



Media release
For immediate release
Thursday, 10 June 2010

Research Report Calls for Better Investment in Young People in Southern Africa

The Southern Africa Trust will launch a new report, **Ending the Age of the Marginal Majority** at 18h00 on 20 July 2010 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The launch will take place during a “Critical Thinking Forum” public dialogue in partnership with the Mail & Guardian newspaper and the Trust’s youth-focused partner organisations, including a panel of representatives of youth organisations, government officials, researchers, and the public in general.

Southern Africa is predominantly made up of a young population, yet we are not investing enough in young people. To curb the growing marginalisation of youth, the research report highlights a number of recommendations that include having a regional youth policy that addresses youth issues as integrated and mainstream concerns.

One of the motivations for the research that was undertaken in five countries including the DRC, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe to produce the report, is to move away from the stigmatisation of young people as perpetrators of crime, as is often suggested in literature on the topic. Rather, the study presents a more holistic analysis of young people in southern Africa.

The report calls for investment in extra-curricular activities such as sports, arts, cultural activities and service opportunities to enable young people to actively explore their assets as well as their own potential.

It also calls for policies dealing with young people to prioritise the development of young people through education, skills training, livelihoods development and civic engagement.

The research that went into the report took an asset-based approach to youth resilience in the face of the many social, economic, political, and environmental challenges facing young people, as a contribution to the discourse on youth and violence.

Head of programmes at the Southern Africa Trust, Dr Themba Mhlongo says, “This report is a first of its kind, serving as a starting point for an understanding of youth violence and its contributing factors in southern Africa from a regional perspective. A full appreciation of the drivers and the extent of youth violence are necessary to develop a regional policy framework on youth and to identify possible interventions.”

Key forms of violence that seem to be common across the countries profiled in the report are domestic and sexual violence, violence located at schools such as bullying, political and systemic forms of violence.

The conceptual framework emerging from the research seeks to address the broad developmental interventions required to build the resilience of young people to violence and crime, as well as to

address the contextually bound factors that increase the vulnerability of young people who are at risk of falling into social dislocation and exclusion.

The report affirms that social problems relating to youth and violence should receive the same attention on the public agenda as do other issues such as HIV and AIDS.

The Southern Africa Trust is an independent non-profit agency that supports deeper and wider regional engagement to overcome poverty in southern Africa.

Members of the media are invited to attend the launch. Venue to be confirmed.

<ENDS>

For more information, please contact:

Ms. Mpho Kgosidintsi

Tel: +27 11 318 1012

Mobile: +27 78 459 0152

Email: communications@southernafricatrust.org