

THE AFRICAN UNION

INTERFAITH **Dialogue Forum**

REVIEW REPORT

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INTERFAITH Dialogue Forum

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AU-IFDF	African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum
AU-PSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
CIDO	Citizens & Diaspora Directorate (of the AU Commission)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social, and Cultural Council
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
IFDF1	1st Interfaith Dialogue Forum
IFDF2	2nd Interfaith Dialogue Forum
IFDF3	3rd Interfaith Dialogue Forum
IRC	Interreligious Council
KAICIID	The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue
KM	Knowledge Management
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
REC	Regional Economic Community
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
ToR	Terms of Reference

THE AFRICAN UNION

INTERFAITH Dialogue Forum

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO REVIEW

The African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU-IFDF or the Forum) was developed as an African Union Programme by the Citizens & Diaspora Directorate (CIDO). The 1st Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IFDF1) was launched in Abuja, Nigeria in 2010 under the theme “Advancing Justice, Peace, Security and Development in Africa: Harnessing the Power of Religious Communities in Africa.” The aim of the AU-IFDF was to create a continent-wide inclusive and representative body of faith-based organizations (FBOs) and to harness their efforts to support African Union (AU) programmes and activities. Specifically, the AU-IFDF was expected to play a role alongside the AU in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, advocate and promote human rights, promote a common understanding of interfaith dialogue, inform its members of the development agenda and environmental protection, engage in humanitarian action, and champion the causes of youth, women and children.

In 2016, the Forum reconvened in Nigeria, with the support of The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue (KAICIID) and a Steering Committee of 12 elected members was formed to carry out the Forum’s Declaration and promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the continent. Since then, the Steering Committee has met four times and produced a Six-Year Strategic Plan for the Forum. The committee was re-elected during IFDF3 in Chad in November 2018.

KAICIID is an international intergovernmental organization that was founded to enable, empower and encourage dialogue among followers of different religions and cultures around the world. It implements its interventions at global, national and regional levels, where it aims to promote dialogue for peace and reconciliation and foster an environment where religious actors work together to build trust for reconciliation and peace.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

On behalf of the AU-IFDF, KAICIID recruited two international consultants (a Senior Review Team Leader and a Senior Knowledge Management Specialist) to undertake an

independent review of the representation and impact of the FBOs in AU decisions and structures. Emphasis was placed on the work of the AU-IFDF and the activities of its Steering Committee, as well as the Committee's strategic positioning within the organization. The Review findings and recommendations contributed to the development of strategic communications/advocacy products aimed at enhancing the AU-IFDF strategy, its partnership with KAICIID, and increasing the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of interfaith dialogue in Africa.

Specifically, the Review will:

- i. **Map AU-IFDF initiatives/activities** on engagement with FBOs vis-à-vis Agenda 2063 and COVID-19, including the organization's decisions and documents that refer to engagement with FBOs/religious communities.
- ii. Analyse the **key factors** that facilitate or inhibit FBOs' participation and identify **good practices** on FBO engagement in the regional context.
- iii. Document **AU-IFDF's** initiatives and **impact** vis-à-vis **policy issues**, including Agenda 2063 and COVID-19 through desk reviews and interviews with the AU-IFDF Steering Committee members, and compiling case studies to elicit overall impact of the intervention to date.
- iv. Identify **AU-IFDF's key strengths and weaknesses** and suggest **recommendations** for improving its impact and facilitating its engagement with FBOs.
- v. Analyse **AU-IFDF's** strategic **positioning** and its **relevance and effectiveness** as a mechanism to strengthen the engagement of FBOs within the AU.
- vi. Condense findings and produce a **document** showcasing the work that has been implemented by the AU-IFDF, to be used as an advocacy tool vis-à-vis other key actors within the AU.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This Review was conducted against the three of the six Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The Review was in accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR) and based on discussions with the AU and KAICIID. Taking into account the constraints posed by the global pandemic (COVID-19) on travel and face-to-face interviews, mixed design methods were used to collect information during the Review. A desk review was carried out on all key reports of the AU-IFDF since its inception in 2010, the Steering Committee meeting reports, the training material and background notes that went into the preparation of the Six-Year Plan, as well as the Plan itself, the AU's Agenda 2063, and other reports of the AU relating to interactions with FBOs.

The interviews with the members of the Steering Committee were greatly facilitated by the fact that the AU-IFDF conducted a detailed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis within the context of the Strategic Plan. Some of the gaps and challenges faced by the AU-IFDF were also echoed during the well-documented 4th meeting of the Steering Committee. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were interviewed to probe their awareness of the AU-IFDF and the role that FBOs play in their respective economic regions. Other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) were also interviewed, primarily to solicit their views on FBOs and to explore complementarities between their activities and those of FBOs. Finally, the initiators of the AU-IFDF cooperation agreement were interviewed to ascertain whether the Forum meets their expectations and to solicit their views on how the Forum could better function to serve the purpose for which it was intended.

There were no formal surveys conducted by the Review Team, however, prior to the interviews, respondents were provided with a series of “guiding questions” to orient the discussions. The interviews were participative, inclusive, interactive and adapted to each target group. All interviews and consultations were conducted following the best ethical practice in research, particularly with respect to ensuring participants’ safety, anonymity (where necessary), the protection of data and risk mitigation.

The Review was carried out in accordance with KAICIID’s Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework.¹ This framework, driven by results-based management (ensuring that activities contribute to the achievement of *clearly stated results*), proved most useful to the Review Team’s assessment of the Six-Year Plan. In particular, the framework guided the Review Team’s assessment of whether the Six-Year Plan was adequately formulated to enable meaningful monitoring and review of implementation results.

The Review Team communicated throughout the Review with KAICIID’s Monitoring, Evaluation Adviser, Programme Manager for the Africa Region, and the Desk Officer at CIDO (all members of the Steering Committee). They were responsible for the management of the Review Team and they established initial contacts with members of the Steering Committee, RECs and other CSOs. They provided all relevant documentation, arranged interviews and commented on all drafts of the Inception Report as well as the main Review Report.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser provided comments on the methodological aspects throughout the Review process and guided the team on the means to provide a stronger evidence base for the conclusions of the Review. KAICIID has the responsibility for the approval of the final Review Report in liaison with the Steering Committee.

1 Khaled Ehsan, “Guideline for Monitoring and Evaluating Results”, KAICIID, 2019.

RELEVANCE OF AU-IFDF

According to all respondents, faith in Africa constitutes a “vast spiritual resource” which is sometimes exploited (misused) to preach hate, disdain and disrespect towards “the other”. However, this resource can be harnessed and utilised to promote and sustain human dignity and material welfare. Faith groups are the drivers and the custodians of this resource, and faith leaders are very respected in Africa (ils sont très écoutés). Thus the AU-IFDF could play a vital role in the AU’s Peace and Security Architecture and assist in the AU’s mission of promoting integration and sustainable development in Africa through participation in the implementation of the AU’s Agenda 2063.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AU-IFDF

The election of the permanent Steering Committee at the 2nd Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IFDF2) has proved decisive. The permanent Steering Committee has worked tirelessly since its election in Abuja in November 2016. The Committee has spurred a flurry of activity which culminated in the adoption of a Six-Year Strategic Plan in Ndjamena, Chad on 13-15 November 2018 during the 3rd Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IFDF3). It is safe to say that interfaith dialogue has come to stay and will be a prominent feature of the AU’s initiatives on conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and equitable and sustainable development.

EFFICIENCY OF THE AU-IFDF

Members of the Steering Committee stated that they were unaware of how the AU-IFDF fit into the AU’s structure and felt that there was a need to “explore opportunities for the Steering Committee to become more relevant and better networked” within the AU. Moreover, two factors were identified as the most likely to diminish the efficiency of the AU-IFDF. The first was a lack of Secretariat to manage the affairs of the Forum. The second was the absence of a clear leadership structure and defined roles within the Steering Committee. Other issues identified included the poor religious diversity among the representatives of religions/interreligious councils (IRCs) at the AU-IFDF and the Steering Committee, and limited budget availability and unpredictable funding.

THE ROLE OF KAICIID

A cooperation agreement between KAICIID and the AU Commission made a lot of sense. The AU has the convening power to summon and involve CSOs (including religious leaders and FBOs) in pursuit of its objectives. KAICIID has the mandate and the expertise to work with religious (and political) leaders to promote conflict resolution and social cohesion. Maintaining the cooperation agreement gives the AU a stake in the Forum's success and makes it more likely that the Forum will be called upon to play a role in the AU's peace and security architecture.

SUSTAINABILITY: ENHANCING THE APPEAL OF FBOs

If interfaith dialogue is to gain universal appeal, then the dialogue must extend to include non-monotheistic religions and to accommodate African customary practices and rites. Religious leaders need to find better answers to rising radical religious extremism and Pentecostalism. In this context, dismissing fundamentalism and Pentecostalism as deviationist is simply not adequate. Moreover, while FBOs and faith leaders need to work with political leaders to be effective, they must speak truth to power, whenever warranted.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS

The Review of the AU-IFDF reveals that it is critical to develop knowledge and communication products that will be useful to: inform the public on the (actual/potential) role of FBOs in conflict prevention and sustainable development; and mobilise resources to fund the activities of FBOs and other peace actors as a cost-effective alternative to destructive violence, insurrection and environmental damages. The AU-IFDF urgently needs to develop the profiles of Steering Committee members to publicise the Forum, as well as to build on the Six-Year Strategic Plan as an instrument for fundraising and recruiting high-profile faith leaders into the AU-IFDF.

1.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 OBJETIVE OF THE REVIEW

As stated in the ToR, the core objective of this independent Review was to assess the representation and impact of FBOs in the AU's decisions and structures. Emphasis was to be placed on the Review of the AU-IFDF and the activities of its Steering Committee, as well as the Committee's strategic positioning within the organization. The deliverables of the Review were expected to be used to develop strategic communications/advocacy products and recommendations aimed at enhancing AU-IFDF strategy and increasing the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of interfaith dialogue in Africa.

