I. INTRODUCTION

African Member States have spearheaded the African Union’s (AU) Initiative on Silencing the Guns (STG) in Africa. In May 2013, on the OAU/AU 50th Anniversary Summit, AU Heads of State and Government undertook a Solemn Declaration, “not to bequeath the burden of conflict to the next generation of Africans and undertake to end all wars by 2020.” In 2013, they adopted Agenda 2063 for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, which includes “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020” as one of its flagship initiatives. Further, in 2017, the Solemn Declaration was operationalized when the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) adopted the Master Roadmap (AUMR) of Practical Steps to silencing guns by 2020. Endorsed by the Assembly of Heads of State, the AUMR recognizes that, beyond the ongoing political and military efforts, there is a need for structural interventions in the area of socio-economic development, to allow for issues of governance, youth and women, employment and education, climate change, and other pertinent factors to be considered in the efforts to silence the guns in Africa.

AFRICAN UNION MASTER ROADMAP OF PRACTICAL STEPS TO SILENCE THE GUNS IN AFRICA

The AU PSC developed a set of detailed objectives to guide Member States towards achieving the STG goal. In this regard, the AUMR outlined the guidelines for grappling with an extensive array of political, social, economic, environmental and legal factors which have been identified as contributors to conflict or impediments to action, ranging from poverty and environmental degradation, to illicit arms trafficking, to cyber-crimes and threats, and the erosion of democracy. The AU contends that if there is effective implementation of the AUMR then one of the grand outputs should be that the youth are socially and economically empowered. To this end, the roadmap calls for the private sector in Africa to contribute towards the creation of employment opportunities, particularly for the African youth.

II. ACTIONS BY THE AU SPECIAL ENVOY ON YOUTH ON STGs

The AU Office of the Youth Envoy (OYE) activities has leveraged on the consideration of 2020 as a pivotal year for the actualization of “Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive conditions for Africa’s Development” to pioneer the ‘Youth Silencing The Guns Campaign’ which was launched by the AU 24th July 2020 with Commissioner of Peace and Security. The main aim of the campaign is to provide a platform to mobilize the development and support of key actions that must be undertaken by youth to fast track the implementation of the STG Agenda in Africa.
As a part of this campaign, ‘The Youth Silencing the Guns Inter-Generational Dialogues’ was launched virtually on August 27, 2020. Six virtual regional Inter-generational Dialogues (IGD) were held as follows:

- **West Africa Youth Silencing the Guns IGD**
  - August 27, 2020
- **Africa Youth Silencing the Guns IGD**
  - September 01, 2020
- **Central Africa Youth Silencing the Guns IGD**
  - September 03, 2020
- **North Africa Youth Silencing the Guns IGD**
  - September 08, 2020
- **Southern Africa Youth Silencing the Guns IGD**
  - September 10, 2020
- **Diaspora Youth Silencing the Guns IGD**
  - September 15, 2020

The purpose of these IGDs was to solicit youth perspectives on the challenges they face, as well as their aspirations towards STG in Africa. Guided by the IGD Toolkit, it was organized by AU Office of the Youth Envoy in partnership with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, the Kofi Annan Foundation, There is No Limit Foundation, One Young World, Southern Africa Youth Forum, East Africa Community Youth Ambassadors Platform, Citoyens Sans Frontière, YALI-Congo, Atlas for Development and International Center for Diplomacy.

The IGDs had the participation of more than 1800 participants out of 5115 registrations drawn from youth organizations and networks, artists, peacebuilders, African Youth Front on Coronavirus members, AU Youth Advisory Council, African Youth Ambassadors of Peace as well as the wider civil society, AUC commissioners and departments, Regional Economic Communities, the United Nations, international organizations, academia, centers of excellence, member states through ministers, parliamentarians, ambassadors and diplomats and other stakeholders.

This included from the African Union Commission, H.E. Ambassador Fatima Mohammed (Permanent Observer Mission of the AU to the UN), Sarah Mbi Enow Anyang Agbor (Commissioner of HRST), Mme, Nyaradzai Gumbezvanda (AU Goodwill Ambassador for Ending Child Marriages), H.E. Amani Abou-Zeid (Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy), H.E. Cessouma Minata Samate (Commissioner of Political Affairs), Dr Solomon Dersso (Chairperson, African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights), H.E. Albert M. Muchanga (Commissioner of Trade and Industry).


