



Security Council Open Debate on 'Peace and security in Africa: the impact of development policies in the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative', 30 March 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms. Francesca Gatt
Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President for convening this important discussion, and I thank the Special Advisor on Africa to the Secretary-General, the African Union High Representative to the Silencing the Guns Initiative, and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Mozambique for their insightful comments.

Malta fully recognises the intrinsic value that socio-economic considerations have in promoting long-term social cohesion, peace, and stability. It is essential to periodically reiterate this message in this chamber, where we daily confront ourselves with the struggle for solutions towards the root causes of conflict and violence.

Malta reaffirms that development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. There can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development. A holistic political process, underpinned by the respect for the rule of law, democratic principles and good governance, is made possible when all stakeholders are included.



Today, I will focus on three key messages that can assist in the realisation of the Silencing the Guns Agenda:

- 1) The focus on children's education and literacy as pillars to end discrimination, radicalisation, violence, and conflict;
- 2) The critical support for the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and its inextricable link to the Silencing the Guns Agenda; and
- 3) The centrality of gender equality for ensuring inclusive participation, equitable development, and political governance, as underpinned by the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

Firstly, the preamble of the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child says that *'Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give'*. We should put this objective at the core of our priorities at the Council and ensure a conducive environment for our children's aspirations to flourish. When schools are targeted during armed conflict, children's right to education is violated. Malta remains deeply committed to protecting and promoting education and literacy for all children. This should be our cornerstone for building more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable societies.

Secondly, Africa is a young continent. As actors of change, young women and men's contributions to decision-making and peace processes must be supported. Hearing impassioned pleas by an 18-year-old from Cameroon last month during our Presidency to remove barriers to youth participation, drives us to do more for our youth.



Ensuring that DDR programs are both age and gender responsive, with comprehensive physical and psycho-social support, can provide young people with meaningful alternatives to violence. Malta supports the Peacebuilding Commission's essential work in also advancing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

Thirdly, gender equality and women's empowerment lie central to sustainable peace, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations. Religious and traditional leaders in Africa continue to play important roles in promoting women's leadership in their communities. By sensitising them, they are preventing sexual and gender-based violence, combating impunity for these crimes, and supporting victims.

President

Development policies must be designed to promote a grassroots-based approach when addressing the root causes of conflict. It is clear that climate, conflict, and conflict-induced food insecurity have left a number of African countries more vulnerable and less resilient to meet current and future shocks. This in turns drives their overall humanitarian needs and stifles progress, most notably their over-arching objectives in respect to the SDGs. When sustainable investments are facilitated, entire communities can be uplifted from the scourges of financial poverty and re-joined into decision-making processes.



The Peacebuilding Fund is one such example. Our national contributions to the PBF over the years stem from our conviction that peacebuilding is an integral part of our multilateral project. We strongly believe that if we all contribute, we can and will achieve significant results.

We also highlight the extensive support the EU is providing through the Global Gateway Initiative, with at least €150 billion invested by 2027 in sectors such as transport education, health and energy.

Early warning systems, as well as mediation, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction or rehabilitation, are critical tools for long-lasting results in many settings. We commend the work of the African Union in this regard.

President

To conclude, the achievement of the Silencing the Guns Agenda requires the commitment and cooperation of all stakeholders in Africa, with the support of the international community. When governments, regional organisations, international partners, civil society and the private sector work together, we are one step closer to a peaceful and prosperous Africa for all.

I thank you.