17th of August 2019. The summit which is a platform for SADC people to share their varied stories of struggle ran under the theme “Rebuilding People’s Movements within Southern Africa’s climate, political and socioeconomic emergencies:

Towards radical and democratic alternatives and a just transition.” The theme sets out clearly the main objective of the summit which is to find strategies for building regional solidarity and citizens campaigns for social, environmental and economic justice towards the emancipation of Southern Africa.

Giving welcome remarks, Southern African People’s Solidarity Network (SAPSN) Secretariat, Janet Zhou labeled the summit as the “festival of the poor” emphasizing that this is the platform where the downtrodden of the SADC region amplify their voices in quest for climate, political and socioeconomic justice.

The Summit comes at an opportune time when SADC regional challenges are deep rooted in climatic, political and socioeconomic injustices. The climatic, political and socioeconomic outlook of the SADC region has undergone magnificent metamorphosis over the past decade to the detriment of the citizens whose rights are continually undermined.

Of all the issues discussed during the summit, issues to do with climate change and shrinking civic space in the region ruled the roost.

Discussions brought forward that climate change has spelt untold suffering to some SADC member states as exemplified by the recent Cyclone Idai where thousands of lives have been lost in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi and millions worth of property having been destroyed. The political landscape in our region is marred with

The Summit comes at an opportune time when SADC regional challenges are deep rooted in climatic, political and socioeconomic injustices. The climatic, political and socioeconomic outlook of the SADC region has undergone magnificent metamorphosis over the past decade to the detriment of the citizens whose rights are continually undermined.



Participants at the 2019 SADC People's Summit

governance challenges characterized by political instabilities and we have seen this pulling down efforts towards national development.

Furthermore, SADC member states are characterized by the ever shrinking space for civic activism evidenced in the aftermath of Zimbabwe's 2018 harmonized elections and Malawi's 2019 general elections. Subsequently, shrinking civic space translates into rampant violations of citizens' rights as citizens' voices are suppressed.

The main thrust of the Summit is hinged upon the belief that it is the duty of every citizen of the SADC region to play their citizenship role and contribute to the development of the region by ensuring that the governments are making people centered and pro-poor policies that work for all.

Despite the various initiatives undertaken by the regional leaders both

at regional and national levels, it is critical for the people of Southern Africa to take into cognisance that they need to play their role in redressing the challenges they are faced with. This reminds one of the famous English adage, "God helps those who help themselves.

This motto emphasizes the importance of self-initiatives and agency. This is what is needed if SADC is to be emancipated in all facets of life.

The main thrust of the Summit is hinged upon the belief that it is the duty of every citizen of the SADC region to play their citizenship role and contribute to the development of the region by ensuring that the governments are making people centered and pro-poor policies that work for all.

SADC Heads of State urged to priorities the plight of women and people living with a disabilities when it comes to sanitation issues

By Tassel Bulanda (WaterAid Zambia)

WaterAid Zambia and the Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Coalition Tanzania co-hosted a session during the 2019 SADC People Summit, an event that looked at women empowerment and justice with special emphasis on menstrual hygiene management, female friendly toilets in public places and access to adequate sanitation for people living with disability. The attendance was over whelming as people were eager to learn and understand the issues around female friendly toilets in public places and the MHM services and products.

The session was characterised by testimonies, practical exercises and demonstration of the issues discussed. The exercises included; men tied with a wrapper and a pillow to represent a pregnant woman and squatting to use the toilet. Almost all the volunteers that came failed to bend down to be able to use the toilet. The exercise was meant to emphasize the need for proper toilets for pregnant women. Furthermore, the other practical exercise was a person whose knee was wrapped to represent a person living with disability and is not able to fold his leg and was required to use the toilet without any support. This person too failed to bend and use the facility as there was no support in terms of rails. The third exercise was that of a blind folded person who went into the pit latrine or toilet without any support. This again proved to be a challenge in that firstly most of these toilet have steps, when they get inside they have to feel the some structures to be able to use the facility. This process highlighted the challenges faced by visually impaired people when trying to access ablution facilities.

