

**9TH HIGH LEVEL
DIALOGUE**

**ON DEMOCRACY, HUMAN
RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE**

**Silencing the Guns Through Building Resilient
Democracies and Accountable Governance**

10 -11 December 2020, Online



**SILENCING
THE GUNS:**
Creating Conducive Conditions
for Africa's Development

#DGTrends

www.au.int   



AGA

African Governance Architecture

Publication of The African Governance Architecture (AGA)

African Union Commission
Department of political Affairs
Roosevelt Street, W21, K19
PO Box 3243
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

@AUC_DPA
@AGA_Platform
www.au.int/aga

#DGTrends #Silencingtheguns

 @Aga_Platform  @Dgtrends_  DGTrends

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

In 2013 during the Golden jubilee celebration of the Organization of African Unity, the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government adopted the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration on Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance where leaders pledged not to bequeath the burden of conflict to the next generation. Member States committed to make peace a reality for all Africans, to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian crises and forced displacement and to prevent genocide. These efforts are also grounded in the commitment of African leaders as espoused in the Constitutive Act of the AU. The Act enjoins the Member States to coordinate and intensify their cooperation, unity, cohesion, and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa. More specifically, the Act calls for the protection and promotion of human and peoples' rights, consolidation of democratic governance and the rule of law, as well as the promotion of social justice to ensure balanced economic development.

To give these pledges impetus, the African Union Agenda 2063 made sure Aspirations 3 and 4 reflect this commitment.¹ The Union further indoctrinated issues of democratic governance and peace through two important architectures that take these aspirations forward. The African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) both specifically dovetail to specific modalities based on the commitment made by the African Union Member States.

Despite the encouraging developments, violent conflict remains at the heart of tragedy in Africa, with more than one third of all conflict in the world taking place in Sub-Saharan Africa (36%).² This year is no different, the continent has witnessed a continuation of violent conflicts despite the COVID-19 global pandemic and calls by different actors for a cease fire. Violent conflicts in Africa have claimed countless lives and destroyed immense resources, while rolling back decades of development progress. It is becoming more apparent that if sustainable efforts are not in place to address Africa's peace and security challenges, the success of Africa's 50 year aspirations as well as Global Sustainable Development goals are likely to be compromised.

Understanding the drivers of conflict as well as fragility is a critical starting point in providing appropriate responses that can effectively prevent, manage or resolve violent conflicts in Africa. A three pronged root causes of conflict can be laid out as structural drivers of conflict – Developmental deficit, Democratic governance deficit and Peace deficit. The lack of socio-economic equality and poverty accentuate violent conflicts manifesting through popular and violent protests. Cognizant of developmental and peace deficits as an important piece to the puzzle, a focus will be made on the importance of addressing democratic governance deficits as it takes the lion's share of structural root causes of violent conflicts. Deficit in democratic governance has hindered development, compromised sustainable peace and has been at the core of Africa's violent conflicts.

The lack of good governance, rampant corruption, impunity, electoral violence, unconstitutional changes of government, lack of political commitment, human rights violations, disregard for the rule of law and justice, inequality, exclusion, lack of citizen's participation and diversity mismanagement can be mentioned as a few of physiognomies of a deficit in democratic governance.

Effective democratic governance can be characterized by strong institutions and responsive governance systems that facilitate positive state-society relationships by providing independent and reliable channels between citizens and their government. Political Parties, independent electoral bodies, independent judiciary and strong civil society all play an important role to contribute to democratic governance processes that maintain the social contract and enhance trust between society and government. Effective democratic governance resolves issues of growing discontent, dwindling public trust in democratic institutions and addresses issues of inclusiveness and cohesion in addition to bringing equitable share of dividends of democracy. Building sustainable peace in Africa requires a paradigm shift, from addressing symptoms of violent conflict to addressing root causes of these conflicts by focusing on building a reliable, renewed, formidable and most importantly resilient democratic governance systems.

