



Compilation of Outcome Statements from the  
2014 High Level Dialogue on  
Democracy, Human Rights and Governance and its Pre-Fora

# silencing the guns



AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS

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Dr. Aisha L. Abdullahi, Commissioner for Political Affairs  
laying a wreath at the Rwanda Genocide Memorial Site in  
Kigali as part of activities of the Women Pre-Forum

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## acronyms

AGA	African Governance Architecture
AGP	African Governance Platform
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union
REC	Regional Economic Communities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
YES	Youth Engagement Strategy

## table of contents

3	Preface
5	Strengthening Governance to Prevent, Manage and Resolve Conflicts in Africa
17	Youth Building a Culture of Democracy and Peace in Africa
23	Women in Democratisation and Peace Building in Africa
30	About the Annual High Level Dialogue
30	Appreciation
31	Contact



# preface

While Africa has taken significant steps toward improving democratic governance and reducing violence in recent years, a number of African Union Member States continue to face critical challenges to democratic governance and sustainable peace. In the past decade alone, the continent has witnessed armed conflicts and mass displacement in Somalia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; a devastating Ebola outbreak in parts of West Africa; terrorist acts in Nigeria and Kenya; and several other worrisome trends that continue to threaten peace and security on the continent.

In response to these critical challenges, the 21st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration on May 26, 2013, in which African leaders committed to ending all wars in Africa by 2020. As a result of this declaration, the African Governance Architecture (AGA) through its institutional mechanism, the African Governance Platform (AGP), convened the Third Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, focusing specifically on how to leverage democratic governance to end conflict under the theme “Silencing the Guns - Strengthening Governance to Prevent, Manage and Resolve Conflicts in Africa.” The dialogue, held in Dakar, Senegal, on October 30-31, 2014, was preceded by three pre-fora that brought together critical constituencies – civil society, youth, and women – under the same theme.

This report summarises the outcome statements from both the High Level Dialogue and its pre-fora. Participants at all four events affirmed the African Union’s commitment to democratic governance and ending violence. The meetings also emphasised the need to go beyond norm setting to norm implementation. The dialogue reinforced the importance of conflict prevention and the African Union’s responsibility to invest in early warning mechanisms. Experts discussed issues such as addressing ethnic diversity, promoting human rights, managing natural resources, encouraging reconciliation efforts, promoting demilitarisation on the continent, and strengthening AU institutions’ ability to address violent conflict.



Through the pre-fora, this year’s High Level Dialogue had more citizen engagement than ever before; recommendations from all three consultations informed discussions at the High Level Dialogue itself. The dialogue’s campaign, DGTrends, received over 120 million impressions on Twitter. Immediately after the High Level Dialogue, I traveled to Burkina Faso with a delegation of former heads of state, including H.E Olusegun Obasanjo, to aid in mediating a smooth transition after citizens rejected President Blaise Campaore’s attempts to prolong his time in power.

Moving forward, the African Union Commission (AUC) will continue to work with Member States to ensure effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the outcome statements. The issue is pressing and cannot be ignored or pushed aside by competing interests. I thank the entire Department of Political Affairs for its efforts and encourage members of the AGP to coordinate in promoting these recommendations in the future.

DR. AISHA L. ABDULLAHI  
COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS  
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

# 3rd Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in Africa: Trends Challenges and Prospects

Dakar, Senegal, October 30-31, 2014



# Silencing the Guns: Strengthening Governance to Prevent, Manage and Resolve Conflicts in Africa

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Third Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in Africa: Trends, Challenges, Prospects and Opportunities was held in Dakar, Senegal, on October 30-31, 2014. The theme of the Dialogue was “Silencing the Guns - Strengthening Governance to Prevent, Manage and Resolve Conflicts in Africa.” It was attended by representatives from all 54 African Union (AU) Member States (Permanent Representatives Committee), African Governance Architecture Platform Members (AU organs, institutions and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)), United Nations agencies, development partners, think tanks, civil society representatives, including women groups and youth organisations, eminent African personalities and academics.
2. The 50th Solemn Declaration committed African leaders to ending wars and violent conflicts by 2020. The overall objective of the High Level Dialogue was to explore strategies for ending violent conflicts on the continent, and to propose policy recommendations for implementation at both the African Union and Member States levels. **The Dialogue reiterated the need for articulating perspectives and strategies for silencing guns by 2020 through strengthening democratic governance as articulated in the Declaration.**
3. This Outcome Statement is a summary of the key issues and recommendations made at the High Level Dialogue toward “Silencing the Guns” in Africa by 2020.