The aim of the Review is to:

- Map AU-IFDF initiatives and activities
- Analyse key factors that facilitate or inhibit FBOs' participation
- Identify good practices
- Document initiatives and impact through desk reviews and interviews
- Identify key strengths and weaknesses
- Suggest recommendations for facilitating engagement with FBOs
- Analyse strategic positioning
- Condense findings and produce a document showcasing the work that has been implemented by the AU-IFDF

2.2 METHODOLOGY

As per the ToR, the assessment methodology employed mixed methods and an innovative approach for capturing and utilising results, such as using a participatory, inclusive approach to ensure that the views of traditionally excluded groups were represented – taking into account that there could be no physical missions to consult with stakeholders

(all such consultations took place virtually in view of the COVID-19 pandemic). Three levels were established to analyse and validate information:

- **Level 1** started with a desk review of information sources available through the AU and KAICIID, including information from progress reports, concept notes, training modules and guidelines, existing portfolio analyses of programming, and relevant evaluations and reviews.
- **Level 2** involved more in-depth portfolio analysis of all relevant interventions utilising case study methods, where possible. Level 2 analysis was primarily based on a document review, supplemented with consultation meetings with representatives of the AU, FBOs and all other relevant stakeholders to ensure a full internalisation of different perspectives on the effects of the interventions, trade-offs among stakeholders and consensus regarding positive developments to date. In addition, where relevant, online/Skype interviews were held with key stakeholders identified by the AU.
- **Level 3** utilised outputs of Level 2 to deploy a number of evaluation methods ranging from further document review, semi-structured interviews and a rapid assessment survey (carried out to capture information from the widest range of stakeholders), to observations and other participatory methods, in order to systematically compare and analyse data to finalise case studies and identify characteristics and factors underpinning results to date.

2.3 PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

There have been no previous evaluations or reviews of the AU-IFDF.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3.1 THE AU-IFDF

The AU-IFDF was established in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2010. The IFDF1 was organised as part of the African Year of Peace and Security under the theme “Advancing Justice, Peace, Security, and Development in Africa: Harnessing the Power of Religious Communities in Africa.”² The establishment of the AU-IFDF was preceded by consultations, a workshop and preparatory meetings.³ During the preparatory phase it was recognised that while interfaith dialogue was new to the AU, it was an old initiative for the faith-based groups themselves. Thus, the AU-IFDF was expected to build on what already existed and to adapt it to the goals and objectives of the Union and, more specifically, to the continental integration, peace and development agenda.

The aim of the AU-IFDF was to create a continent-wide inclusive and representative body of faith-based groups and to harness their efforts to support the *raison d'être* of the AU. Specifically, the AU-IFDF was to assist in: (i) conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building; (ii) advocacy through promotion of human rights, ethics, accountability, good governance and democracy; (iii) promotion of a common understanding of interfaith dialogue and the development agenda of the African continent; (iv) engagement on environmental issues and the protection of “mother earth”; (v) promotion of peace-education; (vi) engagement in humanitarian action including support for refugees and internally displaced persons;⁴ and (vii) championing the causes of youth, women and children and recognising these issues as cross-cutting in all areas of practical endeavours.

2 “The African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU-IFDF): Strategic Plan (2018-2023),” African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2018. P 9.

3 See “Conclusions and Recommendations of the Preparatory Workshop on Interfaith Dialogue in Africa,” Abuja, Nigeria, 5-6 November 2009, African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. And the Report of the Meeting of the AU-Interfaith Dialogue Steering Committee, Abuja, Nigeria, 11-12 March 2010.

4 In this context, African FBOs felt particularly called upon/obligated to respond to the Kampala Declaration and Convention on Internally Displaced Persons adopted by the African Leaders in Kampala, Uganda on 23 October 2009.

The main organ for the realisation of the objectives of the AU-IFDF is a 12-member Steering Committee⁵ elected from the five regions of the continent. The African Council of Religious Leaders serves as the convener and coordinator of the Committee. The Steering Committee carries out the Forum's Declaration, has produced a Six-Year Strategy Plan for the Forum (2016) and sees to its implementation.

3.2 PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW OF THE AU-IFDF

The purpose of this independent Review (conducted by a senior Review Team Leader and a senior Knowledge Management Specialist) is to assess the overall progress of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the region and, more specifically, the status of the AU-IFDF. The Review seeks to answer the following questions: (i) how relevant are the AU-IFDF and the programmed activities of the Steering Committee likely to be in diminishing social tensions and promoting peace and social cohesion on the continent; and (ii) how well are FBOs represented and their views taken into account in the AU decisions and structures, especially as they relate to peace and security, humanitarian action and support for refugees and internally displaced persons, continental integration and development agenda, as well as protection of the environment?

It is expected that the findings and recommendations of the Review will be used to develop knowledge, communications and advocacy products to increase awareness of the workings and products of AU-IFDF, enhance its strategy and to encourage key actors (within and external to the AU) and partners (the media, state actors, CSOs, private sector and donors) to support dialogue/activities of AU-IFDF in the promotion of social cohesion and sustainable peace.

This Review Report is based on consultations and engagements with the beneficiary client (CIDO) and the commissioning agent (KAICIID), and refers to the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October, 2020. It is also informed by a preliminary review and desk analysis of AU-IFDF's strategy and the ToR of the Review Team, as modified in subsequent meetings. The Review Team conducted extensive virtual interviews with members of the AU-IFDF Steering Committee, staff of the African Union Commission (AUC), members of CSOs, staff of RECs and the "key initiators" of the AU/KAICIID cooperation agreement to support faith-based groups, as represented in the chart below:

5 In 2010, the Steering Committee included designated representatives from The African Council of Religious Leaders - Religions for Peace (ACRL - RfP), All African Council of Churches (AACC), the Hindu Council of Africa, the Interfaith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA), African Women of Faith Network (AWFN), Forum for Religious Leaders and Faith Organizations (PLerOC), Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) and selected religious scholars. As indicated above, ACRL was the convener.



4. FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (FBOs) AND THE AFRICAN UNION

According to the Pew Research Center, 84% of the world's population has a religious affiliation, and Africa is no exception. The same research identified Africa as one of the most religious regions in the world in 2012.⁶ It is a continent in which people have deeply held religious beliefs and affiliations. This religious affiliation almost always defines the social and cultural identities of various groups on the continent and within national boundaries. Thus, as noted in the Executive Summary of the AU-IFDF Strategic Plan, “faith and culture can be understood as profoundly informing the sentiments and actions of individuals and communities, with the potential to exert a powerful influence on the continent’s policy makers”.

For FBOs, faith in Africa constitutes a “vast spiritual resource” which is sometimes exploited to preach hate, disdain and disrespect of “the other”. However, this resource can be harnessed and utilised to promote and sustain human dignity and material welfare. And, as faith groups are the drivers and the custodians of this resource, the AU-IFDF aims to:

- Develop an inclusive practical and sustainable working relationship between the AU and FBOs to promote shared values and mutual interests.
- Harness the capacity of FBOs to support the AU in promoting peace, security and development on the continent, including humanitarian action and refugee support.
- Sensitise both the AU and faith-based groups on the demands of cooperation and jointly define an agenda for action and the framework for its implementation.
- Share experiences of the programme of action within and outside Africa and rally and mobilise faith-based constituencies to support the objectives of the partnership.

⁶ Pew Research Center, “The global Religious Landscape: A report on the Size and Distribution of the World’s Major Religious Groups as of 2010,” pp 24–25, as quoted in the African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU-IFDF): Strategic Plan (2018–2023), African Union, Addis Ababa Ethiopia, 2018.

- Further develop guidelines to render the framework of partnership more effective, including mapping out clear channels of structured inputs by FBOs into the AU's decision-making processes and vice versa.⁷

At its inception, the emphasis, when it came to the role of FBOs, was on actions that would promote peace and reconciliation, discourage violent extremism while encouraging tolerance, respect for others and social cohesion. In this regard, humanitarian support and refugee assistance were recognised as crucial, as was the need to put in place a structured working relationship between FBOs and the AU, so that FBO input could be channelled.

However, FBOs and actors could clearly do more than help promote peace, social cohesion and provide humanitarian assistance. As has been observed, “African faith-based organizations play an active role in education, health, and charity.”⁸ FBOs, it is noted, are very present in efforts to eliminate inequitable development, absolute poverty and economic and social marginalisation, all of which are systemic causes for social upheaval and instability. Moreover, all religions encourage the protection of the environment “based on the argument that all religions teach appreciation for the works of the Creator.”⁹ Thus, it would have appeared important to incorporate the FBOs’ perspectives into both the design and implementation of the AU’s 50-year roadmap for Africa-specific (environmentally) sustainable social development goals (Agenda 2063).

The need for incorporating these perspectives was emphatically recognised during the 2nd Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IFDF2) which was held under the banner “Leap of Faith: Religious Leaders Advance Justice, Peace, Security, Inclusiveness, Dialogue and Development in Africa.”¹⁰ However, this is a role that is shared by all CSOs, non-governmental organizations, as well as trade unions, professional and producers’ organizations that may be involved in supporting education, health and the provision of social safety nets. It is noteworthy, therefore, that the AU-IFDF is anchored in CIDO, which has the mandate of leading the AU’s engagement with non-state actors.¹¹

7 See the Report of the Meeting of the AU-Interfaith Dialogue Steering Committee, Abuja, Nigeria, 11-12 March, 2010.

8 “KAICIID and the African Union Strengthening African Interreligious Dialogue,” <https://www.kaiciid.org/news-events/news/kaiciid-and-african-union-strengthening-african-interreligious-dialogue>.