The other aspect looked at was the issue of public toilets availability which most people confessed that public toilets are usually unavailable. Some of the participants attested that in most cases, they refrain from using the available public toilets because they are never clean, characterized by dry cistern tanks and are not disability or female friendly.

Access to sanitary pads when they are needed the most whilst women are doing shopping, attending public gatherings or functions or travelling has also proved to be a challenge as these are not readily available by the venders for easy access. Assuming a person has a sanitary pad and needed to change, the current public toilets have no bins for disposal of such materials. These indeed are the lamentation of women in accessing sanitary pads and use of the public toilet toilets that do not support women.

THE OTHER ASPECT LOOKED AT WAS THE ISSUE OF PUBLIC TOILETS AVAILABILITY WHICH MOST PEOPLE CONFESSED THAT PUBLIC TOILETS ARE USUALLY UNAVAILABLE. SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS ATTESTED THAT IN MOST CASES, THEY REFRAIN FROM USING THE AVAILABLE PUBLIC TOILETS BECAUSE THEY ARE NEVER CLEAN, CHARACTERIZED BY DRY CISTERN TANKS AND ARE NOT DISABILITY OR FEMALE FRIENDLY.



Debt and inequality prejudice citizens of their rights

The points driven in the session were that there is need to have toilets in public places that are friendly – inclusive and sensitive to the plight of the people living with disabilities and women. This therefore means that governments across the region should support the process of producing and distributing sanitary pads to ensure consumers are not exploited and that they receive quality and healthy sanitary pads.

All the points above send an emphatic message to all African leaders and especially the SADC leadership, local authorities in SADC member states to start prioritizing access to sanitation facilities in public places such as markets, bus stations, ports and Central Business Districts (CBDs) to guarantee citizens access to ablution facilities.

Participants demanded that:

1. The SADC body must ensure governments across all SADC member states prioritise the provision of inclusive, female (gender) friendly water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in public places such as markets bus stations, ports,

schools, health care facilities.

2. Governments across the SADC region must ensure that there is accessibility and availability of controlled quality menstrual hygiene products that are affordable to all classes of society by supporting the supply chain process at all levels in order to protect the vulnerable groups.

The session was well attended by the main summit delegates which also saw a blind youth giving a testimony of the challenges that she faces in her day today life including the challenges she faced whilst attending the 2019 SADC People's Summit in terms of accessing ablution facilities. Royce Banda, a youth from Zambia living with a disability emphasized the need to make public toilets responsive to the many needs of the girls, women, the elderly and those living with disabilities.

A Gender Expert, Madam Sara Longwe from Zambia spoke on the perspective of viewing the topic as a gender issue that men and women have special needs which require attention. Therefore, public places should never be source of

infection but rather be places for answering the call of nature in a dignified manner. Mama Malima, the chairperson for the MHM Coalition Tanzania and the co-host for the Women Empowerment and Justice thematic area, emphasised on the need to have all public toilets and indeed any other toilet to have hand washing facilities with soap for health purposes.

Mahema, who is a visually impaired teacher emphasized that most of the blind people are able to read but have been denied that opportunity to access valuable information on issues like menstrual hygiene and the importance of female and disability friendly toilets in the sense that investment in Braille on that information has not been much. Most of the literature cannot be accessed by the blind. With support from SAWA, a local Non-Governmental Organisation championing MHM, Mahema has been instrumental in translating literature on MHM in braille to ensure that visually impaired people are not left behind. She however, appealed for support from governments across the region to invest in translation of this information to braille in order for it to reach out to the many vulnerable

but viable people. The appeal was further extended to organizations that champion various products. The session ended with people sampling the many displayed sanitary pads both disposable and reusable by various NGOs and companies who were marketing their products.

The question of debt is a burning issue in both the SADC region and Africa at large. Public and publicly guaranteed debt is debt that is accrued by government to finance national development. Public debt can be domestic or external, where credit comes from internal creditors and from external creditors respectively. Public debt may be acquired by government, local authorities and public entities on behalf of citizens to finance human development and cover deficits.

Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that “everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized”. Therefore, an international order characterized by extreme indebtedness of low and middle-income countries and an attendant inability to fulfil their human rights obligations to their citizenry is inconsistent with this entitlement.

International measures to deal with the debt crisis should take full account of the need to protect economic, social and cultural rights through, inter alia, international cooperation” (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”. Human rights obligations of States are clearly relevant in the context of their external debt arrangements. It is however regrettable that Southern Africa hosts most of the debt ridden countries fueled by irresponsible deals entered into by the political leadership and the poor bear the brunt of debt repayment.

On the broader global political economy, inequality exist in the frame in which most colonial countries accumulated their debts from the so-called “masters of development”. History has it that colonisers committed natural



Debt and Inequality Side Event

Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that “everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized”. Therefore, an international order characterized by extreme indebtedness of low and middle-income countries and an attendant inability to fulfil their human rights obligations to their citizenry is inconsistent with this entitlement.

resource fraud where they illicitly transferred assets, mainly minerals from the African countries and sanitized the money which they are now loaning to the developing countries ignoring the fact that they owe these nations ecologically due to the ecological footprint they left as they deprived indigenous people the right to benefit and enjoy their resources.

This global political agenda makes sure that developing countries never get out of the debt trap as interest rates and penalties for defaulting continue to increase the debt burden on the shoulders of the tax payers.

Global economic inequality automatically perpetuates in-country inequalities as nations fail to provide social services to their citizens in order to honour public debt arrears. Inequality emanating from public debt trap has resulted in most developing countries performing dismally towards the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Furthermore, poverty and inequality in all forms have reached unprecedented levels with SADC hosting some of the most unequal countries. Speaking during the Debt and Inequality Seminar, side event at the Summit convened by Oxfam International, Oxfam Malawi, Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development, Africa Forum On Debt and Development (AFRODAD) and the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), MoreblessingsChidaushe from NCA highlighted that, inequality is a structural challenge precipitated by the uneven distribution of resources.

She emphasized that all the socioeconomic inequalities are increasing citizens' vulnerability

especially in face of natural disasters and there is therefore need for cushioning mechanisms. In addition, Oxfam Malawi representative argued that there is a chicken and egg relationship between poverty and inequality such that the former cannot be eradicated if inequality is not addressed.

Recommendations

- There is need for coalition of civic organizations from SADC countries which serve as a watchdog for transparency and accountability public debt management;
- Key institutions for instance parliament in public debt management must be strengthened to ensure they undertake their oversight roles effectively;
- SADC citizens must engage in national budget processes to contribute and influence government priorities on budget allocations;
- The church should be considered a key player in national development processes as witnessed in their historical role of providing mission health and education centers;
- To reduce inequality, governments must promote fiscal justice policies and practices;
- Civil society organizations should spread economic governance awareness programs to rural areas;
- Nations should only borrow for long term infrastructure that sustain national development to ensure citizens' rights are fulfilled;
- There is need for political commitment to fight inequality at both national and regional level;
- Structural mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that the vulnerable are cushioned from natural disasters for them not to be continually trapped in the inequality matrix;

Furthermore, poverty and inequality in all forms have reached unprecedented levels with SADC hosting some of the most unequal countries. Speaking during the Debt and Inequality Seminar, side event at the Summit convened by Oxfam International, Oxfam Malawi, Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development, Africa Forum On Debt and Development (AFRODAD) and the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), MoreblessingsChidaushe from NCA highlighted that, inequality is a structural challenge precipitated by the uneven distribution of resources.

IRRESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT, A THORN IN FLESH FOR MALAGASY-PEOPLE

By VolaheryAndriamanantenasa (MADAGASCAR)

Over the past years, Madagascar has become one of the most attractive countries for transnational corporations, especially mining companies, due to its poor governance system, lack of legal and human rights protection framework and the rampant corruption in the country. This is also due to the fact that the State has shown much interest in the “extractivist” economy as profitable such that despite all its shortfalls, the government kept-on calling for investors to come and facilitated transnational corporations’ operations by even lessening the existing regulations. Nevertheless, this have a huge adverse impact on the citizens’ rights.

