

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### INVITATION TO MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

**WHAT:** The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Humanitarian Symposium

**Theme:** *Humanitarian Action within the context of COVID-19 and AU Theme of the Year 2020 Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development*

**When:** 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020,  
**Time:** 3:00pm – 6:00pm EAT daily

#### Description

- **11th November 2020** – Impact of COVID-19 on Humanitarian Situation
- **12th November 2020** – Implementing AU theme of the Year 2020 Silencing the Guns: Creating conducive conditions for Africa's Development within Humanitarian context.
- **13th November 2020** - Implementing the outcomes of the AU 2019 theme, Year of Refugees, Returnees and IDPs, towards durable solutions to forced displacements

**WHERE:** the event will be held via zoom virtual platform: *Registration in advance is required for this meeting:*

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_7p7rvd-TT6mCKkHaFqgwuw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7p7rvd-TT6mCKkHaFqgwuw)

**WHO:** The event is organized by the Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission.

**SPEAKERS:** The meeting will be held for three consecutive days with high level speakers and panelist representing different organization including; -

#### **11th November 2020 – Impact of COVID-19 on Humanitarian Situation**

1. **H.E. Minata Samate Cessouma**, Commissioner for Political Affairs, AUC
2. **H.E Rebecca Amuga**, Chairperson of the PRC-Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons
3. **Dr. Khabele Matlosa**, Director for Political Affairs, AUC
4. **Dr. Ahmed Ogbwell**, Deputy Director, Africa Center for Disease Control (CDC)

5. **Mr. Mamadi Diakite**, Special Advisor on Security, Humanitarian and Fragile Countries, UNAIDS
6. **Mr. Bruce Mokaya Orina**, Head of Delegation, ICRC
7. **7. Mr. Addis Tesfa**, Deputy Regional Representative for Africa, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
8. **Ms Clementine Nkwete-Salami**, Regional Director for the East, Horn and great lakes regions of Africa, UN High Commissioner for Refugees

**12th November 2020** – Implementing AU theme of the Year 2020 Silencing the Guns: Creating conducive conditions for Africa’s Development within Humanitarian context.

1. **H.E Cecilia Jimenez**, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs;
2. **H.E. Maya Sahil-Fadel**, ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced Persons and Migrants in Africa;
3. **Dr. Paul Simon**, Senior Regional Advisor, Institute of Security Studies
4. **Ms. Doris Mpoumou**, AU Representative ad Director, AU Liaison and Pan-Africa Office, Save the Children
5. **Mr. Barthelemy Ngane Mwanza** Member of UNHCR High commission Youth Advisory Group

**13th November 2020** - Implementing the outcomes of the AU 2019 theme, Year of Refugees, Returnees and IDPs, towards durable solutions to forced displacements

1. **H.E Mr. Crisantos Obama Ondo, Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea to Ethiopia Representing H.E Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo**, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and AU Champion of the theme of 2019, Year of Refugees, Returnees and IDPs: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacements in Africa.
2. **Mr. Cosmas Chanda**, Representative, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
3. **Ms. Joyce Mends-Cole**, Former Representative, UNHCR
4. **Ms. Achieng Akena**, Executive Director, International Refugee Rights Initiative
5. **Mr. Valery Mbaoh Nana**, Deputy Head of Delegation, International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (ICRC)
6. **Ms. Mary Ikeora**, Independent Consultant, Author and Executive Director of Raising Women Initiative (RWI)

## **Background**

The COVID-19 pandemic is ravaging African economies and stretching the health systems beyond their limits with enormous social, economic, political and humanitarian implications. It has further compounded the humanitarian and displacement situations in the continent which is already dire. Africa is home to a third of global forcibly displaced persons including, 19.2 million IDPs, 7.8 million refugees and asylum seekers and 172,000 stateless persons. Moreover, there are many who are trapped in protracted conflict situations.

While the pandemic poses serious threats to all persons, evidence shows that the most marginalized social groups are at greater risk. These include refugees and asylum seekers, IDPs, returnees, migrants and stateless persons. Forced displacement in Africa is largely a result of protracted violent conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism, governance failures, including human rights violations, natural disasters and climate change, among others.

The African Union declared 2020 as the year of silencing the guns, its efforts at preventing, managing and resolving conflicts have been compounded by onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has presented the continent with a double-jeopardy:

- (a) Protracted violent intra-state conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism, inter-communal violence and
- (b) Raging health, humanitarian and development crisis occasioned by COVID-19.

