

SILENCING THE GUNS IN AFRICA.

Towards a Peaceful and Secure Africa



SILENCING THE GUNS

A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

A DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO SILENCING THE GUNS

Copyright © UNDP 2021 The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including UNDP, or the UN Member States

Acknowledgements: Development of the report by George Mukundi and Nebila Abdulmelik under the supervision of Jide Okeke (Regional Programme Coordinator) and support from Fatma Ahmed (Capacity Building Specialist) Michelle Mendi Muita (Communications Specialist).

Editing was carried out by Barbra Hall and Heather Bourbeau and layout and design by Aisha Jemila Daniels.

Special appreciation to the UNDP colleagues from RSCA, regional hubs in Dakar, Pretoria and Nairobi and technical teams for their tremendous support and valuable inputs.

Also recognizing support from the African Union Commission for the exceptional inputs and support.

Table of Contents

- Executive Summary**..... 04
- Introduction**..... 05
- People**..... 07
 - Highlights..... 07
 - Encouraging active, engaged and connected youth..... 07
 - Empowering youth entrepreneurs..... 07
 - Supporting the next generation of women leaders..... 08
 - Empowering women through post-COVID recovery efforts..... 08
- Prosperity**..... 11
 - Highlights..... 11
 - Enhancing capacities for and removing barriers to trade..... 11
 - Supporting the 100,000 MSMEs Initiative..... 11
- Planet**..... 12
 - Highlights..... 12
 - Fostering resilience across the continent..... 12
 - Africa Borderlands Centre..... 13
 - Strengthening climate change awareness and adaptations..... 13
- Peace**..... 15
 - Highlights..... 15
 - Conflict Prevention..... 15
 - Supporting Inclusive Transition in Africa..... 15
 - Stabilizing the Lake Chad region..... 15
 - Increasing awareness and ratification of AU treaties..... 16
 - Reducing illicit trafficking of small arms..... 17
- Partnerships**..... 18
- Lessons Learned**..... 19
- Going Forward**..... 20

Executive Summary

A peaceful continent is possible. This aspiration inspired the Silencing the Guns in Africa agenda, which is a flagship initiative of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 that aspires to end all wars, conflict and gender-based violence, and to prevent genocide. During the 14th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly on Silencing the Guns held on 6 December 2020 in Johannesburg, the AU extended the Initiative until 2030. As a result, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a long-standing partner to the AU has recommitted its partnerships, programmes and opportunities to further the Silencing the Guns agenda at regional and sub-regional levels.

UNDP, through its Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA), has been supporting the AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and AU Member States to meet the interlinked objectives of the Silencing the Guns initiative, the Agenda 2063, and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These efforts have been guided by the **joint AU–UN Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063** and the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, as well as the **Joint UN-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security**.

This report is a framing of the association with the goals of the RBA's Regional Programme for Africa and the immediate continental priority of silencing the guns by 2030. It provides a synthesis of how UNDP's programmatic priorities on people, prosperity, planet, and peace coincide with and contribute to the AU's continental aspiration.

In other words, UNDP is helping to create the necessary conditions for Africa's transformative development. The Regional Programme for Africa does this through an integrated mechanism that coordinates region, sub-regional and country development planning and programmes to create greater effectiveness and more robust results.

For example, through the Regional Stabilization Facility for the Lake Chad Basin, UNDP has assisted over 30,000 households to receive healthcare, education and justice and to develop alternative livelihood options. UNDP support for the 100,000 Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) Initiative through the MSME Academy has trained over 25,000 people from 14,000 MSMEs in 13 countries on entrepreneurial and business skills, and improved their access to finance and new markets. The Africa Adaptation Initiative has helped nearly 58 million people and led to the protection of more than 3,000 km of coastline. While YouthConnekt Africa hopes to digitally empower 100 million Africans and create 25 million opportunities through training and enrolment in workplaces.

By leveraging our successes, assessing lessons learned and enhancing our partnerships, UNDP is focused on the future. We continue to launch new initiatives, such as the Data Analytic Centre, that will provide valuable evidence against the risks of uncertainty, increase employment, and boost more inclusive digital governance—all which contribute to silencing the guns.