## EMERGING ISSUES

4. Since independence, African states have made remarkable progress to build stable institutions of statehood and nationhood for managing diversity, encouraging participation, promoting equitable development, and encouraging regional integration. Furthermore, the continent as a whole has made profound strides to establish systems of democratic governance that have broadened competitive politics, improved democratic leadership changes, invigorated and enthused civic action, and resuscitated economies for growth and development.
5. Yet, some parts of Africa remain saddled by violent conflict and instability that are linked to competition over power and resources and the mismanagement of diversity. Conflicts in Africa are driven by governance and development deficits that reflect the challenges faced by institutions and mechanisms that seek to address the strains and pressures of pluralism and poverty. Widespread state fragility and national fragmentation combined with socioeconomic inequities continue to fuel violence and social discontent in many African countries. Democratisation in the face of ethnic, sectarian, and religious fissures has exacerbated conflicts that have further strained efforts aimed at building effective, legitimate, and representative states.







## RECOMMENDATIONS

6. The High Level Dialogue reiterated the fact that ending wars and silencing the guns should be a collective responsibility of African citizens, AU Member States, the AU, RECs, civil society organisations (CSOs), the private sector, faith-based organisations, academia, and the international community. Participants noted, with a sense of optimism, that AU Shared Values instruments, including the Constitutive Act of the African Union; African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; the **Protocol** Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU; the African Peer Review Mechanism and the High Level Dialogue on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa, all aim to strengthen democratic and participatory governance, peace, and security in Africa. Democratic and participatory governance is both a pre-condition and outcome of durable peace and inclusive, equitable, and people-centered development.

### **RE-INVIGORATING THE SPIRIT OF PAN- AFRICANISM AND AFRICAN RENAISSANCE**

7. Transformational regional integration requires that the processes of establishing inclusive and sustainable development are anchored on effective, efficient and accountable governance. Such democratic governance dictates that African citizens are enabled to become drivers and owners of their own development and not just recipients of development projects and programmes without their effective participation. The AU Agenda 2063 and the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda call on African leaders and citizens to embrace the spirit of pan-Africanism and African renaissance rooted in people-to-people and institutional integration processes.

8. The operationalisation of Agenda 2063 requires specific programmes and actions at national, regional and continental levels. The aim is to deepen a shared African identity, unity, integration, solidarity, self-confidence, collective self-reliance and self-respect, all of which are integral parts of ending violent conflict on the continent. **The AU, RECs, Member States and the global pan-African community have to make a concerted effort to revive the pan-Africanist movement and support the convening of the 8th Pan-African Congress in Accra, Ghana, in 2015.**
  
9. The solidarity and unity of all Africans and Afro-descendants is critical to the achievement of the Agenda 2063. **To ensure the sustainable implementation of Agenda 2063, Africa's wealth and the resources it generates domestically should be deliberately applied through agreed mechanisms to finance and sustain the operationalisation of the Agenda 2063 and the Common Africa Position on Post-2015 Development Agenda.**

## FROM NORM-SETTING TO NORM IMPLEMENTATION

10. The AU and RECs already have an expansive and robust set of normative frameworks for promoting democratic and participatory governance for peace and development. However, a huge gap exists between norm-setting and implementation of agreed norms and policies at national levels. In some instances, AU Member States have limited human, material and financial resources to effectively domesticate and implement agreed upon continental policies and standards. This gap needs to be addressed by the AU, RECs and Member States as a matter of urgency. **As a first step, the High Level Dialogue called for the establishment of time-bound implementation frameworks that have dedicated budgets, systems, competencies, and capacities for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and follow up.**
  
11. The High Level Dialogue called upon all AU Member States to ratify, domesticate and implement key AU Shared Values Instruments by the year 2020. They called upon the African Union Commission to ensure synergy and harmonisation of the internal coordination, resourcing, capacity development and evaluation systems.



12. In particular, the High Level Dialogue recommended stronger synergy and complementarity between AGA and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). **It was recommended that a joint working group of the AU Permanent Representative Committee, Peace and Security Council and AU Commission should be established and tasked with ensuring that the AGA and APSA structures, processes and work plans are harmonised before the next High Level Dialogue in 2015.**

### INVESTING IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, EARLY WARNING AND EARLY RECOVERY

13. The High Level Dialogue noted that the AU, Member States and RECs have various forms of early warning and disaster response systems that operate with varying degrees of efficiency and effectiveness. It called for increased investment of time, energy and resources in preventive diplomacy, strengthening early warning and early recovery of conflict-affected countries.
14. This requires robust systems to detect crisis signals, preventive diplomatic entry in volatile situations and candid analysis and reporting of conflict situations. **Where such systems already exist, Member States, AU Organs and Institutions, RECs, civil society and the international community should share intelligence and pool the requisite resources and expertise for timely, preventive responses before the eruption of full blown conflict, as in the situation in Burkina Faso.**