However, the Research and Support Center for Development Alternatives – Indian Ocean (CRAAD-OI) that is based in Madagascar is working on supporting affected communities, or communities that are at risk including rural women groups to stand up for their rights and advocate for a better Malagasy-people centered economic and development policies. In addition, they also advocate for a better human rights protection mechanism as well as empowering communities to be able to say “No” whenever their rights are threatened.

Communities are currently struggling with the implementation of the Australian Base Resources mining sands project in the southern part of the country owned by World Titane Holding which is affecting 200 000 people including the Mikea indigenous group, as well as against the implementation of the Tantalum Rare Earth project in the West-North of the country a company owned by ISR Capital, based in Singapore which has just signed an agreement with the China Nonferrous Metals Mining Group (CNMC) for the development of the project in Madagascar. Both projects have serious ecological and human rights impacts such that civil society organizations in the country qualify them as “genocide”.

HOWEVER, THE RESEARCH AND SUPPORT CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES – INDIAN OCEAN (CRAAD-OI) THAT IS BASED IN MADAGASCAR IS WORKING ON SUPPORTING AFFECTED COMMUNITIES, OR COMMUNITIES THAT ARE AT RISK INCLUDING RURAL WOMEN GROUPS TO STAND UP FOR THEIR RIGHTS AND ADVOCATE FOR A BETTER MALAGASY-PEOPLE CENTERED ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES.

In addition, they also advocate for a better human rights protection mechanism as well as empowering communities to be able to say “No” whenever their rights are threatened.



Participants presenting at Youth Summit 1

YETT HOSTS THE REGIONAL YOUTH SUMMIT IN TANZANIA

By Progress Sibanda (ZIMBABWE)

“Young people presents a window of opportunity for the fortunes of our countries and the region to be drastically transformed into greater economic growth, prosperity, and self-determination that is unparalleled the world over...”
Unknown

The Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT) convened a Regional Youth Summit at the National Museum of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) as a side event to the 2019 SADC People's Summit in Tanzania. The Regional Youth Summit sought to provide an open space for young people from different SADC member countries to have a dialogue on issues affecting them and come up with new ideas and approaches to address these challenges. Young people developed “Regional Youth Key Asks and Aspirations” for onward submission to the SADC Meeting of Ministers responsible for youth affairs. The youth summit

attracted The meeting also sought to develop a clear road map for engagement, follow up and accountability on the youth plan of action.

The 2019 Youth Regional Summit ran under the theme

“Rebuilding Youth Movements within Southern Africa’s Climate, Political and Socioeconomic Emergencies: Towards Radical Democratic Alternatives and a Just Transition”.

The theme was inspired by the theme of the main People’s Summit “Rebuilding People’s Movements within Southern Africa’s Climate, Political and Socioeconomic Emergencies: Towards Radical Democratic Alternatives and a Just Transition”. Young people came up with possible solutions and recommendations to their challenges “The Regional Key Asks” which will be presented to the SADC Secretariat.

Young people were divided into five Commissions, each trying to tackle different challenges that the youth are facing and offering possible solutions and recommendations.

The Commissions were:

- Education and Skills Development
- Human Rights, Governance and Democracy
- Land and Natural Resources Governance
- Peace Building and National Healing
- Employment, Entrepreneurship and Livelihoods

The Summit noted that youth issues and priorities interrelate and must therefore be mainstreamed and integrated into the different sectors of development of SADC. The main youth issues that were highlighted included unemployment; limited access to quality education, shrinking civic and political space for young people, drug and substance abuse, gender inequality and among other things. Young people therefore made recommendations which call upon governments, the private sector, and other stakeholders to provide resources for youth to actively participate in development processes of their different countries and the SADC Region at large.

SADC GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN SHARE THEIR STORIES OF STRUGGLE

By GamuchiraiGono (ZIMBABWE)

The Rozaria Memorial Trust (RMT) in partnership with IM Swedish Development Partner, Justice for Children, Women's Legal Resources Centre (WOLREC) and Non-Governmental Coordinating Council of Zambia (NGOCC) hosted the Nhang'a Binti side event at the SADC People's Summit in Dar es Salaam.

