



05 December 2012

The Bosco Declaration on International African Solidarity

We, the undersigned participants and supporters of the International African Solidarity Festival (IASF), endorse this statement.

Gathered for a festival of learning and exchange, bringing together over 350 peace and solidarity activists, including unionists, artists, leaders, community workers, and conflict transformation practitioners, led by ACTION members from across Africa and around the world, representing over 35 countries, held at the Bosco Youth Centre, in Walkerville South Africa on the 3rd and 4th of November 2012, under the banner: **“Celebrate, Consolidate and Strategise”**

We hereby affirm the common humanity that is at the core of African culture and draw attention to the great potential of Africa’s people to take the lead in the transformation of African societies.

We celebrate:

- Numerous efforts and undertakings to establish and maintain peace in countries such as Burundi, South Africa, the DRC, Egypt, South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Liberia,
- An overall decrease in armed violence across the continent, bolstered by efforts being made by African leadership to seek and implement African solutions to Africa's problems,
- The existence of growing solidarity movements such as the Swaziland Democracy Campaign, the Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum, the Somali Solidarity Campaign, the Friends of Cuba and other efforts in the DRC, Western Sahara and Ethiopia, which form part of a wave of progressive activism intent on contributing to Africa's renewal
- The role women continue to play in building peace through non-violent struggle. This role was globally recognised when the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution

1325, as well as subsequent resolutions, calling for greater representation of women at all levels of political leadership, peace building, peace negotiations and peacekeeping.

- The increasing attention being paid to African solutions to restorative justice - merging the best of African practice with international alternatives that can often complement and strengthen what is already there,
- Increasing recognition of local mediation efforts led by insiders working alongside the growth of local micro-level mechanisms and infrastructures for peace to find more realistic, innovative and durable solutions to violent conflict that serve as alternatives to efforts imposed or initiated from the outside,
- The growing recognition of the need for a unified and collaborative partnership of Africans that can protect the continent and its citizens against emerging forms of imperialism,
- The shifting understanding surrounding the notion of national sovereignty and the growing willingness of African governance structures to intervene where peoples rights are being violated and citizens are being targeted by repressive regimes,
- The emergence of organised forms of African Youth intent on taking forward a non-violent agenda empowered in their self-belief that the youth are a powerful force for social, cultural and personal transformation that can resist the efforts to subvert and manipulate their contribution.

We call for the energetic and engaged strengthening of:

- Existing solidarity networks that enable a deep-rooted process of learning and sharing across the continent and around the world,
- African women's movements, and movements of African feminists in Africa and around the world
- Initiatives that recognise the value of learning exchanges, participatory training processes and information and experience sharing as key initiatives for empowerment and personal growth,
- Efforts to challenge systems that prevent citizens from accessing human and peoples rights and to work actively and in solidarity with community based rights activists intent on protecting and empowering Africa's people against internal and external threats,
- Activities that raise awareness of poverty and inequality as forms of structural violence and that work with marginalised and excluded people to defend and assert the universal right to dignity.

We call on African leaders at multiple levels, including government, private institutions and organs of civil society:

- To step up efforts and implement effective mechanisms to redistribute resources and establish mechanisms that effectively measure levels of inequality in an African context

and that ensure that efforts to reduce levels of inequality lie at the heart of policy decisions that are taken.

- To recognise that people have a right to public education on, and to mobilise in defence of, human and people's rights in relation to the state and public life,
- To inculcate pride, dignity and independence as a thread running through all education systems, both formal and informal,
- To work with the highest organs of the state to resist cosmetic changes that allow for powerful international entities to conduct "business as usual" while ordinary Africans are deprived of dignity and basic socio-economic rights,
- To recognise Africa's youth as major force and voice within society and urge the youth to facilitate the involvement of all Africans in the running of our daily lives.
- To adopt Action Plans for the implementation of Resolution 1325 and related UN resolutions on women and peace and to remove all obstacles to the advancement and full participation of women.

