

2026 SADC PEOPLE'S SUMMIT



**Southern African
People's Solidarity
Network**

Durban, South Africa | 15 August 2026

We, representatives of social movements, community organisations, women, workers, youth, farmers, informal traders, persons with disabilities, faith communities and other civic formations, gathered in Durban for the 2026 **SADC People's Summit** convened by the Southern African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN) under the theme **"The people's SADC: strengthening people's solidarity in a polycrisis of debt, inequality, conflict, extractivism and climate change."**

We meet at a difficult time for Southern Africa. Public debt is constraining development. Inequality and unemployment remain high. Climate shocks are worsening. Conflict and insecurity persist. Civic space is under pressure. Our natural resources continue to generate significant wealth without delivering sufficient benefits to the communities from which they are extracted. We acknowledge growing regional attention to public debt management, domestic resource mobilisation, mineral beneficiation, regional value chains and food security. This is important progress. The challenge now is implementation that produces measurable improvements in people's lives. The Durban Summit therefore places these priority demands before SADC Heads of State and Government:

1. Put people at the centre of public finance.

Public borrowing must be transparent, sustainable and accountable. Major loans and guarantees should face parliamentary and public scrutiny. Governments must protect essential spending on health, education, water and social protection. SADC must also strengthen regional action against illicit financial flows, tax abuse and corruption.

2. Make Southern Africa's mineral wealth work for its people.

Critical minerals must support local beneficiation, regional value chains, decent jobs and industrialisation. Mining contracts and beneficial ownership should be transparent. Communities must participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their land and resources. Resource-backed loans and other arrangements that collateralise strategic natural resources require stronger public oversight.

3. Advance climate justice and protect livelihoods.

SADC must urgently declare and prepare for the 2026/27 El Niño season through early warning, anticipatory action and pre-positioned resources. Climate finance and shock-responsive social protection must reach communities most affected by disasters, with deliberate attention to young women. Extractive industries must be held accountable for climate-related harm, displacement and environmental destruction.

4. Defend dignity, democratic participation and regional citizenship.

SADC leaders must decisively confront xenophobia and Afrophobia and advance a more open, borderless Southern Africa where people can move, work and trade with dignity. Regional integration must protect migrants, informal cross-border traders and vulnerable communities. Women and young people must have meaningful participation in political and economic decision-making.

5. Turn regional commitments into measurable action.

The gap between regional declarations and people's lived realities must narrow. We call for stronger engagement between SADC institutions, the SADC Parliament and organised citizens. SAPSN will advance a **People's Accountability Framework** to track progress on key commitments and People's Summit demands.

6. Put young people at the centre of economic recovery.

SADC must prioritise decent work, living wages, affordable public services, skills development and opportunities for youth-led enterprises. Regional industrialisation and value chains should create meaningful opportunities for young people, not deepen unemployment and migration. Young people must have meaningful representation in economic and political decision-making. Youth demands for jobs, social protection, participation and economic justice must be met with action, not repression.

THE MESSAGE FROM DURBAN

Southern Africa is not poor. It is a region of immense human, agricultural and mineral wealth. The central question is how that wealth is governed, distributed and used.

Regional integration must therefore be judged by its impact on ordinary people: whether it creates decent work, strengthens public services, protects communities, advances gender equality, gives young people a future and enables citizens to participate in decisions that affect their lives. The peoples of Southern Africa are not spectators in regional integration. We are its citizens, workers, producers and communities.

We call upon SADC Heads of State and Government meeting in Durban to translate regional commitments into action that can be seen and felt in communities across our region.

Our work does not end with the Summit. We will continue to organise, engage, build solidarity across borders and hold governments and corporations accountable.

Another Southern Africa is possible.

Viva the Peoples of Southern Africa.

Viva People's Solidarity.

Amandla.

Southern African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN)

On behalf of the Peoples and Social Movements of Southern Africa

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