Introduction

Formally launched in 2017, **Silencing the Guns in Africa** is a flagship initiative of the African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063 that aspires to end all wars, conflict and gender-based violence, and to prevent genocide. In silencing the guns, the AU, RECs and Member States seek to create the necessary conditions for Africa’s development. Silencing the Guns is a clarion call to address the structural root causes and drivers of conflict for sustainable development. During the 14th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly on Silencing the Guns held on 6 December 2020 in Johannesburg, the AU extended the Initiative until 2030, noting that certain gains were hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic and **stressing the importance and interconnectedness of consolidating peace, preventing violent extremism, building social cohesion, fostering democracy and enhancing economic development**. As a result, UNDP has recommitted its partnerships, programmes and opportunities to further the Silencing the Guns agenda, as well as its support to the AU

and Member States. In 2021, UNDP adopted a new corporate strategic plan and subsequently revised its strategic offer in Africa, bearing in mind, the economic trajectory of the continent over the last decade as well as the impact and lessons derived from the COVID-19 pandemic. The offer prioritises six impact areas as core for the realisation of Africa’s promise. They are: natural resource governance, youth employment and empowerment, structural economic transformation, sustainable energy, climate change, and peace and security. Drawing from UNDP’s Strategic Plan and the strategic offer for Africa, there is a need to renew UNDP’s regional focus and support to regional and sub-regional institutions as well as support cross-border initiatives in line with Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. Over the next four years, UNDP will work with regional entities in deepening partnerships and working to support the implementation of the silencing the guns agenda through a renewed regional focus on **people, prosperity, planet** and **peace**.

2022-2025 OUTCOME AREAS

 <p style="color: orange; font-weight: bold; margin: 5px 0;">People</p> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">African citizens (especially women and youth) have a stronger voice and influence in local, national, regional and African Union policymaking and implementation processes.</p>	 <p style="color: purple; font-weight: bold; margin: 5px 0;">Prosperity</p> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">African citizens (especially women and youth) benefit from a regionally integrated, structurally transformed, and inclusive economy.</p>	 <p style="color: green; font-weight: bold; margin: 5px 0;">Planet</p> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">African citizens (especially women and youth), supported by local and national institutions, as well as the African Union and Regional Economic Communities, build a resilient Africa.</p>	 <p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold; margin: 5px 0;">Peace</p> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">African citizens (especially women and youth), supported by local and national institutions, as well as the African Union and Regional Economic Communities, achieve measurable progress towards sustainable peace.</p>
--	---	---	---

There have been many positive developments that may be creating the foundations for silencing the guns in Africa. Since 2000, the number of African children enrolled in primary school has increased by 90 million. Adult literacy rates are up by almost 10 percentage from 1995, and the gender gap

in literacy is shrinking. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, Africa was experiencing economic growth, with 27 countries reaching middle- or high-income status. The continent witnessed a decline in the number of violent conflict.



People

An enabling environment entails strengthening norms, processes, institutions and capacities across the governance, peace, security and sustainable development nexus. To this end, it is necessary to empower African men, women and youth, in a context of reinvigorated social contracts, to have a stronger voice and influence in local, national, AU and RECs policymaking and implementation processes. Inclusive participation of African citizens in championing peace and development requires supporting borderland

communities. It is estimated that more than 400 million people live in borderland communities in Africa. Africa's borderlands are often vulnerable to the triple threat of conflict, climate and COVID-19. Yet, we have a lot to learn from the coping mechanisms, ingenuity, and adaptation of these communities to shocks, uncertainty and risks. Bring the voices of borderland communities to policy formulation and implementation remain a necessity for a new social contract to emerge on the continent.

Highlights

Encouraging Active, Engaged and Connected Youth

YouthConnekt Africa serves to connect young people to economic opportunities, productive resources, peers and role models, and avenues through which youth can participate in leadership and decision-making processes. The programme facilitates inclusive growth and social cohesion in Africa by ensuring greater access to capital and markets, skills development, sustained investment in training, apprenticeship and education, in particular STEM and more dynamic technical and vocation education and training (TVET) schemes.

YouthConnekt coordinates and nurtures collaboration between existing youth empowerment initiatives, hubs, stakeholders and partners, with the aim of building strategic alliances that create the conditions for shared innovative solutions on youth empowerment to emerge. YouthConnekt further aims to foster social cohesion and national reconciliation through civic engagement and the inclusion of youth in national decision-making on conflict prevention, national reconciliation and governance.

Through YouthConnekt Dialogues, youth contribute towards consensus-building on issues of concern, set and agree on national priorities, hold leaders accountable, and support peace-building efforts. In 2019, the programme was endorsed by the AU as a continental platform through which youth initiatives are coordinated

towards the "1 Million by 2021" initiative, whose goal is to create one million new opportunities for young Africans in education, employment, entrepreneurship and engagement.

To date, YouthConnekt has been launched in 25 countries: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, DRC, Eswatini, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guinea, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

YouthConnekt Goals

- Create 10 million jobs in sustainable job environments in emerging industries
- Create 25 million opportunities through training and enrolment in workplaces
- Identify, nurture and grow one million leaders that provide solutions, participate in advocacy and become role models in their communities
- Nurture 5,000 digital ambassadors in each country to help connect and digitally empower 100 million Africans, allowing skills to be transferred to their local communities.

