

STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN FAITH LEADERS' SUMMIT ON POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA:

“From Lament to Action”

Preamble:

We, the senior religious leaders and interest constituencies of, respectively, women, youth, children, people with disabilities and people living with HIV/AIDS from all over Africa, have met at the Commonwealth Resort Hotel in Munyonyo, Kampala, from 30th June to 2nd July 2014 to deliberate on the ongoing process of the post 2015 Development Agenda.

We have reflected on the development challenges of our time, in particular poverty, security, co-existence, disease burden, resource harnessing and exploitation; governance, environmental degradation, global warming and attending negative change in climate, maternal and child mortality, socio-economic and political exclusion, all of which, acting individually and in concert, retard creation and deny a life of dignity to God's people.

We recognize the efforts of governments and the international actors to address these challenges and the positive impact these have had, particularly since the launch of the Millennium Development Goals.

We note, specifically, the enormous contribution that we, as faith communities, have made in providing the moral grounding that has sustained the effort to tackle the development challenges of the last fifteen years, and actual provision of services that have contributed to the modest achievements of the MDGs;

We commend the African leaders for producing the African position on post-2015 that expresses the aspirations of the African people;

We affirm that the struggle for justice within and amongst countries is part and parcel of our religious mission;

Our experience of the achievements under the MDGs has demonstrated the potential that exists when communities and leaders at all levels and sectors align their efforts towards a common purpose.

Present Realities:

As we seek to shape the new agenda for sustainable development, we are confronted with fresh challenges that demand a rethinking of approaches that informed the design and implementation of the MDGs. In consequence, the new development agenda must pay particular attention to the following realities:

- All people have equal dignity because they are all created by God; therefore, development should be people-centred, inclusive, just and holistic.
- The current socio-cultural, economic and political arrangements are responsible for the perpetuation of discrimination, marginalization and denial of the human family of the opportunity to realize its full potential and dignity.
- The growing failure to appreciate diversity and its potential to contribute to peaceful co-existence raises intolerance, extremism and violence within the human family.
- Young people and children represent the greatest human resource ever bestowed on humanity. We have, however, failed to appreciate and harness their resourcefulness for development.
- The focus on purely statistical approaches to measure and express human wellbeing is inappropriate and incapable of inspiring the substantively qualitative changes needed to better the lives of individuals and communities.
- Current political arrangements that are based on an adversarial and populist exercise of power, in contradistinction to inclusive, rational and accommodative approaches, invariably lead to wastage of available resources, unfulfilled dreams and the frustration of alternative voices.
- Lack of integrity and accountability, as manifested in endemic corruption and abuse of public office, has compromised the ability of countries and the international community to provide redress for current and future development challenges in Africa as well as assure the sustainability of what is achieved in the efforts.
- The disproportionate investment in the military and military interventions invariably contributes to an escalation of armed conflicts and is responsible for much human suffering and destruction of infrastructure and environment.
- By continuing to place the market economy as the primary institution in the management of the environment, with its privileging of profit and unbridled economic growth, humanity fails responsible stewardship of the ecosystem resulting in the depletion of natural resources and the exploitation of men and women.
- We derive strength and unbounded comfort in the wellbeing of each other, for which reason we are our neighbors' keeper and thus seek to strengthen social bonds and protection for all individuals and communities.

- Failure to appreciate indigenous knowledge continues to undermine innovation, creativity, and deprives local and global communities alternative and sustainable development approaches suited to their circumstances.

Our Commitments:

In light of the above realities, we, religious leaders from across Africa, pledge to;

- do more to promote peace and reconciliation in countries and communities currently experiencing violence; and call for the prioritization of alternative means of resolving conflicts
- promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation as a means to eradicate the radicalization of religion by elements within our faith communities;
- advocate for creation of mechanisms that ensure women, children, youth, people with disabilities and people living with HIV/AIDS are part and parcel of efforts meant to find solutions to Africa's development challenges;
- recognize and promote the resourcefulness of Africa and not as a place of poverty and misery; oppose approaches and behavior that perpetuates dependency and seeks to make hunger, disease and conflict a normal experience among our people;
- accelerate our efforts towards poverty eradication through home-grown faith based approaches that put creation at the center of development;
- advocate for education that supports value addition and processing of raw materials into final products within our countries as a means of maximizing benefits to our people;
- advocate and act individually through our mosques, temples and churches, and collectively through associations and partnerships, to reverse environmental degradation and global warming;
- create avenues for empowering young people with hope and practical skills that enable them to contribute more effectively to their own wellbeing and that of their family and society;
- document our experiences and practices in order to contribute to the current discourse on development models that are working at enhancing the quality of life in the continent;