9 “African Interfaith Leaders Call for Collaboration to Address Regional Migration, Peacebuilding, and Environmental Challenges,” News Provided by KAICIID Dialogue Centre, 2 September, 2019, <https://www.kaiciid.org/news-events/news/african-interfaith-leaders-call-collaboration-address-regional-migration>.

10 See “The 2nd Interfaith Dialogue Forum 10-11 November 2016,” Final Report, African Union, 2016.

5. A SUMMARISED HISTORY OF THE AU-IFDF

Despite the AU's recognition of the very positive role that FBOs could play in the Union's initiatives and activities, the commitment of the AU Commission in mobilising religious actors and FBOs has been halting. The officialisation of the AU-IFDF in March 2010 in Abuja, Nigeria, was a clear indication of the recognition of the need to engage FBOs, faith and religious actors, and scholars in the Union's activities in the areas of conflict resolution and the maintenance of peace. Moreover, there are indications¹² that the AU recognised that FBOs and actors constituted a distinct voice within the civil society that needed to be consulted (included) in initiatives for sustainable development.

However, after a successful launch of the AU-IFDF in Abuja on 11–15 June, 2010, the initiative became dormant for more than six years,¹³ despite the agreement at IFDF1 to hold the AU-IFDF every two years.¹⁴ Moreover, the lull in activities came at a time when “the daily news links conflict with religion in Africa and other regions.”¹⁵ In the global environment at that time (with the rise of Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, etc.), religious differences had come to be identified by the mainstream media as the major source of conflict. Various explanations were offered, including “the wavering commitment to include religious and traditional leaders and faith-based organizations

11 **The Structure of the African Union Commission:** The Commission is composed of a Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson and eight Commissioners and staff. The Chairperson (assisted by the deputy) is the Chief Executive Officer, legal representative of the AU, and Commission's Chief Accounting Officer. The eight Commissioners support the Chairperson in running the Commission and have the responsibility to implement all decisions, policies and programmes relating to their portfolios. The eight portfolios held by the Commissioners correspond to the first eight of the 11 Departments under the AU Commission. The last three departments (women, gender and development; civil society and diaspora; and legal affairs) are cross-cutting and are headed by departmental directors.

Departments: Peace and Security; Political Affairs; Infrastructure and Energy; Social Affairs; Trade and Industry; Rural Economy and Agriculture; Human Resources, Science and Technology; Economic Affairs; Women, Gender and Development; Civil Society and Diaspora; Legal Affairs.

12 See, for example, “Conclusions and Recommendations of the Preparatory Workshop on Interfaith Dialogue in Africa,” Abuja, Nigeria, 5–6 November 2009. Africa Union (2009). The role envisaged for FBOs included a role in supporting the development agenda of the Union, in addition to integration, conflict prevention and resolution.

13 IFDF2 took place in Nigeria (Abuja) on 10–11 November, 2016.

14 See “AU - Interfaith Dialogue Forum Declaration,” African Union, Addis Ababa (2010).

15 See “KAICIID Builds Cooperation with Africa Union,” Africa Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2014.

in the policy space,”¹⁶ thus leading to low-key efforts to mobilise resources to support the initiative.

The evidence would suggest, however, that efforts to mobilise religious leaders and faith actors for peacebuilding did not cease during the six-year lull in AU-IFDF activities. It is notable that the AU had established an Interfaith Desk that was occupied by a policy officer. Moreover, the AU, in collaboration with KAICIID, organised a conference on Interreligious and Intercultural Education in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in August 2013 at the African Union Conference Centre.¹⁷ In May 2014, KAICIID convened a meeting of experts and religious representatives to discuss the facilitation of peacebuilding processes in the Central African Republic.¹⁸ The African Union Commission played an active role in these consultations.

It would also appear that activities to reactivate the AU-IFDF were ongoing, culminating in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Citizens and Diaspora Department of the AU (CIDO) and KAICIID in 2013. The purpose of the MoU, which is reviewed below, was to facilitate work on an array of faith-based initiatives in Africa, including the organization of IFDF2.

IFDF2 took place in Abuja, Nigeria, in November 2016. IFDF2 was notable for two reasons: (i) the Forum clearly identified its niche¹⁹ within the context of the AU Agenda 2063; and (ii) a permanent Steering Committee was elected to work with the AU to strengthen not only interreligious and intercultural dialogue, but also the partnership between religious leaders and policymakers at the AU.

The election of a permanent Steering Committee proved decisive because the committee spurred a flurry of activities which culminated in the adoption of a Six-Year Strategic Plan in Ndjamena, Chad, in November 2018 during the 3rd Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IFDF3). Since then, the Steering Committee held its fourth meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, in August 2019. The meeting was designed to provide a platform for the new members of the Steering Committee to familiarise themselves with the history and workings of the committee.

In the context of the committee elections, it is important to note the AU-IFDF's increased efforts to move towards equal gender representation, following the 2018 decision by the AU Assembly (Assembly/AU/Dec.687 (XXX)), that member states take specific measures to fully achieve the equal representation of women and men, and to ensure that by 2025, 35% of AU workplaces are made up of youths. This was visible during the 2016 election of Steering Committee members, during which three women were elected and provided with a platform to share their experiences and identify key priorities in areas of interest, including gender and religion. Furthermore, during the elections in 2018, three

16 See “2nd Interfaith Dialogue Forum 10-11 November, 2016,” African Union (2016).

17 KAICIID organised similar regional events in Austria, Argentina and India as inputs into the KAICIID Global Forum in November 2013. This event brought together a diverse group of more than 500 stakeholders, including high-level religious leaders and Ministers of Education from around the world. See African Union release “KAICIID Builds Cooperation with African Union,” Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 2014.

18 See the release in the footnote immediately above.

19 AU-IFDF identified Aspiration 3, Goal 11 and Priority Area of Agenda 2063 as its main area of focus.

women were elected as representatives for their respective regions. Additionally, a youth representative was also included as a member of the Committee.

It is safe to say that interfaith dialogue has come to stay and will be a prominent feature of the AU's initiatives on conflict resolution, peacebuilding and equitable and sustainable development. Faith continues to play, in the AU's initiatives, in collaboration with other donors, the AU has committed to other projects outside of the AU-IFDF initiative. Among these is the AU – German Cooperation Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism – iDove.²⁰

²⁰ See "Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism – iDove Stocktaking Report 2017-2019," Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate of the African Union (AUC-CIDO), June 2020.

6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AU-IFDF

Interfaith dialogue is, by definition, a dialogue between religious actors and leaders to promote mutual understanding and respect; a code of conduct (including rules guiding proselytising and conversions); and a basis for peaceful coexistence. For the dialogue to have an impact beyond the religious leadership (a conversation between converts), however, the mutual understanding must permeate to their followers and inform (publicly and socially) attitudes towards people of different faiths, castes, minorities and (especially) the marginalised.

FBOs cannot limit their activities to preaching tolerance to their respective pulpits or cloister-up, providing humanitarian assistance and undertaking small-scale projects to support the indigent. To be effective, interactions with state actors are essential. The state is, in the final analysis, the guarantor of peace and security and has the mandate to protect all its citizens. In addition, the media can be a critical vehicle for spreading the message of tolerance and social cohesion. Finally, the message of FBOs can only be enhanced through cooperation with other CSOs, religious and non-religious NGOs, traditional and customary authorities, the private sector and opinion leaders.

6.1 THE 2ND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE FORUM DECLARATION

It would appear that the Steering Committee of the rejuvenated AU-IFDF was conscious of the fact that, to be effective, it needed strategic direction, a strategic and implementation plan, and resource mobilisation to effectively implement, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Forum's activities. To that end, and given the context and framework for FBOs' activities and the key factors that enhance the effectiveness of FBO engagements, at the IFDF2 declaration²¹ was made which was notable for its insistence of the following:

21 See "The 2nd Interfaith Dialogue Forum 10-11 November 2016," African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2016.

- Recognition of the role of interfaith and FBOs as well as religious and traditional leaders in promoting inter- and intra-religious dialogue for peaceful coexistence, harmony, peacebuilding and development in Africa.
- Affirmation that the life, dignity, rights and well-being of each person should be the centre of all FBOs' work.
- Expression of concern by the misuse of religion as an instrument by radical groups to serve their own interests and perpetuate violence.
- Admission that poverty and inequality grimly violate human dignity, well-being and have grave moral and spiritual dimensions.

IFDF2 further resolved to ensure that:

- Religion is not used as a platform to incite hate, conflict, violence, war or terrorism.
- FBOs are actively involved in the effort to end poverty in all its forms and to achieve an integrated, prosperous, stable and peaceful Africa, as stated in Agenda 2063.
- FBOs forge working partnerships among themselves, as well as with religious and traditional leaders and policy makers, while ensuring that women and youth are well represented in all their initiatives.

IFDF2 committed to electing a permanent Steering Committee to coordinate its working partnership with the AU, the RECs and other peacebuilding organizations. Among other actions, IFDF2 also defined possible initiatives on media and advocacy, partnerships, education, peacebuilding, preventing violent extremism, enhancing the role of women and youth and protecting vulnerable groups including taking the plight of children into consideration. Without doubt, however, the most consequential commitment was the instruction to seek the support of the AU to “establish a Ten-Year Interfaith Development Agenda for all AU member states based on Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030.”²²

6.2 THE SIX-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2018–2023)

A Six-Year Strategic Plan (2018-2023) was adopted at IFDF3 in 2018. The main building blocks emanated from a workshop organised for the Steering Committee by the Directorate of Strategic Planning, Policy, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilisation held in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2017. Members of the Steering Committee were taken through the process of strategic planning, including: (i) espousing a vision; (ii) outlining a mission; (iii) the setting of strategic direction; (iv) the development of a strategy of implementation; (v) resource mobilisation and allocation; and (vi) implementation, monitoring and review.