Amadou Mounirah Mariam Bissiri is a trained engineering scientist, specializing in physics from Burkina Faso. She originally wanted to become a research and development engineer in renewable energy to “bring energy access to my people.” She was in the first cohort of African Young Women Leaders Fellows, deployed to the UNDP Chad country office. “What thrills me about this Fellowship Programme is that I will be able to broaden and deepen my knowledge on the SDGs, especially in the energy sector in Africa. I wish to contribute to devising solutions to transform our continent. My experience at UNDP Chad comes as a crucial added value to my academic training and professional and personal growth. Leading a one-hour session with over 300 people on the legal instruments against gender-based violence in Southern Chad has pushed the limits I had set on myself. I want to keep nurturing the seeds of this Fellowship and grow into a strong and inspiring woman, leading meaningful change in my country, my continent and the world.”

Empowering Youth Entrepreneurs

Complementing YouthConnekt and in collaboration with the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF), the Youth Entrepreneurship Programme, seeks to harness the abundant entrepreneurial, creative and innovative spirit of young people to generate productive opportunities, businesses and new ways to deliver services.

The programme empowers vulnerable and under-served youth in conflict, rural and border areas with training and mentoring, and provides access to innovative financing to promising start-ups. In collaboration with TEF, UNDP provided training services for 7,989 entrepreneurs, as well as mentored and funded 4,661,000 start-ups since 2018, with a commitment to further support 100,000 entrepreneurs in the next decade. Notably, 35 percent of participants were women.

Supporting the Next Generation of Women Leaders

Launched in 2019 by the AU Commission and UNDP, the African Young Women Leaders Fellowship Programme aims to build a new generation of young African women leaders. These women help design and implement development programmes within UN agencies around the world. The year-long practical and professional work experience is complemented with mentoring, candid and informal experiential learning and exchange sessions, as well as professional courses and training. Developed jointly with the AUC Department of Human Resources Youth Division, the programme’s first cohort was comprised of 21 women from 20 different countries. In 2022, UNDP will be supporting the deployment of approximately 30 fellows from AU member countries. The ultimate goal of the fellowship is to place at least one woman from each country in Africa each year. African Union member states are encouraged to work with UNDP to support at least one qualified African citizen in current and future fellowship. It is vital for inter-generational transformational leadership.

Empowering Women Through Post-COVID Recovery Efforts

Launched in 2020 and implemented by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), in partnership with ECOWAS and UNDP, the Building an Inclusive Approach to Post-Covid-19 Recovery, Crisis Recovery and Governance Reforms in the Sahel initiative aims to strengthen systems and structures that empower women at the local and national levels in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali and Niger. The end goal is to enhance women’s participation and contribution to the development of governance and gender-sensitive policies and practices amid myriad security, humanitarian and developmental challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic. National Women Coalitions, each represented by 30 leaders, were formed across the four countries to advocate for the inclusive participation of Sahelian women in political processes at all levels. As a result, women of all ages are coming together to bridge the intergenerational gap and collectively work towards tackling issues affecting their peace and security.



“Women’s further involvement in conflict prevention and peace initiatives across the region is a key condition for sustainable peace, stability and development. Women’s leadership and their participation in post-COVID-19 recovery, crises transitions, and governance reforms are critical to building peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies.” – Ahunna Eziakonwa, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa



FOR AMAL
Bimbe®
Using a wooden spoon, stir flour
to the water, break up lumps until a
smooth consistency is obtained.
Add hot water if necessary, allow
to cool before serving with
meats, soups, etc.

**PLANTAIN
FLOUR**

Rich in Iron, Vita
1kg

Prosperity

Silencing the guns requires not only narrowly focusing on peace and security issues, but rather, on structural transformation of the socio-economic sphere, ensuring all African men, women and youth benefit from an integrated, structurally transformed and inclusive economy. Initiatives supported by UNDP under this theme include regional integration, trade and mobility; industrialization and energy; digital governance,

transformation and innovation; fiscal governance, reforms and accountability; private sector engagement; and diversifying and transforming economies with a particular emphasis on digital and green business opportunities. An overarching vision on prosperity will be to push for promoting a continental enabling ecosystem for promoting and retaining investment in Africa.

Highlights

Enhancing Capacities for and Removing Barriers to Trade

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is an AU flagship initiative established in 2018 to create an integrated continental market for goods and services and to support the movement of capital and natural persons. The AfCFTA is expected to enhance competitiveness, promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development, and foster sustainable socio-economic development and structural transformation. In 2021, UNDP, working with the AfCFTA Secretariat, the AU Commission, RECs, development partners, trade associations and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), began directly supporting the implementation of the AfCFTA by contributing to the enhancement of African SMEs' capacities to trade across borders and to the removal of non-tariff barriers to trade through investment facilitation, capacity building and advocacy.

