



OPENING REMARKS BY

**H.E. AMBASSADOR BANKOLE ADEOYE,
COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND
SECURITY**

AT THE

**5TH CONTINENTAL DIALOGUE ON YOUTH, PEACE AND
SECURITY AND WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY**

10 – 12 AUGUST 2026, BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI

- **Excellency, President of the Republic of Burundi, the Chairperson of the African Union and African Union Champion on Youth, Peace and Security;**
- **Excellency, First Lady of the Republic of Burundi;**
- **Excellency, Former President of the Republic of Burundi and Chair of the AU Panel of the Wise;**
- **Excellency, Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) for the month of August 2026;**
- **Excellency, AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security;**
- **Excellency, UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region and Representative of the UN Secretary General;**
- **Distinguished Co-Chairs of the FemWise-Africa and Women Leaders here present;**
- **Esteemed members of the WiseYouth Network;**
- **Distinguished African Youth Ambassadors for Peace;**
- **Representatives of Development Partners;**
- **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.**

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, it is my distinct honor to participate at this **5th Continental Dialogue on Youth, Peace and Security and Women, Peace and Security**. I wish to express profound appreciation to His Excellency President Évariste Ndayishimiye, for your leadership as Chair of the African Union, and the AU Champion on Youth, Peace and Security. I thank the Government and good people of Burundi for the continued commitment to hosting this important continental platform consistently over the past five years.

2. This Dialogue has become the continent's foremost platform for advancing intergenerational convergence on peace and security. This year's Dialogue, convened under the theme "**Water, Peace and Inclusive Leadership by Women and Youth in Preventing and Managing Conflicts**," is both timely and consequential. It reminds us that peace is not built only by responding to conflict after it erupts, but by creating the conditions that prevent conflict from emerging in the first place.

3. As we begin our deliberations, I would like to reflect on **five priorities** that I believe should guide our collective efforts to advance the Youth and Women Peace and Security agenda across our continent. These priorities revolve around: **Vision, Inclusion, Partnership, Empowerment and Resilience**.

First, Vision.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. The realities of Africa's peace and security landscape require broadened understanding of peacebuilding. Africa's Strategic Priorities for governance, peace and security remain clear and have continued to drive the vision and workings of the African Union. These are guided by the African union's shared values, normative frameworks and guiding principles. These include peaceful resolution of conflicts, African solutions to African problems, zero tolerance for unconstitutional changes of government, consolidation of democracy and Silencing the Guns.

5. All of these are clearly defined by the Aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want. With this vision, we look forward to an Africa where peace is sustained through accountable institutions, responsible stewardship of shared resources and opportunities that enable every woman and every young person to contribute meaningfully to the continent's development.

Second, Inclusion.

6. For many years, our conversations have centered on how women and young people could participate in peace processes. Today, however, the question is no longer whether they should participate. The real question is whether our institutions are prepared to make their leadership permanent and sustained. Women and young people represent Africa's greatest source of innovation, resilience and leadership.

7. Meaningful inclusion must therefore go beyond representation. It must ensure that women and young people shape public policy,

influence decision-making and lead peacebuilding efforts at community, national, regional and continental levels. In this connection, I am pleased to announce that the African Union and UNDP recently launched the **African Academy for Women in Political Leadership**, as a deliberate investment in emerging leaders on the continent. This in addition to continuous investment in inclusive and intergenerational architecture for peace, particularly: the African Youth Ambassadors for Peace; the WiseYouth Network; FemWise-Africa; and the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.

Third, Partnership.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. No institution can build peace in solitude. Advancing the Youth and Women Peace and Security agendas requires partnerships rooted in shared responsibility, mutual accountability and a common vision for Africa's future. Delivering on these agendas demands coordinated action across continental, regional, national and local levels.

9. The African Union, under the leadership of His Excellency President of Burundi, prioritizes translating our commitments into meaningful change requires **strong collaboration with our Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), the United Nations, Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations and all partners here present for this Dialogue**. We remain committed to placing Member States at the center of this agenda through the development of National Action Plans on Youth, Peace and Security, continued implementation of the

Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and sustained investments in inclusive governance.

Fourth, Empowerment.

10. Partnerships must be matched by deliberate investments in people. The African Union has invested in strengthening capacity of youth and women through various AU processes. Most recently, we have expanded youth participation in AU Election Observation Missions and strengthen engagement through the African Governance Architecture Youth Engagement Strategy. The African Union, under the leadership of President Évariste Ndayishimiye, is investing in leadership development that prepares the next generation of African peacebuilders.

11. Ultimately, empowerment is about equipping women and young people not merely to participate in Africa's peace and governance processes, but to lead them with confidence, competence and purpose.

Fifth: Resilience

Excellencies,

12. The overall measure of our success will not be measured by the number of frameworks we adopt but in the **resilience of our institutions**. As we begin our deliberations over the coming days, let us focus on practical outcomes that strengthen institutions, deepen partnerships and empower communities. Let us remember that peace is not merely the absence of conflict. The African Union Commission

remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthening the institutional pathways that make inclusive peace possible.

13. Throughout this Dialogue and thereafter, let us be guided by these five enduring commitments: **a Vision** that looks beyond today's challenges; **Inclusion** that places women and young people at the center of leadership and decision-making; **Partnerships** that unite institutions, communities and generations; **Empowerment** that transforms commitments into opportunities; and **Resilience** that enables Africa to navigate uncertainty while remaining firmly on the path towards Agenda 2063.

14. In conclusion, Excellencies, on this side, the African Union has responded to the call of Former President of Malawi, Joyce Banda, who said: "The seeds of success in every nation on Earth are best planted in women, (youth) and children." On that side, I challenge you, under the authority of the Chairperson of the African Union, to respond to the call of former president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah. He said and I quote: "Africa's story has been written by others; we need to own our problems and solutions and write our story." Every African woman and youth can contribute meaningfully to shaping the future we deserve.

I thank you.