



STATEMENT BY MS ASANDA LUWACA, EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY TO THE BRICS HEAD OF STATES SUMMIT 2023, SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE

Your excellencies the Heads of State of the BRICS countries

Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Members of the media

Leaders of business, civil society, and labour

Young people

It gives me pleasure to deliver a statement on behalf of young people to this BRICS Heads of State Summit. Young people make up a large proportion of the populations of each of our respective countries. Their voices and views are critical as we forge a post-pandemic society at the highest decision-making forums. I must recognise the efforts of the organisers to ensure that young people are represented at this summit.

Your excellencies, from the 18th – 20th July young people from BRICS countries converged on Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal for the ninth BRICS Youth Summit and the first in person since the pandemic. The Summit was convened under the theme ***“BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism”*** to discuss the current state, and future prospects for the development of youth cooperation in BRICS countries over a wide range of areas.

As we have entered into the ‘Decade of Action’ for SDGs (2021-30), we believe that BRICS countries young people should use their collective strengths to prioritize the ‘development paradigm’, using it as a guiding principle for our work as we continue intra-BRICS cooperation across areas such as trade, education, skills development and training, economic participation and transformation, health and wellbeing, social cohesion.

Your excellencies, young people in their collective believe that young people are the present and are the future and our interactions as BRICS members cannot and should not be limited to an annual summit. At the Summit we presented the draft framework for a BRICS Youth Council which will become the coordinating body for youth development between BRICS member countries and will join formations such as the BRICS Business Council, BRICS Women’s Alliance and the new Development Bank and will be a historic achievement for young people of BRICS countries.

Since the Summit, leaders of youth agencies have met on three occasions to consider the draft framework of the BRICS Youth Council and we are pleased to inform this Summit that we have

reached consensus on the Youth Council. This will allow us to ensure deeper and stronger collaboration amongst young people. We request that this Summit endorses our proposal for the establishment of a BRICS Youth Council in its final declaration.