Supporting the 100,000 MSMEs Initiative

UNDP is supporting the implementation of the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) **100,000 Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) Initiative**. MSMEs account for 90 percent of all businesses on the continent and 70 percent of all jobs. The initiative aims to accelerate Africa's economic transformation, develop skills and build resilience in the face of economic shocks, including those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. UNDP provided financial support to the MSMEs Academy (launched in December 2020) and delivered

trainings to MSMEs. UNDP also worked with country offices in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal and Tanzania to provide training on entrepreneurial and business skills, and to improve access to finance and new markets with the establishment of country-based and digital networks for support and incubation

Other PROSPERITY projects and initiatives by UNDP include:

- Africa's Emergence: Promoting Structural Economic Transformation and Human Development
- African Facility for Inclusive Markets
- African Inclusive Markets Excellence Centre
- Tax Inspectors Without Borders

to bolster their success. The MSME Academy is now in 13 countries, over 25,000 people from 14,000 MSMEs have attended online events, and more than three million people have tuned into webinars with experts and government officials held online and on radio platforms. The next step is to launch the Academy in the other Member States, with training modules delivered in at least five languages accessible across all 55 African countries. The 100,000 MSMEs Initiative's goal has been expanded with a new goal to reach over one million MSMEs in Africa by the end of 2024.

Planet

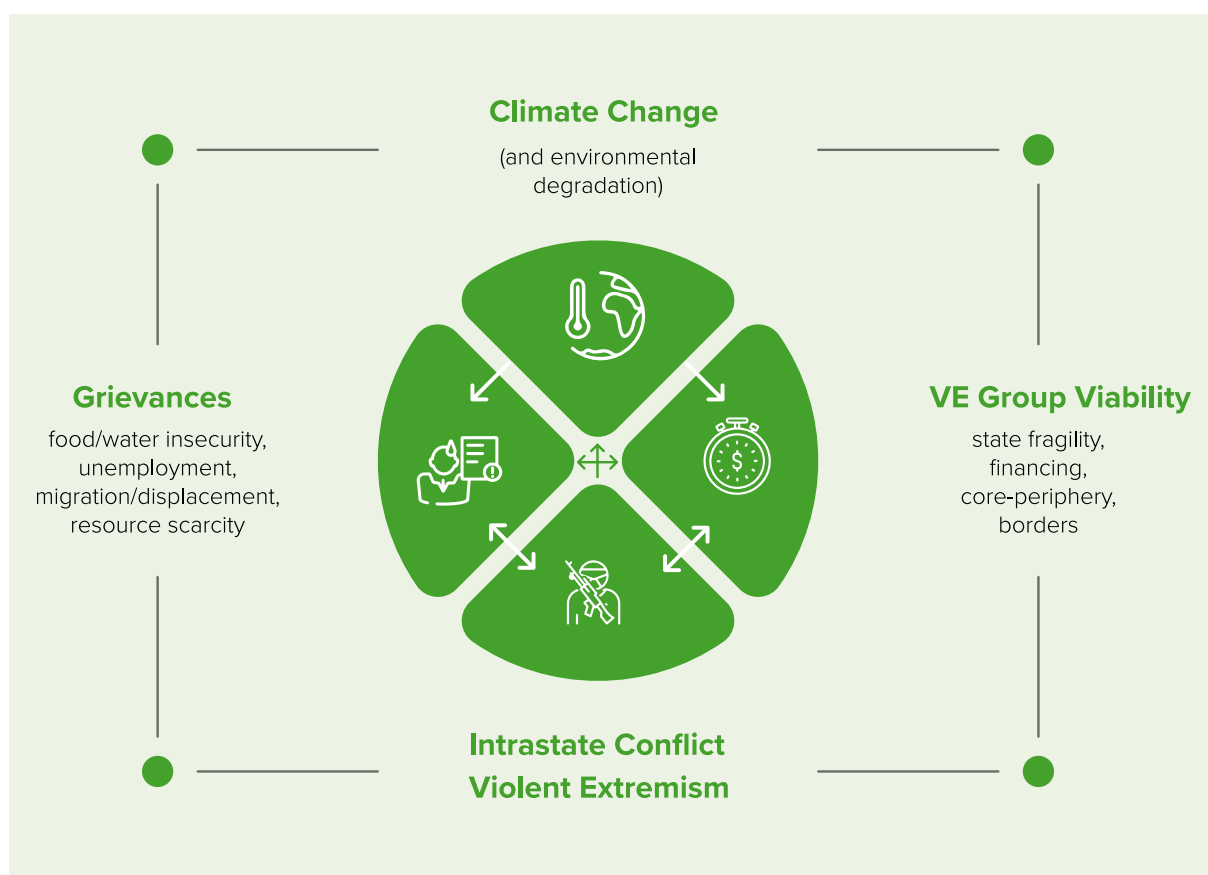
Although Africa is among the lowest contributors to global warming, the continent faces increased susceptibility to violent conflicts at the intra-state, inter-state and community levels due to climate change. Climate change aggravates food insecurity, economic shocks, competition for natural resources and losses of livelihoods. One of the goals of Agenda 2030 and a key aspiration of Agenda 2063 is to establish environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economies and communities. Strengthening resilience is critical

