

PRESS STATEMENT INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY: 21 SEPTEMBER 2019 CLIMATE ACTION FOR PEACE

Sustainable Peace is everyone's desire in Zimbabwe. We join the rest of the world in commemorating the 2019 International Peace Day themed "Climate Action for Peace". We applaud the Zimbabwean government's action of establishing the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC); a peace infrastructure focusing on building peace, promoting healing and reconciliation and developing mechanisms for early detection of areas of potential conflicts and disputes, and taking appropriate preventive measures. The NPRC's efforts thus far in strengthening the inclusion of all marginalised groups in national peace processes is commended.

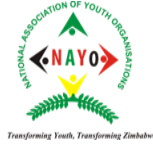
We urge the government and other actors to increase their efforts to mitigate against climate induced effects. For many years, climate change, as a global phenomenon has been viewed as a meteorological issue rather than a factor which destabilises peace and security in communities. The nexus between peace and climate change has been underestimated. Through our programming efforts as civil society partners in rural, urban and peri urban communities; we have noted an indisputable link between climate change, conflict and instability. With increased climate change variability, we have noted increased insecurity in the following specific areas; migration of vulnerable groups, conflict over resources, food insecurity, climate related displacements including and not limited to catastrophes such as the recent Cyclone Idai and Cyclone Kenneth.

Climate change has become a new threat to peace and security as it challenges food and water security, human health as well as challenges the social, economic and political stability of nations. It is unfortunately emerging as one of the biggest threats to humanity calling for urgent attention by both state and non-state actors.

The International Peace Day 2019 themed, 'Climate Action for Peace' targets two Sustainable Development Goals, (SDG) 16 and SDG 13 and draws attention to climate change as an avenue to the building, maintaining and promotion of Sustainable Peace not only in Zimbabwe but globally. There is therefore an urgent need to have a holistic approach in addressing & mitigating the negative impacts of climate change to protect and promote peace in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is also a signatory to a number of conventions on the Environment which also impact on Climate Change, including the Ramsar Convention (1971) on wetlands; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992), the Kyoto Protocol (2005) on internationally binding emission reduction targets among others and this is indeed commendable.

As we celebrate International Peace Day we have several recommendations we would like to bring to the fore as outlined below;



Recommendations

- The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission, which is in the process of commissioning a conflict mapping exercise, should undertake a research to explore how climate change and environmental stresses influence peace and human security in Zimbabwe. This will help to inform the creation of a Comprehensive National Action Plan for combating climate induced conflicts;
- The creation of inclusive government led platforms which target the participation of marginalised groups (women, youth, children, people living with disabilities, minority ethnic groups and communities in remote areas in climate mitigation and adaptation whilst recognising the unique needs of specialised groupings in climate processes;
- With a 67% youth population in Zimbabwe, the Government is encouraged to uphold section 20 of the Zimbabwe Constitution and to domesticate the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 which seeks to contribute to sustainable Peace with inclusion and participation of youth as key stakeholders including putting in place mechanisms which ensure the meaningful participation of Youth as key stakeholders in climate related issues, for example, in the Zimbabwe National Climate Change Response Mechanism;
- State and non-state actors need to collaborate towards strengthening climate action and the national disaster risk preparedness and management strategy;
- Prepare for peace and green climate by designing mitigation and adaptive mechanisms that are geared towards resolving or mitigating conflict;
- The nation needs to embrace the phenomenon of shared security and understand that climate change knows no bounds, ignores borders, cannot be confined to one continent/country/city hence the need to protect global peace by addressing the dynamics created through climate change and working collaboratively with other countries and bodies in the region such as SADC;
- Civil Society Organisations to raise awareness on climate related issues and undertake climate stewardship advocacy as a major initiative. They should recognise stewardship as a core value in all programming facets. Good stewardship means taking care of what has been given, not just for ourselves, but for those around us and for future generations;
- Donors and agencies need to support dialogue efforts targeting state and non-state actors to facilitate the development of a multi-stakeholder strategy on averting imminent global suffering and the emergence of a platonic refugee crisis with the potential to strain relations, exacerbate conflict and wipe away years of investment and progress;
- Donors and agencies to support the desperate call for the shifting of regional and national policies and resource allocations so that the nations that are currently significant contributors of carbon emissions to the atmosphere; become front runners in the advancing of short- and long-term solutions.

END!