### BUILDING CAPABLE, EFFECTIVE AND LEGITIMATE STATES

15. The African state is central to developmental democratic governance, policy formulation and implementation, post-conflict recovery, building national cohesion, guaranteeing human and state security, decentralisation and local economic development, and enforcement of human rights and the social contract.
16. **The High Level Dialogue called for redoubling of efforts to build the institutional and administrative capacities of the African states.** Capable, responsive, accountable and democratic states engender a culture of values and performance-based leadership and institutions. Such states have the requisite legitimacy and authority, which leaves little room for social upheavals and rebellion born out of discontent, marginalisation and exclusion. Effective state capacity is crucial for efficient service delivery and the fight against impunity, corruption and abuse of public office. State capacity is also important for regulating illicit financial and capital outflows that are driven by vested internal and external interests and actors.
17. Capable, democratic developmental African states stand a greater chance to silence the guns. **The High Level Dialogue called for a capacity needs assessment in African countries that may require technical support, especially those emerging from conflict. The AU, Member States and RECs, through the existing governance, peace and security architectures should improve coordination and share comparable practices, lessons as well as human and financial resources with countries that require rebuilding and the re-establishment of norms and institutions of democratic governance, peace and security.**







## CONSTRUCTIVE MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY

18. The High Level Dialogue called upon the AU, Member States and RECs to harness African socio-cultural and intergenerational diversity for sustainable development anchored on the spirit of pan-Africanism and the African renaissance. The continent's diversity should not be a curse; it should impel Africans toward greater unification and integration. Constructive management of diversity, through youth engagement and empowerment; specific language policies; proportional representation in electoral systems; political tolerance; local economic development; decentralisation of power and resources; and federal systems of governance, should be strengthened by AU Member States as tools of diversity management.
19. **The AU, in partnership with African CSOs, youth and women's organisations, academia and the media, should create communities of practice for African countries to share lessons learned, innovations and effective practices as a way of entrenching a culture of constructive management of diversity on the continent.**

## PREVENTING ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

20. The High Level Dialogue noted that some elections in Africa have promoted democratisation and peacebuilding, while others have reversed the gains made in the past and ignited bloodshed. The roots of electoral violence have varied among countries, with some bouts of violence stemming from inefficient management of elections, while others stem from structural deficiencies such as unemployment, poverty and inequality.
21. The High Level Dialogue recommended that in addressing and redressing electoral violence, the AU, Member States and RECs should deal with causal factors stemming both from the electoral cycle and more structural roots. Doing so will ensure that policy responses go beyond mere symptoms of violence. **The AU, Member States, RECs and civil society representatives should thus make greater investment in long term pre-election assessments that integrate mediation, preventive diplomacy and effective management of potential electoral disputes.**
22. The High Level Dialogue noted a growing tendency to pressure countries emerging from crisis and conflict into immediately holding elections as an ill-conceived policy option. **African countries emerging from violent conflict should consider seriously the timing of post-conflict elections to ensure that they are premised upon solid foundations of peace, stability and political legitimacy. There is need to ensure that elections held soon after episodes of violent conflict or social upheaval have no potential of plunging countries back into cycle of political violence.**





## DEMILITARISING POLITICS

23. After decades of relative stability, the continent has witnessed a resurgence of the militarisation of politics. The High Level Dialogue reiterated that demilitarisation of politics is a crucial step in silencing the guns. It called for an end to the politicisation of the security establishment and to the securitisation of politics characterised by instances where political elites establish and control militias that work parallel to formal security agencies. In order to reverse this trend, the High Level Dialogue called upon African countries to recommit to professional security establishments accountable to civilian authority through parliament.
24. Formal security agencies should not compete for space with informal militias. African states should invest more resources in managing, regulating and controlling private security companies, which operate in national settings and across borders. **The High Level Dialogue called upon the AUC to propose a code of standards and practice for private security companies that operate at a regional level or in multi-country settings as well as mechanisms for ensuring their accountability by December 2015.**

## EXPANDING THE FRONTIERS OF HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

25. In silencing the guns, African countries need to do much more in the area of expanding the frontiers of a human rights culture. Human rights, especially the rights of women and girls, must be protected and promoted. It is largely deficiencies in embracing a culture of human rights that has led to some of the tragic cases of mass atrocities and genocide on the continent.
26. Silencing guns in Africa entails committing to eradicating conditions that lead to international crimes, such as genocide and impunity, among others. Transitional justice mechanisms should be embedded in the continent's human rights architecture. This is where Africa-specific methodologies and culturally embedded strategies for transitional justice and conflict transformation such as the Gacaca courts in Rwanda, the Ubuntu system in South Africa and Mot Oput in Northern Uganda, become extremely useful. These should be embraced, strengthened and reinforced.
27. In support of the declaration by the African Union that 2015 is the Year for Women's Empowerment in the Context of Agenda 2063 and 2016 as the Year for Human Rights, with special reference to the Rights of Women, **the High Level Dialogue called for the theme of the 2015 High Level Dialogue to focus on women's empowerment and leadership.**