to silencing the guns because it enables states to respond more effectively to disasters and crises, thereby averting losses of livelihoods and better managing natural resources.

“Climate change is an existential multidimensional and multi-layered threat to local, national, regional and continental peace, security and stability.”

-African Union Peace and Security Council Press Statement, 19 February 2019

Figure 1: Between climate change and violent extremism - in Africa through impacting grievances and the viability of violent extremist groups Potential indirect links.



* From “Toward New Policies for the Climate Change and Violent Extremism Nexus in Africa” (June 2021), Extremism in Focus, Issue Brief 1, from UNDP RSC for Africa and Oslo Governance Centre.

Highlights

Fostering Resilience Across the Continent

The UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa in Nairobi aims to enhance resilience on the continent to prevent and better respond to shocks, particularly those due to climate change and conflict. The Hub provides capacity-building on peacebuilding

and governance, disaster risk recovery, climate resilience, and migration and displacement to the AU, RECs and AU Member States. With the COVID-19 crisis still unfolding, a better understanding of the drivers of resilience has become even more critical in order to develop suitable investments.



Africa Borderlands Centre

Borderlands and their communities are a unique source of ingenuity, places of untapped opportunity and great resilience. In many of these regions, insecurity and poverty disguise the true socio-economic potential of borderlands and their communities.

In improved circumstances, borderland communities could thrive by unlocking their potential and rich cultures that will be critical to achieving Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. In February 2021, UNDP established the Africa Borderlands Centre (ABC) based in Nairobi to provide dedicated research, policy and programming support for socio-economic development and peacebuilding in Africa's borderlands.

The Centre integrates capacities on innovation, policy, data and research to inform and support new programming in borderlands, working closely with the AU, RECs and the UN system. ABC gives voice to the ideas and innovations from borderland communities and emphasizes the economic opportunities of borderlands, particularly through the promotion of cross-border trade.

Strengthening Climate Change Awareness and Adaptations

The Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) was launched in 2015 by African Heads of State to ensure the continent adapts quickly and effectively to the adverse effects of climate change.

The Initiative raises awareness of climate adaptation; facilitates knowledge management, capacity building and capacity strengthening; supports and facilitates resource mobilization for implementation; promotes cooperation and partnerships (at sub-regional and regional levels) for synergy, scale and maximizing shared benefits; and tracks progress through monitoring and evaluation.

In partnership with the AU and funding from the European Union (EU), UNDP and its partners launched a two-year €1 million grant to support the AAI by increasing African countries' access to climate information, risk and vulnerability studies,

and risk transfer options—thereby increasing their adaptive capacity while softening the economic impacts of climatic hazards.

In this context, UNDP is helping publish a 'State of Resilience in Africa Report', slated for publication to coincide with COP 27 in Africa in November 2021, which will be the first report of its kind from the continent's perspective aimed at guiding governments to transition to risk-informed climate-resilient pathways and advocating for greater investments in adaptation.

Through UNDP's support to adaptation in Africa:

- More than **3,000** km of coastline protected
- Improved practices for **156,300** hectares of agricultural land
- **57.8** million people benefitted

UNDP is:

- Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in **39** countries
- Supporting **25** African countries to develop National Adaptation Plans (NAP)
- Supporting **34** African countries to access and effectively utilize over **\$500** million in adaptation finance.

Other PLANET projects and initiatives by include:

- Last Mile Connectivity Programme
- Integrated and Innovative SDG-NDC Climate Financing in Africa
- National Adaptation Plans

Peace

UNDP's work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding are centred around the prevention of violent extremism, cross-border cooperation and coordination; the enhancement women's effective and meaningful participation in political

and peace processes; and the development and implementation of regional stabilization and conflict prevention strategies, including in the Lake Chad Basin, Liptako-Gourma, the Horn, the Sahel and the Great Lakes regions.

Highlights

Conflict Prevention

The partnership with the AU's Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Department, on the prevention of conflict and supporting peacebuilding efforts in Africa, focuses on re-energizing early warning, conflict prevention and mediation efforts on the continent.

