

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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AFRICA TALKS - YOUTH INNOVATIONS ON PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA.

The African Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat with support from the African Union (AU)'s Governance and Conflict Prevention Directorate have concluded the "Africa Talks" event at the Expo 2020 Dubai. The 2021 "Africa Talks" session was convened under the theme "Showcasing Youth innovations in Peace, Democracy and Governance towards Silencing the Guns in Africa" as a platform for sustained engagement of young innovators to showcase their ideas and contributions to creating a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

The Africa Talks session is designed to create a platform for sharing best practices and accords young people the opportunity to showcase their initiatives and share comparable



lessons on the various thematic areas that support the realization of good governance on the continent. Built on the model of Tedx platform, young people present their projects and innovations that then inform the panel discussions that follow. This year's theme is reflected towards AU flagship project, 'Silencing the Guns' which focuses on the promotion, prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa to achieve a conflict-free Africa.

The panel discussions on Silencing the Guns through Innovation, were based on the presentations of AGA Top 5 winners of the [Democracy and Governance in Africa- Youth Innovation Challenge](#) launched in 2020. The [finalists](#) were Ms. Benazir Hilali, Ms. Dina Ibrahim, Ms. Lydia Matte, Mr. Romaric Moftaou, and Mr Justin Anthony.

Top finalist of the Democracy and Governance in Africa- Youth Innovation Challenge, Ms. Benazir Hilali, and Co-Founder of Axle International, opened Silencing the Guns through Innovation and Youth Engagement focused on how public risk perception can create and exacerbate crises moreso in regards to the various non-state actors such as armed groups, media or marginalized groups. She made strong recommendations on the need for Youth engagement in decision-making processes and all political processes to minimize security risks, create innovative development solutions and reshape the traditional role of the government bodies. Axle International will be launching a new initiative "the African risk compass - an inclusive, evidence-based platform to gather information on socio-political challenges across the African continent". This initiative is intended to addresses the adaptation of governance models to the new and emerging challenges. The initiative interrogates the evolution of the concept of risk to the new concept of "compound risk"



arising from the creation of modern-day nations; the growing influence of non-state actors in human security; and the cycle of public risk perception.

Her presentation was complemented by the inputs of Amb. Salvator Matata of COMESA on the Role of RECs in advancing good

governance and democracy through Innovation; and the presentation of AGA-APSA Secretariat’s Head; Amb. Salah Hammad, on Silencing the Guns in Africa through Innovation and Youth Engagement.

Ms. Lydia Matte, SEMA’s country director in Uganda, identified the lack of public service trust by the Youth, as a contributing factor to the lack of inclusive and reliable data on service delivery. She underscored the need for effective and honest feedback on public service, to better respond to the people’s needs, by allowing and creating platforms where the citizens speak and engage freely. The SEMA platform enables young people to give feedback and recommendation anonymously on the public service.

The lack of reliable data was also addressed by Ms. Dina Ibrahim. As fake news and the misuse of freedom of expression by the media are on the rise, citizen’s support for media is declining more and more each year. Ms. Dina created the AkhbarMeter Media Observatory Project, as a platform to monitor the performance of the media outlets in Egypt, to identify unprofessional and unethical practices of the viral content using quantitative evaluation method. This is done to curb fake news, media manipulation and provide reliable information to the public through fact checking. This helps create a less polarized society and contribute to a peaceful and secure Egypt, and Africa at large.

Mr. Romaric Mouftaou, founder of Movement of New Type of Citizen (NTC), has a different approach to engage youth in decision making processes. His company’s ideology is to “equip citizens with a new mindset towards citizenship and teach them the skills to get involved for an inclusive governance” the objective is to fill Africa countries with a “generation of new types of citizens who are no longer spectators but actors and co-producers of the governance of their communities”. Through civic education programs and citizen actions campaigns, the NTC movement rolls out projects that enhance the mindsets and infrastructures placing young people at the center of all innovations.

Moderated by Ms. Hagar Azzoz of the AGA-APSA Secretariat, the presentations were followed by a very insightful Q&A session with the audience and enriching presentations on AU Continental Framework on Youth for Peace Security, and the Peace and Security

Council Mandated Study on the Roles and contribution of Youth on Peace and Security. The 'No Room for Hate Speech' campaign was also discussed and showcased together with the intersection of youth, technology and the African Union's theme of the year "arts, culture and heritage: leveraging for building an Africa we want".

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