

POLICY BRIEF

Youth inclusion in negotiation, mediation, and other peacebuilding processes in East and Horn of Africa

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**American
Friends
Service
Committee**



Abbreviations

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
AFSC	American Friends Services Committee
ARCSS	Agreement for Conflict Resolution for South Sudan
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AU PSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DPoA	Decade Plan of Action (AU)
EAC	East Africa Community
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
IPHRD	Institute for Peace, Human Rights and Development -Africa
JGYC	Joint Galkayo Youth Committee
HoA	Horn of Africa
IDMC	International Displacement Monitoring Centre
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LPI	Life and Peace Institute
MSU	Mediation Support Unit
NAP	National Action Plan
NYU	National Youth Union
R-ARCSS	Resolution to the Conflict in South Sudan
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RMs	Regional Mechanisms
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SSCF	South Sudan Civil Society Forum
UK	United Kingdom
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund
YOC	Youth Organizations Coalition
YPS	Youth, Peace, and Security

Executive summary

Across the Horn of Africa (HoA) region, young people are involved in efforts to establish lasting peace in their communities, countries, and region. These efforts have, without a doubt, demonstrated that youth participation in peace processes can improve peace outcomes before, during, and after conflict. Youth in the HoA are actively working to build peace and prevent violence, using various approaches and modalities, including working through networks, alliances, associations, civil society organizations, and community-based organizations.

However, their participation is generally constrained by long-standing cultural norms of exclusion, an erroneous view of youth as a threat to peace processes, limited resources, restricted civic spaces, exclusionary appointments to mediation processes, and a lack of trust and suspicion from state and other peace actors. Given these norms, it is critical to expand spaces for youth engagement in peace processes by developing guidance on youth inclusivity in peace processes, outlining youth inclusion as a minimum standard in all peace processes, promoting intergenerational mentorship, providing youth-focused resourcing, as well as undertaking capacity building and alliance building processes to advance UN youth, peace, and security agenda.

1.0 Introduction

Youth in the HoA are engaging in peace processes by working closely with civil society organizations. They have demonstrated that they can be engaged as critical actors and leaders in raising awareness of non-violent approaches to resolving conflicts. In countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan, and Kenya, the Life and Peace Institute (LPI) has been implementing **Sustained Dialogue Processes**, working closely with young women and men within university settings and youth in borderlands and informal settlements. These dialogues aim to strengthen building a culture of trust, foster collaboration between otherwise segregated or conflicting communities and social groups, and ultimately strengthen social cohesion.

At the global level, the United Nations (UN) has made considerable efforts to implement a policy architecture to promote the youth, peace, and security (YPS) agenda. For example, in 2015, the United Nations Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security (UNSCR 2250) was adopted, and it recognizes the contributions of young people to peace and security efforts. UNSCR 2250 calls upon member states to increase the representation of youth in decision-making and to establish mechanisms for their meaningful engagement. Similarly, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2282 on the **“Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture,”** adopted in 2016, re-affirms the critical roles played by young people in the prevention and resolution of conflict and acknowledges that youth are pivotal towards the sustainability, inclusiveness, and success of all peace processes.

In 2018, following a study on the roles and contributions of youth in peacebuilding, the UN Security Council also adopted Resolution 2419, which calls for an increase in the role of youth in negotiating and implementing peace agreements. The UN also adopted UNSCR 2535 (2020), which calls for institutionalizing the YPS agenda and underscores the importance of youth in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

UNSCR 2535 further calls for State Parties to protect civic and political spaces for the participation of young people and urges State Parties to develop guidance on protecting young people. In addition to UNSCR 2250, the UN also adopted a **Five-Year Strategic Plan on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes (2022-2026)**, which seeks to ensure that all peace processes are shaped by and supportive of young people’s meaningful participation. The strategic plan ensures young people’s active and significant involvement in designing and implementing peace processes.

