



PMRC STATEMENT ON AFRICA DAY: “SILENCING THE GUNS: CREATING CONDUCTIVE CONDITIONS FOR AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT”

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As we celebrate this year’s Africa Day under the theme “**Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development**” it is important that we take stock of our progress towards a more prosperous future in which all African citizens, young, old, female, male, of all creed and backgrounds are empowered to realize their full value and potential.

The African Union (AU) has made significant progress in driving Agenda 2063 which is the continent’s blueprint and masterplan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the near future. In line with this year’s theme, it is evident that the pursuit of continental level African Peace and Security Architecture that is fully functional has been established and maintained. However, concerns arise regarding the number of armed conflicts recorded on the continent despite the notable efforts made by the AU Member States to establish and sustain the continental campaign of “Silencing the Guns by 2020”.

Extreme poverty, political and economic marginalisation, poor governance and lack of access to opportunities are not only challenges that millions of Africans face, but a fertile breeding ground for threats such as civil conflicts, extreme terrorism and uncontrolled migration. This reminds us of the urgent need to end our troubles by constantly mobilising our collective resolve and energies to end conflict and fulfil international commitments to peace. Despite the fragility of international commitments as evidenced by the constant violation of these commitments by multiple state actors and the persistence of conflict there is great hope for African solidarity through resistance and resilience to overcome our challenges.

2020 which marks the last term of the current commission as well as the proclaimed year of the “Silencing the Guns on the Continent” presents other challenging phenomena such as the COVID 19 pandemic, poverty, unemployment, regional conflicts, electoral crises, inter-state and community conflicts.

Security can no longer be effectively addressed from the traditional state-centric perspective, where national security and law enforcement apparatus are all that is needed to ensure the security of citizens. It has become a Universal concern, with a focus on individuals and groups’ access to the benefits of development and a more people-centred security. The growing concept of ‘human security’ therefore underlines the importance of empowering individuals and groups in Africa to benefit from economic growth and development, so as to not only protect them from conflicts and tensions but also to build

their resilience to engage in development activities. There can be no sustained development without peace and in the same vein no peace without development. There is urgent need to Africa to enhance its institutional capacities, opportunities and living standards in this regard. Evidence from research shows there is a strong link between insufficient; work opportunities, jobs, wealth distribution and the risk of instability. Therefore, building resilient communities and rigorously pursuing development objectives mitigates the impact of losses due to insecurity.

By acting decisively on all these issues and identifying their causes, Africa possesses all the resources required to “Silence the Guns” through diplomatic, political and military means. We call on all African Heads of State to help deepen and strengthen unity on the continent. Africa’s prosperity and destiny resides in us and by acting in unity, Africa is set to be an economic success of unparalleled proportions and a centre of sustained economic growth.

Further, this is a call for unity, integration and coordination among African nations. Under the framework of the Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), we submit that the narrative for Africa should now be towards more in-ward search for solutions to the several challenges that we face. The comprehensive African development framework for African challenges is what we should endeavor to focus on. This will ensure that we put together our experiences, technologies, ideas and resources to work out solutions to our problems. Yes, Africa remains a great continent with numerous resources but the time has come to also focus on mechanization, industry and technology so as to transform the natural resources for the development and benefit of Africans. In conclusion, several agendas still need to be looked into ; such as the Africa Open Skies agreements, strengthening of local and regional currencies as well as enhance trade within African states. For Africa to realize the Vision 2063, then young people should be integrated more than before, to be given as many opportunities as possible to also contribute in the affairs of the continent at different levels.

The time is now, Africa!

Happy African Freedom Day to all.

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