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OPENING REMARKS

**H.E. Mr. 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”

**30 January 2017
Trusteeship Council Chamber
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Your Highness,
Excellency,
Mr. Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth,
Youth representatives,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Welcome to the 2017 Economic and Social Council Youth Forum. Thank you all for coming.

Your presence here today is a sign that you have not given in to despair and cynicism. You recognize that progress is being made, even though not as fast as we would like. Over the past 25 years, extreme poverty has dropped from 40 per cent to under 10 per cent. For those who have been the direct beneficiaries, this has meant more opportunities for better health care, better education and a job.

At the same time, since we met last February, this progress has been questioned. There is a sense of unease and anxiety.

Indeed, 2016 has been characterized by a wave of global discontent. Escalating conflicts have displaced hundreds of thousands of people, preventing young people's efforts to contribute to the creation of stable and prosperous societies. We are reminded every day of the number of young people risking life through treacherous journeys, seeking refuge from war and conflict, often with no end in sight.



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Many young people are also fleeing crises caused by financial dislocations and climate change. These unplanned movements of people combined with other processes associated with globalization are seen as a path to lower wages, a weakening of cultural and religious identities and rising inequality.

Dear Friends,

There is an alternative direction we can take. In 2015, the international community agreed on the new 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Agenda, which you helped to shape, is an ambitious undertaking that will help us safeguard the future of people and planet. It can serve as a blueprint for guiding global action towards the future we want – for current and future generations.

We have 169 targets to be achieved over the next 15 years to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure “shared prosperity” for all by 2030.

We must ensure economic growth is inclusive. It must benefit all parts of society, leaving no one behind, including young women and girls.

We must acknowledge that globalization has not benefited all. The dislocations from globalization, technological advance and integration need to be better addressed. Social safety nets that increase access to food, nutrition and health care can help make globalization more equitable.

We must invest in young people’s education and skills-training to unleash their creativity and innovation. Enhancing the quality of education and training to meet today’s labour market needs must be a priority, particularly as we seek to foster innovation to build resilient infrastructure and sustainable industrialization.

Climate change is the biggest challenge of our times. We must shift the allocation of productive resources towards greener industries. This will require incentives for channeling resources into more sustainable and productive sectors. It would also require specific policy interventions, such as skills development and training. We must pay special attention to conserving the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

As a roadmap, the SDGs allow us to effectively tackle the most urgent challenges of our time. Youth have a special stake in this endeavour. It is your future we are building in implementing the Agenda. This is why we need **you** to play a role in shaping the world **you** will be living in. Increased participation of young people in decision-making at all levels will be key in this path to 2030. This is particularly crucial in countries affected by or emerging





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from conflict. If you are not too young to vote, you are not too young to participate in civic life and in leadership at all levels.

My Friends,

It gives me confidence to see such a diverse group of young people coming together to share our common goals. As young people, you bring something essential to the table: new perspectives. And it is through new ideas and policies that we will make progress. We will listen attentively to you and convey your proposals back to the ECOSOC High-level Segment and the high level political forum.

In conclusion, I call on all of you today to join the Economic and Social Council in supporting the 2030 Agenda. We cannot hope to have shared prosperity without working together. We are all stakeholders in this joint endeavor.

I am eager to hear what you have to say.

Thank you