

AFRICAN ARTISTS PEACE INITIATIVE (AAPI)

ACTION 9/21 #InspireACultureOfPeace

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE 21 SEPTEMBER 2015



In November 1981, the United Nations passed resolution 36/67 and declared that the third Tuesday of September shall be officially proclaimed and observed as *International Day of Peace* and shall be devoted to commemorating and reaffirming the principles of peace globally. The adoption of resolution 55/282 in 2001 declared September 21st as a Day of non-violence and ceasefire.

As Africa joins the rest of the world in commemorating the International Day of Peace, the *African Artists Peace Initiative (AAPI)* also unveils its action 9/21 focus, which is **“Inspire A Culture of Peace”**. AAPI advocates for the importance of inclusive participation of the creative industries in the discourse for greater peace around our world and supports the activities of organizations around the world striving to inculcate a culture of peace in our continent. The 2015 International Day of Peace is aptly themed, **“Partnerships for Peace – Dignity for All”**.

Today, innocent civilians around the world continue to suffer the consequences of war with the emergence of newer insurrections and hostilities such as the Syrian tragedy. AAPI remains cognizant of the on-going conflicts within Africa, placing particular emphasis on Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Northern Nigeria, South Sudan, Darfur, Libya and Northern Mali as hotspots within the continent plagued by conflict. Recent political crisis in Burundi and Burkina Faso is worrying and AAPI calls for immediate action and partnerships for peace.

The Artistic community that comprises AAPI notes with concern, the escalation of violence in these zones over the last few months and we believe that unified, inclusive action must be taken to halt further escalation.

The largest percentage of lives lost are those of innocent civilians or non-combatants. The African Union and its member states unveiled their commitment to ending all wars in Africa by 2020 in the **“Silencing the Guns”** declaration which was a key component of the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration made in 2014.

It is clear that the ambitious target can only be achieved through a coordinated approach at national, regional and international levels respectively.

Africa’s prosperity has been stunted over the past decades and we have been unable to meet our full potential because of the recurring economic and social roadblocks attributed to conflict. For Africa to prosper and earn its rightful place as an influential global player and partner, peace has to first prevail within continent. The greater task for communities such as AAPI, is continuing to educate our people on the culture of peace, calling on governments to adopt peaceful conflict resolutions and speaking for the voiceless through the available artistic mediums.

It is therefore AAPI’s message to Artists around the continent to join the world in commemorating this special day by using our tools and talents to spread the message of peace in our communities. There is no better way to reach the hearts and minds of a people than through the arts. We therefore use this special commemoration to dedicate AAPI’s efforts to strengthening the values of Non-Violence and Peaceful Coexistence.

The *African Artists Peace Initiative (AAPI)* intends to make a unique contribution to peace advocacy and education through the creative arts. More importantly, AAPI will demonstrate how the arts can be applied to achieve important social objectives in the African society.

African Artists’ Peace Initiative will coordinate events around Africa through a strategic social media campaign - **#InspireACultureOfPeace** - to build on existing frameworks for action 9/21.

On this special day, AAPI is reaching out to its 45 country coordinators, 100 Ambassadors and thousands of members around the world to send a resounding message in a strong and unified voice, for peace restoration and sustenance. We urge the greater artist community around the continent and in the diaspora to join us as we build a bridge of peace with our communities and continue to send a message of **“Partnerships for Peace”** and **“Dignity for All”** because it is only with lasting and sustainable peace that our aspirations as a people can be truly realized.

We have to **“Make Peace Happen”** in our continent and in our world.