22 See “The 2nd Interfaith Dialogue Forum 10-11 November 2016,” African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2016.

It should come as no surprise that the AU-IFDF vision, “A united, peaceful, and prosperous Africa driven by a people living with human dignity” closely parallels that of the AU, “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the global arena.” The mission statement of the AU-IFDF, “To establish and nurture partnerships, platforms and channels of engagement among religious and faith-based communities, the African Union and other stakeholders in order to achieve sustained peace and security, human dignity and inclusive development in Africa”, closely aligns with that of the AU.²³

Flowing from the vision and mission statement, the AU-IFDF set six strategic objectives and desired outcomes. The objectives covered:²⁴

- i.** Enhancing existing and developing new mechanisms for sensitisation of policy makers on the role of religious leaders and faith-based communities in development agendas.
- ii.** Developing the capacities of religious leaders and faith-based communities to effectively implement policies and programmes.
- iii.** Forging partnerships and collaborations with religious and faith-based communities as well as other stakeholders.
- iv.** Building synergies and coordination for effective implementation of AU-IFDF policies.
- v.** Developing and implementing strategies for communication and advocacy.
- vi.** Ensuring active participation and inclusion of women and youth as key partners in the realisation of AU-IFDF initiatives.

There is little doubt that the strategic objectives logically flow from the mission statement of the AU-IFDF. However, the objectives (and desired outcomes) could have been more crisply defined in a manner that made it easier to ascertain whether the desired outcomes have been attained both quantitatively and qualitatively. Baselines and key performance indicators need to be further defined to allow the desired progress to be effectively measured.

Given the strategic objectives and desired outcomes, the AU-IFDF further identifies the strategies that will be adopted and the specific activities that will be undertaken. However, these lack specificity and appear to be no more than further elaboration of the strategies, leaving it near impossible to cost the activities out.

The Six-Year Strategic Plan elaborates on the roles and duties of the Steering Committee members, the Founding Observer (who oversees activities and offers advice) and the Coordinator (who manages the day-to-day activities of the Forum, and the five regional

23 The AU Mission Statement is: “An efficient and value-adding institution driving the African integration and development process in close collaboration with African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities, and African Citizens.”

24 See African Union Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU-IFDF) Strategic Plan (2018 – 2023), African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2018.

coordination units – Central, East, North, South and West Africa). The implementation of the Strategic Plan is budgeted at a total of US\$8,425,000 for the six-year implementation period, however there is little justification for the budgeted amounts.²⁵ While there is a logical framework matrix appended to the Strategic Plan, with identified indicators for monitoring outcomes, the proposed activities were not defined with any specificity, making it impossible to establish a correlation (much less causality) between the activities undertaken and the observed indicators.

Finally, the document could use a more polished write-up and presentation. For example, the presentation of the Strategic Plan is preceded by an attempt to situate the plan within the global and continental environment. However, the write-ups on the global outlook and the continent's political, economic, social, technology, environment and legal context leave much to be desired. This section is replete with generalisations and unsubstantiated assertions. For example, it might well be true that “the rise in mineral prices over the period 1997–2010 contributed to up to 21% of the average country-level violence in Africa,” but this assertion is presented as a “fact” even though it raises many questions. Similarly, the section on “Technology” is probably better titled “The impact of cell phones and social media.”

²⁵ See “Guideline for Monitoring and Evaluating Results” by Khaled Ehsan, Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, KAICIID, 2019. In this context it is difficult to assess how realistic the budgeted amounts are since neither the expected results nor the specific activities are identified with any specificity as the “activities” are no more than further elaboration of strategies.

7. CHALLENGES OF THE AU-IFDF

7.1 THE AU-IFDF ROLE WITHIN THE AU

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC) is the decision-making organ of the AU for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. The AU-PSC achieves its mandate through subsidiary bodies (the Committee of Experts and the Military Staff Committees), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF), and the Peace Fund. The AU-PSC also sets up advisory and implementation panels, such as the Panel of the Wise, the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa), and the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan, the successor to the High-Level Panel on Darfur.²⁶

Given the AU-IFDF's mission to play a central role in promoting peace and security, human dignity and inclusive sustainable development, it is only natural to enquire about the extent to which FBOs are integrated to the AU-PSC conflict prevention, management and resolution activities. A further question is whether there is interaction between the AU-IFDF and the various advisory and implementation panels of the AU-PSC.

The short answer to these queries is that it is quite unclear if the AU-IFDF has a formal role within the AU structure or if it is simply a body that works in parallel to the Union (but has the Union's blessings) and helps realise the vision of the Union. Indeed, the Steering Committee, at its fourth meeting in Maputo, Mozambique,²⁷ lamented that they lacked a basic understanding of: (i) the inner workings of the AU; (ii) the various AU organs, their functions and how they operate; and (iii) the significance and methodology of the AU summits. The Steering Committee also implied that they were unaware of how the AU-IFDF fits within the AU's structure and requested that the CIDO "explore opportunities for the Steering Committee to become more relevant and better networked" within the AU.

26 "The African Union Handbook," 2018, Chapter on Peace and Security Council.

27 See "African Union Interfaith Dialogue Steering Committee Meeting," Maputo Mozambique, 28-29 August 2019. African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2019.

Interviews with AU officials did not provide any more clarity on how the AU-IFDF fits in the AU's peace and security architecture. However, it bears pointing out that the resuscitated AU-IFDF is relatively young. Its Strategic Plan was only finalised and adopted at the end of 2018, not long before the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, AU-IFDF has lost almost a year due to the global pandemic and the social, economic and financial havoc it has inflicted. We can only hope that with the full resumption of activities, modalities will be found to better insert the AU-IFDF into the peace and security architecture of the AU.

7.2 THE ECOSOCC STATUTE AND FBOs

Discussions with senior officials at CIDO suggest that an important first step might be a formal recognition of FBOs as CSOs with full rights to membership in the AU's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC). The ECOSOCC was established in 2004 as an advisory organ composed of different social and professional groups of AU member states, and hosted by CIDO. The purpose of the council is to provide an opportunity for African CSOs to play an active role in contributing to the AU's principles, policies and programmes.

Critically, ECOSOCC statutes provide for 10 Sectoral Cluster Committees (mirroring the AUC technical departments) as key operational mechanisms to formulate opinions and provide input into AU policies and programmes. The AUC's technical departments are Peace and Security, Political Affairs, Social Affairs, Trade and Industry, Infrastructure and Energy, Gender, Human Resources, Science and Technology, Rural Economy and Agriculture, Economic Affairs. There are also Cross-Cutting Programmes, such as HIV/AIDS, international cooperation and coordination with other AU institutions and organs.

The ECOSOCC statutes apply to CSOs including, but not limited to: (i) social groups representing women, youth, the elderly and people with disabilities; (ii) professional groups such as associations of artists, engineers, health workers and teachers; (iii) NGOs and community-based organizations; (iv) cultural organizations; and (v) social and professional organizations in the African Diaspora. FBOs are not specifically mentioned as CSOs and it was the opinion of senior staff at CIDO that it would be necessary to amend the statutes of ECOSOCC to specifically acknowledge FBOs as legitimate CSOs to enable the AU-IFDF to have its rightful place in ECOSOCC and, through it, to have an impact on AU's policies and programmes.

7.3 THE KAICIID MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Review Team analysed the MoU signed by the AU Commission and KAICIID. They found it to be useful to the extent that it opened up the possibility to jointly organise workshops, meetings, seminars, and to develop and implement projects in the area of

interreligious and intercultural dialogue.²⁸ It is within this context that KAICIID and the AU Commission signed specific collaboration agreements to provide resources to support the IFDF2 as well as the meetings of the Steering Committee.

A cooperation agreement between KAICIID and the AU Commission made a lot of sense. KAICIID seeks to bring religious leaders and political decision-makers together to develop and implement multilateral social cohesion, building conflict resolution initiatives.²⁹ The AU is the apex intergovernmental organization in Africa with a mandate to drive the economic integration and development agenda of Africa in a peaceful and secure continent, in close collaboration with member states, RECs and African citizens (through CSOs). The AU has the convening power to summon and involve CSOs (including religious leaders and FBOs) in pursuit of its objectives and KAICIID has the mandate and the expertise to work with religious leaders (and political leaders) to promote conflict resolution and social cohesion.

The AU is a potential user of the services of the IFDF in its peace and security activities, while KAICIID has the expertise to help improve the capacity of FBOs. At best, the AUC is more likely to limit its role to that of a co-financier or mobiliser of resources to support IFDF capacity-building activities. It should be noted, however, that KAICIID as an intergovernmental organization is specifically tasked to promote interreligious and intercultural understanding, bringing religious leaders together to promote understanding, interreligious education (the KAICIID Fellows Programme) and relevant research (the KAICIID Peace Map).³⁰ In this regard KAICIID would play a more substantive role (or “substance partner” as it is indeed indicated in the MoU).

It is pertinent, therefore, that the MoU specifically identifies the fields of education (interreligious and intercultural education), research, and dialogue and cooperation methods (including the general sharing of networks) as the areas of special focus of cooperation between the AU and KAICIID. The MoU also foresees the exchange of information, experiences and regular consultation between KAICIID and “AUC-designated programme officers on subjects that are of common interest.”³¹

There is an asymmetry in mandates and staffing that needs to be understood in order to cooperate effectively. The AU Commission serves as the Secretariat to the decision and implementation instances of the Union. In this regard it is important to underline that the 11 departments of the Commission are not (specialised) implementation agencies but only facilitate, coordinate and document the decisions of the AU.³² KAICIID, on the

28 See Memorandum of Understanding Between The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and The African Union Commission on the Cooperation in the Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Vienna, 18 November 2013.