At the continental level, the African Union (AU) has been advancing the YPS Agenda through various normative instruments, including the AU Constitutive Act (2000), which identified youth as essential partners in strengthening solidarity and social cohesion for a strong and united Africa. Furthermore, Article 17 of the African Youth Charter (2006) underscores the critical role of youth in promoting peace and security in Africa. Additionally, the African Heads of State and Government adopted the AU Continental Framework on Youth, Peace, and Security (2020- 2029) to foster accountability on the YPS Agenda. The AU’s Agenda 2063 **Aspirations 3, 4, 5, and 6** collectively call for a peaceful and secure Africa, characterized by mainstreaming youth considerations into the efforts to create *“The Africa We Want.”*

The AU’s *Silencing Guns initiative*, which is part of the AU’s flagship projects, also recognizes the role of youth as one of the critical areas to ending all wars in Africa. This is augmented by the AU’s *Youth for Peace Africa Programme*, which signals the continental body’s sustained action to support youth engagement in peace and security processes. Since November 2018, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) has been convening Open Sessions on YPS, highlighting the imperative to meaningfully involve young people in peace processes and provide a platform to discuss thematic peace and security issues affecting young people. The AU also launched the African Youth Decade and its Plan of Action

(DPoA), followed by the *African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment* (2019-2023) and the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace, and Security adoption.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) also acknowledges young people in peace and security processes. For example, IGAD's Strategy (2021-2025) recognizes the roles played by youth as agents for peace. Additionally, IGAD is in the process of developing its Regional Policy and Strategy on Youth. IGAD's Mediation Support Unit (MSU) has developed programmes that engage youth mediation and negotiation, and the focus of such programmes is to strengthen capacities to participate in peace and security processes meaningfully. In 2021, IGAD launched the IGAD Youth Forum for Peace, which provides a regional platform for youth-led and youth-driven initiatives to enhance the region's peace, security, and stability. A series of capacity-building training initiatives for youth from various IGAD Member States, such as South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti, Somalia, and Ethiopia, followed the establishment of the Forum. IGAD also launched the Scholarship for Youth for Peace and Stability in the Region, which is earmarked for young people affected by conflict, especially those forcibly displaced. Plans are underway to appoint IGAD Youth Envoys.

A study on youth engagement in peace mediation and negotiations in the HoA was conducted by the Salama Hub Project (AFSC) based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to showcase the varied experiences of youth in peace processes. The Salama Hub Project is a joint venture of AFSC, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), and an international non-governmental organization (NGO) of European origin. The project presents an opportunity to contribute significantly by equipping African civil society and faith-based organizations in the HoA region with research evidence to influence policy development, thereby contributing to peace. Led by AFSC, the study focused on the roles and contributions of youth in mediation and negotiations in the HoA region, the challenges experienced, and how to strengthen their involvement. The findings form a basis for formulating necessary policy shifts towards comprehensive, youth-inclusive peace processes. The study used a mixed-method approach using desk research, interviews, consultations, and questionnaires. The findings of the study are summarized below.

2.0 Youth participation in peace processes in the Horn of Africa

Youth participation in peace processes in countries of the HoA has been evident in their communities, countries, and beyond. These efforts show that youth participation in peace processes can improve outcomes before, during, and after conflict. While some actors see youth bulge in the region as a risk in terms of their negative involvement, which sometimes comes from manipulation from the political actors, some see them as opportunities to strengthen peace processes. The former UN SG (Ban Ki-moon, 2016) called it the “most severe social injustice” if youth are removed from the cycle of reconciliation and peacebuilding.

During the 2018/19 revolution in Sudan, youth actively pushed for political transformation and democracy through various associations such as the Sudanese Professional Association (SPA). Youth participated alongside women in sustained protests and engaged in multiple forms of civic resistance to call for a more democratic Sudan. However, following the ouster of Al-Bashir, the role of youth in the transitional council was diminished gradually. Also, Sudan played host to the South Sudan peace process that led to the Revitalized Agreement for the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). During this peace process, youth associations and networks, such as the National Youth Union (NYU) and the Youth Organizations Coalition (YOC), played a pivotal role in influencing processes around the mediation spaces and outside. Youth in the South Sudan Civil Society Forum (SSCSF) mobilized youth from across political, religious, and ethnic divides and were able to build a strong alliance and develop a common agenda for young people. They used this jointly crafted youth agenda and call for action to influence the formal peace processes in South Sudan. Other young people worked under the auspices of these umbrella organizations and brought new ideas and fresh perspectives to peace processes, especially the call for a youth-inclusive peace agreement.

Establishing the R-ARCSS provided space for undertaking youth-sensitive disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programme, setting up a Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), and establishing a Students Fund. As a strategy to promote inter-ethnic cohesion, during the peace process, young people called for a more inclusive, unifying, and non-ethnified education system in South Sudan, which would mean that students from different ethnic groups and tribes could enroll in the same schools. Additionally, young people in South Sudan engaged in social media campaigns to call for an inclusive peace process. Examples of such campaigns include **#SouthSudanIsWatching** and the **#Anataban** campaigns, which sought to raise awareness of the R-ARCSS negotiations in 2017/18. Digital activism by the youths ensured that diverse sectors of the population managed to follow up on the progress of the peace talks. These campaigns were also vital in putting pressure on the conflict parties, calling them to resolve the conflict in South Sudan peacefully.