The programme has notably supported 3 country structural vulnerability and resilience assessments and mitigation strategies in Zambia, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, provided support to women and youth mediators, and have increased collaboration on support to national peace infrastructure. Strategic partnerships have also been forged with regional civil society umbrella platforms demanding improved accountability.

Supporting Inclusive Transition in Africa

The last five years have witnessed a rise in critical political transitions leading to real or imminent risk of crises in Africa. Countries like Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Sudan, the Gambia, Chad, Mali, South Sudan, and Somalia are examples of diverse forms of both constitutional and unconstitutional forms of transitions.

Countries at risk of crises during transitions generally rank low in governance, human development, and fragile states indices. Supporting inclusion and effective states in diverse contexts will reduce the risk of crises. UNDP and the African Development Bank (AfDB) have partnered to deploy their comparative advantages in support of countries in transitions. Vital to achieving this outcome is establishing a

facility that supports inclusive transitions in Africa and enables countries in transitions to achieve recovery.

Stabilizing the Lake Chad Region

Amina Baba, 32, is a single parent and small business owner in Mora, the capital of the Mayo-Sava department in the Far North region of Cameroon, where the devastating impact of Boko Haram is felt. Amina's husband abandoned her and their five children when the Boko Haram crisis began. "Perhaps he joined the group and went to die somewhere out there in the bush," says Amina. In this region, several young people such as her husband have gone missing over the last few years as unemployment and security worsened. "Several times I was approached by some people to join the Boko Haram group, but I always refused," she says.

Amina was able to participate in a UNDP-supported cash-for-work programme, which enabled her to fund a small business selling doughnuts and natural fruit juices. As a result, she is able to earn 3,000 CFA francs (US\$5.30) per day, save money and even deliver food to her cash-for-work colleagues. With her small profits, Amina can now afford to send her children to school and buy a freezer, which will allow her to expand the range of products she sells. "Life for me was tough. I used to cry every day for the whole day because the burden was overwhelming," says Amina. "This programme saved me."

Regional Stabilization Facility for the Lake Chad Basin

\$100 Million | **8** Territories | **900,000** People

RSF investments in the region have led to:

- Over **30,000** households provided with healthcare, education, justice and alternative livelihood options.
- **1,800** houses, market stalls and water lines constructed.

The **Regional Stabilization Facility (RSF) for the Lake Chad Basin** seeks to bring immediate stabilization and relief to communities affected by Boko Haram in eight regions across Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The project aims to help the region move from humanitarian assistance to development and resilience, reduce household level poverty, and combat radicalization and recruitment of young people into terrorist groups.

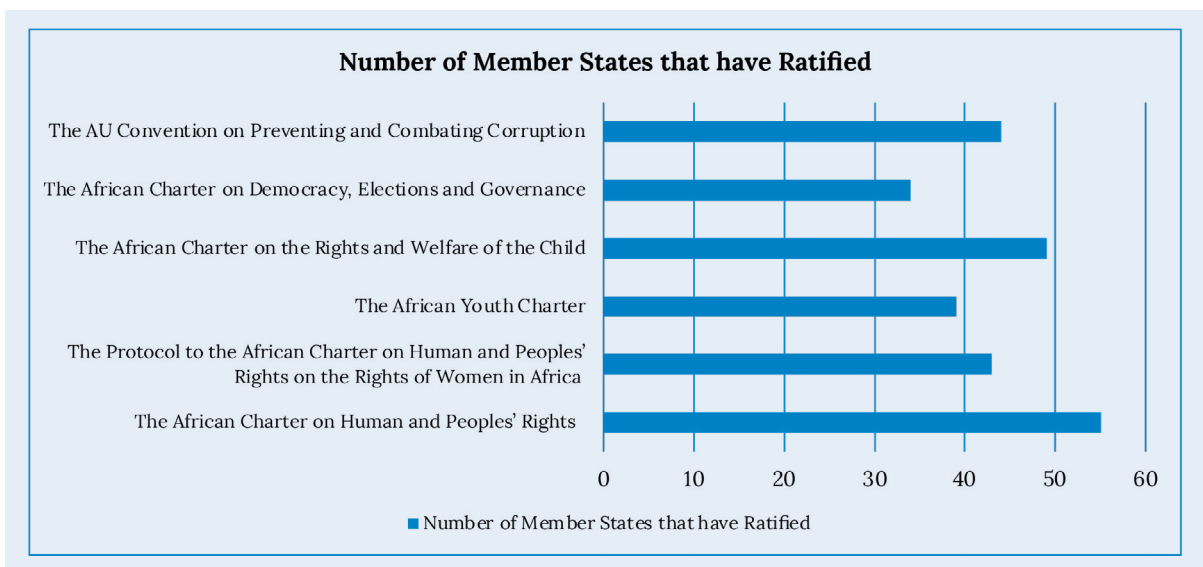
The RSF serves as a rapid response mechanism to support the local authorities to restore and extend effective civilian security, improve delivery of basic services, provide employment opportunities for local populations in the region, and support a timely, coordinated and effective transition from stabilization to early recovery.