From Member States, H.E Ambassador Xolisa Mabhongo (South Africa Permanent Mission to the UN), H.E. Sibongiseni Dlamini Mntambo (High Commissioner of South Africa to Canada), H.E. Jamila Debech Kssikss (Member of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People of Tunisia), H.E. Walaa Issam ElBoushi (Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of Sudan), Dr. Albino Bol Dhiue (Hon. Minister of Youth and Sports of South Sudan).
The intergenerational dialogues reached over **7.6 million** youth over several virtual platforms using hashtag **#AfricaYouthLead** and **#100IGD** and since the 33rd Ordinary Summit, the overall reach for Youth Silencing the Guns campaign is over **48 million youth**

Each Dialogue had a consultation component to ensure bottom up approach in harvesting the views of young people, through five breakout sessions with average of 20 participants per session in focused group discussion:

1. Free- conflict Africa
2. Silencing Youth Unemployment, Poverty & Hunger
3. Silencing Gender Based Violence
4. Silencing Corruption
5. Silencing Climate Crisis

Based on each region’s priorities, the polls we implemented provided the following findings:

The polls were conducted on a region-specific basis under the five thematic priorities. The first component of the poll questioned whether participants were aware of the Youth Silencing the Guns (STG) initiative before participating in the actual dialogues. The second component of the poll requested participants to select among the five key thematic priorities, in terms of most important and as a top priority to the participants.
Across all six regions of Africa, with the African Diaspora being considered the 6th region of Africa, 806 people were cumulatively polled on whether they had knowledge of the Youth STG initiative before this dialogue, 586 (73%) replied yes, while 217 (27%) replied no. Further, 1,049 participants were cumulatively polled, with a common trend identified amongst all regions, including the Diaspora, is that the “silencing youth unemployment, poverty and hunger” is the top priority of participants to the polls. This was followed by silencing corruption and silencing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are also of particular importance to participants. “Silencing corruption” being the second highest priority in Southern Africa, North Africa, and East Africa. In West Africa, the Silencing of GBV was the second highest priority cited from the polling, and in Central Africa and the Diaspora, achieving a “conflict free Africa”, was the second highest priority.
III. IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT UNDER THE AFRIAN UNION OFFICE OF THE YOUTH ENVOY

The AU Youth Envoy has positioned the youth, peace and development agenda as central to her advocacy. The Envoy has therefore undertaken interventions that have ensured youth participation and empowerment through the following engagements:

- Developed and Launched game-changer 2019/20 Action Plan which involved 1000+ feedback submissions from both online and offline six months consultations; click
- Contributed to 2019 AU Theme of the Year through a Solidarity mission to South Sudan and Internally Displaced Persons at POC 3 Equatorial State in Juba (Report) click
- May 2019, Advocacy during the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa; click
- July 2019, Convened with Silencing the Guns (STG) Unit on the margins of the Africa Regional High-level conference on Counter-Terrorism and the Prevention of Violent Extremism as side event on the role of youth in STG (Statement); click
- August 2019, Convened youth conference on “Young People Reimagining Today’s Politics” producing an anthology on youth contribution to peace and governance (Report); click
- October 2019, briefed UN Security Council on African youth mobilizing for silencing the guns (Statement); click
- November 2019, briefed AU Peace and Security Council and inaugurated the five regional African Youth Peace Ambassadors (Statement); click
- 2019, Supported AU Peace and Security Department’s regional consultations which produced a study on the ‘Roles and Contributions of the Youth to Peace and Security in Africa’, and helped finalize the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security; click
- December 2019, Organized OYE Communications Workshop which resulted in the development of Youth Silencing the Guns campaign; click
- December 2019, Advocacy during the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development; click
- January 2020, pioneered the “Virtual AU Youth Summit on Silencing the Guns”; click
- February 2020, advocacy during 33rd AU Summit and Outfit Design Challenge for young fashion designers on the theme of the year; click
- May 2020, convened Intergenerational Dialogue on Co-Leadership in Silencing the Guns (Webinar); click
- June 2020, efforts led to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopting the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security; click
- July 2020, launched first ever African Union Sauti Blog and publication; click
IV. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key observations and recommendations from the six virtual IGDs have, are reflected herewith, and they are categorized under five thematic areas: Youth Inclusion and Co-leadership in Governance, Youth Leadership and Capacity Development, Youth Livelihoods, Strengthened Understanding of ‘Silencing the Guns’ Challenges, and Enhanced Implementation of ‘Silencing the Guns’ Programmes.

