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**Press statement**

**11th March, 2019**

### **Developmental Policies and Priorities have left the Youth Behind**

Zambia will join the rest of the world in commemorating the Youth Day on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2019. This year's theme has been dubbed "Zambian Youth; Generation Unlimited". By coming up with this theme, the government seems to recognise the fact that the youth in Zambia have a great potential to contribute to the development of this country.

It is however, worth noting that as the country commemorates this year's Youth Day, the Zambian youth faces numerous challenges. These include; high unemployment, limited opportunity to access and attain tertiary education and to participate in decision-making processes. Current youth unemployment levels have been estimated in the range of 10.5 to 15.4 percent. The numbers of students that progress from junior secondary school level of education to higher secondary school level has remained low, estimated at 50 percent. The foregoing situation and other challenges the youth continues to face has robbed the majority of them an opportunity to contribute to the social and economic development of the country. This is primarily because the current development policies and their implementation have failed to contribute positively to addressing the needs of the Zambian youth.

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, JCTR, is therefore of the view that the Government and other players in development must carry out self-introspection to establish and urgently address the cause of youth unproductivity, marginalization and despondency. The current situation should not be allowed to continue and to be viewed as normal as it has and continues to deprive our youth an opportunity to live fulfilled and dignified human existence where they are able to realise their full potential in life and to contribute constructively to the society and to national development. The negative consequences have been immense. These include; subjecting the youth to living in unsuitable conditions, limiting their ability to afford adequate income to enable them afford basic needs and to fully, actively and consciously participate in decision making.

As we commemorate this year's Youth Day, JCTR urges the government to take stock of its development policies to ensure that it prioritizes investment in youth development and economic empowerment. JCTR is of the view that one of the ways of addressing the needs of the youth in this country is by stopping rampant mismanagement of public funds to avoid wastage and to channel such resources towards job creation. Further, JCTR calls upon the general citizenry, especially the youth to actively get involved in holding the government and other duty bearers accountable.

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)

JCTR Repository

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Statements

Advocacy on Socio-Economic Development

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