In **Somalia**, youth participation in peace processes is more prominent at the community level. Young Somalis actively participate in peace processes through informal groups, religious organizations, associations, and networks. An example of the youth’s significant and impactful participation is the Galkayo peace process, initiated following territorial tensions between the two dominant clans, namely Galmudug State (and Puntland State). In 2015, when the communal conflict in Galkayo escalated, young people, through the Joint Galkayo Youth Committee (JGYC), partnered with traditional elders, local businesspeople, the Federal Government of Somalia, and the local authorities in Puntland and Galmudug to support a community-based mediation process). The Galkayo process resulted in a peace agreement signed in 2016 between the Puntland and Galmudug administrations. The success of the JGYC in shaping the negotiations demonstrated that when provided with

a platform, young people can play critical and meaningful roles in promoting peace and building bridges across conflict lines.

In **Kenya**, young people have recorded success stories, especially in facilitating community-based dialogues, mediation, and negotiation processes. Kenya's Nakuru County Peace Accord, signed in 2012, provides lessons on youth participation. The Nakuru County Peace Accord was signed following mediation and dialogue efforts to end several cycles of electoral violence experienced in the county during the 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2008 election years. Young people were part of the signatories to the Nakuru County Peace Agreement). Youth engagement in the peace process followed a recognition by conflict parties and community leaders that young people had a crucial role to play in implementing and sustaining the peace agreement.

Life and Peace Institute (LPI) has also implemented Sustained Dialogue processes in the urban informal settlements of Dandora, Kibera, Mathare, Mandera, and Wajir. Most of the LPI activities involve connecting youth from across political, ethnic, and religious divides to strengthen their capacities to manage and resolve conflicts. LPI has also been working to support youth in borderland areas such as Mayenje and Malomba between Kenya and Uganda borders. The dialogues have played critical roles in putting young people at the center stage of strengthening social cohesion and promoting a culture of peace.

The Institute for Peace, Human Rights and Development (IPHRD-Africa), a Kenyan-based organization, has consistently tried to enhance the mediation capacities of young women from the Horn of Africa region, particularly in Kenya, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Somalia. Under the **Africa Young Peacemakers Project**, IPHRD-Africa has established a network of young women involved in peace processes, including dialogue and mediation. Efforts by such organizations have resulted in enhanced capacities and knowledge about creative tools in reconciliation, conflict transformation, and prevention.

Young people in the region have also been engaging with their governments as well as with multilateral institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and other Regional Economic Communities/ Regional Mechanisms (RECs/ RMs). Several organizations have stepped up efforts to provide technical and capacity-building support to youth, focusing on strengthening their participation in mediation, negotiation, and dialogue processes. IGAD Mediation Support Unit (MSU) has, since 2017, been providing youth from the Horn of Africa region with capacity-building support in mediation and negotiation skills. Additionally, it provides internships and fellowship opportunities to young women in conflict prevention and mediation to enhance their skills. The targeted earmarking of young people for capacity strengthening is based on IGAD's recognition that peace processes should be inclusive to contribute meaningfully to a more durable and sustainable peace.

Similarly, the East Africa Community (EAC) established a programme for Youth Community Ambassadors, which is operational in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Sudan. The EAC Youth Community Youth Ambassadors Platform has provided a vehicle for youth mobilization in peacebuilding processes, mainly at a community level. For example, along the Kenya-Tanzania borders, the EAC Youth Peace Ambassadors have engaged in a multi-stakeholder outreach programme targeting border communities such as Horohoro (Tanzania) and Lunga Lunga (Kenya), and they seek to enhance the collaboration between border stakeholders and actors and to promote intergenerational dialogues between community members.

