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BUJUMBURA DECLARATION ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

The Republic of Burundi, in its capacity of the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) in collaboration with the African Union Commission with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized a Continental Dialogue on 23 April 2022, in line with the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security and its 10-Year Implementation Plan, which was adopted in June 2020 by the AU PSC. It also builds on the UN Security Council resolutions on youth, peace and security.

Note with appreciation the official opening of the Continental Dialogue by H.E. Ambassador Ezéchiel Nibigira, Minister of East African Community Affairs, Youth, Sports and Culture of the Republic of Burundi, who emphasized the importance of inclusion and participation of youth in peace, security and development programmes in the Continent as well as empowering the youth in order to channel youth's energy in development activities,

Guided by the OAU/AU instruments and decisions on youth peace and security, in particular the Youth Charter and the Assembly Decisions [Assembly/AU/Dec.591 (XXVI)], adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its 26th Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 30 to 31 January 2016, and [Assembly/AU/Dec.753(XXXIII)] adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its 33rd Ordinary Session held from 9 to 10 February 2020, as well as the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020),

Reaffirming the AU's full commitment to prevent and resolve conflicts and foster development programmes with the full inclusion and participation of and also create conducive conditions in order to realize a conflict-free Africa, in line with the Solemn Declaration adopted by the 50th Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity/ African Union (OAU/AU) on 25 May 2013, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in which the Assembly of the Union pledged not to bequeath the burden of wars to the next generation of Africans,

Mindful of the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security (CFYPS) and its 10-Year Implementation Plan adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) in June 2020.

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT:

- I. ***The African Union and its Member States*** have made significant efforts in ensuring youth meaningful participation and inclusion in peace and security agenda of the Union, including other areas such as development, as a preventive measure to conflicts and address the root causes of conflicts in the Continent starting at the national level.
- II. ***Despite*** these efforts, the Youth are still experiencing challenges including unemployment, lack of inclusion in political spheres, socio-economic empowerment, capacity building, and lack of resources including funding, to name a few.

The Dialogue was facilitated by the African Union Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAPs) Mr. Christian Achaleke (Central Africa), Ms. Diana Chando (East Africa), Ms. Kholoud Boughari (North Africa), Ms. Cynthia Chingwenya (Southern Africa), Ms. Mohamed Kunta (West Africa) and the African Union Chairperson's Youth Envoy Ms. Chido Cleopatra Mpemba. Over 300 youth participated in the Dialogues and the following recommendations were made:

Participation:

1. ***Stressed*** the need for governments of AU Member States to establish structures that allow smooth engagement and participation of youth in the national agendas and promote the visions and role of youth; in this regard, ***commended*** the Government of Burundi for allowing smooth participation and engagement of youth in the national agendas including holding regular meetings between the leaders of the Government and the youth;
2. ***Noted with satisfaction*** the development of Youth Peace and Security agenda within the AU, a tool that promotes participation and engagement of youth at continental level, between and among the regions, as well as provide platforms of inter and intra-states dialogues among African States;
3. ***Noted with concern*** the issue of language as barrier in the promotion of participation and collaboration of youth in their activities in the continent; in this regard, ***emphasized*** the importance for youth to be provided with opportunities of learning more languages with a view to open up a wider space of communication and engagement;
4. ***Encouraged*** youth to wisely use social media platforms such as searching for opportunities, promoting peace and mobilizing youth participation in national agendas, as well as for innovation of and collaboration on their ideas;
5. ***Requested*** the AU Commission to include the participation of youth in the promotion of ratification and signing, as well as implementation of the AU Youth Charter, in order to provide an opportunity for youth to participate and engage with Member States from the ratification, signing and implementation of the Charter;

6. **Emphasized** that knowledge and information is power for youth development; in this regard, **stressed** the need for Member States to promote and provide access to knowledge, information and communication for youth, including to ensure the availability of internet access in all communities;

Protection:

7. **Emphasized** the need for capacity building and more awareness raising programmes for youth with regard to the instruments and national laws which provide protection to youth, with a view to facilitate youth's engagements in advocating and promoting protection with their respective governments;