Nhang'a is a cultural innovation for social empowerment, it is a safe space led by African young women and girls. It is a space for mentorship, learning and advocacy for girls and young women with policy leaders and policy makers.

Rozaria Memorial Trust started the Nhang'a initiative having realized the importance of safe spaces for interaction. Girls and young women discussed issues that are

bedeviling the Southern African region, particularly child marriages, poor access to sexual and reproductive health information, HIV and girls' access to education.

Five young women, who are survivors of child marriage from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Tanzania shared their experiences in the Nhang'a. They demanded for more safe spaces so that girls can openly discuss issues that are sometimes considered a taboo in the African culture so that speak collectively against harmful cultural practices withholding women from fully enjoying their human rights.

Tererai Zulu (not real name) a young Zimbabwean woman under Rozaria Memorial Trust's Re-entry programme, shared her experience of how she was forced

into a 'marriage' while she was still in school."It was a traumatic experience for me. I was married off by my parents against my will while I was in form 5. The man used to beat me and abuse me even as I bore him a child.

He later abandoned me, that is when RMT with the generous support from IM Swedish Development gave me a second chance to education. I am so excited to be back at school, I feel so empowered now through the leadership programmes I attend at RMT's Education and Counselling Centre," said Tererai.

Young women and girls also shared country policy issues around girls access to education and re-entry for girls who are impregnated and then decide to go back to school.





Francisca Smith (not real name) shared the challenges faced by girls who aspire to go back to school (re-entry in Tanzania).

She said, “Where I come from, girls are brought up to respect the males in their families. We are not allowed to have an opinion, it’s a taboo for a woman to oppose the voice of the male counterpart. In Tanzania, there is a lot of backlash on the issue of Re-entry, it’s something that you can not speak openly about, and girls do not have the courage to speak out on it more.

We need to create safe spaces for girls because we are crying in silence, exposure plays a pivotal role in how girls are able to stand and fight for equality and for their rights” Young women are also aggrieved about societal pressures pressed upon women to get married. Young women across Southern Africa shared stories of how most African parents and relatives put unnecessary pressure on them as they indicated that it is this pressure that leads to forced or early marriages.

We need to create safe spaces for girls because we are crying in silence, exposure plays a pivotal role in how girls are able to stand and fight for equality and for their rights” Young women are also aggrieved about societal pressures pressed upon women to get married.

Young women across Southern Africa shared stories of how most African parents and relatives put unnecessary pressure on them as they indicated that it is this pressure that leads to forced or early marriages.

The IM Swedish Regional Advisory and Advocacy Group on Ending Child Marriage (RAAG) Chairperson, Daphne Chimuka called for stronger links among partners to ensure tangible impact. She emphasized that the war against child marriages can only be won if parents as well as men are included in these conversations on child marriages.”These safe spaces such as the Nhangas should be encouraged as they give young girls a platform to express themselves but most importantly, we need to ensure that perpetrators such as parents and boys are given a platform to allow dialogue on child marriage.” said Chimuka.

She added that starting right from birth, mothers start to adorn the female child with pink ribbons and other ornaments for her to look attractive, these girls carry a message up to adulthood that they have to look beautiful, but who are they adorning themselves for? “We are teaching girls to aspire for marriages at tender ages, but what happens when a 13 year old girl goes into labour? It is important to have parents participating in these platforms so that they know how much harm they are causing when they force their children into marriages” charged, Chimuka.

Rozaria Memorial Trust is a non-profit making organisation that supports innovative initiatives that promote education, health and entrepreneurship for women and young people in rural communities. RMT is headquartered in Murewa, Zimbabwe with community activities in Mashonaland East and Central provinces, while engaging in advocacy and policy influencing work at national, regional and global levels.

