



ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES (AACC) CONFERENCE DES EGLISES DE TOUTE L'AFRIQUE (CETA)

AACC-CETA

General Secretariat (HQ): P. O. Box 14205, 00800 Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya

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February 19, 2021

All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Youth Forum Statement on Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020

Preamble

We are youth representatives from across Africa under the leadership of the All Africa Conference Churches (AACC). We have committed ourselves to engaging with the “*Silencing the Guns Initiative of the African Union*” under the longer-term vision of a secure and peaceful Africa. **We are key agents of peace.**

Inspiration

We draw inspiration from these words from the founding years of the AACC:

“The continent of Africa will see unparalleled events and changes during the rest of this century, welcomed by some feared by others. We pray that the [Faith Community] of Africa will play its role as champion, teacher, counsellor and shepherd during these crucial years. We are humbly aware of our responsibilities to God and to this continent, and dedicate ourselves anew to their performance, trusting that we shall be led and supported by [people of faith] throughout Africa and the rest of the world...”

Our Vision of the Africa we want

We take pride in Africa our home, our future.

We dream of a **prosperous and dignified** Africa where youth are actively engaged in decision making processes; an Africa that is **united** - embraces all Africans without discrimination based on political opinion or affiliation, ethnicity, nationality and religion; where the rule of law is entrenched in constitutions and upheld. We dream of an Africa that experiences and **enjoys sustainable peace** – free of violent conflicts where African nations maintain peace and are my *brothers and sisters keeper*.

PRESIDENT: Rt. Rev. Arnold C. Temple • GENERAL SECRETARY: Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki

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We dream of an Africa that protects **human dignity**, where youth potential is realized with access to employment and can render entrepreneurial skills; and where safe freedom of movement across all countries on the continent is enhanced;

We strongly believe the following values are essential to realize this vision

- An Africa that has love for humanity;
- An Africa that is self-reliant and takes care of its own destiny;
- An Africa that self-accepts including embracing its diversities;
- An Africa that upholds good governance, including rule of law.

We note the progress made by the AU in implementation of the Road Map to Silencing the guns, notably:

- The establishment of the “Africa Amnesty Month” initiative in 2017 that has helped reduce the flows of illicit arms and light weapons.
- The October 2017 appointment of Ambassador Ramatane Lamamra of Algeria as the AU Special Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 with the mandate to “galvanize support towards ending violence and sustaining peace on the continent”;
- The establishment of the Silencing the Guns Unit (SGU) within the Bureau of the AUC Chairperson which has developed an action plan for fast tracking the silencing the guns programme and prioritize and coordinate actions and interventions;
- Recognition and inclusion of women and youth UNSCR 1325 / 2250 – implementation in peace & security initiatives.
- Efforts to streamline the AU institutional structure and improve efficiency through the AU Institutional Reforms process;
- The 2016 appointment of Donald Kaberuka of Rwanda as the AU Special Representative for the Peace Fund has given impetus to the revitalization and full operationalization of the Peace Fund;
- In July 2016, AU member states committed to implement a 0.2% levy on eligible imports and remit the revenue to the AU. An increasing number of AU member states are implementing this commitment;
- Since 2016, there has been unprecedented contributions to the Peace Fund. By November 2019, 50 AU members had contributed \$131 million, representing the

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- highest member states' contributions to the Peace Fund since it was established in 1993.

However, we call on the AU Heads of States:

1. **To stand up to their commitment to silence the guns by 2020;**
2. To ensure political tolerance, good governance and rule of law;
3. To hold Member States accountable in upholding civil liberties, especially the right to information and freedom of expression and political affiliation during election periods.
4. To inculcate the values for humanity and natural law /philanthropy;
5. To implement agreements and commitments adopted by the AU including those that relate to youth, peace and security;
6. To invest in the diversity of African culture and values; and celebrate our cultural identity and diversities, common heritage, shared values and ethics;
7. To make financial resources accessible in order to support and promote youth-led peace initiatives and development;
8. To be good stewards of the abundant African natural resources for the benefit, sustainability and enjoyment of all Africans;
9. To propose and apply sanctions against corrupt state leaders towards deterring the illicit financial flows that continue to fuel armed conflict and perennially destabilize the state of economies.
10. To implement the AU Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child towards abolishing; mining and extraction related to child labour and slavery, recruitment of child soldiers and disruption of children's education by rebel groups.

Our commitments

In our work to achieve our vision of - **the Africa we want** - we commit to:

- **Hold duty bearers to account on their commitments on peace and security, including silencing the guns by 2020;**
- Be patriotic to our continent and to promote African indigenous values of *Ubuntu*;
- Work collaboratively towards debunking the following myths about Young People in Africa;

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- That bulging youth populations present an increased risk of violence;
 - That young migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are potential threats to host societies and a drain on social services;
 - That young men and women are drawn to join violent extremist groups simply because they are unemployed and uneducated.
- Research on, disseminate and raise awareness on binding agreements / conventions in existence relating to youth – peace and security;
 - Scale up on the existing initiatives on peacebuilding, and to identify and replicate best models of peacebuilding;
 - Coordinate, cooperate and partner with other likeminded institutions and stakeholders to support local and regional peace building initiatives;
 - Promote African alternative dispute resolution mechanisms; and
 - Organise youth interfaith dialogues, intergenerational dialogues and involve our communities.

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