**PRESS RELEASE**

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**First-ever Intergenerational Dialogue Forum Set to Kick-off in Kenya**

***Nairobi, 18th November 2022;*** The first-ever Intergenerational Dialogue Forum is set to kick off from 21 November 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya. It will be anchored under the theme; *“Breaking the barriers to meaningful youth participation and inclusion in advocacy: Enhancing the meaningful participation of youth in peacebuilding and peace processes in the COMESA region*.”

The forum will be conducted in a hybrid format, bringing together the nine members of the COMESA’s Committee of Elders, leaders of key institutions, key youth constituencies led by members of the COMESA youth advisory panel (COMYAP), representatives from National Youth Councils in the COMESA region, youth-led organizations, and social justice actors, among others.

Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary for Youth Affairs, Sports, and Arts Hon. Ababu Namwamba will officially open the Dialogue, which is the first in the COMESA region. Its goal is to promote the youth peace and security agenda through advocacy for more inclusive policies and meaningful engagement of young people in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and governance processes.

The Forum has been organized by COMESA, Save the Children International East and Southern Africa Region, Horn of Africa Youth Network in partnership with the Ministry for Youth Affairs Sports and Arts.

According to the Head of the Governance, Peace and Security Programme at COMESA Secretariat, Ms. Elizabeth Mutunga under which the youth programme falls, voices of the youth, particularly young women, need to be heard and their views incorporated into policy priorities. The intergenerational dialogue with COMESA’s committee of elders, policymakers, and institutional Leaders is one of the ways envisaged of improving the contact between youth and key policymakers, to achieve understanding and solidarity.

She added that the forum will provide a platform for the voices of young people to be heard by decision-makers at the highest level. Specifically, the forum seeks to: Create spaces for reflection, listening, and exchange of ideas and experiences between young people, the COMESA Committee of Elders, policymakers, business leaders, religious leaders, and other stakeholders on issues of governance, leadership and emerging peace and security challenges in the region. that concern the youth.

Horn of Africa Youth Network’s Executive Director, Mr. David Momanyi notes that the Youths and elders will discuss and develop strategies to ensure the relevance and greater implementation of the Youth Peace and Security Agenda in the COMESA region in order to enhance intergeneration support and implementation of various peace and security agenda on legal, policy and programmatic related initiatives.

Ms. Lavina Oluoch of Save the Children said the Forum will help establish a structural linkage between the youth and the COMESA Committee of elders, religious leaders, politicians, and other policy makers and explore avenues that the generations can work together in promoting governance, peace and security in the region.

The conveners of the meeting would like to invite every young person in the COMESA region to sign up for the meeting in order to ensure that their voices are heard and incorporated in the realm of policy making.

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