SADC, A HOTSPOT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE INDUCED NATURAL DISASTERS

The recent Cyclone Idai and Cyclone Kenneth that hit SADC region is a clear indication that the region has become a hotspot for climate change induced natural disasters. Climate emergency that is already having a devastating impact on the SADC region is a cause for concern. Together with the broader ecological, economic and social crises, the climate crisis will make the rebuilding of a sovereign, integrated and developmental region able to overcome poverty, unemployment, landlessness and inequality a very distant achievement.

The side event on Climate Change Impact convened by the Rural Women Assembly, Women in Mining, AIDC and Forum Mulher held during the 2019 SADC People's Summit bare it all that women are the most affected by climate change.

This is due to their gendered roles including ensuring that they put food on the table for the family, therefore food insecurity largely impact them. Despite women being the most affected by climate change, participants at the Climate Change side event bemoaned the exclusion of women in discussions focusing on solutions to climate change citing that climate change is not all about food, rather there are a lot of social issues at stake ranging from child marriages, gender based violence and divorce.

Participants from different SADC member countries concurred on the suffering spelt out by climate injustices such that food insecurity is hovering across the region with Tanzania's 10 districts experiencing severe food shortages.

One participant from Madagascar lamented how cyclones hit Madagascar on an annual basis but regrettably the government seem to have no clear and sustainable strategy to curb challenges posed by the cyclones. "What hurts most is how the government ignore recommendations proffered by civil society organizations" explained the participant.

The question of climate debt ruled the roost as participants emphasized that there is need for the global north to pay their ecological debt to Africa, SADC region in particular. Climate debt can be understood as the compensation owed to developing countries for the damages of climate change that they have

not caused, in this case it is the global north that should repair Africa, SADC region in particular for the loss of lives and property due to climate change associated disasters for instance Cyclone Idai and Kenneth.

Multinational corporations have been fingered in destroying SADC people's livelihoods wherein most of them rests on the production indigenous crops with participants highlighting that SADC governments are enticed by these corporations to reduce protection of the indigenous seeds. Recommendations were made that there is need for urgent attention to ensure that farmers' rights are observed and an appeal is long overdue to lobby policy makers so that farmers are empowered to create their seed banks.

At the end of it all the seminar resolved that, the solution to SADC's climatic challenges cannot be resolved without the involvement of women who are the most affected parties. It was also resolved that SADC people should come up with strategies to curb climate change crises and bring about climate justice. Climate just also entails fighting false solutions which are mostly originated from the developed countries.



Participants at Climate Change Seminar 1



Regional Debate Tournament winners: Methembe Mervyn Ndhlovu and Mary Anne Nazombe

As per tradition, the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) in partnership with the Norwegian Church Aid conducted the SADC Regional Tertiary Institutions Debate and Public Speaking Gala during the 2019 SADC People's Summit, that have seen Zimbabwean debaters coming first.

The debates were conducted under the theme "Youth empowerment and participation." Youth are a vital cog for any country's development and Africa is one of the continents with growing youth population. The youth dividend in the region needs to be harnessed if SADC is going to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and address the current asymmetrical international and national economic relations.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in one of its annual Goalkeepers Report which tracks the progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals warned against the risks that can arise if the young population is not given the opportunities needed to improve their lives.

The regional debates come at an opportune time when calls for youth participation in economic

ZIMBABWE DEFENDS THE CHAMPIONSHIP FOR REGIONAL TERTIARY DEBATES

governance processes are heightened. A number of critical issues were raised during the debates.

The debates interrogated the debt question in the SADC as well as issues to do with foreign investments that have seen youth bemoaning irresponsible investment that have spelt untold suffering for the local SADC people.

Debaters regretted how SADC leaders have embraced the extractivism system of investment where investors siphon resources out of the region without meaningful benefit for the locals. The Chinese were largely blamed for irresponsible investment characterized by human rights abuses, looting and use of technology where locals could have been employed, "First of all we regret the environment that exists in SADC that does not allow for genuine investment and allows for bias capitalist investment." charged one debater.

Interestingly, another participant claimed that, the manner in which China handles investment in SADC testifies that the Chinese do not pity the region but it's their newly invented economic expansionist policy to shun out the West. The SADC region is characterized by the signing of mega deals with foreign investors, which some of the debaters argued, are poorly negotiated prejudicing citizens of their natural resources.

