



PRESS RELEASE

AFRICAN UNION and KAICIID hold Interfaith Dialogue Forum in Nigeria

November 1, 2016, Abuja, Nigeria – In an effort to promote interreligious dialogue as a means to build peace and enhance social cohesion in Africa, the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) of the African Union Commission and the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) will hold, within the framework of the African Union - KAICIID Memorandum of Understanding, the 2nd Interfaith Dialogue Forum from 10 to 11 November 2016 in Abuja, Nigeria.

The Forum will, among other things, enhance partnerships between the African Union and religious leaders in AU Member States, enable the creation of a safe space for dialogue, add an interfaith dimension to the joint efforts towards achieving the Africa Agenda 2063, AUC's flagship initiative; and serve as both a working meeting and an opportunity to set up a united front in peacebuilding. It will also provide a platform for the repudiation of violence committed in the name of religion in any African region and declaration of an unequivocal statement in support of diversity, featuring new and diverse voices in a follow-up declaration to the Abuja Declaration of 2010; and oversee the establishment of a permanent Steering Committee, which will link policy makers with religious leaders and institutions. This committee will be made up of representatives from national interfaith councils, civil society organizations and scholars.

Mr. Ahmed El Basheer, Ag. Director CIDO stated “The religious community is a significant civil society in Africa which if utilized properly can lead to development, peace and security. The significance of religion isn't just because we Africans are spiritual, but also because many of the current challenges in Africa and the World, are being committed under the name of religion. CIDO is partnering with KAICIID to create a space for dialogue between religious and interfaith community as they craft their own action plan and roles which will lead to the betterment of African and Africans.”

“This event comes at a time when the emerging and ongoing crises on the continent, and indeed around the world, make such a meeting more necessary than ever,” said Faisal Bin Muaammar, Secretary General of KAICIID. “We are very excited about this Forum, the result of our collaboration with the African Union. By fostering collaboration between religious makers and policy makers, we believe we are also supporting peace and reconciliation in Africa”.

Participation in the 2nd Interfaith Dialogue Forum in Nigeria will be drawn from national interreligious councils of AU Member States, including African Traditional Religions and other affiliations, representatives of interfaith organizations, scholars and women. It will also include AU departments and Divisions who will speak about the role of religious leaders within the Agenda 2063 and their respective scope of work.

Recognizing the need to build a structured partnership between the African Union and religious leaders for advancing justice, peace, security and development in Africa, the African Union in partnership with African religious leaders had launched the 1st AU-Interfaith Dialogue Forum in Abuja, Nigeria in June 2010 to develop an inclusive, practical and sustainable working relationship between the African Union and faith-based organizations capitalizing on their shared values and mutual interests.

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About CIDO

The Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) is a directorate under the Bureau of the chairperson of the African Union commission. It is designed to serve as a catalyst to facilitate the involvement of African peoples in the continent and the Diaspora in the affairs of the African Union. Its commitment is to ensure that the AU represents not only African governments, but also the people of Africa. Its overall mission is to engage all elements of African communities, namely civil society and the African Diaspora, in the development and support of AU activities, decision-making processes, policy programmes, institutions, organs and overall goals.

About KAICIID

The International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) is an intergovernmental organization that promotes dialogue to build peace in conflict areas. It does this by enhancing understanding and cooperation between people of different cultures and followers of different religions. The Centre was founded by Austria, Saudi Arabia and Spain. The Holy See is the Founding Observer. Its Board of Directors comprises prominent representatives from five major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism). The Board designs and supervises the Centre's programmes.