In the realisation of the significant importance of democratic governance as bedrock for Silencing the Guns, the African Union during its 34th Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in July 2019 in Niamey, Niger declared the theme of 2020 as " Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development". Through various activities and initiatives within the context of the theme of the year, the AU aims to rally various segments of the African society including AU Organs, Institutions, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the Member States; Civil Society Organisations, as well as citizens including youth, women and media to highlight the urgent need to address deficits of democratic governance on the continent as a sustainable path to Silencing the Guns and ultimately creating a prosperous and peaceful Africa. In light of this, the African Union organs and institutions that form the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat on behalf of the Platform (AGP) is convening the Ninth (9th) High-Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance focusing on the theme: 'Silencing the guns through building resilient democracies and accountable governance in Africa' scheduled to take place virtually 10-11 December 2020.

RATIONALE

Post-independence, African countries have recorded considerable strides in democratization and have achieved relative peace. Intrinsic and instrumental values of democracy have been witnessed, considering that beyond creating credible and transparent and strong democratic institutions, a relative realization of socio-economic rights has been achieved. Notwithstanding the positive development, the peace and security landscape is still marked by conflict. In fact, the trends in violent conflicts have changed over the years, as research indicates that violence in Africa have moved from coups to election violence, from battles to violent and popular uprisings, rebellions, service delivery protests, violent extremism and inter-communal violence.³ Adding fuel to the fire, COVID-19 has also shocked the world and has posed significant challenges, crippling nations' systems and institutions. It has also exposed the once invisible, layered and cross-sectional democratic governance challenges by magnifying it for the bare eyes. It has exacerbated inequalities, created rampant COVID-19 corruption and has tested humanity to its limits.

It is not all doom and gloom, however. On the bright side, COVID-19 has increased compassion and camaraderie among African Nations in their fight for debt cancelation, spiked the learning curve, promoted digitalization and triggered the need to think outside of the box. This has ushered in a breadth of innovative ideas, promoting flexibility and adaptation in all aspects of life. Alas, the continent still remains with a colossal responsibility of turning the tide of violent conflicts across the continent amid a pandemic. Addressing conflict in Africa should be a key priority, however, solving it, as the year 2020 demonstrated, requires a significant shift in mind-set, multi-dimensionality in an approach coupled with a candid interrogation of the existing situation and pivoting to a more holistic and sustainable solution.

Silencing the guns can only be achieved by silencing several ills of the continent, and starting with addressing issues of democratic governance as drivers of conflict can take us far. It is imperative to invest in capable democratic governance institutions that are resilient, efficient, effective and inclusive by making targeted as well as intentional investments. Furthermore, a democratic culture that fosters learning, adaptation and flexibility must be built to create effective democratic institutions that can deliver on inclusive development and sustained peace. This should be done in cooperation with national, regional and international institutions towards effectively catching up with a fast changing world.

Addressing these issues is therefore at the core of the continental aspiration of not bequeathing a conflict rigged continent to the next generation. It is in that line that the 9th High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human rights and Governance in Africa: Trends, Challenges and Prospect is organized. It is envisioned that the High level dialogue will provide a space to take stock of our past, identify challenges and opportunities, assess our current state and most importantly strategize for our future.

THEMATIC FOCUS OF THE 2020 HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

The discussions will focus on three key areas :

● THE PAST

Assessing the state of democracy and governance as a structural and proximate driver of conflict. The continental, regional and national trends of violent conflicts are scanned along with an assessment of political, social and economic impact of violent conflicts in Africa.

● THE PRESENT

Discussions will focus on creating resilient democratic governance systems that can withstand pressures and remain relevant in a fast changing world.

- The first session under this thematic area focuses on creating a clear understanding of how existing system dysfunctionalities contribute to vulnerability and violent conflicts. The session digs deep into topics of Democracy, Elections, Corruption and Diversity mis-management to draw the nexus between Democratic Governance deficits and Violent Conflicts in Africa.
- The second session on this thematic area will address the need for adaptability, Innovation, recovery and technology to ensure resilience to conflict is achieved through building a stronger/dated democratic and accountable governance systems.

