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## PRESS RELEASES

### African Union Commission and United Religions Initiative -Africa Join Forces to Promote Interfaith & Intercultural Dialogue in Africa



Addis Ababa, May 8, 2015 – African Union Commission (AUC) and United Religions Initiative – Africa (URI-Africa) have concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthening their working cooperation to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue in Africa.

The MoU was signed at the Headquarters of African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by the Director of Civil Society and Diaspora (CIDO) of the African Union Comisison, Dr.

Jinmi Adisa and Regional Director of URI for Africa and Representative of URI to AUC, ECA, UNEP and UN office at Nairobi H.E. Ambassador Mussie Hailu on May 8, 2015.

According to the signed MoU, AUC and URI-Africa will cooperate to explore opportunity for cooperation and non-exclusive partnership in the following areas:

- To collaborate and maintain close and continuing working partnership to enhance the effort of promoting peaceful co-existence among followers of different religions and cultures in Africa
- To implement jointly the declaration of the African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum.
- To counter violent extremism, radicalizations and terrorism in Africa and to combat hatred, prejudice, intolerance and stereotyping on the basis of religion and culture
- To promote and facilitate a culture of peace, inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, harmony and cooperation in Africa

- To put a spotlight on helping religious leaders in Africa to understand the important role they must play in promoting inter-religious cooperation for peaceful co-existence, reconciliation, security, environmental protection and sustainable development
- To promote constructive dialogue and peaceful co-existence among followers of different religions, culture and ethnicities group in Africa through the teaching of the Golden Rule which says “Treat others the way you want to be treated” as the Golden Rule is affirmed in many religions, traditions, indigenous cultures and secular philosophies as a fundamental principle of life and moral. It is also the foundation upon which the global ethic is founded and addresses critical issues such as democracy, human rights, respect for one another, gender equity, social justice and inter-religious and inter-cultural harmony.
- To joins hand together to bring different religions, faith-based and interfaith organizations in Africa to work together on Agenda 2063 and post 2015 Development
- To promote peace education in Africa as part of the school curriculum

After signing the agreement, Dr. Adisa said “I highly appreciate the recommendable work of URI-Africa in promoting daily interfaith cooperation among followers of different religions and faith traditions to promote a culture of peace, justice and healing. The work of URI Africa is very relevant to address the issue of counter violent extremism, radicalization and to end religiously motivated violence in



Africa. CIDO is happy to partner and work closely with URI Africa to promote inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue for peaceful co-existence in Africa”.

Dr Adisa added: “I want to thank Amb. Mussie Hailu for his exemplary effort in assisting us to organize the highly successful Interfaith, Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue at the African Union Commission”. I also duly appreciate him for his commitment, dedication, vision, passion, reaching out mechanism, public relation skill, lobbying ability, high diplomacy and leadership in facilitating partnership and building bridges among grass roots practitioners, interfaith

organizations, religious & traditional leaders and policy makers on the issue of a culture of peace, inter-religious and inter-cultural harmony and cooperation in Africa. Amb. Mussie is a champion and spokesperson for the African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum throughout Africa and the rest of the world. It is a great pleasure for us to work very closely URI-Africa ”.

On his part Amb. Mussie Hailu said “URI Africa acknowledged the initiative of African Union Commission and African Religious Leaders for establishing the African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum to harness the work of religious communities in Africa” He further said “As a bridge building organization, URI-Africa also appreciate the work of AUC, Department of CIDO for facilitating the participation of non-state actors and civil society in Africa with the African Union, for enhancing the collaboration between the African Union, Member States, and Civil Society organizations, for engaging the African Diaspora community on the issue of Africa and for its commitment to ensure that the African Union represents not only African Governments but also the totality of its people”.

“On behalf of members of URI, I want also to recognize the work of the Economic, Social and Cultural of the African Union (ECOSOCC) for giving the opportunity for African civil society to play an active role in charting the future of the Continent and fostering partnership for civil societies in Africa to work with African governments to contribute to the principles, policies and programmes of the African Union”. He added.

URI is interfaith organization with consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council and it is working to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

URI-Africa is cultivating peaceful co-existence among different religions and cultures through its 157 member organizations in over 28 African countries by engaging people to bridge religious and cultural differences and work together for the good of their communities and the world.

URI Africa’s vision is to see a united, prosperous, and peaceful Africa where followers of different religions live together in harmony and respect each other based on the teaching of the Golden Rule which says, “Treat others the way you want to be treated.”