29 See KAICIID home page www.Kaiciid.org.

30 The KAICIID Peace Map shows the range of interreligious activities by international organizations across the world in a central online location, Wikipedia.

31 MoU between KAICIID and African Union Commission On the Cooperation in the Area of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue from November, 2013.

32 The core staff of the departments (in addition to the Director and division heads) are desk officers whose duties and responsibilities include serving as focal points, coordinating inputs from stakeholders, preparing reports, speaking notes, briefs, writing letters, documenting speeches and other correspondence, and drafting decisions and resolutions.

other hand, is a centre that develops and implements capacity-building programmes, workshops, training and partnerships under the direction of its Board of Directors and Advisory Forum, and is staffed³³ to do so.

Moving forward, it will be important to underline that the AU-IFDF is not (and never will be) a subsidiary body of the AU. It is a voluntary association of FBOs and faith leaders organised into a Forum which is jointly supported by the AU (financially) and KAICIID (substantively and financially) with a view to building the capacity and the profile to render the Forum a useful partner in the AU's peace and security, and sustainable development initiatives. Maintaining the cooperation agreement gives the AU a stake in the Forum's success and makes it more likely that the Forum will be called upon to play a role in the AU's peace and security architecture.

³³ KAICIID staff amount to around 50 when fully staffed as opposed to a CIDO senior staff of 6 – composed of the Director, heads of the Civil Society Division and Diaspora Division, respectively, and three desk officers.

8. CLIENT AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS OF THE AU-IFDF

In line with the ToR and expected deliverables, the consultants were tasked with interrogating different stakeholders with a view to understanding their perspectives on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the AU-IFDF.

8.1 SCOPE AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

As per the ToR, the Review criteria were to be focused on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Additionally, the Review Team was to assess the AU-IFDF partnership strategy and gender considerations.

Review questions were recalibrated in the Inception Report:

— Relevance

- To what extent is the AU's engagement in peacebuilding through dialogue a reflection of strategic considerations, including AU's role in the particular development context in the region and its comparative advantage vis-à-vis other partners?
- Was the design of the intervention adequate to properly address the issues envisaged at project formulation?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended outcomes and effects?
- To what extent has AU capacity-building support contributed to influencing national policies/strategies?

— Effectiveness

- To what extent have project results/targets been achieved or has progress been made towards their achievement?
- What has been the contribution of other AU projects, partners and other organizations to the project results, and how effective have project partnerships been in contributing to achieving the results?

- What were the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by the project's work?

— **Efficiency**

- Has the project implementation strategy and approaches, conceptual framework and execution been efficient and cost-effective? Are they sufficiently sensitive to the political and development constraints of the country?
- Has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outputs?

— **Sustainability**

- What indications are there that the project results will be, or have been, sustained, e.g., through requisite capacities (systems, structures, staff, etc.)?
- To what extent has a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key national stakeholders, been developed or implemented?
- To what extent are policy and regulatory frameworks in place that will support the continuation of benefits?

The Review also included an assessment of the extent to which programme design, implementation and monitoring have taken the following cross-cutting issues into consideration:

— **Partnership strategy**

- To what extent were partnership modalities conducive to the delivery of outputs?
- Are there current or potential complementarities or overlaps with existing partners' programmes?
- How have partnerships affected the progress towards achieving the outputs?
- Has the AU worked effectively with partners to deliver on this current initiative?

— **Gender considerations**

- To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of access to justice interventions? Is gender marker data assigned this project representative of reality?
- How were gender issues implemented as a cross-cutting theme? Did the project give sufficient attention to promote gender equality and gender-sensitivity?

At the Inception Report stage, the criteria for the assessment of the AU-IFDF were further calibrated to accommodate the fact that it is premature to engage in a classic review of the AU-IFDF given how recently it developed its Action Plan and the disruptions caused by COVID-19. The fact is that while members of the Forum and the Steering Committee individually had track records of using interfaith dialogue and engagement at the national stage for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the Forum had yet to undertake any activities or interventions on behalf of the AU. There were, therefore, no AU-IFDF portfolios to analyse and no interventions to evaluate using case study methods.

Similarly, Review criteria relating to impact was, for the time being, not particularly germane to the AU-IFDF given the current stage of its development. Rather, the Review Team, with the concurrence of the Review Steering Committee, decided to classify this Report as more of a Review of the AU-IFDF with a view to ascertaining whether (i) the Abuja Declaration of 2016 and (ii) the Six-Year Strategic Plan constitute sufficiently strong building blocks for the role needed in peace and security and the promotion of inclusive sustainable development in Africa. The criteria for the Review were thus modified to include relevance, effectiveness and efficiency while simultaneously looking at challenges, partnerships (the role of KAICIID), sustainability (enhancing the appeal of FBOs) and knowledge and communication products.

8.2 RESULTS OF THE STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The AU-IFDF conducted a SWOT analysis within the context of the Strategic Plan. Some of the gaps and challenges identified for the AU-IFDF were echoed during the fourth meeting of the Steering Committee. **Two factors were identified as the most likely to diminish the effectiveness of the AU-IFDF. The first is a lack of Secretariat to manage the affairs of the Forum. The second is the absence of a clear leadership structure and defined roles within the Steering Committee.** Other issues identified included the poor religious diversity among the representatives of religions/interreligious councils at the AU-IFDF and the Steering Committee, limited budget availability and unpredictable funding.

Among **the strengths** of the AU-IFDF, the following were among the most important: (i) access to a strong, diverse network of interfaith actors and FBOs; (ii) access to government and intergovernmental organizations through the representatives of the Steering Committee; (iii) awareness and conviction of the crucial necessity of the AU-IFDF and more significantly; (iv) the expertise of the Forum members. Indeed, as stated above, while the AU's formal involvement with FBOs started in 2010, all the members of the Forum had a history of interreligious dialogue to promote peace and to promote human dignity as well as to support sustainable and equitable development. Given this state of affairs, it proved impossible for this Review to assess the impact of FBOs in Africa strictly within the confines of activities carried out within the AU-IFDF. The assessment that follows, therefore, considers the totality of FBO actions and initiatives carried on by the members of the Steering Committee who the Review Team was able to interview.

The impact of FBOs in promoting social cohesion and avoiding conflict in any society is typically assessed by evaluating activities that:

- i. Prevent** conflict (promoting dialogue, countering hate speech, seeking mutual understanding, preaching avoidance stigmatisation of minorities and marginalised groups, etc.).
- ii. Strengthen** the capacity of “peace actors” to identify potential conflict situations and equip them to defuse them.
- iii. Build** a coalition of religious and peace actors and other stakeholders to promote peace, reconciliation and respect for human rights.³⁴

Within the constraints posed by COVID-19, the Review Team conducted virtual interviews with members of the Steering Committee (as representing the AU-IFDF), other CSOs, representatives of RECs, and international partner organizations that are either faith-based or support faith-based initiatives³⁵ Prior to the consultations, the stakeholders were sent the following areas of interrogatories to ponder over. However, the actual interviews were much more free-flowing, interactive, and not constrained by an attempt to elicit responses to the key questions posed.

34 The United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect: Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that could lead to Atrocity Crimes.

35 The other CSOs included the United Kingdoms of Africa (engages traditional and religious leaders), the Pan African Council of Traditional and Customary Authorities and 2Bread for the World (a multi-faith initiative targeting Africa and Africans in the Diaspora). The RECs were represented by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Liaison Office of The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Communauté Économique des États de l'Afrique Centrale (CEEAC) or, in English, the Economic Community of Central African States. Current and potential international partners interviewed included KAICIID, the International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development (PaRD), The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, and the All-Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) or the Conférence des Églises de toute l'Afrique or (CETA).

The various groups of stakeholders and the information requested is provided below:

Description of stakeholder	Key questions and information needed
Community-based groups and structures, eminent personalities such as religious leaders, youth groups, women's groups, FBOs, traditional leaders, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In what areas has AU-IFDF been effective and impactful in its mandate/strategy? » In which areas can AU-IFDF be more efficient and impactful? » How relevant and significant is AU-IFDF's strategy of dialogue in preventing violent conflicts in Africa? » What are the current and emerging realities that AU-IFDF should be focusing on to achieve its mandate? » How can AU-IFDF be more effective and efficient in the delivery of its strategy? » What should AU-IFDF change or consider towards realising its goals and objectives and being sustainable?
AUC departments, CIDO, RECs, AU member states and other international stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In what areas has AU-IFDF been effective and impactful in supporting the work of the AU, RECs, AU member states and other international partners? » In which areas can AU-IFDF do better to support the work of the intergovernmental organizations and international partners? » How aligned is the AU-IFDF's strategy to your work in conflict prevention in Africa? » What are the current and emerging realities that AU-IFDF should be focusing on to align itself better to your mandate? » How can AU-IFDF be more effective and efficient in the delivery of your strategy?

Description of stakeholder	Key questions and information needed
Civil society groups, diaspora organizations, think tanks and research institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What resources and partnership can AU-IFDF leverage to achieve more results? » How sustainable is AU-IFDF's strategy in the context of current and emerging realities in peacebuilding in Africa? » What challenges exist internally and externally that AU-IFDF need to address to achieve results? » Can the existing capacity and structure of AU-IFDF enable it to achieve its mandate?

As expected, the interviews led to very little assessment of the AU-IFDF for the reasons already stated – the shortness of time elapsed since its renaissance, the absence of clear leadership within the Steering Committee, and the lack of a Secretariat to handle the affairs of the Forum. In fact, it should come as no surprise that some respondents (outside of the members of the Steering Committee) confessed to the Review Team that it was the very first time they had been made aware of the existence of the AU-IFDF, and of its mission and objectives.