## MANAGING AFRICA'S NATURAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

28. Africa has normative frameworks at the national, REC and continental levels to govern the extractive sectors and natural resources generally. The intricate linkage between security and natural resource rent abuse or usage is a key factor to silencing the guns. The High Level Dialogue reiterated that Africa requires optimum and transparent extraction and beneficiation of its resources in order to sustainably combat insecurity and achieve sustainable development and peace.
29. It noted that the mismanagement of Africa's natural resources has resulted in massive corruption that has left African economies bleeding, as demonstrated by the Thabo Mbeki Panel Report and the Kofi Annan Africa Progress Report on illicit resource outflows and exploitation of Africa's natural resources, respectively. The High Level Dialogue noted that a growing number of Africa's violent conflicts are over distribution of rents and benefits from these natural resources. Resource based conflicts often find virulent expression in religious and ethnic sectarianism and radicalisation.
30. **The AU, Member States and RECs have to ensure effective governance, distribution and redistribution of natural resources to address issues of corruption as well as illicit financial and capital outflows as envisaged by the African Mining Vision.**

## ADDRESSING THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF MARGINALISED SOCIAL GROUPS

31. African countries are constituted of heterogeneous ethno-linguistic and religious groups that are sometimes bounded by spatial, economic, social and political inequalities. These inequalities and class differences are often exacerbated by uneven development within regions. In their efforts to silence the guns, AU, Member States and RECs will need to address the specific challenges facing marginalised social groups including women, children, young people, minorities and people with disabilities.
32. It is imperative that women and youth empowerment constitute part of the broader package for silencing guns. Interest of children, minorities and people with disabilities need to be taken into account during conflict situations, during processes of peace-building and development process in peacetime. **The consolidation and effective implementation of various national and continental women and youth engagement strategies by the AU, Member States, RECs and civil society is a critical component of efforts geared toward silencing the guns.**
33. **The High Level Dialogue recommended that existing continental benchmarks and frameworks on empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised social groups should be made an integral part of AU democratic governance, peace building and conflict transformation processes. In order for this to be sustained, tools and mechanisms for mainstreaming the existing normative expectations should be developed and AU mediators should be trained on how to use the same.**



### ADDRESSING FORCED DISPLACEMENT DUE TO VIOLENT CONFLICTS

34. The High Level Dialogue noted that the disproportionate impact of violent conflicts on the continent, including the massive forced displacement of communities leading to millions of internally displaced people, refugees, stateless people and irregular migrants. In most conflict zones, such as the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, the Great Lakes region and parts of North Africa especially, Libya forced migration accounts for over 10 million refugees and equally high numbers of internally displaced persons. Data sources indicate that 43,000 young Africans have died since the year 2000 trying to cross the high seas to seek perceived better opportunities in Europe. While some of these are economic migrants, others are political refugees fleeing violence in their home countries.
35. **The High Level Dialogue called upon the AU, Member States and RECs to find durable solutions to forced displacement in Africa due to wars and violent conflicts by strengthening early warning and response systems.** But once wars erupt, remedial measures are needed to mitigate their adverse impact on civilian populations and discourage migration.
36. **The AU, Member States, RECs and international community should work closely to establish locally owned and led support systems for the affected communities and States. The AU, Member States and RECs should work closely together to develop a Common African Position on the Humanitarian Situation in Africa in anticipation of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, in June 2016.**

### PROMOTING RECONCILIATION, SOCIAL HEALING AND NATIONAL HARMONY

37. The High Level Dialogue noted that national and local systems and cultures of peace are linked to governance mechanisms and processes designed to guarantee justice, freedom and human rights. A key foundation to achieving national cohesion is national reconciliation after disputes or violence. **In pursuance of the AU Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.501(X-XII), declaring 2014-2024 as the Madiba Nelson Mandela Decade of Reconciliation in Africa, it was noted that Member States should invest in reconciliation efforts aimed at reconciliation and building social harmony and facilitating successful nation-building across Africa.**
38. In countries emerging from violent conflicts, a good mixture of social healing, justice and accountability mechanisms are required for sustainable peace and democracy building. **The High Level Dialogue called upon the AU, Member States and RECs to adopt and implement the AU Transitional Justice Framework as a means to addressing issues of impunity, national reconciliation and recovery anchored upon the principles of justice, peace, and reconciliation as encapsulated in the AU Shared Values instruments.**