3.0 Challenges and remaining gaps

Notwithstanding the incredible efforts by youth in peace and security processes and the significant norm-setting efforts, there are still challenges in attaining full participation of youth in mediation and negotiation processes in the HoA region. These challenges include the following:

- **Under-representation in formal peace processes:** Despite their active engagement in mediation processes at community levels, young people's expertise and contribution to peace processes are often overlooked and under-valued. Young people are frequently excluded and marginalized in discussions concerning peace and security issues, especially in formal peace processes.
- **Long-standing cultural norms of exclusion:** The meaningful participation of youth in mediation, negotiation, and other peacebuilding processes is often curtailed by longstanding and deeply embedded cultural norms and practises. Gerontocratic, hierarchical, and patriarchal cultural practices and social norms broadly characterize the HoA. Hence, young people are often undervalued, overlooked, and left out in peace processes.
- **Viewing youth as a threat:** Youth under-representation in peace processes is often compounded by the erroneous perception that young people threaten peace, security, and stability. Their engagement is often not informed by a genuine desire to work with them. Still, it usually comes from a deficit perspective, driven by the fear that they will pose a potential security threat if they are not included. This tokenism often leads to the failure to create a platform for meaningful engagement.
- **Misunderstanding of peacebuilding work:** Often, State actors, conflict actors, and community members have a general misunderstanding of the work undertaken by the youth peace activists. For example, the calls for inclusion by youth are often interpreted as anti-establishment or as their expressed desire to usurp power, which is therefore interpreted as a significant threat to peace. Additionally, the militarized nature of conflicts and the increasing polarization between conflict actors tend to make the work of youth peacebuilders harder.
- **Appointments to mediation processes are exclusionary by design:** The nomination processes for mediators tend to be elitist and state-centric, often drawing from a pool of high-level political figures, diplomats, military people, or other elites. In most cases, the mediators often appointed by AU or RECs such as IGAD or nominated by member states must demonstrate that they previously held high-level political, diplomatic, or security positions. Such stringent requirement is one of the key reasons why youth are often excluded from official mediation processes.
- **Threats to the safety and security of youth peace actors:** Safety and security threats impede the effective participation of youth participation in mediation, negotiation, dialogue, and other peacebuilding processes. For example, in Somalia, attacks by Al-Shabaab accentuated the insecurity in the country, leading to widespread sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against young women. Such protection challenges can deter youth, especially young women, from actively participating in peace processes. Ultimately, unresolved protection issues can impede the effective participation of youth in peace processes.
- **Misunderstanding of youth activism:** Within the region, notable instances of the collision between the state and growing youth peace activism have occurred. By challenging the root causes of conflict and questioning existing power structures, youth actors sometimes face threats to their physical, emotional, psycho-social, and digital well-being. For example, in Eritrea, the restricted civic space and the closed space for independent CSOs to operate have often

meant that youth activists find it challenging to be meaningfully engaged in the dynamics of their society, including in peace and security processes.

- **Restricted civic space:** In much of the HoA region, including countries like Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda, there have been notable trends toward constricting civic space. The constriction of civic space has increasingly made it difficult for youth groups to mobilize and organize, even for peacebuilding issues. One way the constricted civic space is manifested is by adopting stringent and inhibitive legislation, such as public security and anti-terrorism laws, which curtail peacebuilding activists, human rights defenders, and the media. These laws and unfair judicial processes are used to counter political activism and impact freedom of association, including young peacebuilders' mobilization and active engagement. For example, Ethiopia's Anti-Terrorism Law, adopted in 2002, and the new Proclamation of 2020 has notably been used to counter political activism by opponents.
- **Peripheralization of inclusion issues:** Dis-

missed calls for inclusivity are recurring challenges. Very often, demands for inclusion and engagement of youths are not accommodated, as the key actors argue that their primary objective is ending armed violence.

- **Limited funding and material resources:** Lack of funding is one of the biggest impediments to the meaningful participation of youth in peace processes. Most youth-led initiatives and organizations remain underfunded, under-resourced, and overlooked in formal funding application processes. This affects young people and their organizations, which still need to establish a track record and experience to enable them to compete more effectively with their more established counterparts. Unfortunately, development partners have not yet adopted flexible funding arrangements to address this gap.
- **Capacity gaps:** Youth participation in mediation, negotiation, and other peacebuilding processes is constrained by the capacity in leadership, governance, strategy design, public speaking, and stakeholder mobilization.

4.0 Conclusions

Youth engagement in peace processes in the region has yielded substantial gains and is bringing peaceful solutions. Youth in the HoA region, through their movements and networks, have been able to raise their voices for inclusivity in durable peace processes. However, they remain absent in various formal peace processes in the region.

It is critical to enhance their participation through capacity-building support, the provision of flexible funding, as well as through provision of platforms for mentorship. Additionally, there is a need for peace actors at all levels by International Development Partners, the continental body (AU, regional bodies, national governments, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to commit to sustained engagement with youth. This will advance the YPS agenda as spelled out under the normative frameworks adopted by the UN, AU, IGAD, and other RECs/ RMs.

