



Statement on a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence

We, members of Pax Christi International, the International Catholic peace movement, from different parts of Africa who came together for the conference under the theme “**Nonviolence in Africa: Creating a Future of Hope**” organized by Pax Christ International in Johannesburg, South Africa from 5-9 December 2016, state as follows:

As we dream and work together towards an Africa that is free from violent conflicts, we are confronted with challenges both old and new that demand moral strength, innovative ideas and unbroken determination to build sustainable peace through active nonviolent approaches.

Inspired by Gospel values, the spirit of Ubuntu and the teaching of the Golden Rule which urges us to treat others the way we would want to be treated...

We recognize that:

- parochialism, intolerance, extremism and violence are on the rise;
- young people and children represent the greatest resource in Africa, and if well-harnessed would contribute to the development, well-being and peace of Africa;
- current adversarial politics is exclusionary and marginalizes certain parts of the society;
- the huge investment in the militarization of peace and conflict could be channelled towards active nonviolent peacebuilding approaches;
- civil society is under threat and basic rights are being oppressed.

Acknowledging our role in promoting a culture of active nonviolence, social justice, peace, reconciliation, healing and forgiveness;

Bearing in mind our commitment to compassionately stand side by side with the vulnerable, marginalized and the voiceless;

Affirming that the life, dignity, rights and well-being of each person should be at the centre of all our work;

Convinced that the basic teaching of all religions includes nonviolence, tolerance and peace;

Taking into consideration the need to challenge hate speech, exclusion, radicalization and violent extremism;

Encouraged by the Africa Union agenda 2063 to silence the guns in Africa by 2020;

Recognizing that good leadership and working partnerships with policy makers and other stakeholders are paramount for our continent...

WE HEREBY:

Affirm that peace and nonviolence is possible when we commit ourselves to be agents of peace for positive change;

Agree to work together to create a better future for this generation and future generations;

Commit our efforts to contribute towards an African continent that is free of corruption, violence and war.

We commit to

- advocate for nonviolence and peace education in the society;
- collaborate with like-minded stake holders to address the issues of migration, human trafficking, social justice, small arms and light weapons;
- mobilize our various constituencies to promote peace and reconciliation in countries and communities currently experiencing violence, and call for the prioritization of and investment in active nonviolence mechanisms as an alternative means of resolving conflicts;
- work to improve our facility to host peace talks and negotiations between adversaries at all levels, from community to international;
- use home-grown faith-based approaches that promote nonviolent means to accelerate our efforts towards a continent free of violent conflicts;
- create avenues for empowering young people with moral, spiritual, and ethical values as well as practical skills that enable them to contribute more effectively towards a stable, just and peaceful Africa.

WE CALL UPON:

Our governments and political leaders to respect human rights and to invest in and promote a culture of peace and active nonviolence;

The media to develop peace journalism;

Religious leaders to lift up the vision of nonviolence in their preaching and teaching ministry.

MAY PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE PREVAIL IN AFRICA

Dated this 8th day of December 2016, Johannesburg, South Africa