

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 30 September 2019 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of South Africa, the Security Council will hold a debate on “Peace and security in Africa: mobilizing youth towards silencing the guns by 2020” on Wednesday, 2 October 2019. In order to guide the discussion on the subject, South Africa has prepared a concept note (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jerry **Matjila**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa



Annex to the letter dated 30 September 2019 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council debate on peace and security in Africa: mobilizing youth towards silencing the guns by 2020, to be held on 2 October 2019

Introduction

1. The African continent has been beset by a number of conflicts, which compromise the development and stability of the continent and undermine international peace and security. In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which later became the African Union, on 25 May 2013 the Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted its Fiftieth Anniversary Solemn Declaration, in which it pronounced its determination to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa and to make peace a reality for all African people. In that respect, African leaders resolved not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans and undertook to end all wars in Africa, by adopting the flagship project of Agenda 2063 of the African Union, Silencing the Guns by 2020.

2. That commitment was endorsed by the Security Council on 27 February 2019, through its resolution [2457 \(2019\)](#), in which it outlined the steps leading towards the achievement of the goal of ending conflicts in Africa through enhanced international cooperation and partnership, as well as through robust support for peace operations led by the African Union. However, it is important to also acknowledge the agency and role played by young people in achieving the aspirations of the continent.

3. According to United Nations statistics, young people comprise 1.2 billion people between the ages of 15 and 24, 600 million of whom live in violent regions and conflict areas. Those 600 million young people have a vital contribution to make to mediation and peacebuilding processes. With some 20 per cent of the population of the continent between the ages of 15 and 24, the African Union has recognized that youth must be at the core of its initiatives to silence the guns in Africa. This is underscored in the road map of the African Peace and Security Architecture for the period 2016–2020, in which the African Union Commission and subregional organizations were encouraged to develop and implement sustainable youth empowerment policies aimed at educating the young people of the continent on peace and security activities and integrating them into those activities, including in processes leading to peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

4. In December 2015, the Security Council adopted its resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) on youth and peace and security. In the Resolution, the Council recognized that the energy and creativity of young people should be harnessed and actively engaged in shaping lasting peace and contributing to justice and reconciliation, and that a large youth population presented a demographic dividend that could contribute to lasting peace and economic prosperity if inclusive policies were in place. In its resolution [2419 \(2018\)](#), the Council recognized the role that young people could play in negotiating and implementing peace agreements and in conflict prevention.

5. Including young people and investing in them starts with expanding the avenues for young women and men to take part in decision-making processes at all levels. In the present case, it is prudent to create opportunities to integrate young people in peace activities and harness intergenerational interaction throughout the entire peace

continuum. For that to happen, it is important to foster trust between decision makers and young people. Political will and leadership is therefore needed to allow meaningful engagement by young people in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Objective

6. The focus of meeting is to address the following issues:

(a) To discuss ways to involve young people in peace and security activities (conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding);

(b) To discuss initiatives of regional and subregional organizations in implementing the youth and peace and security agenda;

(c) To provide an opportunity to listen to leaders and youth experts on their expectations of the Security Council in advancing the youth and peace and security agenda.

7. We encourage interventions that will address the following questions:

(a) How can Member States accelerate the meaningful involvement of young people in peace and security activities, and in what areas?

(b) How can regional and subregional organizations promote the role of young people in peace and security activities?

(c) How can the Security Council consolidate the advancement of the youth and peace and security agenda?

(d) How and when can African young people get involved in efforts to ensure that the United Nations and the international community contribute to advancing the flagship initiative, Silencing the Guns by 2020?