4.1 Recommendations

Call to IGAD/ AU member states

- **Provide an enabling environment for young women's participation:** Empower young women and girls to participate in peace and security initiatives and ensure the creation of an enabling environment for enhancing youth participation in peace and security processes by establishing youth quotas in mediation and negotiation processes and transitional and post-conflict reconstructive and development (PCRD) procedures. This includes setting aside spaces for young people to participate in National Commissions, Committees, and Councils, conflict prevention, preventive diplomacy, conflict management, and resolution.
- **Adopt measures to promote youth representation in leadership and decision-making:** Promote youth representation in leadership and decision-making at all levels to enable young people to gain the necessary experience at the national level and subsequently carve out a niche for themselves in peace and security processes. The meaningful engagement of young people in the decision-making arena in politics, public service, and other areas will effectively prepare them to participate in formal peace negotiations, dialogues, peacemaking, and peacebuilding at national, regional, and continental levels.
- **Adopt National Action Plans on YPS:** Accelerate the development and implementation of national action plans (NAPs) on the YPS Agenda, in line with the AU Framework on Youth Peace and Security provisions. NAPs on YPS signal a government's commitment to integrating the needs of young people into peace processes, and they guide how to ensure that national legal frameworks, policies, and programmes align with the provisions of the UNSCRs 1325, 2250, and related resolutions.
- **Ensure that youth are represented in national peace infrastructures:** Create space to facilitate and strengthen youth participation in national peace infrastructures and mechanisms such as National and Local Dialogue Commissions, National and Local Transitional structures, and National and Local Peacebuilding Commissions and Committees. Youth should be partners in designing national and local peace processes, including developing legal frameworks, policies, and guidelines on peace and security.
- **Establish dedicated National Youth Focal Points for Peace Processes:** Appoint national youth focal points for peace processes, who can be called upon to provide policy advice on internal and external peace processes. A Youth National Focal Points on Peace and Security database should be kept and regularly updated to identify and select young people who can participate in national peace processes. The database can also be used as a tool by the AU, IGAD, and other RECs/ RMs to call upon young people to participate in peace processes at national, regional, or continental levels.
- **Capacity building of Youth Peace Actors:** Provide the necessary technical support to strengthen the capacities of youth peace actors at national and local levels. This should be augmented by the development of National Databases and Rosters for youth involved in mediation, negotiation, dialogue, and other peacebuilding processes.
- **Enhance the Protection of youth peacebuilders:** Establish and enhance protection mechanisms for youth peacebuilders to enable them to undertake their work without concern for their digital, emotional, and physical security. Special measures must be

taken to address threats, harassment, violence, and hate speech against youth peacebuilders.

- **Promote youth entrepreneurship and job creation programs** to address the region's high levels of youth unemployment and economic instability to prevent radicalization.
- **Facilitate dialogue between youth and older generations** to bridge gaps in understanding and foster inter-generational cooperation in peacebuilding efforts.
- **Fund and facilitate programs that empower young people** to take on community leadership roles. This can include training in conflict resolution, mediation, and negotiation

skills.

- **Implement digital and media literacy programs** that teach young people to evaluate information critically, identify fake news, and recognize the potential consequences of spreading violent or false content.
- **Integrate civic education into the school curriculum** to help young people understand the principles of democracy, peaceful conflict resolution, and responsible citizenship offline and online.
- **Promote ethical guidelines for social media platforms**, emphasizing the importance of responsible and respectful online behavior, including refraining from hate speech and incitement to violence.

Call to AU, IGAD and other Regional Economic Communities

- **Develop programs that advance the YPS Agenda:** Support the advancement of the YPS Agenda by developing capacity-building and awareness-raising programmes that strengthen young people's participation and meaningful engagement in peace processes. In line with the UN *Strategic Plan on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes (2022-2026)*, the AU, IGAD, and other RECs/ RMs should support the institutionalization of youth-inclusive peace processes, working closely with Member States and parties to the conflict.
- **Develop guidance for youth inclusion in mediation and negotiation processes:** Develop and adopt advice, frameworks, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure that youth-inclusive lenses and perspectives are integrated into all regional peace processes. Such tools should be consultatively developed in collaboration with young people and their networks and can guide all actors engaged in mediation, negotiation, dialogue, and peacebuilding processes in the HoA. These Guidance or Frameworks on Youth Inclusion in Mediation and Negotiation Processes are critical

for advancing the YPS Agenda and ensuring that peace processes adhere to inclusivity standards.

