

Scouting Prepares Youth for Leadership

A message by Dr. Wayne Adrian Davis, Chairperson of the Africa scout Committee, read on his behalf by Victor Atipagah, member of the Africa Scout Committee at the opening ceremony of the 8th Africa Scout Youth Forum on 4th September 2018 at ZESA National Training Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe.

[Salutations]

My dear Scouts, first I apologize that I am not able to be with you during the opening session of the 8th Africa Scout Youth Forum. However, I know that I am well represented by my colleagues and I thought I would share the following message with you.

Theme of the Forum

The theme for this 8th Africa Scout Youth Forum - "Africa Scouting: Building the Foundations for Sustainable Development" – summarizes our desire as Africans to play our part in the achievement of sustainability in everything we do – both within and outside the Scout movement.

To me achieving, such a huge ambition requires great leadership from all of us who have the opportunity to play leadership roles at different levels of our movement and communities. This is why I have chosen to focus my message today on Leadership; and how we as Scouts need to rise up to the occasion to contribute to the attainment of the global sustainable development agenda.

Leadership and Scouting

Apart from being the largest educational youth movement, Scouting, has been billed as the world's largest leadership training academy for young people. This couldn't be far from the reality. The movement has over the years churned out into the world young men and women who have gone on to influence positive change in the families, communities, organizations, businesses, politics and many other spheres of life.

In the words of Robin Sharma, "*Leadership is not about a title or a designation. It's about impact, influence and inspiration.*" This words hold significant truth to me. In my understanding, Leadership is about the four I's:

Impact: Scouting is more than games and play. It is about getting the job done! The job of transforming self, others and our community. It is about creating a better world. We can't create a better world without putting time, labor and sweat in everything that we do.

When we come to **influence**, our founder and those who followed his vision to bring Scouting to us in this generation have laid a strong foundation in establishing the name, brand and the true influence of the movement. It is then, our responsibility to maintain that influence and fulfill our common vision of ensuring that our movement is earth's leading educational youth movement.

However, we cannot do this without the third I which is **innovation**. They say in Amharic that "*no one has ploughed his land using the memory of his grandfather's spade.*" What worked 50 years ago has no guarantee to be as effective today in this generation as the wants, needs and aspirations of young people have evolved and changed. This requires us to be innovators of better ways to disseminate the message and influence of Scouting in today's reality.

We need to find ways for our movement to answer young people's questions, that is why we insist on the involvement and engagement of young people at all levels of leadership in our movement. The youth are great innovators. With your innovation and vision and with your older brothers' and sisters' wisdom and experience we can take leadership in Scouting to the next level.

The culmination of all the above brings me to the last I in leadership, **Inspiration**: the Merriam- Webster dictionary defines inspiration as *the action or power to move the intellect or emotions*. If we are to inspire others we need to possess that power to move people. If the message of inspiration is to "*create a better world*" then how we live a sustainable, balanced life will inspire others to follow our actions which in turn creates a better world.

Our theme, Africa Scouting: Building the Foundations for Sustainable Development is a message that can inspire us and other to come together and create a better world through sustainability and this more than words is demonstrated by action. What do we Scouts do to lay the foundations of sustainable living? Our levity, the way we do things, how we handle issues we stand for are to inspire, influence and impact others. That will show our leadership.

Today, all of you seated here are part of a global social force for good. You are here by virtue of being representatives of your peers back home – that already is a leadership responsibility. The many lessons you learn over the period of this Youth Forum and the many other experiences surrounding it are designed to prepare you to effectively take up leadership responsibilities in your National Scout Organizations (NSOs) - for the sustainability of Scouting; and in your Communities – for the sustainability of our world.

The opportunities Scouting provides young people to learn and lead are not only experiential but are by far more likely to inculcate skills that will stay with you for the rest of your lives. Make the most out of them. And please, don't take them for granted.

Entrenching Sustainability in all we do

When it comes to ensuring sustainability in everything we do, as Scouts we need to be at the forefront. From the way we run our Scout camps, the community service activities and projects we undertake, the kind of lifestyles we live and the consumption practices and habits we adopt – all need to be consciously thought about. We should always ask ourselves, as Baden Powell asked of, "*Does it make the world a better place?*"

Back in our National Scout Organizations, young people hold the key to better Scouting today and in the future. I urge you to support and contribute to all efforts to ensure our NSOs have in place proper systems to guarantee the future of

Scouting, one hundred or more years to come. Take the lessons of this youth forum and apply them to help grow and develop Scouting in your communities and countries. We cannot achieve our WOSM Vision 2023 of impacting over 100 million young people without your support.

Call to Action – Discover the Leader in You

And do not forget about yourselves. Leadership begins from within. Try reinvent yourselves in every opportunity to become better. How you manage your life with regards to matters like health, career, family (for those who are married or when you will get married) your relationships with others and so on – all call for certain leadership qualities. I have no doubt that Scouting continues to prepare you well to take up these responsibilities. Fulfill them in the best way you possibly can; and always remember to be of service to others as well. Look deep within yourself and discover the leader in you.

For us to live in a way that guarantees the future of those coming after us, requires a collective effort – something that is highly exhibited by young people. I therefore challenge you today to take advantage of your preparedness as Scouts and your skills to contribute to creating a better world. And tag along your friends by encouraging them to become Scouts, so that with more of us we can live this world a better place.

Conclusion

Finally, my dear young people, Baden Powell once said, *"A Scout is never taken by surprise. S/He knows what to do when something unexpected happens."* These words which are also inscribed in the Messengers of Peace Heroes Award Trophy presented by World Scouting to outstanding young people, some of the former recipients of whom are here with us today, remind us of how we have been taught and prepared for life by Scouting. May they always inspire you as you strive for greater leadership in ensuring you play your part in leaving this world a better place.

I hope to see in a very short while most of you doing your best to serve and demonstrate your preparedness to life. Also contributing through your lives and your Scouting to the creation of a sustainable better world.

I wish you successful deliberations at the 8th Africa Scout Youth Forum and eagerly look forward to receiving the recommendations you will bring to the 17th Africa Scout Conference which kicks-off immediately after your forum ends. God bless you!

Dr. Wayne Adrian Davis
Chairperson
Africa Scout Committee

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