- promote healthy interaction between indigenous and conventional knowledge and practices to ensure rootedness of our people and sustainability of development efforts;
- engage with strategic institutions and personalities at local and global levels to bring our values and vision to bear on the ongoing process of shaping the Post 2015 Development Agenda;
- undertake continuous self-evaluation on our role in perpetuating the spiritualization of poverty, women's subjugation, violence against children and unjust political arrangements;
- exercise our moral responsibility, and provide leadership as well as guidance in laying a fresh foundation for building a stable, inclusive, caring, prosperous and just world; and
- ensure the wellbeing and sustainability of the family is the main focus of our mission and development processes.

Our Recommendations:

- That, the International community and other stakeholders recognize the vital role that the family institution plays in inculcating morals and values, its agency for economic and social development, contribution to the peaceful coexistence of peoples, and the progress and prosperity of individuals, communities and nations. In light of this, the international community must work towards to strengthen and protect the family institution as a matter prior to other endeavors.
- The international community recognizes and is seized appropriately of the indispensable role of faith groups in the formulation and implementation of the Post 2015 development agenda.
- The active consultation and engagement of faith communities; and marginalized groups, including youth, children, people with disabilities and persons living with HIV/AIDS through embracing the principles of inclusivity, participation, equality and partnership.
- Our shared vulnerability as a global community must inform our commitment to building a safe and just world.
- The international community takes practical steps to eliminate all obstacles to equal and sustainable development for developing countries and particularly in the areas of trade, governance and social security.

- Corruption must be tackled as a global occurrence with counter-measures, accountability and transparency mechanisms put in place.
- The heavy expenditure on military infrastructure is incompatible with the aspirations of the post-2015 development agenda.

In conclusion, we, leaders of religious communities, resolve to involve our various constituencies in setting up a collective post-2015 mechanism to ensure the full implementation of the goals.

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Endorsed by:

1. African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL)
2. All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)
3. Arigatou International – Ending Child Poverty/GNRC
4. Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA)
5. Bible Society of Uganda
6. Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA)
7. Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network (EDAN)
8. Faith to Action Network
9. Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA)
10. Hindu Council of Africa (HCA)
11. Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia (IRCE)
12. Inter-Religious Council of Kenya
13. Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) and constituent members
14. Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)
15. Organization of Africa Instituted Churches (OAIC)
16. Programme for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA)
17. Religions for Peace International (RfP)
18. Southern African Catholic Bishop Conference (SACBA)
19. Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SCKM)
20. Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)
21. The Baha'i Communities in Africa
22. Union of Muslim Council for East, Central and Southern Africa.

Contacts:

1. Rev Nicta Lubaale, Secretary General of OAIC (nic.lubaale@oaic.org; post2015@oaic.org; +254721989257).
2. Mr. Firmin Adjahossou, Programme Officer at SECAM Secretariat (fadjahossou@yahoo.fr; +233245315450)
3. Sheikh Ebraheem Ssali, Secretary General Union of Muslim Councils for East, Central and Southern Africa (barhum@hotmail.com; +256712400494)
4. Rev. Fred Nyabera, Director Ending Child Poverty, Arigatou International (fnyabera@arigatouinternational.org; +254733793938).
5. Arthur Shoo, Director for Empowerment, Diakonia and Development, AACC (anshoo@aacc-ceta.org; +254722717160)
6. Dr. Elly Macha, Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network (macha.elly@gmail.com)
7. Ms. Nyambura Gichuki(nyambura@acrl-rfp.org)
8. Mr. Joshua Kitakule, Secretary General, Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (jkitakule@ircu.or.ug; +256782551108)