- **Insist on mediators to create parallel committees where youth can participate:** The AU and regional actors should insist on minimum standards for youth inclusion in peace processes. For example, mediation teams and conflict parties should be compelled to create Youth-centred Thematic Committees and Advisory Panels for mediation and negotiation processes, which can become avenues for young people to engage with the processes meaningfully.
- **Undertake monitoring and evaluation of youth participation in peace processes:** The AU, IGAD, and other RECs/RMs should institutionalize the monitoring of youth participation in mediation, negotiation, dialogue, and peacebuilding processes. Agreed-upon monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be used to track the YPS Agenda's progress, including youth-inclusive provisions in peace agreements and post-conflict policies and programs.

To the International development partners

These recommendations are targeted at international actors, including the United Nations (UN), the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), the European Union (EU), and the private sector, which have a critical role in ensuring that mediation and negotiation processes are more inclusive.

- **Incentivize youth participation in peace processes:** Make support to peace processes conditional upon the demonstrable commitment by parties, guarantors, facilitators, and mediators to the principles of youth inclusion. For example, establish minimum standards such as quota systems for youth participation in all peace processes. Development partners and international actors can also incentivize parties to conflict to include youth in their delegations and advisory committees for negotiation and mediation.
- **Insist on youth inclusion in all phases of peace processes:** Call on all actors, from conflict parties to mediators, to ensure that youth play more visible, robust, and meaningful roles in peace processes. Attention should be paid to ensure that the needs of youth who are displaced and those with disabilities, as well as other marginalized groups, are not overlooked.
- **Provide flexible and sustainable funding to youth peace actors:** Provide more sustainable, accessible, and flexible funding to enable youth to participate more meaningfully in mediation and negotiation processes, including participating in thematic Committees of mediation processes.
- **Establish urgent action funds earmarked for young people: Establish urgent action funds and other flexible funds to** foster youth's rapid deployment and participation in peace processes at all levels, including preventive diplomacy missions, election observations, and conflict resolution.
- **Provide protection for youth working on peace and security issues:** Provide protection mechanisms and strategies to support youth peace actors. This includes availing legal, psycho-social, funding, and repatriation support to peacebuilders.
- **Provide spaces for networking between youth and other peace actors:** Support the convening of intergenerational dialogues, which facilitate cross-fertilization of ideas between youth and other actors in the peace and security spectrum. Such dialogues should include political leaders, mediators, mediation support teams, and representatives from the AU, RECs/ RMs, and the international community.
- **Invest in enhancing spaces for mentorship:** Provide mentorship support to youth peace actors and provide platforms for young people to participate in forums that enable experience-sharing and harnessing good practices.
- **Establish effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** to assess and adjust youth-focused peacebuilding strategies and support developing and implementing early warning systems that involve youth monitoring and reporting potential conflicts to help prevent violence.
- **Provide funding and technical assistance** to local and regional youth-led and youth-focused CSOs.

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About the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression. Guided by the Quaker belief in the divine light within each person, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life to fundamentally transform our societies and institutions. We work with people and partners worldwide of all faiths and backgrounds to meet urgent community needs, challenge injustice, and build peace. Through its Africa Regional Office in Kenya, AFSC promotes projects in Kenya, South Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, and Zimbabwe, with an evidence-based advocacy component for policy change in the Horn of Africa, with an office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. AFSC has decades of experience leading advocacy, evidence-based research, and worldwide civil society strengthening programs. AFSC brings Global South leaders and Civil Society Organizations through the Dialogue and Exchange Program to learn and exchange ideas every year. Due to the challenging situation in the Horn of Africa, AFSC focused intensely on this region to link up with existing civil society networks and Faith Leaders to contribute with its specific expertise.

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About the All Africa Conference of Churches, AACC:

AACC (All Africa Conference of Churches) is a continental ecumenical body that accounts for over 200 million Christians across the African continent. AACC is the largest association of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, and Indigenous churches in Africa, and a member of the worldwide ecumenical network. As an ecumenical body, AACC is a fellowship of 214 members comprising Churches, National Christian Councils (NCCs), theological and lay training institutions, and other Christian organizations in 43 African countries. With eleven programmatic focus areas, AACC's current strategy ensures that churches and other Christian institutions in Africa significantly contribute to the realization of the Continental and Global sustainable development agendas, such as the 17 SDGs and the AU Agenda 2065: "The Africa We Want."

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