We note:

- The dire need for visionary and transformative leadership at all levels of African society including within the civic movement across civil society sectors,
- That while in many contexts the political and social systems have changed, making it easier to manage the tensions that are inherent in societies emerging from contexts of violence, the overarching economic systems and the inequalities and poverty that characterise these systems, remain a deep source of tension across the continent,
- That conflicts are exacerbated in contexts involving natural resource exploitation and are escalated even further in communities affected by the extractive industry,
- The long term tensions that form part of the context in countries emerging from years of violent conflict lasting for generations, and that they require constant attention at multiple levels over many decades,
- That there are significant and unnecessary gaps between the substance of peace agreements forged at an international level and the real challenges of implementing these agreements on the ground,
- That African nations continue to be hobbled by substantial barriers to trade and are bound by unfair trade agreements and economic systems that expose vast numbers of Africans to poverty and inequality,
- That despite the growth of an African middle class, high levels of poverty remain, and in many contexts poverty indicators are getting worse not better,
- That poverty is a form of structural violence that acts daily to disempower and marginalise the majority of Africans,
- That the sense of alienation from society is compounded as the gap between rich and poor widens, creating dangerous and ravaging levels of inequality,
- That the youth of Africa, representing almost 60% of the continent's population are an enormously important potential force for widespread transformation,

- That efforts to build a diverse and unified youth are still largely uncoordinated and disconnected,
- That there are few connections made or maintained between similar struggles waged against the same issues affecting the majority of people in African and around the world.

We hereby renew our commitment to:

- Support the freedom struggles of people everywhere, and especially in Cuba, the DRC, in Palestine, and in Madagascar, Tibet, Syria, Swaziland and the Western Sahara, and Zimbabwe, and the struggles to implement political agreements, harness local conflicts behind a collective agenda and protect communities from violence wherever there is a need, including in Zimbabwe, Myanmar, Somalia, Somaliland, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Egypt and South Africa.
- Consolidate existing coalitions and strengthen networks, including supporting the establishment of cooperative partnerships between local stakeholders and learning between communities to engage and link with different initiatives at all levels
- Use local micro-community knowledge to develop alternative solutions to Africa's challenges and avoid over-structured, complex and expensive solutions that ignore local approaches that are often already working
- Increase civil society representation in a broad based alliance of democrats as we build and implement a **Proudly African Campaign** - an inspiring and galvanising intercontinental initiative based on dignity, African ingenuity (including arts and technologies) and transformation
- Support and encourage organised youth movements as a visionary force that would be well placed to drive and lead an African process of transformation and renewal
- Develop an African renewal programme, driven by all sectors, that will build leadership institutions to produce visionary value driven leaders groomed on the continent, by the continent and for all the people of Africa
- Develop and communicate a clear role for the African Diaspora that finds ways to harness their skills and participation in building new institutions and contributing directly to the transformation agenda
- Include art and culture as methodologies for peacebuilding and socio-economic and political transformation, using social commentary to subvert power

- Develop campaigns that deepen an awareness of the continental and global context within which transformation is taking place and seek to make the connections between dynamics at local, national, regional and international levels
- Recognising the impact of individual and collective trauma on African communities and work to deepen and extend initiatives aimed at processing and overcoming the debilitating impact of this trauma
- Encourage existing efforts to build social cohesion and promote dialogue
- Initiate new forms of organisation that create spaces in which people feel involved in decision making, and part of a collective group with common purpose organised behind a shared value driven agenda
- Explore the emerging idea of an **African Solidarity Caravan** that travels from Cape Town to Cairo connecting conflict transformation, peacebuilding and solidarity activists through a series of solidarity events hosted by local networks intent on taking forward the vision of a world of justice and peace in which the basic needs of people are met and peoples' rights and dignity are respected. The **African Solidarity Caravan** will also include a festival in Addis Ababa and will seek to hand over a declaration of solidarity to the AU through the chair Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma.

Adopted on this day: 10th November 2012, Guided by the discussions between ACTION members, comrades, colleagues and friends at the International African Solidarity Festival and informed by the thematic workshop discussions held at the Bosco Centre, Walkerville, South Africa

Endorsed by:

Organisations

The ACTION Support Centre (ASC), TIS-DAI, Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia; Children of the Earth, Zimbabwe Organisations for the Youth in Politics (ZOYP), Uthungulu Community Foundation, The Association for Global New Thought, Embrace Dignity, Network Movement for Justice and Development, Partners in Conflict Transformation, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, PAZci, Soyden

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To endorse the declaration please send your name and surname as a signatory to philani@asc.org.za. The names will be published on our website and facebook pages.

Issued by: **The ACTION Support Centre**