### PROMOTING EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

39. Democratic and participatory governance and peace and security are key preconditions for sustainable human development, which is people-centered. Most of violent conflicts in Africa stem from governance deficits and development failure. In order to address the structural root causes of violent conflict, countries must address socio-economic challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. The High Level Dialogue reiterated the need to ensure that economic policy is linked with social policy and adequate investment in the productive capacities of African states and people. **The High Level Dialogue called for economic and social policies that evolve out of participatory processes and advance a culture of democracy and peace.**

40. The High Level Dialogue reaffirmed the imperative of greater engagement and participation of African citizens in state and continental affairs, especially policy making and implementation toward silencing the guns. **The High Level Dialogue commended the AU for improving its social media engagement strategy and called for strengthening citizen engagement through the Economic Social and Cultural Council. The High Level Dialogue also encouraged the use of traditional media and other participatory processes such as people to people dialogues, information sharing and feedback with Member States in order to ensure continental and national policies are owned and driven by beneficiaries.**

### PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE GENERATION, POLICY ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION

41. **The AU, Member States and RECs should engage, partner and cooperate more with African think tanks, universities, research institutions and media outlets to generate and disseminate evidence-based knowledge, research and policy analysis on strengthening democratic governance and addressing violent conflicts with a view to sharpening their policy responses and interventions aimed at silencing the guns.**



08

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07

ACCOUNTABLE

GOVERNANCE

WILL

SILENCE THE GUNS

Youth Pre- Forum to the 3rd Annual High Level  
Democracy and Peace in Africa Dialogue on  
Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in  
Africa: Trends, Challenges and Prospects

Nairobi, Kenya, September 15-17, 2014





# Silencing the Guns: Youth Building a Culture of Democracy and Peace in Africa

## INTRODUCTION

1. From September 15-17, 2014, two hundred (200) young people, male and female, representing youth-led organisations and movements from across the continent, as well as AU Member States, young members of parliament, private sector, civil society organisations, researchers and development partners met in Nairobi, Kenya to address the rising impact of conflict on the socio-economic development of the continent, its impact on Africa's increasingly youthful population, and to examine and recommend through a youthful perspective, practical solution needed to silence the guns in Africa.
2. The youth pre-forum, was aimed at examining situation of youth as perpetrators and victims of conflict, and the need to harness their energy toward mitigating and curbing the rise of conflict on the continent.
3. Organised by the African Governance Architecture in the African Union's Department of Political Affairs with technical and financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), GIZ and Infonet Africa, the Youth Consultation was convened as part of the build up to the High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance to be hosted under the patronage of President Macky Sall in Dakar, Senegal in October 2014. The pre-forum provided young people the space to impart, contribute and influence the discourse on how their passion, energies, insights, creativity and innovation can be harnessed toward building a culture of democracy and peace in Africa, and bringing an end to conflicts on the continent.
4. Following exchanges on current policies and practices with regard to the role and impact of youth in crisis and post conflict peacebuilding, participants noted the following issues:

## EMERGING ISSUES

5. **Acknowledged** that as an estimated 60% of the overall African population, Africa's youth are at the heart of violent conflicts on the continent, which have been exacerbated by acute governance deficits and hindered development. Conflict prevention, strategic intervention and post-conflict reconstruction aimed at silencing the guns must be rooted in sturdy, resilient, participatory, efficient, effective and inclusive governance systems.
6. **Noted** that Africa's greatest resource is its youthful population and that through their active and full participation, Africans can surmount the difficulties that lie ahead. In particular, Article 11(2) of the AU Youth Charter provides that "Each State Party shall [...] take the measures to promote active youth participation in society including; guaranteeing the participation of youth in parliament and other decision-making bodies, facilitate the creation or strengthening of platforms for youth participation in decision-making at local, national, regional, and continental levels of governance; give priority to policies and programmes including youth advocacy and peer-to-peer programmes for marginalised youth, such as out-of-school and out-of-work youth, to offer them the opportunity and motivation to re-integrate into mainstream society and provide technical and financial support."
7. **Further noted** with concern the situation of African youth, many of whom are marginalised from mainstream society through inequalities in income, wealth and power, unemployment and underemployment, infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, living in situations of poverty and hunger, experiencing illiteracy and poor quality educational systems, restricted access to health services and to information, exposure to violence including gender violence, engaging in armed conflicts and experiencing various forms of discrimination.
8. **Recalled** that regional and international obligations and commitments at global and regional levels address youth empowerment and inclusion in governance and economic policy making and implementation processes.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **ON STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE TO SILENCE THE GUNS IN AFRICA:**

