

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### **AU Peace Fund and Football for Peace Kick Off Strategic Alliance for Peace and Development in Africa**



As Africa works to strengthen peace and stability in an evolving landscape, it is also advancing a dynamic agenda of development priorities. At the heart of this agenda are efforts to enhance social cohesion, engage youth more effectively, and build on existing foundations of stability. In response to these pressing goals, the demand for innovative partnerships and inclusive, African-led solutions continues to grow. The African Union Peace Fund is therefore expanding its collaboration with forward-looking organisations to explore new pathways toward advancing peace, inclusion, and sustainable progress.

The launch of a strategic alliance with the international non-profit organisation Football for Peace (FFP) reflects this commitment—recognising sport as a powerful catalyst for resource mobilization, youth empowerment, community resilience, and sustainable development across the continent.

The collaboration will see both organisations co-designing and implementing initiatives that integrate football diplomacy into peacebuilding efforts. The partnership aligns with the AU Peace Fund's mandate to support conflict prevention, mediation, and sustainable peace efforts.

Central to the partnership is the creation of an **“African Union - Football for Peace” team**—a unique squad of international football superstars, athletes, influencers, and diplomats. These Peacemakers will champion the AU–FFP alliance on a global stage, raise awareness of its initiatives, and inspire solidarity through exhibitions and multimedia campaigns.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025 in London, UK Mrs. Dagmawit Moges Bekele, Director of the African Union Peace Fund, stated: *“The African Union Peace Fund is proud to partner with Football for Peace in this unprecedented venture. By harnessing the universal language of football, this partnership will empower communities, foster intercultural dialogue, and galvanize young people across Africa and beyond to become agents of peace and sustainable development.”*

Mr. Kash Siddiqi, Co-Founder of Football for Peace and former international footballer, highlighted the significance of the partnership: *“This partnership marks a new chapter in how we see sport—not just as entertainment, but as a powerful platform for social impact. Together with the African Union Peace Fund, we are committed to building inclusive programmes that engage young people, break down barriers, and create opportunities for peace and progress.”*

Key components of the partnership include:

- Mobilising a network of sports ambassadors, public figures, and policymakers to champion peace and inclusive development;
- Forging alliances with local, regional, and international stakeholders to strengthen sports diplomacy as a tool for societal transformation;
- Launching targeted public awareness campaigns connecting football to peacebuilding initiatives;
- Researching and co-designing grassroots initiatives to integrate football into development strategies across Africa;
- Driving collaborative fundraising to support programme delivery and long-term investment.

The high-level signing ceremony in London brought together an extraordinary gathering of international dignitaries, royalty, athletes, and changemakers, including Claude Makelele, Oumar Niasse, Paul Pogba, Harry Redknapp, Dimitar Berbatov, Rachel Yankey OBE, HRH Princess Katerina of Yugoslavia, Makhtar Gueye, HH Sheikhha Hend Al Qassemi, Adebayo Akinfenwa, NFL All-Pro Josh Norman, and Super Bowl winner Jason Bell, alongside the UK Under Secretary of State for Equalities and Migration, MP Seema Malhotra.

This joint initiative underscores Africa's proactive role in global peace innovation—demonstrating how African-led solutions, powered by sport, can pave the way for conflict prevention, social transformation, and resilient communities.

### **About Football for Peace (FFP)**

Founded to leverage the unifying power of football, FFP uses sport as a platform for peacebuilding, inclusion, and advocacy. The organisation has delivered grassroots programmes across conflict-affected regions and mobilized high-profile ambassadors to promote dialogue and reconciliation.

### **About the African Union Peace Fund (AUPF)**

The AUPF was established to provide predictable, adequate, and sustainable financing for peace-related initiatives across Africa. The Fund prioritizes conflict prevention through mediation, early warning, preventive diplomacy and capacity-building, in line with the African Union's vision for a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

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