8.2.1 RELEVANCE

Respondents were, however, unanimous in welcoming the AU-IFDF initiative, thus affirming its **relevance**. They identified a number of areas where the involvement of faith actors could prove decisive in aiding the AU to meet its objectives of promoting prosperity, integration, peace and sustainable development in the continent. One example, as outlined by a member of the Steering Committee, was in the area of conflict over natural resources where religion or faith are used as a vehicle for forging “negative solidarity” and to escalate the conflict. This is a case that is common in many West African countries in conflict between herders (mostly Muslim) and farmers (Christian or animist). In many instances, interventions by experienced mediators (religious leaders/faith-based actors) have often helped defuse tensions and help protagonists to arrive at a mutual understanding with workable solutions.

A member of the Steering Committee also outlined the activities that FBOs have been carrying out, which fit very well into the AU’s mandate of Democracy, Governance,

Human Rights and Elections (DGHRE).³⁶ In Nigeria (as in other places), faith leaders and FBOs have developed considerable expertise in election monitoring. Additionally, FBOs have played useful roles in monitoring the conduct of the census, which has become a political tool through the (upward) falsification of figures to ensure disproportionate allocation of resources.

In addition to initiatives to combat violent extremism, members of the Steering Committee outlined roles FBOs have been playing in their respective countries. The roles included actions to combat extreme poverty and xenophobic violence. In South Africa, for example, religious leaders played critical roles in the fight against apartheid and the disdain for African traditional religions. Currently, these same leaders are fighting “Afro-phobia” and “black-on-black” violence. Perhaps, for the Review Team, the most revealing testament to the invaluable role that FBOs play was the example from South Sudan. As recounted by one respondent, faith-based groups played very important roles as facilitators and the guarantors of the peace accord. This was possible because FBOs command the respect of the population and are seen as neutral (non-partisan) peacemakers. **Precisely because of the power of their influence (ils sont très écoutés), FBOs need to be involved “in the whole cycle of conflict management” in a structured, as opposed to an ad hoc, manner.**

The discussions revealed that most FBOs have developed extensive local and international (global) networks in pursuit of their initiatives. However, they **stressed that they would welcome a structured association with the AU**. Respondents were of the view that they could harness their skills and experiences to assist the AU in its endeavours. The FBOs would, in turn, use the AU platform to enhance their activities (both locally and internationally).

8.2.2 EFFECTIVENESS VERSUS REPRESENTATIVENESS

In conception, representatives attending the AU-IFDF are to be nominated by governments and, preferably, represent the Interreligious Councils (IRCs) in their countries (where they exist) or be active in interfaith dialogue/activities. In practice, it was observed that representatives were not always active in the IRCs and, in some cases, were nominated for the Forum simply because they were the religious leaders known to the authorities or preferred by government officials/political leadership. Further discussions, however, revealed that there may very well be trade-offs or tensions between representativeness (of IRCs) and effectiveness (as in influence with the political leadership and/or governmental authorities).

³⁶ The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) of the AU is responsible for promoting, facilitating, coordinating and encouraging democratic principles and the rule of law, respect for human rights, participation of civil society in the development process of the continent and the achievement of durable solutions for addressing humanitarian crises.

8.2.3 DIVERSITY

In this context, the Review Team did observe the diversity (gender and generational) of the Steering Committee. While the Steering Committee boasts a “youth representative,” the female representatives were also quite young. What they lacked in terms of long experience in faith-based activities, “stature” (or fame), as well as “wisdom” (assumed to come with age in Africa), they amply made up in terms of enthusiasm, dynamism and relevance. As one respondent put it “you have to listen to the voices of the young people because they are the most affected by violent extremism.”

8.2.4 SUSTAINABILITY: ENHANCING APPEAL OF FBOs

The Counter-Narrative – the Review Team observed (from comments made by some respondents as well as a desk review of the literature of the role of FBOs in Africa) that the impact of FBOs is not uniformly positive. The misgivings ranged from the restriction of interfaith dialogue to monotheistic religions, the ambiguous relationship between the “established religious traditions” and African traditional religions and cultural practices, the seeming impotence of traditional religious leaders in the face of rising fundamentalism and the surge in Pentecostalism. In addition, the perceived co-option of religious leaders by the dominant power structure is seen as repressive and undemocratic.

Public perception of the role of FBOs in promoting social cohesion, tolerance, and defusing (social, economic, and ethnic) tensions, countering hate speech and eliminating violent extremism differ depending on the country’s situation. In countries where there are significant inter- and/or intra-religion tensions and where fundamentalism holds sway (e.g. Boko Haram in West Africa) the public perceives faith (or religion) as “the problem.”

Moreover, there is the perception that tolerance stops at the door of monotheism. Yet many Africans easily combine a deep belief in monotheistic religions and African traditional practices and customary rites that involve ancestor worship. As a participant put it, “I am a proud Christian but I also believe in and perform customary rites.”

On the role of FBOs in the promotion of sustainable development, views are also divided. Certainly, it has historically been the case in Africa (especially in the pre-independence era) that missionary activities (in education, health and charity) have been used as vehicles to proselytise and for conversions. Moreover, the Marxist designation of religion as “the opiate of the masses” has a significant number of adherents among leading intellectuals on the African continent.

By this assertion, religion, rather than promoting social and economic justice, serves as a “balm to the soul” and induces the marginalised to accept suffering with a promise of Minerva in the other world. Religion is also a refuge for the marginalised and may explain

why “The global South is exceedingly religious”³⁷ and becoming even more so as income inequalities become more and more accentuated. Thus, to the adherents of the Marxist view, religion is an understandable but misguided response³⁸ to increasing (social and economic) marginalisation.

Public perceptions of religion in Africa would also seem to be very much influenced by the phenomenal rise of Pentecostalism, most notably in Nigeria and Ghana, but is increasingly becoming transnational, spreading throughout West and Central Africa, South Africa and Ethiopia. These are (mega-) churches headed by pastors, bishops, apostles, prophets or “men of God.” Many of these “men of God” are controversial and/or outspoken. These churches not only promise spiritual salvation, but also happiness, business success and material abundance in this world (as opposed to the afterlife).³⁹ Not surprisingly, these “men of God” are the ones most likely to seek ties within the political leadership and to use their pulpits, “prophesies” and “revelations” to serve the dominant political interests.

Finally, while faith leaders need to work with the political leadership in order to be effective, **there must be separation between the church/mosque and state, and blasphemy laws must be resisted. Faith leaders must also speak truth to power, whenever warranted.**

37 Observation by key initiator of the AU/KAICIID cooperation agreement.

38 See, for example, “Still an Opium? Contemporary Marxists versus Karl Marx on the question of Religion,” Joseph Cronin, May 14, 2018. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionglobalsociety/2018/05/still-an-opium-contemporary-marxists-versus-karl-marx-on-the-question-of-religion/>.

39 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Pentecostalism - For a perspective of a Ghanaian filmmaker, see Kwaw Ansah’s interview on his film, “Praising the Lord Plus One” in <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-africa-24146595>, <https://qz.com/africa/1007819/pentecostal-churches-in-ghana-and-nigeria-are-entrenching-sexist-gender-roles-for-women/> and <https://www.cairn.info/entreprises-religieuses-transnationales-en-afrique--9782845866539-page-395.html>.

9. CONFLICT PREVENTION IN ACTIONS – A CASE STUDY

9.1 THE CHIEF IMAM OF GHANA

All societies have groups that may be identified along religious, ethnic, linguistic, gender, sexual orientation and cultural lines. In a perfect world, the diversity of the population would not only be tolerated and accepted but would be celebrated. In reality, conflicts arise in situations where social divisions are exploited to pitch one group against another and/or when long-standing grievances are not addressed or ignored by the dominant power structure.

The period of activities linked to political elections or the usurpation of political power by a group (and heightened awareness of the perceived gainers and losers of the political process) are particularly critical periods during which the risk for conflict/violence is greatest. This is even more so when the main competing political actor(s) are identifiable as (or perceived to be) belonging to different groups. The context then becomes a struggle (a zero-sum game) to alter/consolidate the balance of power in favour of one group to the detriment of “the other.”

But Regardless of the immediate trigger, all violent conflicts involve attempts to alter the status quo and to shift the balance of power towards one (or a coalition) of protagonists. In contexts where the dominant groups are all powerful, the ultimate results may be succession. Otherwise, wars and insurgency may be waged by groups for control of decision-making power to allocate resources and benefit from economic opportunities, for freedom of speech and worship (or the power to decide what constitutes acceptable speech and forms of worship), as well as the right to self-determination.

There are few African countries (or states) where the control of state power is settled either once and for all or for the foreseeable future. More often, they are rapidly changing young states, where the legitimacy of the state and state actors are constantly challenged, and therefore prone to conflict. The threats to stability come from the demands of various ethnic/religious/linguistic/regional groups for access to political power and to benefit from economic opportunities.

This poses a particular challenge for FBOs and peace actors in their attempt to prevent violent challenges to the dominant power structure and makes it clear that tensions cannot be defused simply through photo ops such as a (Chief) Imam embracing a Cardinal. First, the legitimacy of the demands or grievances of the groups threatening and/or initiating violence must be acknowledged by all. Secondly, the FBOs and other peace actors must be perceived as being neutral or fair, and they must address the root causes of conflict to avoid pyrrhic victories.

The Chief Imam of Ghana, Dr Osman Nuhu Sharubutu, has been one religious leader who has understood the causes of conflict and the complexities of conflict resolution and has played a critical role in conflict prevention in Ghana. Indeed, so great has been his contribution that there are loud calls by political leaders (past and present) for him to be awarded the Nobel Prize for peace.⁴⁰ The Chief Imam is said to be single-handedly “changing the narrative about Islam from a religion of wickedness, a religion of conflict, a religion of hate for others, to a religion whose mission is rooted in the virtues of love, peace and forgiveness.”⁴¹

The National Chief Imam of Ghana is not just an advocate of interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance, but an active practitioner who walks the talk. In fact, for his 100th birthday, he attended a church service to demonstrate the importance of religious tolerance. But it is well known that he seeks not just tolerance but active engagement with other religious traditions.⁴² He is noted to champion the cause of the persecuted within the Muslim tradition and without.⁴³ For example, he has shown his support for the persecuted Ahmadiyya Muslims and called on Muslims to forget their differences and unite.