● THE FUTURE

Discussions will be forward looking and solution oriented. The discussions will partly focus on AfCFTA as an opportunity to entrench peace and security in the continent. Futurists on the panel will also delve into different foresight researches to enumerate the steps that need to be taken towards Silencing the Guns beyond 2020.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVE

The overall goal of the Ninth High-Level Dialogue is to assess, identify and explore normative, structural enablers to achieve sustainable peace in Africa. Specifically, the Dialogue will provide a platform to share evidence-based knowledge and analysis as well as exchange comparable lessons and experiences in silencing the guns while also developing policy recommendations to address current limitations and challenges.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the HLD are to:

- 1 To assess the progress that has been made so far through identifying key hindrances and causes; Mapping out trends of violent conflict to understand the trends and courses and assess the socio economic and political impacts of violent conflict in Africa;
- 2 To address the present democratic governance dynamic by highlighting the need for transformation to create a resilient democratic governance system for sustainable peace;
- 3 Discuss the futures and recommend appropriate governance reform measures as part of prevention, management and resolution of violent conflict in Africa
- 4 Highlight innovative, data-driven, technological and advocacy initiatives to improve democratic governance in the continent contributing to Silencing the Guns in the AU Member States;
- 5 Proffer policy recommendations and practical solutions as well as appropriate governance freeform measures as part of the prevention, management and resolution of violent conflict in Africa;

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

It is expected that the 2020 High-Level Dialogue will meaningfully contribute towards the realisation of Aspiration 3 and 4 of Agenda 2063 which envisions “An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law” and “A peaceful and Secure Africa”. The Dialogue will also be instrumental in identifying specific roles of AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities and non-state actors towards contributing to Silencing the Guns.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The Dialogue shall produce the following outputs;

- 1 One (1) Policy Brief focusing on discussion of the dialogue;
- 2 One (1) Proceedings Report that will be disseminated widely through traditional and new media;
- 3 Press Releases;
- 4 Media Interviews;

ABOUT THE 2020 HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

The Ninth High-Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance is convened under the auspices of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and will serve as a forum for reflection on the 2020 AU theme of the year on “Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development”. Particularly, discussions at the Dialogue will focus on examining the theme within the normative and legal framework of AU’s peace and security agenda through rallying of all actors to contribute to the Silencing the Guns in Africa.

The Dialogue is therefore intended to provide a frank, open and inclusive space for policymakers, the private sector, think tanks, academia and practitioners to interrogate policy and practice imperatives that build the cornerstone of silencing the guns. In addition, the Dialogue will focus specifically on appropriate democratic governance actions and recommendations that shall guide state and non-state interventions at national, regional, continental levels.

In this vein, the High-Level Dialogue will be preceded by the Continental youth consultation and a Gender Pre-forum. Outcomes and resolutions from these consultations will systemically dovetail into the discussions at the HLD and eventually form parts of the outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 9th HLD will be held virtually. The dialogue and discussions will be conducted through several interactive strategies including TV-Style moderated Panel Discussions, conversations with high profile individuals, marketplace interactions and plenary forums. The Panel Discussions will be designed to ensure an intergenerational exchange as well as ensure a mix of policy and practitioners’ perspectives in the conversations. Also, the High-Level Dialogue will include media interviews, robust social media engagement and other innovative means to spur debate before and during the Dialogue, engage the virtual audience in the deliberations, and disseminate the outcomes of the Dialogue.

DOCUMENTATION AND WORKING LANGUAGES

Considering the Ninth High Level Dialogue will be held virtually the documentation for the Dialogue Forum will be shared electronically. All High-Level Dialogue documents and news updates will be available on the www.au.int/aga, @AUC_DPA @AGA_Platform @_AfricanUnion and on Hashtags #DGTrends #Silencingtheguns.

The Meeting will be conducted in Arabic, English, French, and Portuguese with simultaneous interpretation provided in all languages while documentation will be provided in French and English only.

