

PRESS RELEASE

AUC-CIDO and GiZ co-organized the 2nd Intercontinental Youth Forum- 2nd phase of the iDove project- in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

03 – 05 October 2018 – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – The African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AUC-CIDO) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH organized the 2nd Intercontinental Youth Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The event brought together 39 youth from 27 countries across Africa and Europe for three days of fruitful discussions and interactive sessions.

The forum was organized as part of the Interfaith Dialogue on Violent

Extremism (iDove), a project that aims to foster innovative youth-led approaches across Africa and Europe in the field of preventing violent extremism (pve) drawing on the soft power of religion and inter and intra-faith dialogue. During the opening ceremony, Dr. Inge Baumgarten, Director of the GiZ office to the African Union, recognized the importance of incorporating religious discourse in policy development and international cooperation, specifically leveraging religion as a powerful source for sustainable development and peace.

iDove is based on the premise that violent extremism is a global issue and whether it has political, ideological, or religious backgrounds, the problem of youth radicalization affects African as well as European societies in a similar way. As we see more violent extremist acts being perpetrated globally there is an overwhelming need to find alternative and innovative solutions at the macro and micro level to preventing violent extremism. Drawing on this, Chief of Staff of the African Union Commission, Mr. Wane El-Ghassim recognized the timeliness and uniqueness of the iDove project in its cross-continental approach and its intent on using innovative youth-led approaches in the fight against violent extremism; “iDove was created as a youth led, bottom up approach to prevent violent extremism. It engages youth who are academics, policy makers, community workers and creative. iDove succeeded in transcending borders and continents to bring all the youth brilliant minds, to design effective and impactful solutions”.

The three-day forum featured speakers from various fields of pve including academics that work on gender and transnational discourses, gamers and mobile application developers, poets that use the arts in



order to raise awareness about violent extremism, broadcasters that have developed radio programmes to foster interfaith dialogue, and community activists that empower youth through local initiatives. Discussions circulated around identifying recruitment trends, exploring PVE trends in Africa and Europe determining the role of youth in pve and cross-border governance and cooperation.

This forum built on the key findings identified during the first forum, including patterns of occurrences of violent extremist acts in Africa and Europe, however, special focus was paid to ungoverned spaces, such as, border regions and marginalized areas. It has been found time and time again in research that youth are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups, specifically in border regions and marginalized areas. These ungoverned spaces provide breeding grounds for extremist movements and are the main target of recruitment campaigns. Dr. Ayite Marcel Baglo, Director General of the Beninese Agency for Integrated Management of Border Spaces, and expert in border security suggested, “poverty, marginalization, isolation and statelessness are the main contributors to crime and youth radicalization in border regions” hence, making youth more vulnerable and susceptible to recruitment.

For the first time the iDove project introduced a gender sensitive lens to pve. Understanding the gender roles, specifically the role of women in pve initiatives in general and within ungoverned areas in particular, was a key thematic area of discussion during the forum. Dr. Katherine Brown from the University of Birmingham emphasized that the role of women is underestimated and underrepresented and there is an importance on involving women in pve initiatives globally.

The forum dedicated the last two days to leveraging technology and innovation as a fundamental tool to prevent violent extremism. This “Youth Innovation Hub” called on the participants to tap into their creative sides and come up with innovative social media campaigns, mobile applications and board games in pve, through the guidance and support of experts within the field. This was facilitated through the use of a design thinking technique, which



emphasizes on the use of creative approaches to problem solving. In this regard, participants teamed up and created [#17inspirations](#) for innovative solutions to prevent violent extremism.