The boxes below highlight several of the many instructive instances that demonstrate the Chief Imam in action, personally defusing tensions and avoiding conflict. He is also very involved in myriad charitable activities and supporting educational endeavours.

40 <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Chief-Imam-deserves-Nobel-Peace-Prize-Kufuor-1117847>.

41 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48221879>.

42 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48221879>.

43 <https://www.rabwah.net/chief-imam-of-ghana-speaks-out-in-support-of-ahmadis/>.

9.2 CONFLICT PREVENTION IN ACTION

INSTANCE NO. 1

- » In 2019 he reprimanded a group of young Muslim men who attacked a church in Accra after its pastor predicted his death in the coming 12 months.
- » He told those who had been armed with machetes to forgive the preacher and managed to defuse the tension, something that earned him the thanks of the police chief.

INSTANCE NO. 2

- » When gunshots reverberated through the streets of Old Tafo in Kumasi in a disagreement over a cemetery in 2016, he immediately made a trip to the Ashanti regional capital.
- » A curfew had been imposed after one person died in clashes. Traditional leaders wanted proof that the Muslim community owned a section of land in the graveyard to bury their dead.
- » The situation nearly degenerated into all-out war after Muslim youths slapped the traditional leader of the Tafo community.
- » The slapping of a chief constitutes a desecration of his office, a taboo in Ghana which requires war to be waged - something that could have spread to other communities.
- » According to Mr Shaibu, the Chief Imam went to the palace of the Tafo chief, and without even speaking a word, he calmed the situation by the humility and meekness of his presence, preventing further unrest.

INSTANCE NO. 3

- » In 2012, the corpse of an imam in the Volta Region was exhumed and dumped by the roadside by a community who felt Muslims should not bury their dead in that graveyard.
- » Sheikh Sharubutu flew into the south-eastern region and negotiated a peace deal - saving the state from using force to quell the riots.

The Chief Imam of Ghana, Dr Osman Nuhu Sharubutu, is also a member of the National Peace Council of Ghana, an independent statutory peace institution established by the 818th Act of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana⁴⁴.



Vision - dynamic environment where people can engage in their lawful activities confident that the institutions, mechanisms and capacities for mediating differences and grievance are effective and responsive.



Mission - The National Peace Council will facilitate the development of mechanisms for cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in peace building in Ghana by promoting cooperative problem solving to conflicts and by institutionalising the processes of response to conflicts to produce outcomes that lead to conflict transformation, social, political and religious reconciliation and transformative dialogues.



Objective - the object of the Council is to facilitate and develop mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, resolution and to build sustainable peace in the country.

44 <https://www.peacecouncil.gov.gh/about-us/>.

10. KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY PRODUCTS

The Review of the AU-IFDF reveals that it is critical to develop knowledge and communication products that will be useful to: (i) inform the public on the (actual/potential) role of FBOs in conflict prevention and sustainable development; and (ii) mobilise resources to fund the activities of FBOs and other peace actors as a cost-effective alternative to destructive violence, insurrection, and environmental damage. The fact that most respondents (outside of the Steering Committee) had not heard of the AU-IFDF, would suggest two immediate actions are needed: (i) an effort to update the Six-Year Strategic Plan as an instrument for recruiting high-profile faith leaders into the AU-IFDF and for fundraising; and (ii) a commitment to develop the profiles of the Steering Committee members to publicise the Forum.

Going forward, the AU-IFDF must commit to Knowledge Management (KM), KM is an intangible and intellectual asset that must be managed.⁴⁵ Gartner, a social scientist, describes KM as “a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving and sharing all of an enterprise’s information assets”. Indeed, knowledge has become a major economic resource needed by organizations to secure a competitive advantage and learning capacity. Studies have established that consistent application of proven practices can significantly improve an organization’s results, increase efficiency, productivity and teamwork, leading to faster decision-making and easier collaboration and ultimately stimulate innovation and growth.

Furthermore, the AU-IFDF, being the leading faith-based continental organization with expertise in dialogue and peacebuilding and with a formalised relationship with inter-governmental institutions, has acquired a unique set of experiences over the years. In this regard, the AU-IFDF can be a great resource, not just for other FBOs and CSOs, but also for other intergovernmental organizations that operate at a global level. It is therefore important for the AU-IFDF to have well-developed KM and communication systems, not just to ensure growth and sustainability, but also as a strategy to contribute to the broader learning in the field of dialogue, preventive diplomacy, peace and security. It will also help fulfil the needs expressed by institutions such as the United Nations. The AU and regional economic groupings regarding how to replicate the unique experiences that the AU-IFDF brings to the field of peace and security. Moreover, a compendium outlining the best practices of conflict prevention and resolution as well as the lessons learned should serve as a counterpoint to the commonly held belief that “most conflicts emanate from intolerant violent, religious extremists.”

45 See full version of Knowledge, Communication and Advocacy Product brief appended as Annex to this Review Report.

To effectively store information and enable it to influence policy, the AU-IFDF must leverage the best available and most relevant knowledge which is based on both evidence and practice, and comes from internal and external sources. Learning must be a continuous process to ensure that it becomes more agile, responsive and innovative in the solutions it brings. Without efficient management of critical information, members of the AU-IFDF may take important pieces of knowledge with them when their tenure is over or when the staff working with them leave, while new members and employees are forced to learn their roles without any guidance. Tremendous amounts of time are wasted learning and relearning the same processes in inconsistent ways. These challenges, if not properly addressed, can erode any gains made in the knowledge foundation upon which subsequent interventions and programming can be based.

The effective creation, collection, storage and sharing of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned should be integral to the AU-IFDF's mandate of a collaborative approach to dialogue and peacebuilding. Knowledge Management can transform the organization to new levels of effectiveness, efficiency and scope of operation. It is the lubricant that keeps the engine running smoothly, allowing free flow of information, collaborations and joint problem-solving.

10.1 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND POLICY INFLUENCING STRATEGY FOR THE AU-IFDF

**"AN ORGANIZATION THAT FAILS TO MANAGE KNOWLEDGE,
COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY AND LEARN FROM ITS PAST
IS DOOMED TO LEAK VALUE AND REPEAT FAILURES."⁴⁶**

10.1.1 PREAMBLE

Objective 5 of the AU-IFDF's Strategic Plan committed to developing and implementing strategies for communication, advocacy and capacity building among state and non-state actors, including the media and religious leaders, to ensure accurate representation of religions and faith communities⁴⁷ with an expected output of increasing the role AU-IFDF plays in implementing Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

⁴⁶ <https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/Pages/default.aspx>

⁴⁷ AU-IFDF Strategic Plan, p38-39.

The key activities it identified that could lead to the realisation of the above strategic objective are as follows:

- Identify the different recognised religions and faith traditions in each country of the region
- Set up a database of faith-based and interfaith organizations based on different thematic focus areas, e.g. peace and security/political affairs
- Popularise the role of religion and faith in peace and development
- Support the popularisation of Agenda 2063
- Support the domestication of AU policies and decisions
- Support and act as early warning mechanisms
- Work towards achieving gender parity
- Work towards countering violent extremism and radicalisation

Objective 5 was informed by the identified weakness of the AU-IFDF through the SWOT analysis carried in preparation of the Six-Year Strategic Plan. **It acknowledged that a lack of a comprehensive database of FBOs/interfaith organizations and lack of communication and limited knowledge and sharing of information** contributes significantly to the poor appreciation of the effectiveness and relevance of the Forum.

It must also be pointed out that knowledge and appreciation of the impact of AU-IFDF's work of IFDF is further limited because FBOs (and by extension the Forum) are not members of the African Union ECSOCC⁴⁸ and do not have observer status within the AU, so are therefore unable to systematically engage with the Commission and its organs/departments. Furthermore, the lack of a functional Secretariat with a dedicated Coordinator and Communication Specialist (responsible for identifying, managing, packaging and disseminating key information about the work of the Forum) may also have contributed to the inability of the Forum to develop and implement a KM and communication/visibility strategy and provide the impetus for its relevance, effectiveness and continued support. In fact, according to one of the officials at the AU, FBOs had no formal means of interaction with each other, or of gauging their work with the AU. He further added that the staff of CIDO were limited and had to divide resources between the ECOSOCC Secretariat and the Forum. Similarly, the constant changing of the Steering Committee members made it difficult to sustain institutional memory.⁴⁹

The ongoing Review of the Forum commissioned by KAICIID and CIDO further revealed that it is critical to develop knowledge and communications products that will be useful to: (i) inform the public on the (actual/potential) role of FBOs in conflict prevention and sustainable development; and (ii) mobilise resources to fund the activities of FBOs

48 ECOSOCC is the civil society policy organ of the African Union. It is an advisory organ of the Union designed to serve as a policy development interface that will harness civil society expertise to the work of various Departments of the Commission and through it, to its union at large.

49 Interview with AU Officials.

and other peace actors as a cost-effective alternative to destructive violence, insurrection and environmental damages. The fact that most respondents (outside of the Steering Committee) had not heard of the AU-IFDF would immediately suggest two needed actions: (i) an effort to polish the Six-Year Strategic Plan as an instrument for recruiting high-profile faith leaders into the AU-IFDF and for fundraising; and (ii) a commitment to develop profiles of the Steering Committee members to publicise the Forum.