A YOUTH INCLUSION AND CO-LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNANCE

Various frameworks that have been adopted on the continent point to proactively transforming the narrative about youth and their role in Africa from “avengers and perpetrators of violence” to “partners, leaders and benefactors of peace and security”. The following recommendations are aligned to this narrative.

Inter-generational Dialogues (IGDs) that involve representatives of the youth, past and current leaders, must be regularly convened on important issues concerning peace, stability and development in Africa.

Lack of collaboration between different generations of leaders and the youth has resulted in a “generational gap/crisis” characterized by mistrust. IGDs can help address this crisis by giving youth a platform to interface with their leaders, eventually resulting in the co-creation of policies and intergenerational co-leadership. Moreover, inclusivity is key for peace-processes and peacebuilding initiatives to succeed. This is particularly important in countries that are vulnerable to violence and where the majority of the population consists of the youth. Including the African and diaspora youth in these dialogues can also help bring in fresh perspectives.

Robust processes should be implemented to ensure that youth from rural communities are actively engaged as partners and contributors to policy-making.

Violent conflict and other natural and/or man-made calamities disproportionately affect rural Africa. However, youth engagement from these rural communities, regarding policymaking is low compared to those from urban centres.

Youth-centred policies of governments also tend to focus heavily on the urban youth as beneficiaries. This inequity must be urgently addressed to ensure sustainable holistic development.

Mechanisms need to be established to ensure that information about ‘Silencing the Guns’ and other existing policies on the youth agenda reach all sections of the youth (especially those in rural and conflict-affected areas).

While attractive youth-centred policies might exist in some African nations, not all sections of the youth, especially those in rural and conflict-affected areas, are aware of these. This prevents them from capitalizing on the benefits that would accrue and hence decreases the overall effectiveness of the policies, even if they are well designed and implemented. Moreover, many young people, especially those in rural and conflict-related areas, have the talent, experience and passion required to contribute to violence prevention and conflict resolution. However, they do not have access to the necessary information and resources about the STG agenda that could propel them into action.
Building on existing mechanisms, a robust and agile networking framework must be established to connect youth organizations, youth volunteers, government agencies and established Civil Society Organizations working on high-impact issues around the “Silencing the Guns” Agenda in Africa.

A Pan-African networking platform, designed with the objective of revitalizing youth-led initiatives will go a long way in addressing two main issues. First, youth-led initiatives face difficulty in finding well-established organizations (government-run and civil-society) that are willing to partner and cooperate with them. This is primarily due to organizations not trusting youth-led initiatives because of their lack of experience and possible misconceptions about their real motives. Secondly, there are many youth-led initiatives in Africa that could benefit from collaborations across regions through resource and knowledge-sharing.

Evidence-based, measurable steps must be taken to incorporate youth in peace-processes, peacebuilding programmes and other development initiatives in the spirit of making intergenerational co-leadership a reality.

There is overwhelming evidence that peacebuilding initiatives and peace processes that are not inclusive are unsustainable. Key policy frameworks like the African Youth Charter, the Continental Framework of Youth, Peace and Security and the Agenda 2063 clearly point to such youth-inclusive processes.

The AUMR clearly emphasizes the need for the youth to be active participants in political, economic, social, environmental and legal policy issues. The steps laid out in the plan with respect to youth inclusion must be steadfastly implemented with the clear aim of youth being at the forefront of this campaign’s leadership.

The Diaspora youth must be actively engaged towards furthering the ‘Silencing the Guns’ agenda through innovative outreach programmes.

The Diaspora Youth community has the passion, skills and resources to significantly contribute towards the continent’s STG agenda. This rich untapped potential must be effectively harnessed through innovative outreach and engagement.

Regional and national mechanisms must be established with the main focus of mitigating corruption across the continent. This must include processes that allow youth to voice their concerns and contribute ideas.

Corruption is a widespread issue across the continent and ultimately acts as an impediment to the success of ‘Silencing the Guns’ agenda. Strategic interventions that address the root causes of corruption need to be designed. It is important that this includes a robust youth component.
The leadership capacity of the youth in Africa need to be enhanced by (1) training them in issue-specific expertise (particularly mediation and negotiations) as well as leadership skills, (2) providing them with the relevant networks for mentoring, and (3) giving them opportunities to serve in policy-making and other decision-making roles.

To make intergenerational co-leadership an effective reality in Africa, tangible measures with a long-term vision need to be elaborated to ensure excellence in youth leadership. There is no dearth of proactivity and talent among the African youth. African youth are disproportionately affected by the peace and development challenges, and as such, they also understand the challenges well. Rigorous leadership capacity-development along with hands-on decision-making experience can make them effective leaders.