THE AFRICAN GOVERNANCE PLATFORM

Established in 2012, the African Governance Architecture (AGA) was created as a framework for dialogue between various stakeholders mandated to promote and strengthen democratic governance in Africa as articulated in the various African Union Shared Values instruments. Its establishment was premised on the dire need to enhance the impact of various AU and RECs intervention in addressing governance deficits on the continent. The Secretariat is hosted by the Department of Political Affairs as the Bureau of the African Governance Architecture Platform.

The African Governance Platform is the institutional and interactive mechanism of the AGA. It is mandated to operationalize and coordinate programmes and initiatives related to democracy, elections, constitutionalism, rule of law, public service and administration, decentralisation, anti-corruption, human rights and transitional justice. The Platform is composed of nineteen (19) AU Organs, Institutions and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). In this regard, the Platform has a responsibility of enhancing the capacity of its stakeholders to support Member States in promoting democratic governance. The Platform comprises eleven (11) AU Organs and institutions with a Human Rights, Democracy and Governance mandate as well as the 8 RECs.⁴

PARTICIPATION

The key stakeholders that will be part of the High-Level Dialogue include the following:

- Heads of State and Government of the AU Member States;
- Former Heads of State and Government;
- AU organs and institutions;
- Regional Economic Communities;
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) including Youth networks and Women’s organizations;
- Development Partners and Agencies
- Private Sector (Multinationals/ Local);
- Philanthropy Organisations and Individuals;
- UN agencies and other International and continental financial institutions (e.g. AfDB, IMF, World Bank)
- Media; and
- Academic and Research Institutions.

PARTNERSHIP

The Ninth High-Level Dialogue is a flagship Initiative of the African Governance Platform created to foster dialogue between stakeholders. It will be jointly convened by the Department of Political Affairs of African Union Commission as the Secretariat of the AGA and the bureau of the African Governance Platform (AGP), the Department of Peace and Security as the lead for the theme of the year and other relevant stakeholders.

CONTACT DETAILS

Dr. Khabele Matlosa

Director of Political Affairs,
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: matlosaK@africa-union.org
Tel: +251-11-518-2610 (DL)

Amb. Salah Hammad

Ag. Head, AGA Secretariat
Department of Political Affairs
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: HammadS@africa-union.org
+251-91-305-7711 (M)

Ms. Makda Mikre Tessema

Democracy and Governance Expert
AGA Secretariat
Department of Political Affairs
African Union Commission
Email: MakdaM@africa-union.org
+251 – 911615083 (M)

Endnotes

1 Aspiration 3 - Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law' and Aspiration 4 – 'a peaceful and secure Africa'.

2 Heidelberg institute for International Conflict Research (HIIC), accessed on, Sept 2020, <https://hiik.de/?lang=en>

3

4 The 11 Organs are as follows, The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC), African Union Commission (AUC), African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), The African Court on Human and People's Rights (AfCHPR), Pan-African Parliament (PAP), African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC), The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL), African Union Development Agency (AUDA). The RECS are namely, East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

AGENDA

DAY ONE - 10 DECEMBER 2020

SIGN IN – VIRTUAL ROOM WILL BE OPEN AT 12:30 PM

**OPENING
AU ANTHEM**

1:00 PM - MODERATOR:
1:30 PM ● Dr Khabele Matlosa, Director, Political Affairs, AUC

WELCOME REMARKS

- **H.E. Ms. Minata Samate Cessouma**, Commissioner for Political Affairs, AUC
- **Amb. Baye Mactar Diop**, Chair of PRC Sub Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance
- **H.E. Amina Mohammad**, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

OFFICIAL OPENING

- **H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat**, Chairperson, AUC

1:30 PM - 2:15 PM **SESSION ONE – HIGH-LEVEL PANEL THE PAST: Addressing the root causes of conflict in Africa – Stepping Back to Step Forward.** This session will address the state of democracy and governance as a structure and proximate driver of conflict. Scanning existing continental, regional and national trends of conflicts along with an assessment of the political, social and economic impact of violent conflicts in Africa.

