

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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African Youth Leaders, Member States and Partners Commit to Advance the Development and Implementation of National Action Plans on Youth, Peace and Security in Africa

The Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Department of the African Union Commission organized an experience-sharing roundtable dialogue to promote the development and implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS). The discussions, which were held from 12 to 13 April 2023 at the African Union (AU) Headquarters, brought together representatives from member states that have adopted NAPs, member states that have officially begun the process of developing NAPs, and member states that have expressed strong interest and are committed to following suit.

The two-day exchange provided a platform to share best practices and lessons learnt and to develop more robust approaches in the national and regional implementation of the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security (CFYPS), and AU Peace and Security Council decisions from its 933rd, 963rd and 1067th meetings, as well as the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2021) in advancing the YPS agenda in Africa, in collaboration with Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) as well as national and international partners.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Director of Conflict Management at the PAPS Department, Alhadji Dr Mohamed Sarjoh Bah, stated that, "To be functional, the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security needs to be domesticated at the member state level through the adoption of NAPs on YPS, which provide a framework for governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), and other stakeholders to integrate youth perspectives and priorities into peacebuilding and security efforts". He underscored the importance of developing and implementing NAPs on YPS, which allow for diverse stakeholders to collaborate in ensuring that Africa's peace and security challenges are mitigated in a way that keeps the continent's youth demographic at the core.

H.E. Hon. Ezechiel Nibigira, Minister of East African Community Affairs, Youth, Sports and Culture of the Republic of Burundi, on his part, noted that the YPS agenda remains critical in advancing meaningful youth participation in peacebuilding and reiterated the centrality of NAPs on YPS in promoting inclusive governance, peace and stability as well as preventing conflict. He said, "Member states must have well-developed NAPs which factor in current realities." To achieve this, government institutions, partners, youth networks and other stakeholders must be sensitized on their respective roles in promoting the full implementation of NAPs. Therefore, he urged participants to work closely with all stakeholders, including parliaments and private sector actors.

The two-day discussions highlighted the importance of partnership and coordination, key pillars of the Continental Framework on YPS. The over forty delegates from Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Tunisia, The Gambia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe have formed a community of practice to promote exchanges of resources, support each other and encourage interaction and cooperation between YPS stakeholders. They have, among others, elaborated strategies and roadmaps to advance the

development of NAPs across Africa. The RECs, including COMESA, ECOWAS, and other development partners, reiterated their commitment to building youth capacities towards the entrenchment of NAPs.

Dr Sarjoh Bah, on behalf of the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security, Amb. Bankole Adeoye expressed gratitude to the AU Champion for Youth, Peace and Security, H.E. President Évariste Ndayishimiye of the Republic of Burundi, for his tireless leadership efforts in promoting this critical YPS agenda for Africa's peace and stability.

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