Programmes to encourage, incentivize and build the capacity of the youth to pursue non-violent means of advocacy must be designed and implemented. This should include integration of peace education modules in middle and high-school curricula.

The youth in Africa are disproportionately attracted to pursuing violent strategies to fulfill their needs and aspirations. Programmes that incorporate youth into an adaptive process of non-violent communication and advocacy can be significant in furthering the ‘Silencing the Guns’ agenda.

Such initiatives have shown different levels of success in countries like Democratic Republic of the Congo. Moreover, education can play a key role in helping young people build a worldview that embraces non-violence and pan-africanism. Through peace education at the school-level, students can be trained to effectively deal with root-causes and systemic factors that drive the youth to take up arms. Community-level youth leaders must be identified and given the resources to engage, organize and mobilize so that they can locally address high-impact issues around the “Silencing the Guns” Agenda.

Programmes that address COVID-19 pandemic-related challenges must be designed with a prominent youth-leadership component.

Several studies have shown the disastrous socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the youth population in Africa – disruption in education, mass unemployment, increase in gender-based violence, as well as mental and physical health challenges have all affected the youth. Empowering young people to play a leadership role in addressing these challenges is vital to holistically address these issues.
National as well as regional-level mechanisms need to be further established with renewed vigour to ensure ‘sustainable livelihoods’ for the youth, creating opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Employment, development and peace are inherently inter-linked. Particularly, the perception of injustice and inequality through the lack of ‘sustainable’ livelihoods/employment results in youth engaging in violence, illicit arms trade, drug abuse and other criminal activities. Restrictions on the economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic has left a great number of African youth unemployed (particularly those in the informal economy). In regions where many unskilled youth already depend on criminal activities and violent conflict for their living, the current situation may provide an opportunity for violent groups to easily recruit, exploit and sway young people to “pick up the gun” as a source of livelihood. Besides providing direct employment to youth in government agencies and encouraging the private sector to employ young people, promoting entrepreneurship can go a long way in building sustainable livelihoods for the youth.

Innovative regional and national-level programmes must be developed to promote sports, arts, innovation and related activities to effectively build resilience of at-risk youth.

Sports and arts can be a powerful tool for peace. Sports and creatives programmes can be effective in confronting risk factors of youth relating to crime, violence and violent extremism. Sports and arts courses delivered by well-trained coaches and artists, designed through meaningful engagement with marginalized youth, and supported by the communities they are engaged in, can create a positive sense of belonging and identity amongst the youth. This has the real potential to help them avoid crime and violence. While few such sports, arts and cultural programmes exist on the continent, there is a need for scientifically designed, professionally run long-term programmes focused on at-risk youth in Africa.

Young entrepreneurs and technology innovators must be encouraged to drive ‘digital trade and e-commerce protocol’ of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement.

African youth tech-entrepreneurs and innovators are at the forefront of the tech-business and e-commerce revolution on the continent. It is imperative that they lead the design and implementation of this protocol.
UNDERSTANDING OF ‘SILENCING THE GUNS’ CHALLENGES

The successes and failures in the implementation of the ‘Silencing the Guns’ agenda in Africa, especially with respect to youth involvement, must be studied and the lessons learnt must be incorporated in future implementation.

In the last decade, Africa has seen several successes and failures with respect to ‘Silencing the Guns’ agenda. Effectively incorporating the lessons learnt from this experience can immensely benefit future interventions. This is particularly pertinent with respect to transforming the role of the youth to become partners, leaders and drivers of peace and security.

Studies should be commissioned to understand the complex root causes, in different contexts and geographies in Africa, that cause the youth turning to ‘guns as a means of survival’.

Root causes of violence on the continent are much more complex than poverty, unemployment and climate change but also include marginalization, identity crisis, historical legacies and perception of injustice. It is critical to understand context-specific and location-specific root causes that drive young people to take up violence. Focused interventions can then be designed based on the results of these studies.

Evidence-based measures must be taken to gain the confidence and trust of communities, especially the youth, in ongoing peace-processes and peacebuilding initiatives.

There is a history of unsuccessful implementation of peace agreements, untenable truces, and ineffective strategies countering violent extremism in several parts of the continent (examples include South Sudan, Somalia and Central African Republic). This has created a sense of cynicism, mistrust and fear of looming conflict in the communities (especially the youth), which in turn affects the efficacy of on-going peace initiatives. This phenomenon needs to be studied and addressed effectively.
ENHANCED IMPLEMENTATION OF ‘SILENCING THE GUNS’ PROGRAMMES

Accountability mechanisms should be established to hold governments to their undertakings under the ‘Silencing the Guns’ agenda.