MODERATOR:

- **Amb. Hadiza Mustapha**, Advisor to the Chairperson of the African Union

SPEAKERS:

- **Prof. Eddy Maloka**, CEO, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)
- **Dr. Jide Martyns Okeke**, Regional Programme Coordinator, UNDP
- **Dr. Paul-Simon Handy**, Senior Regional Advisor, Institute for Security Studies (ISS)
- **Dr. Nompilo Ndlovu**, Violence and Memory Studies Scholar, Department of Historical Studies, University of Cape Town

PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

2:15 PM – 2:20 PM **INTERLUDE – Video/Break**

2:20 PM – 3:05 PM **SESSION TWO: The nexus between Democratic Governance systems dysfunctions and Violent Conflicts:** This session focuses on drawing the link between Democratic governance systems failures and violent conflicts in Africa by looking at issues like Democracy, Elections, Corruption and Diversity mismanagement.

MODERATOR:

- **H.E. Miarom Begoto**, Chair of AU-ABC Corruption and Good governance

SPEAKERS:

- **Idayat Hassan**, Executive Director, CDD Nigeria
- **Mr. Job Ogonda**, Senior Advisor, OSF- AfRO
- **Prof. Cheryl Hendricks**, Head Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Johannesburg
- **Mr David Onen**, Principal Political Officer, EAC

PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

3:05 PM –
3:20 PM

AFRICA TALKS: Youth's contribution in Re-thinking Democratic Governance

SPEAKER:

● **H.E Ms. Walaa Essam El-Boushi**, The Minister of Youth and Sports, Sudan.

MODERATOR:

● **Hagar Azzoz**, Project Officer, AGA Secretariat

DAY TWO - 11 DECEMBER 2020

1:00 PM –
1:45 PM

SESSION THREE: Building Resilience brick by brick: This session discusses salient issues that support the creation of resilient democratic governance systems through addressing Inclusion, inter generational collaboration, adaptive leadership, Innovation and Digitization/technology to create a stronger system.

MODERATOR:

● **Amb. Salah Hammad**, Ag Head of AGA secretariat

SPEAKERS:

● **Dr George Mukundi**, Chief Executive Officer, Maendeleo Group

● **H.E. Bineta Diop**, Special envoy, Women in peace and Security

● **Ms. Nanjala Nyabola**, Author, Digital Democracy, Analogue Politics

PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

1:45 PM –
2:00PM

AFRICA TALKS: Unveiling of the winners of the Youth Innovation Challenge on Democracy and Governance.

MODERATOR:

● **Ms. Makda Mikre Tessema**, Democracy and Governance Expert, AGA Secretariat, AUC

2:00 PM –
2:45 PM

SESSION FOUR: This session will take advantage of analysis on AfCFTA and its role in conflict prevention but also focus on findings of foresight research to identify challenges, trends and opportunities to Silence the Guns beyond 2020.

MODERATOR:

● **Ms Shuvai Busuman Nyoni**, Director, African Leadership Center Speakers

SPEAKERS:

● **Mr Ndongo Samba Sylla**, Author, Development Economist and Speaker

● **Dr Jackie Cilliers**, Head of African Futures and Innovation, Institute for Security Studies

● **Prof Migai Akech**, Team Lead, Africa Governance Report 2021- African Governance Futures, APRM

PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

2:45 PM –
3:00 PM

PRESENTATION OF AN OUTCOME STATEMENT OF THE 9th HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

● **Lead Rapporteur** - Dr. Chijoke Kelechi Iwumadi

3:00 PM –
3:30 PM

OFFICIAL CLOSING

MODERATOR:

- **Dr. Khabele Matlosa**, Director, Political Affairs

CLOSING REMARKS

- **H.E. Smail Chergui**, Commissioner for Peace and Security Department

OFFICIAL CLOSING

- **H.E. Ms. Minata Samate Cessouma**, Commissioner for Political Affairs, AUC



**SILENCING
THE GUNS:**
Creating Conducive Conditions
for Africa's Development