

**AFRICAN UNION**  
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**AU-ECOSOCC CIVIL SOCIETY PRE-SUMMIT CONSULTATIONS**  
**10th – 12th DECEMBER 2019**  
**GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

**COMMUNIQUE**

**The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) and the Citizens and Diaspora Organization Directorate (CIDO) held the Annual Civil Society Pre-Summit Consultation from 10 to 12 December 2019 at Gaborone, Botswana on the AU Theme of the Year 2020; “Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development”.**

**Reaffirms** ECOSOCC’s solidarity with the African Union to enable a climate of peace and to create conducive conditions for Africa’s development.

**Further** reaffirms ECOSOCC’s commitment to the implementation of the AU Master Road Map on Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020.

**Recalls** the ECOSOCC proposal for an Amnesty Month, meant for the surrender and collection of illicit Small Arms & Light Weapons (SALW) on the continent as a gateway to silencing the guns in Africa.

**Further recalls** that the roadmap of the AU Amnesty Month of September was endorsed by Decision AU/Dec.645(XXIX) at the 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government (July 2017, Addis Ababa.)

**Welcomes** the initiative of the AU Inter-Faith Dialogue Forum.

**Appreciates** the facilitating role played by the Peace and Security Council of the AU for the establishment of a new transitional Government in Khartoum.

**Recognizes** the African Union’s efforts to reconcile belligerent groups and to enhance peaceful co-existence in South Sudan.

**Acknowledges** the AU’s efforts in supporting parties to the South Sudan *Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan* (RARCSS); and wishes to underline that political instability, insecurity, intercommunal conflicts, famine, droughts, and flooding are contributing significantly to the erosion of household and community resilience and associated vulnerability to poor living standards in South Sudan, with women and children greatly affected.

**Commends** the tireless strides of the AU Ministers of Foreign Affairs AD HOC High-Level Committee for South Sudan (C5), the Inter-Government Authority on Development (IGAD) Heads of State and Governments and the AU Commission, as well as the Regional and International Special Envoys to South Sudan for their continued support to the parties to implement the provisions of the RARCSS.

**Further Commends** the Union’s efforts in championing the ‘Khartoum Peace Agreement 2019’ thereby calling on armed groups in Central African Republic (CAR) to surrender their arms and integrate army units,

**Also commends** the AU for the strong role it played in condemning terrorist attacks against innocent civilians in the Mali Sahel region and the continent in general.

**Salutes** the AU collaborative efforts with the United Nations in reinforcing the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in the development and adoption of the 2018 Regional Strategy for Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin.

**Applauds** the Mano River Union Member States for adopting a new five-year strategic plan aligned with the work and goals of global and regional agendas such as the UN SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063, to enhance stability and accelerate economic growth in the sub-region.

**Guided by the:** (a) *African Union Vision and missions*, (b) *the 2063 AU Agenda’s flagship programmes*, (c) *2016 AU Roadmap on Silencing the Guns*, (d) *Livingstone Formula Framework*, (e) *AU Nouakchott process on Mali and the Sahel*, (f) *Common African Defense and Security Policy 2009*, (g) *the African Peace and Security Architecture* and (h) *the African Governance Architecture*, among others,

#### **(A) The AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council (AU/ECOSOCC)**

**Engages** to host a series of activities throughout the year to raise awareness about the AU Theme of Year 2020. On Africa Day (25<sup>th</sup> May) ECOSOCC National Chapters will organize colloquiums, exhibitions, cultural shows and educational talks and advocacy campaigns around the theme ‘Silencing the Guns’.

**Calls** for enhanced inclusion of Women and Youth in decision-making processes on peace and security matters in the continent. To further express its commitment on this and put African Women at the heart of peace building initiatives, ECOSOCC will hold on the African Women Day (31<sup>st</sup> July) a grand symposium/forum engaging women & youth on the AU Theme of the Year.

**Pledges** to partner with faith-based organization to promote the Golden Rule which says “ Treat others the way you want to be treated ” as a common shared value to enhance mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, human dignity, to curb the problem of hate speech, violent extremism, xenophobia and to deepen the solidarity with one another and to broaden the space for common action and reflection among various faith communities and social

movements with the firm belief that interreligious & intercultural dialogue and cooperation form an integral part of promoting constructive dialogue among civilizations and silencing the guns in Africa.

**Commits** to host a premiere ‘Peace Caravan’ that will travel through various African capital cities during the Amnesty Month (September) as a demonstration of solidarity for African Unity and to encourage the surrender of arms and the granting of amnesty to reformed combatants.

**Pledges its commitment** to support and undertake advocacy, advisory support and dialogue missions to South Sudan, Somalia and the Lake Chad Basin (Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria) to support and reinforce ongoing AU, IGAD and UN peace, conflict resolutions, cross border security and stabilization interventions, and Civil Society and community resilience building initiatives.

**(B) ECOSOCC calls on Member States to:**

**Invest** in education for primary and secondary school children to provide a strong foundation for future peace builders and promote peaceful coexistence and harmony.

**Proclaim** April 5<sup>th</sup> as Golden Rule Day in Africa as it helps to foster human dignity, democracy, human rights, mutual respect, gender equality, social justice, interfaith harmony, conflict prevention, and building right human relationships.

**Expedite** the implementation of past recommendations and decisions relevant to the AU theme of the year “Silencing the guns by 2020 creating conducive conditions for Africa’s Development”.

**Advocate** for the implementation of policies and legal frameworks, in the ecosystem of the AU’s governance architecture, on increased public participation (particularly the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance), protection and promotion of human rights, entrenched rule of law, respect for constitutional change of government and constitutionalism democratic principles, free and fair elections, as well as other forms of good governance.

**Urge** that Heads of State and Government effectively implement the AfCFTA thereby creating more opportunities for regional integration, free movement of people within Africa as a mitigation factor to some of the conditions leading to conflicts.

**Further urge** the active involvement of all stakeholders including grassroots communities in the early warning mechanisms and calling on Member States to increase efforts in mitigating

the impact of climate change, including depletion of natural resources that are key drivers to conflict.

***Recognize the role of civil society in the work of the AU and its Member States by enabling a liberalize civic space in the continent with administrative, legislative and practical reforms to allow civil society's existence.***

**Call** for the establishment of Rehabilitation Mechanisms for human rights, respecting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) re-integration of returnees to their countries of origin;

**Discourage** cross border gun and weapon supplies; propose a high-level dialogue/forum with Heads of State and Government and global media to raise awareness about the severity of this problem on the continent.

**Encourage** dialogue between disagreeing parties to governance drive and the encouragement of dissent on governance agenda within Member States, and

**Call** for the ratification and domestication of the AU's framework for Transitional Justice by AU Member States and, in the process, allow the participation of civil society, faith based organisations, traditional leaders and all other stakeholders in cascading transitional justice principles such as truth, reconciliation and stamping out impunity.