The onus of implementation of the roadmaps and various agreements signed under the ‘Silencing the Guns’ agenda largely lies with national governments. Successes and failures to honour such commitments must be studied so that mechanisms are devised and/or strengthened to monitor, and evaluate implementation.

International campaigns must be strategically designed, with the help of diaspora youth, to attract sustainable long-term international partnerships with governments and organizations that would benefit the youth in Africa.

There is much untapped potential for African countries to form sustainable partnerships with states and non-state organizations in addressing education, health, livelihood and other developmental challenges. The key to such initiatives would be a strategically devised branding exercise that would showcase Africa’s strength and potential to be a peaceful and prosperous continent. The African diaspora has an important role to play in this process.

Dialogue processes must be established amongst Diaspora youth to coalesce the community and focus their attention on high-impact areas of ‘Silencing the Guns’ Agenda.

The Diaspora youth who directly contribute to development issues on the continent are not a part of a cohesive unit. Rather, they work in isolation on several agendas. In this context, dialogue processes amongst the diaspora are important to build spaces that can bring them together, help them understand each other’s interests/motivations and build consensus to collaborate on high-impact areas in ending violence around the continent.

Illicit movement of small weapons across borders must be proactively curtailed by: (1) encouraging Small Arms manufacturers to abide by the regulations (such as stipulations of the ECOWAS Convention on SALW); and (2) engaging communities residing near state-borders (such as the Mano-River Union region) in innovative peacebuilding activities.

Particularly in West Africa, despite the implementation of the ECOWAS Convention on SALW and its mechanisms, effectively reducing the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons is proving to be challenging. Challenges include porous borders as well as difficulties in tracking the illicit movement of small arms and non-state groups involved in these activities. Reducing the proliferation of Small Arms is crucial to “Silencing the Guns” in Africa.

1. ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Ammunition and Other Related Materials
Holistic Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes should be designed and implemented. These should take into account the complex connections between violent conflict and youth and women issues, inequality, climate change, illegal financial flows, corruption, as well as the operations and motivations of armed groups.

The continent is not new to Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes. Nonetheless, such initiatives often fail (as in the case of CAR) because they are designed in a manner that does not entirely consider the complex web of factors that sustain conflict in those contexts.

Conflict prevention and peace enforcement mechanisms must actively involve cross-border cooperation strategies between neighbouring countries.

Many armed groups like Boko Haram, Al Shabab and Daesh operate transnationally. Country-specific operations against such transnational armed groups have proven to be insufficient. But examples of countries such as Chad and Niger which have demonstrated some effective cross-border conflict prevention mechanisms in the past, as good examples to draw from and share experiences.

Human rights-based mechanisms should be designed to bring armed government agencies like the police under the purview of the ‘Silencing the Guns’ agenda.

Human rights violations and police violence and other state-sanctioned armed groups are often reported in the region. Full realization of the ‘Silencing the Gun’ agenda will not be possible until such excesses are effectively monitored and curtailed while youth rights to peaceful protest and freedoms are protected.

Innovative campaigns must be launched at the regional, national and community-levels to raise awareness on the impact of climate change.

Climate change is inherently linked to development as well as peace and security issues. There is cognizance of this linkage in the policy and academic spheres. However, there is a lack of awareness amongst the African public about the implications of climate change on their daily life and vice-versa. During the IGDs, climate change clutter had the least participation potentially due to lack of awareness and platforms addressing the intersection of conflict and climate change.

Technology must be effectively leveraged to empower women’s voice and agency to report Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

One of the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has been an increase in instances of Gender-Based Violence cases. Fearing ridicule and other consequences, women find it hard to report and speak up about such crimes committed against them. Technology can be effectively used (innovations like app-based digital reporting systems) to make reporting GBV crimes and reaching out for support easier and more discrete.