The African Union, Regional Economic Communities and Member States should make concerted efforts to ensure that policy responses to COVID-19 should consider the special needs of displaced persons, host communities and migrants.

It is recalled that the AU theme focused on addressing root causes and finding solutions for forced displacement in the continent. Within this overarching objective it has successfully implemented a range of activities in collaboration with its Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and partners. The AU also marked the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa as well as the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the 2009 AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa in 2019. Thanks to a robust international collective advocacy, five countries namely Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Somalia and South Sudan ratified the Kampala Convention. Many countries in Africa have also made important pledges in relation to the Global Compact on Refugees which aim to strengthen protection and solutions for refugees. The Commission also successfully organized a series of Continental Consultative Meetings (CCMs) which brought together member states, RECs, international partners, academia and research institutions, representatives of displaced persons and AU's development partners. Some of the topics on which these important consultative meetings were organized include the implementation and supervision of the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention, implementation of the Kampala Convention and international and global solidarity and burden sharing. The AU also organized, in partnership with UNHCR, a dialogue on refugees, returnees and displaced women were organized whose outcome helped mainstream and integrated the rights and interests of women across various AU 2019 theme activities.

## **Purpose and Objectives:**

The main objectives of the symposium are to deliberate with the aim of achieving the following specific objectives:

- Tracking the vulnerabilities of displaced people and those who are affected by humanitarian crisis within and across borders, including those that are seeking asylum during the plight of Covid-19 pandemic in Africa.
- Presenting experiences of refugees, IDPs, vulnerable migrants and civilians affected by COVID-pandemic on their plight during the Covid-19 pandemic and share key humanitarian responses in the African Continent.
- Mapping emerging best practices and share experiences and lessons learnt of inclusive COVID-19 responses across the continent.
- Discussing regional and international partnerships in addressing the multidimensional consequences and impacts of COVID-19.
- Providing a platform for policy and intergenerational reflections on the dimension to forced displacement in Africa and create a collaborative space for ideation and innovation towards durable solutions to be embedded in Silencing the Guns.
- Highlighting the relationship between COVID and Silencing the Guns agenda
- Promoting \ strong synergy and effective linkage with African Union Agenda 2063, Silencing the Guns and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals thereby promoting greater partnership between the UN and African Union.
- Sharing lessons and best practices regarding the role of Women in Peace Building and Mediation, domestication and implementation of the framework within the spirit of Silencing the Guns.
- Advocate for a more robust inclusion and involvement of displaced persons in key processes of the AU and RECs and share practical lessons and tools that support inclusion agenda,
- Disseminate information and key findings of the study conducted on mainstreaming the rights and interests of women in AU peace and security architecture.

## **Expected Outcomes**

The expected outcomes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Humanitarian Symposium are to generate:

- Policy and programmatic strategies towards improved protection and assistance of persons of concern in forced displacement within Silencing the Guns
- Presenting experiences and lessons learned as well as documented stories of forcibly displaced persons of concern to elevate their voices and recast their image as partners towards achieving durable solutions
- Increased momentum on persons of concern movements on the continent, in addition to facilitate candid discussions on roles in forced displacement situations
- Tracking the vulnerabilities of displaced people and those who are affected by humanitarian crisis within and across borders, including those that are seeking asylum during the plight of Covid-19 pandemic in Africa.
- Presenting experiences of refugees, IDPs, vulnerable migrants and civilians affected by COVID-pandemic on their plight during the Covid-19 pandemic and share key humanitarian responses in the African Continent.

***For More Information on the event:***

**Ms.Rita Amukhobu** , Acting Head, HARDP Division , Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission;  
Email: AmukhobuR@africa-union.org

**Mr. Allehone Abebe.**; Senior Legal Officer, HARDP Division, Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission; Email: [AllehoneA@africa-union.org](mailto:AllehoneA@africa-union.org)

***For Media inquiries:***

**Mr Molalet Tsedeke**, Directorate of Information and Communications; AU Commission, Tel: 0911-630631;  
Email: [Molalett@africa-union.org](mailto:Molalett@africa-union.org);

**Mr Yusuf Muhammed**, Knowledge management and Communication Expert, Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission; email; Mohammedy@africa-union.org

**For further information:**

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: [DIC@africa-union.org](mailto:DIC@africa-union.org) | Website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia.

**Follow us**

Face book: <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanUnionCommission>

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/\\_AfricanUnion](https://twitter.com/_AfricanUnion)

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/AUCommission>

Learn more at: <http://www.au.int/e>