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2004/034502/0855

#### **PRESS RELEASE**

55 Empire Park Offices Parktown, Johannesburg, Youth for Solidarity Movement (Movement) in South Africa hereby announces the Southern African (Regional) Youth Hearing that will be held at the Kliptown/Walter Sisulu Square in Soweto on the 28th November 2008.

**At this hearing the largest collected (40,000) youth concerns report from six Southern African countries including South Africa, will be presented to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) chair by more than 1300 young people from South Africa and five SADC countries.**

The event is expected to be attended by SADC chair –President of South Africa, Hon. Mr Kgalema Motlanthe (*invited*). Johannesburg mayor and Gauteng premier's offices are expected to attend this exciting event.

The Movement has collected more than 40,000 youth concerns from six Southern African countries, namely Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The concerns were collected to inform policy makers on the current issues affecting the youth.

To date 6 participating countries have held successful hearings. The countries that have had hearings managed to bring together more than 5000 youth and different Ministries to discuss some of the pressing issues affecting the youth- this allowed youth to speak. The hearings at the different countries managed to bring youth issues to at least 13 million people from Southern Africa through the media. In Zimbabwe, the national hearing was broadcast live on ZBC which commands more than 7 million viewers. In South Africa, the Daily Sun with more than 1.2 million readers per day wrote and published the article on the hearing.

The regional hearing consolidates all the national hearings from the six countries. The theme is **"United for a better life"** The movement feels that issues of youth have been sidelined for a long time and those that speak on behalf of the youth frequently fail them, hence the movement has taken a decision to amass youth concerns and allow youth to be their own voice. The slogan is **"Listen!"** The regional hearing will afford youth the platform to speak and to be heard and decision makers will be offered the opportunity to **listen**.

We are **elated** about this activity and *we can't wait for the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008. The program for the day will begin with a 1.3km walk to Kliptown Hall at 10h00 and a formal program is expected to end at 16h00.*

Youth for Solidarity Movement is a lobby group recognized by young people in Southern Africa. The Movement was established from the realization of the existing gaps within the SADC and AU processes. The main idea for the movement is to ensure that young people from Southern Africa pay solidarity to each other in order to better their lives. The movement consists of more than 100 youth organizations including, 21 from South Africa.

For more information

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