9. The AGA Secretariat should ensure inter-departmental and multi-sectoral partnerships with relevant AU organs and institutions, civil society, development partners and media representatives in the implementation of the AGA Youth Engagement Strategy (YES). Such partnerships must ensure the active involvement of the African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).
10. The AU should support national and regional youth structures to promote ratification and domestication as well as assessment and reporting on compliance of AU shared values and instruments as a key means of silencing the guns on the continent.
11. AGA, through its cluster on Democracy, should provide opportunities for young people across the continent to participate and engage effectively with various organs and institutions of the AU and RECs on issues of elections, parliaments, political parties amongst others. In particular, AGA should facilitate youth involvement in pre-election processes, election observation and post-election audits.
12. The AGA Secretariat should coordinate with AU Youth Division and partners to develop a continental youth mentorship initiative toward strengthening democratic governance, rule of law, constitutionalism, human rights and humanitarian assistance.
13. The Humanitarian Affairs Cluster should, in collaboration with AU Youth Division, develop a Youth Peace Corps to support emergency relief and humanitarian crises in AU Member States.



## ON PEACEBUILDING AND PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY:

14. The AU should encourage and support Member States to adopt structures that strengthen conflict resolution, peacemaking and peacebuilding at national, regional and continental levels.
15. Member States emerging from conflict should make deliberate efforts to ensure that young people participate and are included in preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, mediation and post conflict reconstruction and development efforts.
16. The AU Panel of the Wise should proactively engage in preventive diplomacy on the basis of efficient and effective operationalisation of the AU and RECs early warning mechanisms.
17. Member States should commit to the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and accelerate efforts to eradicate small arms proliferation in Africa.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE:

18. Member States should develop and/or strengthen national youth structures to create opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, jobs and engagement in public service.
19. The African Union Youth Programme should take a lead in enhancing the capacity of young people to effectively engage and participate in public service and entrepreneurship.
20. The AGA platform should institutionalise and broaden the youth pre-fora to the High Level Dialogue to include capacity strengthening and training in leadership, public service and entrepreneurship.
21. The AU should encourage Member States at a political and technical level to make greater investments in science, technology and innovations to spur sustainable economic development.





## IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM AND FOLLOW UP:

22. The AU should identify and request sitting heads of state to champion the implementation of recommendations from the youth pre-fora as the key contribution by the youth to silencing the guns at the 2015 January Summit of the Heads of State.
23. The AU should strengthen its communication, media outreach and citizen engagement strategies to ensure that they are user-friendly, accessible and impact oriented.
24. The AU should partner and collaborate with young researchers and youth oriented think tanks in data and knowledge generation, management and dissemination on democratic governance trends, challenges, and opportunities in Africa.
25. The AGA secretariat should coordinate the implementation of the recommendations as well as the AU YES.

## CONCLUSIONS

26. In conclusion, participants expressed satisfaction at the quality of discussion and called on AGA and the Platform to prioritise the implementation of the recommendations. The AGA secretariat is also requested to ensure that the conclusions are implemented in a participatory and inclusive manner.
27. Participants expressed their immense gratitude to the African Union Commission, UNDP, the GIZ and Infonet Africa for convening and hosting the meeting and for the warm hospitality accorded during the stay in Kenya.



Women Pre- Forum to the 3rd Annual High  
Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights  
and Governance in Africa:  
Trends, Challenges and Prospects

Kigali, Rwanda , October 6 -7, 2014





# Silencing the Guns: Women in Democratisation and Peace Building in Africa

## INTRODUCTION

1. From October 6-7, 2014, two hundred (200) men and women, drawn from gender experts from across the AU Member States, organs, RECs, development partners, civil society organisations, academia, media, private sector and think tanks met in Kigali, Rwanda. The purpose of the meeting was to foster a deeper understanding of the trends, challenges and opportunities for women in strengthening democratic governance toward silencing guns in Africa by 2020. The meeting also aimed at identifying practical initiatives and strategies that can enhance women's inclusion and engagement in peacebuilding and democratisation processes on the continent.
2. The principal aim of the pre-forum was to examine trends, challenges and opportunities for enhancing the role of women in contributing to ending conflict and attaining sustainable development in Africa.
3. The AU organised the Gender Pre-Forum as part of the AGA Annual Dialogue Series on Democratic Governance Trends (DG Trends). AGA convened the Gender Pre-Forum in advance of the High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance that was held from October 30-31, 2014 in Dakar, Senegal. The pre-forum was co-hosted and supported by the Government of Rwanda through the Rwanda Governance Board and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, UNDP, GIZ and UN Women.
4. Following deliberations on the current trends, challenges, prospects and opportunities for women in democratic governance and peacebuilding, participants noted the following issues and recommendations.