The question on whether the Africa should pay illegitimate debts or not raised much heated debate. One of the debaters argued that if AFRICA pay illegitimate debts accrued by the former colonizers, it will be tantamount to embracing colonialism as a whole and accepting the plunder of the continent and SADC region in particular therefore Africa must not pay debts that were accrued to subdue Africans. Not only does public debt hinder national development but also undermines the realization of citizens' socioeconomic rights and to make citizens shoulder illegitimate debts they did not benefit from is an injustice in strict sense.

The regional tertiary institutions debates provided a platform for regional youth to share knowledge and sentiments to the major hindrance to Africa's development, public debt, which is being pushed by the masters of the global political economy specifically the International Financial Institutions.

The IFFs hidden agenda is to keep African states and developing countries in a debt trap that will always haunt them and dampen the morale to initiate organic and sustainable national development plans. Since the youth are considered to be the pillar upon which countries future lies, the quality of the debates was a clear testimony that the young people are well equipped to influence policy at both national and regional level.

MAURITIUS IS AN ISLAND FULL OF STRUGGLES

By GamuchiraiGono (ZIMBABWE)

It is disturbing that Mauritius, a SADC member state, is acting as a catalyst for the underdevelopment of other SADC member states, through acting as a tax haven, gentrification, privatization and ecological crisis. Depriving other countries to derive taxes from activities being conducted in their jurisdiction cannot be considered as fair or competitive. Investors' tax is a way of paying back to society, part of which is used to fund government expenditure that ultimately should be invested in public services.

As a growth dependent economic system, capitalism pursue endless accumulation and reproduces itself on a larger scale. As a social system, capitalism has progressively advanced the commoditization of everything on planet earth. We are living in an alarming and critical time for human kind, organized human society and the planet. Just a few years of inaction in the immediate future could lock in dangerous climate change that would be irreversible for the next ten thousand years.

While humanity has to come to grips with the biggest existential crisis of our century, matters are worsening with the political rise of the extreme right forces and climate denials in different parts of the world. In a situation of rapid worsening planetary emergency, with climate change deteriorating and ecological boundaries exceeding threshold. The Indian Ocean islands populations are among the most vulnerable populations on earth in terms of climate induced catastrophes. Mauritius is among one of the small islands under direct threats of global warming in the coming years.

What could be an important outcome for the 2019 SADC People's Summit in addressing ecological crisis could be the implementation of Climate Debt which is a concept incorporating two distinct elements: adaptation debt which represents the compensation owed to the poor for the damages of climate change they have not caused and emissions debt which is compensation owed for their fair share of the atmospheric space they cannot use if climate change is to be stopped. A second initiative could be the implementation of the Rights of Nature in all the respective constitutions of the SADC member states.

Amandla, Pouvwar Pou LEPEP!!!

What could be an important outcome for the 2019 sadc people's summit in addressing ecological crisis could be the implementation of climate debt which is a concept incorporating two distinct elements: adaptation debt which represents the compensation owed to the poor for the damages of climate change they have not caused and emissions debt which is compensation owed for their fair share of the atmospheric space they cannot use if climate change is to be stopped. A second initiative could be the implementation of the rights of nature in all the respective constitutions of the sadc member states.

WE ARE LIVING IN AN ALARMING AND CRITICAL TIME FOR HUMAN KIND, ORGANIZED HUMAN SOCIETY AND THE PLANET. JUST A FEW YEARS OF INACTION IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE COULD LOCK IN DANGEROUS CLIMATE CHANGE THAT WOULD BE IRREVERSIBLE FOR THE NEXT TEN THOUSAND YEARS.

SUPPORTED BY



Southern African People's Solidarity Network Secretariat
No 5 Orkney Road, Eastlea, Harare, Zimbabwe
Tel: 263 242 776 830-1 | Website: www.sapsn.org | Email: sapsn@zimcodd.co.zw
Follow us: @SAPSN2003
Facebook Page: Southern African People's Solidarity Network