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CLOSING REMARKS

H.E. Amb. Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council
2017 ECOSOC Youth Forum

“The Role of Youth in Poverty Eradication and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World”

31 January 2017
Trusteeship Council Chamber
United Nations Headquarters, New York

**Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have come to the end of another exciting Youth Forum. Your passion and engagement has energized all of us. We have also been inspired by your optimism and your frank interventions have spurred us into some much needed introspection.

Our discussions during the Forum have proven once more that you have the creative ideas that can help push the 2030 Agenda forward.

Allow me to highlight just a few of the main messages that I heard over the past two days:

- You called for youth involvement in poverty eradication, economic growth, employment and job creation, and stressed the particular interests of marginalized young people, such as young women and girls, young people trapped in conflicts and young refugees.
- You emphasized investment in your education, skills development, including on entrepreneurship, stressing that this should be of high quality and linked to the job market opportunities.



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- You highlighted the importance of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls as necessary for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- You noted the importance of natural resources, and emphasized the role of agricultural systems, the oceans and the marine environment in addressing the economic needs of young people.
- The role of new and innovative technologies as a means to improve access and quality of education and vocational training, and in employment and job creation, in particular in renewable energy sector, was emphasized.
- You made clear calls for resources, from all sources, to promote investment in young people, youth organizations and in sectors that benefit you most.
- You called on your governments to go beyond pledges and begin to plan, implement, and monitor and evaluate programmes that benefit you together with you.
- You underscored the importance of intergenerational dialogue. And you called for better representation, where you can sit together and discuss your issues with governments, the private sector and civil society.
- I have even heard the saying that if you are young enough to vote that you can also run for office. I am sure that many of the Ministers have heard you.
- And we also noted your appreciation for the space provided for you by the ECOSOC Youth Forum. We will do our best to improve the diversity of voices at the Forum and its impact at the global, regional and country levels.

There was, of course, much more – in terms of scope, details and regional specificity. In order to ensure that our work has a lasting impact in the ECOSOC system and in particular at the high-level political forum in July this year, I will do two things.

I intend to issue a Presidential Statement tomorrow, which will capture the key messages and recommendations that emerged from the Forum. In addition, a more detailed summary that captures all the highlights of all of the sessions will also be prepared and shared with you. Both will be transmitted to the ECOSOC High-level Segment and the High-level



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political forum so that your views are heard. I would like to call on all countries that will participate in the high-level political forum to use these messages in their national presentations. I also urge countries to also seriously consider including youth representatives in their delegations.

I would like to call on our young women and men to continue to engage with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Wherever you go, advocate for the SDGs, support their implementation and hold your Governments accountable.

Excellency, Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I conclude, let me take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, the Secretary General's Envoy for Youth, for a very good job as he concludes his tenure. Your tireless efforts have put youth issues at the center in the global sustainable development agenda. We wish you the very best in your next assignment.

Finally, I would like to thank you all –Ministers and representative of governments and civil society as well as you, the youth representatives, for your constructive participation. Special thanks go to our panellists and moderators.

With this, it only remains to wish you all a safe journey back home.
Thank you.