## EMERGING ISSUES

5. Acknowledged that women and girls suffer disproportionately from the effects of armed conflicts in Africa, which have been exacerbated by democratic governance deficits that continue to trigger violent conflicts on the Continent.
6. Further acknowledged the pivotal role women have previously and continue to play in conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction and recovery as well as the development of strategic interventions that address violent conflicts on the continent. Such interventions are pivotal in silencing the guns in Africa and should be strengthened and sustained through investment in strong, resilient, participatory, efficient, effective and inclusive democratic governance institutions and processes.
7. Noted that despite the fact that women and girls are often the most affected during violent conflicts, they are excluded from conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives, rendering them victims rather than actors in these processes.
8. Further noted that even with efforts to provide affirmative action aimed at enhancing their participation in public spheres, there still exist gaps in the effective participation of women in democratic governance systems.
9. Reaffirmed that women's participation in peacebuilding efforts is a matter of gender equality and universal human rights, which is crucial to achieving sustainable peace, economic recovery, social cohesion and political legitimacy.
10. Reiterated the need for enhanced women's leadership and participation in effective management of diversity, natural resource governance and socio-economic development of the continent.
11. Acknowledged the progress made in the adoption of African Shared Values norms, institutions and strategies especially the Constitutive Act, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; the Protocol to the African Charter for Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol); and the AU Gender Policy (2009).
12. Recalled that there are also various regional and international instruments that bestow obligations and commitments on Member States to address women's empowerment, inclusion in democratic governance, participation in socio-economic policymaking as well as implementation processes, although many have either not been ratified or implemented.
13. Commend the AU for appointing Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security and reiterated the need to provide the necessary support for the execution of her mandate.
14. Inspired by the progress made by Rwanda through the adoption and implementation of effective transitional justice that include innovative and locally owned solutions to accountability, national unity and reconciliation as well post conflict reconstruction and development. Commended Rwanda as an exemplar of what is possible on the continent with visionary leadership and participatory democratic governance to silence the guns. Further called on Rwanda to share comparable lessons with Member States emerging from conflict.
15. Acknowledged the need for AU and Member States to fight destructive ideologies including terrorism, genocide, religious extremism and radicalisation. Further noted that the gender dimension of these destructive ideologies should be given special attention, including the abduction of young girls, use of rape as a weapon of war during conflict and genocide as well as the militarisation of the family. Reiterated the need for experience and knowledge sharing through dialogue and development of a community of practice among Member States.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION, ACCESS AND LEADERSHIP ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE TOWARDS SILENCING THE GUNS IN AFRICA BY 2020**

16. The AU should work more closely with Member States in the implementation of African Shared Values Instruments, particularly the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance and the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa aimed at enhancing inclusive participation of women in democratic governance processes on the continent. Such engagement should go beyond election observation to also include local governance, public service and socio-economic empowerment.
17. The AU should provide political and technical support to Member States in the implementation of regional commitments to addressing governance deficits, especially on unconstitutional changes of government. In that regard, the AUC, through the AGA Platform, should scale up advocacy for the ratification, domestication and implementation of regional, continental and international instruments that guarantee the rights of women to effectively participate in socio-economic and political development processes.
18. The AUC, through the Inter-Departmental Task Force on Conflict Prevention, should develop an action plan and implementation strategy aimed at engendering conflict prevention, peacebuilding, post conflict reconstruction and development programmes of the Union.





19. Member States should strengthen democratic governance structures at the national and local levels that facilitate dialogue, engagement and inclusion of African citizens, particularly women and youth, in order to ensure inclusive development interventions on the continent.
20. AGA should develop and build strategic partnerships and initiatives with regional and national civil society networks, women's formations, media, faith based organisations and development partners to enhance the capacity and involvement of grassroots women in democratic governance and peacebuilding initiatives.
21. Member States, in close collaboration with civil society partners, should strengthen and implement civic education policies that are aimed at enhancing civic awareness among citizens at the national and subnational levels to address governance challenges and advance opportunities to improve democracy.
22. The AU should intensify efforts aimed at providing the opportunity for women to play more pivotal roles in the conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, mediation, preventive diplomacy, and post conflict reconstruction and development at all levels from the grassroots to inter-state.
23. The AU should proactively discourage confrontational politics in democratisation processes on the continent and encourage consensus building among all stakeholders in seeking to silence the guns in Africa by 2020.
24. AGA through its citizen, youth and women engagement strategies should form strategic partnerships and alliances with civil society organisations, media and various national structures of Member States to share and implement comparable practices on the continent, including success stories of armed conflict resolutions and peacebuilding initiatives, which can be used to guide current efforts on silencing guns and restoring sustainable peace and reconciliation in post conflict countries.
25. The AU, in close collaboration with Member States, should intensify the efforts aimed at developing engendered natural resources management frameworks, to enable women actively participate in the management and negotiation processes as well as benefit from natural resources.
26. Member States should engage with civil society organisations, media, faith based organisations and the private sector to fight masculinity tendencies in households through civic education.
27. Member States should work in close collaboration with RECs, regional mechanisms and civil society organisations to build the capacity of women to meaningfully engage in peace processes as well as for self-empowerment.
28. AGA should institutionalise the Gender Pre-Forum to the Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in Africa.



**RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW AND UPHOLDING CONSTITUTIONALISM IN SILENCING THE GUNS BY 2020**

- 29. The AU should strengthen structures for Member States reporting on the administrative and legislative measures undertaken to implement the various AU Shared Values Instruments.
- 30. The African Union, through the Pan African Parliament, should partner closely with parliaments in the oversight of compliance to various national, regional and continental commitments and obligations.
- 31. Member states should institutionalise the quota systems in their respective countries to enhance affirmative action on women's participation in elected positions.
- 32. Civil society organisations should strengthen their interventions around advocacy on the various normative frameworks that engender popular participation of African citizens.

**PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS IN SILENCING THE GUNS**

- 33. The AU organs and institutions with human rights protection and promotion mandates should be strengthened to effectively and efficiently monitor Member State compliance of agreed norms and standards.
- 34. The AU should strengthen accountability mechanisms at the regional level and especially at the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights to ensure Member States implement legal commitments on the rights and welfare of women and girls.
- 35. The AU, in line with its dedication of the 2015 Summit to Women's Rights, should advocate for the universal ratification and strengthening of administrative and financial measures as well as structures for the domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol by Member States.



36. Member States and civil society should cooperate and coordinate efforts to attain credible and legitimate transitional justice processes and initiatives which promote innovative local solutions to post conflict reconciliation and social cohesion on the continent.
37. Member States should provide adequate legislative and judicial mechanisms to address impunity and crimes committed against women and girls during conflict situations as a deterrent for future occurrences.
38. Development partners should support measures and initiatives aimed at enhancing the institutional capacity of state and non-state actors in advocacy, monitoring, reporting and documenting best practices on the promotion and protection of women's rights.

### **ENHANCING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN SILENCING THE GUNS BY 2020**

39. Member States should ensure national disaster policies and response initiatives that involve and include women by building the capacity of national disaster preparedness institutions and first responders on the vulnerabilities of women and girls during conflict and post conflict situations.
40. Member States should adopt policies and mechanisms aimed at strengthening structures for Early Warning and Early Action at national levels to stem the outbreak of conflicts on the continent.
41. Member States and development partners should collaborate on measures aimed at enhancing security for citizens to ensure durable solutions to peacebuilding on the continent.
42. Civil society organisations should develop structures aimed at providing complementary psycho-social support in post conflict situations in Africa. This should focus on partnering with Member States in the rehabilitation, reintegration and resettlement of victims of conflict.
43. Member States should put an arms embargo on countries emerging from conflict to stem the tide of arms proliferation on the continent.
44. AGA, through its humanitarian assistance cluster, should develop a humanitarian assistance coordination model to ensure effective and efficient deployment of assistance in conflict and post conflict situations.





## CONCLUSIONS

45. In conclusion, participants expressed satisfaction at the quality of discussions and called on the AUC to prioritise the implementation of the various recommendations from the meeting. The AUC, through the AGA secretariat was tasked with ensuring that the recommendations are widely shared and disseminated and to follow a process to support and ensure effective implementation in a participatory and inclusive manner.
46. Participants expressed their immense gratitude to the African Union Commission, the Government of Rwanda, the Rwanda Governance Board, UNDP, GIZ and Infonet Africa for convening and hosting the meeting as well as for the warm hospitality accorded to all delegates during the stay in Rwanda.

## about the annual high level dialogue

The Annual High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance provides a frank, open and inclusive platform for Member States, AU organs and institutions, Regional Economic Communities, African citizens, think tanks, civil society, media, private sector, philanthropists, and development actors to engage and share comparable experiences and lessons on how to improve governance, consolidate democracy and foster effective realization of human and peoples' rights on the continent.

The Annual Dialogue also referred to as DGTrends is a flagship programme of the African Governance Architecture and Platform. The AGA Platform provides a unique opportunity for African peoples and institutions to interact, engage and participate effectively in the development agenda of the continent.

## appreciation

The Africa Governance Architecture Secretariat remains infinitely grateful to the various individuals, and partner institutions who supported the successful hosting of the 2014 High Level Dialogue and its Pre-Fora. We are very proud of our partnership and collaboration with:

- The Government of Kenya
- The Government of Rwanda
- The Government of Senegal
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- National Democratic Institute
- Institute for Peace and Security Studies
- International IDEA
- Africa Governance Institute
- GIZ
- Infonet Africa
- Youth Hub Africa

## contact

The AGA Platform welcomes inputs, ideas and perspectives of the broad spectrum of African citizens through its traditional and new media platforms

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# silencing the guns



Compilation of Outcome Statements from the  
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Democracy, Human Rights and Governance and its Pre-Fora



AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS