

AFRICA REGIONAL DIRECTOR TO 8TH AFRICA SCOUT YOUTH FORUM

Harare, Zimbabwe: 4 September 2018

“Scouting is a Safe Space for Young People”

Dear Chief Guest,
Dear friends representing our partners—all protocols observed,
Dear friends, Scout leaders and Scouts, in your respective capacities,

I greet you all in the name of Scouting!

Allow me to recognize the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe for the support extended to Scouting, in particular in the organization of this 8th Africa Scout Youth Forum and other regional Scout events taking place here in Harare.

Let me also recognize those from the Scout Association of Zimbabwe who have gone out of their way to support these events—some of whom, for various reasons, are not at this opening ceremony.

Let me also recognize and thank all of you gathered here for the 8th Africa Scout Youth Forum. As it has been mentioned severally, this is an opportunity for you to consider your engagement as young leaders and to devise ways of having a positive impact on your personal lives and in the lives of those you get in touch with.

Since this event is mostly for you, young people, let me focus on your place in our movement and the world at large.

Building on 2018 International Youth Day 2018 Theme: Safe Spaces for Youth

On 12 August every year, the world celebrates the International Youth Day—a day dedicated to promoting youth engagement and empowerment and to highlighting the successes and challenges of young people across the world

This year’s International Youth Day was organized under the banner “**Safe Spaces for Youth**”, with particular focus on facilitating dialogue on safe spaces between governments, UN agencies, academia, civil society, and—most importantly—youth groups, with the goal of offering practical solutions to the challenges of creating youth-friendly spaces.

By exploring the role of safe spaces in contributing to freedom of expression, mutual respect and constructive dialogue, the discussions centered on four major topics: civic spaces, public spaces, digital spaces, and youth-friendly physical spaces.

This provides a good background for the consideration of the importance of Scouting.

Scout Movement and Safe Spaces for Young People

Scouting is a movement committed to the education and empowerment of young people to enable them realize their full potentials in life and to be of service to their communities. With young people at the centre of everything Scouting is about, ensuring that there are safe spaces for them to express themselves freely and engage in constructive dialogue is priority for the movement.

This Youth Forum for instance, is one of the safe spaces that Scouting provides young people. Over the three days you will be here together you will have the opportunity to discuss different topics, share lots of experiences, challenge one another, elect your own representatives and make recommendations for the 17th Africa Scout Conference to consider.

All these give you the opportunity to become part of the solution to the kind of space you wish Scouting to become for you and the millions of other young people you represent. In doing, the adults you see around will only stand behind you and support you in delivering the entire event – a testament to the fact that Scouting is really about young people and adults are only there to guide and support.

Our global educational programmes and initiatives under the Better World Framework, world, regional, national and local Scout events among others are other spaces for you to learn and develop skills that will be useful in your lives. I cannot forget to mention our Safe From Harm Policy which seeks to ensure that every learning opportunity the Scouts and other young people are exposed to

does not pose any kind of threat to them; and that the adults in-charge are accountable for the responsibility they have to ensure the safety and security of the young people.

Scouting and Sustainability

The theme of this 8th Africa Scout Youth Forum "Africa Scouting: Building Foundations for Sustainable Development" call upon all of us to strive towards ensuring sustainability in everything we do. In saying this, let us not only look at sustainability from the point of view of the Sustainable Development Goals, but more broadly in the way we live and do things – including making sure Scouting is safe and accessible to many more young people, in line with our Vision 2023.

Our contributions, as Scouts, to the Sustainable Development Goals is one way of working towards a sustainable world. The community service initiatives you implement at community level are a good entry point for spreading the sustainability message among your peers and families.

I would also urge you to deeply reflect about and make recommendations on how we can make Scouting more sustainable, considering the aspects of quantitative and qualitative growth, financial stability, governance and an attractive, engaging and challenging youth programme.

Our Commitment to Ensuring a Safe Environment

Despite the many challenges faced by both young people, our movement and the world today, we have made significant strides to ensure that Scouting is indeed a safe space for young people. We count on you to sustain this progress as we stride to do even more.

As a movement, we remain committed to continuously developing and implementing policies and programmes that ensure the millions of young people who join Scouting have a fulfilling experience. By innovating the way we do things, we hope to attract and retain more adult volunteers who will help us ensure that Scouting is available to as many more as possible diverse groups of young people in safe and secure environments.

Call to Action – Occupy the Space and Use it to do Good

I would like to finish by urging you to maximize the opportunities provided by Scouting to acquire skills and knowledge for service to God, others and self – just as the Scout Promise suggests to us. As young people, you need to occupy these safe spaces provided by the movement and use them to do good.

As ambassadors of Scout values, I invite you to become facilitators of dialogue for peaceful world. I invite you to become champions of change in your communities and help us grow our movement for social good to ensure that many more young people benefit from what Scouting has to offer. And finally, I invite you to become leaders of sustainability – by everything you do, may you inspire others to live with the future in mind.

Thank you and God bless you.

Frederic Tutu Kama-Kama
Regional Director
Africa Scout Region