JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Youth for Peace Ethiopia: Cross-Regional Dialogue and Experience Sharing Workshop
Building the capacity of Young People in nation building, governance and peacebuilding efforts

Addis Ababa, 29 November 2019: As part of wider efforts to build the capacity of young people in nation and peacebuilding processes, the Youth for Peace (Y4P) Africa Program of the African Union Commission, managed by its Peace and Security Department, in collaboration with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Ministry of Peace (MoP) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, convened a two-day workshop themed: “Youth for Peace Ethiopia: Cross-regional Dialogue and Experience Sharing” with youth representatives from Ethiopia and across the continent, from 26 to 27 November 2019, at the AU Headquarters.

The two-day workshop provided a platform for young people to share experiences on the roles and contributions of youth in nation and peacebuilding in Ethiopia and across the continent. The forum also identified threats to national cohesion, peace and security in Ethiopia and proposed strategic options to transform the threats including envisaged roles for youth; as well as interrogated the challenges hindering the meaningful participation of youth in all spectrums of peace and security in Africa and recommended ways to address them. The cross-regional workshop brought together 200 participants composed of youth from the different regions and cities of Ethiopia, the newly appointed African Youth Ambassadors for Peace, youth representatives from other African Member States, representatives from IGAD, Civil Society Organizations, the Ministry of Peace and the AU Commission.

Speaking at the opening of the workshop, Ambassador Smail Chergui, Commissioner, Peace and Security Department of the AUC, commended the Government and People of Ethiopia for the ongoing political and institutional reforms particularly their efforts to promote and ensure the empowerment and participation of the youth in peace and development initiatives in the country. "It is my greatest hope that we can indeed achieve the main objective of dissuading youth from all acts of violence, transforming the stereotypes that they are perpetrators of violence and effectively working with them in peacebuilding efforts to achieve sustainable peace, security and development," he said.

In her opening remarks, H.E. Muferihat Kamil, Minister of Peace, Ministry of Peace of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, stated ‘Peace’ has always been a valuable asset for all citizens and in order to sustain peace, Ethiopians have always preserved their indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms intact. “Togetherness, humanity, brotherhood and peace are paramount in the shared values of conflict resolution and traditional justice systems in all parts
of our country. The role and contribution of youth in re-establishing these values is critical”. Following the Minister’s remarks, the African Union Youth Envoy, Ms. Aya Chebbi, also stated that the Youth4Peace Ethiopia program is a good opportunity for creating a network of fellow youth across the continent “because we live in an interconnected world and our actions affect our neighbors and other parts of our continent”.

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Note to the Editor

About Youth for Peace Africa (Y4P) Program
The Youth for Peace (Y4P) Africa Program of the African Union Commission, managed by its Peace and Security Department, was launched in September 2018, in Lagos, Nigeria, with the mandate of implementing Article 17 of the Africa Youth Charter (AYC), United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 and all relevant regional, AU and international instruments, relating to the role of the youth in the promotion of peace and security in Africa and to contribute towards the actualization of Aspiration four (4) and six (6) of Agenda 2063, especially its flagship project – Silencing the Guns by 2020.

The Program primarily seeks to promote the meaningful participation of youth in all spectrums of peace and security by engaging them as leaders, partners and implementers of peace initiatives but also working to dissuade them from all acts of violence.

Ethiopia towards political and institutional reforms to build and consolidate democracy
The Government of Ethiopia, within its broader effort to build and consolidate democracy has embarked on a series of political and institutional reforms nation-wide. These reforms focus on good governance, strengthening the democratic system and its institutions, promotion of human rights and opening up the political space. These political reforms are expected to create a more accountable and transparent governance that is responsive to its citizens. It also involves guaranteeing democratic rights to ensure the participation of citizens, including women, youth and all other parts of society in political governance and socio-economic development. Although, Ethiopia is still at a very early stage of the political reform process, various initiatives and programs have been launched with the objective of strengthening and transforming institutions, frameworks and practices, to facilitate the democratic transformation process.