The facility also supports high-level strategic political dialogues, engagements and policy harmonization, as well as peace and stabilization committees that ensure the inclusion of communities in decision-making with authorities and security actors. As a sign of its effectiveness, the RSF was extended in August 2021. At that point, 15 Joint Action Plans had been implemented and 13 Community Stabilization Committees created. These led to the rehabilitation of essential infrastructure and basic services, as well as actions to address community security challenges.

Increasing Awareness and Ratification of AU treaties

AU treaties provide the normative and legal mechanism through which AU Member States can foster greater political and economic integration, reduce poverty and improve peace and security.

To date, AU Member States have adopted 67 treaties, protocols and conventions. Efforts are being made to encourage Member States to ratify the treaties. Launched in 2019, **Accelerating the Ratification and Domestication of African Union Treaties**, is a joint AU-UNDP three-year, multi-country and regional initiative designed to address challenges and bottlenecks associated with ratification and domestication; help enhance the capacity of the AU to manage the ratification process; and provide tailored support to Member States with domestication-related challenges.



Six priority countries have been selected based on regional balance, openness to civil society, entrenched democratic systems, and legal diversity (encompassing the three major existing legal systems on the African continent):

- Burkina Faso (West Africa)
- Senegal (West Africa)
- Kenya (East/Horn of Africa)
- Mozambique (Southern Africa)
- Tunisia (North Africa)
- Sao Tome & Principe (Central Africa).

Six treaties are the focus of this programme:

1. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
2. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa
3. The African Youth Charter
4. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
5. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
6. The AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption.

UNDP also supports the ratification, domestication, enforcement and reporting on global, regional and national instruments and frameworks on gender equality by working with **Equality Now** to conduct mappings and assessments. UNDP supports RECs to put in place mechanisms to monitor and update the status of gender policies and instruments, including when these are up for review.

Reducing Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms

UNDP's regional interventions supported the reduction of illicit trafficking of small arms by strengthening regional and cross-border cooperation and improving national and community structures and capacities in the field of **Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)** control.

Other PEACE projects and initiatives by UNDP include:

- Conflict Prevention
- Ballots Without Bullets Campaign
- A Comprehensive Regional Prevention Strategy for the Horn
- The Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
- Stabilization Facility for Liptako-Gourma Region
- Great Lakes Region Strategic Framework
- Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa

For example, UNDP conducted the first regional mapping study of small arms interventions in over a decade across all 15 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Member States.

In partnership with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNDIR), UNDP conducted two Weapons and Ammunitions Management assessments and provided technical support to strengthen the operational capacity in regional planning and implementation of the ECOWAS Convention on SALW for six National Commissions of Small Arms (NATCOMS).

Data from these sources have been used to track and trace weapons involved in crime or diverted for other purposes. Furthermore, UNDP enhanced the operational capacity of NATCOMS by establishing 15 decentralized offices for NATCOMS and security forces at selected borders, thereby reducing the free flow of illicit arms at border areas.

Partnerships

The fifth pillar is Partnerships. Our partners help us implement and amplify our projects, programmes and initiatives. Our partnerships help build strong institutions, bolster cohesion, and enhance responsiveness and resilience.

UNDP's work on contributing to Silencing the Guns is a result of close coordination with:

- The African Union Commission and Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs)
- Regional and sub-regional institutions, such as WANEP
- UN agencies and international organizations
- Host country governments
- Donors and the private sector
- NGOs, civil society and communities

For this initiative, however, our most important partner is the African Union Commission and the AU specialized agencies and institutions. As is often stated at UNDP, "alone we go fast, but together we have greater impact". This is the core tenet of our partnership with the AU.

This partnership is guided by the joint AU–UN Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the Joint UN-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the critical guidance of the AU's African Governance Architecture (AGA) and African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The AU-UNDP partnership benefits from Africa's

diverse and youthful populations, increasingly vibrant civil societies, and a greater participation by women in peacebuilding across the continent. The AU brings critical normative frameworks, as well as effective experience in mediation, dialogue and peacebuilding. For its part, UNDP has provided support to the AUC and RECs/RMs through flagship research, policy advice and programmatic interventions, leveraging UNDP's presence in countries and at the sub-regional levels and building on existing engagements and programmes.