CONCLUSION

The progress made since 2013 on the STG agenda has set the trajectory for AU Member States, RECs/RMs, the UN, civil society organizations and supporting partners to continue its implementation. The youth have a critical role to play in this regard as partners and contributors to make a conflict-free Africa a reality. As captured in this report, there are significant challenges on the way. Therefore, a careful study of these challenges combined with inclusive policymaking and implementation of evidence-based, holistically designed measures is the best way forward. Member-states’ accountability and commitment to the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration are of paramount importance in this regard. The intergenerational Dialogue platform can be a tool to convene and unpack the challenges and provide innovation as well as prevent conflict.
AFRICA YOUTH DECLARATION ON SILENCING THE GUNS

We, the participants of the African Union - six regional Youth Silencing the Guns Intergenerational Dialogues, representing youth in civil society organisations, peacebuilding, arts and grassroots networks across Africa and the diaspora, convened virtually between August and September 2020 as part of the Youth Silencing the Guns Campaign, acknowledge that our generation is facing unprecedented challenges from the disruption of education to mass unemployment, risk in the informal sector, digital divide, gender inequality, exclusion from decision making, conflict and violence as well as humanitarian and human rights crises. We therefore believe that our African leaders who have taken the responsibility to mitigate these challenges and harness the demographic dividend, must deliver on their commitments.

CONGRATULATE the African Union Office of the Youth Envoy for convening Youth Silencing the Guns Intergenerational Dialogues and consultations, in collaboration with regional, continental and global partners;

OBSERVE that COVID-19 pandemic has added to the existing structural injustices, creating a far deeper social, economic and humanitarian threat, including the extraordinary risk on youth in conflict settings, refugee settlements, Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, the informal sector, and those living with disabilities are facing

GUIDED BY the objectives of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU), particularly its Article 3(f) and 3(g), AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol under 3(a), the African Youth Charter (2006), AU Theme on Youth (2017), AU theme on Silencing the Guns (2020), the African Union Youth Envoy Action Plan (2019/2020); Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security (June 2020), National and Regional Initiatives; and Global Policy Initiatives.

COMMEND the work of the AU Member States and African Union Commission (AUC) under the current leadership of H.E President Cyril Ramaphosa in his capacity as the Chairperson of the AU and H.E Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the AUC, for the support to Africa’s efforts to address the challenges African countries are facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the support in the launch of the Youth Silencing the Guns Campaign;

RECALL that peace is more than Silencing the Guns, but also building of a Conflict Free Africa; Silencing Gender Based Violence; Silencing Youth Unemployment, Poverty and Hunger; Silencing Corruption; and Silencing the Climate Crisis,

Therefore collectively COMMIT to continue to play our role and make our contribution and impact as young peacebuilders to fast track the implementation of Silencing the Guns Agenda in Africa towards building a peaceful integrated and prosperous continent;
Further call on the Commission of the AU, the AU Heads of State and Government, Regional Economic Communities and Member States to ensure that Africa's youth effectively and inclusively co-lead the Silencing the Guns agenda, and respond to current and future challenges through the following recommendations:

**SILENCE** youth unemployment by creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods for youth in digital jobs, entrepreneurship, agriculture and African Continental Free Trade Area

**SILENCE** corruption by delivering governance reforms to challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and by critically addressing inequality, healthcare and education infrastructures as well as youth inclusion in public service

**SILENCE** and **CRIMINALIZE** gender-based violence in all its forms especially in conflict, displacement and humanitarian settings including femicide, rape, harmful practices, child sexual abuse, child soldiers recruitment, forced or coerced prostitution or trafficking, and all other forms of exploitation

**DEMONSTRATE** Africa's leadership in tackling climate crisis through comprehensive local and global action as well as public - private partnerships

**RESPECT** youth rights including the right to peaceful protest, freedom of speech and internet freedom, and **PROTECT** youth from urban violence, police violence and other human rights violations

**RESTRICT** illicit movement of small weapons across borders and **IMPLEMENT** holistic Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programmes for youth

**PROVIDE** rigorous leadership capacity-development and resources to young peacebuilders especially marginalized and vulnerable youth including displaced, refugee, youth in rural communities, youth with disability and young women

**ENGAGE** Diaspora youth in building international partnerships in line with Agenda 2030 and leveraging on their skills, knowledge and resources to significantly contribute towards the continent’s STG agenda

**INSTITUTIONALIZE** intergenerational co-leadership at all levels of leadership with consistent Inter-Generational Dialogues (IGDs) platforms that convene youth with past and current leaders beyond ethnic and political boundaries, to build trust and debate issues of peace, stability and development

**LEVERAGE** on Agenda 2063 strategic goals, and the 2021 AU Theme of the year to prioritise innovative regional and national-level programmes and campaigns that promote the arts, culture, heritage, Pan-African identity as well as sports to build the resilience of at-risk youth