



**Media release
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Launch of the Southern Africa Youth Exchange Programme in Maputo

An exciting new Southern Africa youth exchange programme, *sayXchange*, launches in Maputo, Mozambique, on Tuesday, 23 February 2010. The *sayXchange* launch will start at 18h00 at the Pestana Rovuma Hotel, Rua da Se 114, Maputo. Members of the media are invited to attend.

Mrs Graça Machel, earlier launched the programme aimed at young people aged between 18 and 25 years old, in Johannesburg, South Africa. Mrs Machel urged young people to embrace their regional identity and to cultivate a deep self-knowledge as southern Africans.

"Mutual acceptance rather than tolerance is necessary to make us strong and enable us to share a common future and destiny in the region," she said. The *sayXchange* programme nurtures a regional development perspective amongst future leaders by promoting civic participation amongst young people. It also aims to build bridges between communities and promote intercultural understanding amongst young people in southern Africa.

Machel recalled the xenophobic attacks in 2008 on migrants living in South Africa and said poverty and deprivation of basic needs can dehumanize even the nicest of people. "We should never push our people to a point where they have to struggle for survival," she said.

Neville Gabriel, Executive Director at the Southern Africa Trust, encouraged people to nominate participants for the programme, or offer to host young people on exchange. "*SayXchange* provides a tremendous opportunity to develop leadership potential in young people with a sound regional understanding," he said.

Southern Africa Trust's *Change4ever* Ambassador and songstress Unathi, officiated at the launch which was attended by over 90 civil society leaders, media and young people from southern African regional youth organizations. The *sayXchange* youth programme was developed by the Southern Africa Trust in collaboration with AFS Interculture South Africa.

AFS Interculture is an international, volunteer-based, non-governmental, non-for-profit organisation, that provides intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world.

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

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