For example, in collaboration with the AUC, UNDP has been supporting the development of an **African Impact Investment Ecosystem**, backed by a study that captures the industry's trends, constraints and sector development opportunities. After successive deliberations with key stakeholders, the first pan-African impact investment ecosystem development network was established, **Impact@Africa**. The network serves as a gateway and platform for information, networking and collaboration between industry players with relevant government authorities to address the key barriers that inhibit the development and growth of the impact investing sector on the continent. The network requires the collaboration and concerted action of stakeholders with complementary skills and perspectives, all working towards a common vision with a clear understanding of the mission and the goals. Impact@Africa has prioritized the development of solutions to address the financing needs of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Lessons Learned

Over the course of this initiative, UNDP has learned many lessons from the challenges and the opportunities that have arisen.

Better Coordination of Efforts

One key challenge to sustaining peace in Africa has been limited coordination among actors involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Moreover, securing and sustaining peace requires more inclusive and participatory local and community-based platforms for dialogue and engagement on sustaining peace.

Therefore, while UNDP's support to the AU, RECs and Member States has been an important contribution to silencing the guns, more effort should be made at the local and community levels. In particular, resilience-building requires a strong network of diverse local actors that bridge differences with national and international actors to jointly come up with solutions that suit the context-specific and pressing needs of communities.

In addition, UNDP and other UN agencies in their support to the AU and RECs require better coordination to avoid a duplication of efforts as well as to share burdens, risks and the means to respond to them. On-going efforts to strengthen the partnership with the AU through dedicated consultation and joint partnership on governance, peace, security and development is an instrumental step towards better cooperation and collaboration.

Invest in Shared Knowledge and Analysis

It is necessary to establish joint consultation and briefing mechanisms to ensure a shared understanding of priorities and linkages in terms of programming, planning, implementation, monitoring and learning.

UNDP will be investing more in co-created knowledge products with the AU and RECs that contain joint analysis, document shared lessons

and forecasting future opportunities. It is also imperative that we develop and implement joint strategic investments based on our comparable niches, leverage and capacities for sustainable development in Africa.

Greater Citizen Engagement

Decision-makers should be ready to engage citizens to ensure that they contribute to and understand the decisions that affect their lives. Without such engagement, sustainable socio-economic transformation and development may be difficult to achieve.

Over the next five years, UNDP intends to improve its engagement in and progress toward contributing to the Silencing the Guns Agenda by:

1. Applying a gender-sensitive lens across all programmes.
2. Cultivating stronger working partnerships with Africa's continental and regional-level organizations.
3. Improving regional capacities to address specifically cross-border development challenges and opportunities in Africa.
4. Building resilience to crises and shocks experienced by actors, institutions and communities by drawing on lessons learned during the COVID-19 crisis.
5. Making better use of measurable data, including baseline data and SMART indicators in the programme results framework.
6. Developing project exit strategies to enhance sustainability.

Going Forward

UNDP is focused on the future. Our initiatives contribute to silencing the guns by building resilience, increasing employment and boosting more inclusive digital governance.

For example, the Resilience Hub for Africa is working to enhance analysis of risks that countries and communities face, the drivers of resilience, and the policies and investments that have proven successful in preventing and responding to crises and in achieving a stronger recovery. The Resilience hub will also develop the very first 'State of Resilience in Africa' report, in which African countries will tell their own story on resilience and promote African-grown, resilience-building solutions globally.

Due to the vast opportunities offered by **digitization** to ensure broader access to public services, UNDP is also increasing our work in building African governments' capacity to leverage digital tools and platforms to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility and equitability of service delivery. UNDP has a long track record of helping countries shift to e-governance, which revolutionizes the ways in which states govern, public institutions function,

and citizens interact and hold states to account. In addition, UNDP has been supporting the AU and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and put in place mechanisms to address and adapt to the current and future pandemics. These initiatives (such as the work carried out by the UNDP Resilience Hub) aim to build resilience to better prepare for and deal with shocks, stresses and crises and to support the response to and mitigation of the effects of COVID-19 and climate resilience.

We remain committed to stopping the gun and working with our strategic and valuable partners such as the AUC and RECs. We have no choice but to invest, more holistically and with others, in measures that will result in a reduction in conflicts and gender-based violence, as well as in facilitating conducive conditions for Africa's development. As Moussa Faki Mahamat, AUC Chairperson, reminds us, the Silencing the Guns initiative is "our collective responsibility." We must come together, share the burden of realizing that responsibility, and inspire coordinated innovation and response. We are bolstered by the belief that together that we can go far.



SILENCING THE GUNS IN AFRICA .

Towards a Peaceful and Secure Africa



Regional Programme for Africa
Regional Service Centre for Africa (RSCA)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Main Bole Road, Olympia roundabout, DRC Street
P.O. Box 60130
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
<http://www.africa.undp.org>
rp.africa@undp.org
Twitter @UNDPAfrica