8. **Appealed** to AU Member States and the AU Commission to establish educational programmes in universities/institutions focusing on providing education on prevention, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa, in order to empower youth on peace and security matters in the Continent; in this regard, **underscored** the need for governments to provide youth education scholarships in peace and security matters;

9. **Commended** the Government of Burundi for creation of facilities which empower and protect youth, such as youth investment bank (BIJE), the program for economic empowerment and youth employment (PAEEJ) and loans for youth's development projects and encouraged other Member States to emulate these initiatives;

10. **Underscored** the critical role the private sector plays in supporting youth's development projects which empower and protect youth, as well as increasing opportunities for employment and sharpening youth's creativeness;

11. **Stressed** the need for Governments to establish laws that protect youth's development projects such as businesses, ideas and innovations, including copyrights and remunerations for selling out youth's ideas or creativeness;

Prevention

12. **Acknowledged** that the Continent has developed sufficient tools which facilitate the engagement of youth in prevention of conflict and **called for** its effective application and development awareness programmes for youth on the use of the existing tools;

13. **Underscored** the need to create forums for youth's interaction on conflict prevention which will promote their involvement in conflict prevention; in this regard, encouraged youth across the continent to establish youth groups focusing on conflict prevention;

Partnership and Coordination

14. ***Underscored*** the need for more partnerships and coordination to advance the Youth, Peace and Security agenda at community, national, regional, continental and global level particularly among the youth, and in this regard encourages Youth for Peace (Y4P) networks at the different levels as a platform to: provide more visibility of the role of youth, engage in experience sharing and experiential learning, as well as increase the impact of youth participation different sectors/areas;
15. ***Underscored*** that partnership and coordination enhance socio-economic opportunities, such as employment, entrepreneurship and market for business and ***emphasized*** the need for transparent processes on partnerships and protection against exploitation and abuse of the youth;
16. ***Recommended*** for Member States to highlight the essential role the governments and their institutions responsible for developing and maintaining partnerships and coordination of different stakeholders interests, alongside youth and their networks, to advance the development and implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) on Youth, Peace and Security; and, encouraged Member States to adopt the AU model of appointing youth ambassadors at national level, as a means to galvanize youth representation and participation in different sectors of their respective national agenda, as well as coordinating with AYAPs at regional and continental levels ;
17. ***Emphasized*** the need for transparent engagement in partnership and coordination and conducive structures that promote youth partnership;

Disengagement and reintegration

18. ***Called for*** rehabilitation of centers for youth who have been affected and traumatized with conflicts and engage them in the reintegration process;
19. ***Highlighted*** the need for voluntary and professional programmes for youth to be able to develop socially, including provision of psychosocial support, and to facilitate their engagements in cooperative activities
20. ***Underscored*** the importance of the AU and UN involvement in the disengagement and reintegration programmes which require technical expertise;
21. Furthermore, the Dialogue:
 - i. ***Commended*** the President of the Republic of Burundi, H.E. Évariste Ndayishimiye, in particular for his constant and direct engagement with youth as a “Friend of Youth” and ***recommended*** to the AU to consider appointing him as AU Champion for Youth, Peace and Security Agenda;

- ii. **Recommended** for the AU and UN to consider holding annual Continental Dialogue on Youth, Peace and Security which brings together all youths across the continent and dialogue on peace and security issues in the Continent;
- iii. **Expressed appreciation** to the people and Government of Burundi for hosting the Continental Dialogue, for the hospitality accorded to all participants and for a well-organized Dialogue with the support of the UNDP;
- iv. **And accordingly, agreed** to call the outcome of the Dialogue “*Bujumbura Declaration on Youth Peace and Security*” and **submit** it to the Peace and Security Council for consideration and adoption while looking forward to the outcome of the said PSC Meeting.

Adopted by the Youth Participants of the AU- convened Continental Dialogue, on 23 April 2022, in Bujumbura, Burundi.