10.1.2 INTRODUCTION

To be effective in storing information and ensuring that the influence policy is value for money, the AU-IFDF must leverage the best available and most relevant knowledge based on both evidence and practice, from internal and external sources. Learning must be a continuous process to ensure that it becomes more agile, responsive and innovative in the solutions it brings. As identified in the Strategic Plan and Review, without efficient management of critical information, members of the AU-IFDF Steering Committee⁵⁰ may take important pieces of knowledge with them when their tenure is over, especially as the Forum doesn't have a functional Secretariat or archiving system. This means that new members of the Steering Committee and employees are forced to learn their roles and procedures for information management without any guidance. Tremendous amount of time is wasted learning and relearning the same processes in inconsistent ways. These challenges, if not properly addressed, can erode any gains made in the knowledge foundation upon which subsequent interventions and programming can be based.

The effective creation, collection, storage and sharing of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned should be integral to AU-IFDF's mandate of a collaborative approach to dialogue and peacebuilding. Knowledge management can transform the organization to new levels of effectiveness, efficiency and scope of operation. It is the lubricant that keeps the engine running smoothly, allowing free flow of information, collaborations, and joint problem solving.

In order to sustain its mandate and visibility, address some of the weaknesses identified in its SWOT analysis, and exceed performance objectives, especially in the face of competing environment, the review recommended that AU-IFDF needs to put in place an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving and sharing organizations' information assets such as databases, documents, policies and procedures. It has always been said that information is power. Information plays a critical role in our daily lives and it is a vital resource for effective job performance. The right information at the right time is an essential way for an organization to make the right decisions, to project a positive image, and to get useful feedback that would help it improve on programme delivery. In practical terms, KM is a model that is focused on connecting people with the purpose of sharing knowledge and making that knowledge more easily accessible.

50 The Committee is elected for a specific period of time with little or no consideration for sustainability.

As people are ultimately the holders of knowledge, the AU-IFDF Steering Committee, staff and critical stakeholders need to understand the processes of managing and sharing organizational and project information in a manner that will ensure continuous improvement and influence the change it desires.

10.1.3 RATIONALE/JUSTIFICATION

Knowledge Management posits that knowledge is an intangible and intellectual asset that must be managed. Gartner, a social scientist, describes it as “a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying, capturing, evaluating, retrieving, and sharing all of an enterprise’s information assets.” Indeed, knowledge has become a major economic resource needed by organizations to secure competitive advantage and learning capacity. Studies have established that consistent application of proven practices can significantly improve an organization’s results, increase efficiency, productivity and teamwork, leading to faster decision-making and easier collaboration and ultimately stimulates innovation and growth.⁵¹

Furthermore, the set of experiences that the AU-IFDF has acquired over the years are quite unique, particularly being the leading faith-based continental organization with expertise in dialogue and peacebuilding and with a formalised relationship with inter-governmental institutions. In this regard, the AU-IFDF presents great learning opportunities not just for other FBOs and CSOs, but also for other intergovernmental organizations that operate at global levels. It is therefore important for the AU-IFDF to have well-developed KM and communication systems, not just to ensure growth and sustainability, but also as a strategy to contribute to the broader learning in the field of dialogue, preventive diplomacy, peace and security. It will also help fulfil the needs expressed by institutions such as the United Nation, AU and regional economic groupings regarding how to replicate the unique experiences AU-IFDF brings to the field of peace and security. It is in this wise that this strategy on KM, communication and influencing has gained relevance

10.1.4 AU-IFDF’S AMBITIONS

In line with its current Strategic Plan and the interviews conducted with some of the Steering Committee members, it is evident that AU-IFDF’s ambition is to be recognised as a critical player in the arena of peace and security and an enabler for the realisation of Agenda 2063. In order to do this, the Forum must strive to:

- **Capacitate state and non-state actors, including the media and religious leaders, to ensure accurate representation of religions and faith communities and co-create.** The AU-IFDF seeks to enhance the effectiveness

51 Adapted from WANEP Concept note on Knowledge Management, 2019.

and performance of interreligious organization and faith-based groups in order to support the AU, RECs and African states conflict prevention, peace and security agenda. The aim is to strengthen the legitimacy, transparency, accountability and resilience of these groups through training, mentoring and coaching programmes among others. In this respect, the KM for policy influencing, communication and visibility of the AU-IFDF pursues a long-term approach to capacity development and shared learning rather than teaching.

- **To connect and convene.** The AU-IFDF seeks to create spaces and platforms for diverse groups of civil society (especially FBOs) to connect, share and learn from each other and with non-civil society actors like the state, intergovernmental organizations and private sector. The approach will focus on facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement on critical issues, strengthening civic voices, and linking networks and alliances.
- **To curate knowledge and facilitate learning and sharing.** The AU-IFDF seeks to curate knowledge and facilitate learning and participatory knowledge sharing within civil society and between CSOs and other actors through its KM strategy.
- **To influence and advocate.** The AU-IFDF intends to ensure that its programmes and Strategic Plan influences institutions, policies, legislation and funding practices to ensure civil society in Africa has an enabling environment in which to operate and the latitude to support the AUC, RECs and member states. This will be done through continuous engagement with policy actors and policy institutions and in collaboration with a diverse group of civil society and development partners.

"A FIRM'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE DEPENDS MORE THAN ANYTHING ON ITS KNOWLEDGE: ON WHAT IT KNOWS - HOW IT USES WHAT IT KNOWS - AND HOW FAST IT CAN KNOW SOMETHING NEW."⁵²

10.2 REVIEW OF AU-IFDF'S CURRENT KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE(S)

It is important to recognise from the outset that even though the AU-IFDF does not have a dedicated coordinating structure and information management strategy, it is endowed with a significant amount of information that can benefit not only itself, but civil society community, the AU, RECs and AU member states. AU-IFDF's Steering Committee and

⁵² HR Magazine 2009, p1.

members are experts in different thematic areas such as dialogue, mediation, conflict management, advocacy, alliance building, monitoring and review, finance and administration, research, capacity development, and KM and have indeed been implementing projects in these areas. However, to become a renowned knowledge hub in Africa, especially in its unique area of operation, known for excellence in facilitating the generation and use of knowledge, the Forum needs to consciously work to address some gaps that may contribute to hinder the appreciation of its contribution to peace and security in Africa through KM. These include:

10.2.1 KM STRATEGY

Even though the current Strategic Plan clearly identified the lack of KM as a key weakness, there is no existing KM strategy or a dedicated Communication Specialist for the Forum. This is a huge gap that accounts for the urgent existing need to put in place this KM strategy. The strategy will serve as an agreed basis on which all actions undertaken by a KM Unit will rely on and will hinge on the Forum's current and future Strategic Plan. This strategy will be developed and implemented as a core means towards an end (achieving the vision) for the AU-IFDF and satisfying its core partners.

10.2.2 UNDERSTANDING OF KM

The interviews with the Steering Committee revealed that there was a diverse understanding of what KM was and, indeed, its relevance to the Forum. Some members attribute KM to “research” while others attribute it to the production of knowledge-based resources aimed at achieving the Forum's objectives as defined within the strategy. The latter can largely be attributed to the fact that KM is more within the programmatic operations of the Forum and not instituted as part of its deliberate strategy. There is, however, a weak understanding across the team on the inevitable role of KM in contributing to the Forum's effectiveness and relevance.

10.2.3 DEFINITION AND HARMONISATION OF THE FORUM'S APPROACH TO KM

The AU-IFDF operates a largely ad hoc but responsive KM approach. By this, the Forum focuses more on “knowledge products” resulting from its interventions (at national levels). For example, the Forum puts in appreciable efforts to review its members' interventions but lags when it comes to ensuring a continuous production of anticipated knowledge products out of such ventures – such as policy briefs and newsletters. This may be connected to the fact that the Forum lacks any sort of formal relationship with the AU authority and organs. Finally, the Forum has several stand-alone elements that capture relevant information during operations, however there is no regular conscious effort to synthesise this information, identify lessons learned or take practical steps to put the lessons learned into use to improve the overall functioning of the Forum.

10.2.4 HOLISTIC OWNERSHIP AND IMPLEMENTATION OF KM PRACTICES

Some practices that should enrich KM within the Forum are not institutionalised and this may lead to the loss of valuable information. For example, trip reports and after activity reviews have not been regularly developed and filed as expected. Most importantly, there has been weak follow-up on key recommendations documented in such reports.

10.2.5 PARTICIPATION OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

Increased participation of Steering Committee members in knowledge generation is key. Although some members contribute, there is little response from others and it is important that all members have the responsibility to contribute in knowledge generation. This should be clearly mentioned in ToRs for the engagement of the Steering Committee members and the proposed staff when they are employed to guide operations and practice. This will ensure that those lagging in this domain are identified and systematically provided with the appropriate support to contribute towards the Forum's knowledge generation efforts. This will largely propel the AU-IFDF to exemplify its moral leadership position on the continent. It will also foster a spirit of ownership of the knowledge generation process by the Forum and its members and staff.

10.2.6 ALLOCATING A DEDICATED BUDGET FOR KM

It is evident that most of the AU-IFDF's activities are driven by project funds and core support from organizations like KAICIID. However, KM is lagging in terms of attracting sufficient funds to drive the Forum's worthwhile and ambitious agenda. Despite this, in the short term, it is important to allocate funds annually to roll out some targeted KM activities. Also, it is important for the AU-IFDF to consciously and deliberately include budget lines that will enable KM to play its part in programme initiatives. Through this, KM can support with evidence-based findings (in the form of rapid evidence reviews) and/or the documentation of programmes/projects/processes, lessons learned and challenges that can constitute rich knowledge sources to edify interfaith organizations and other civil society actors. This can bolster the foundation of a robust knowledge generation hub at the AU-IFDF and create a favourable ground for the AU, development partners and critical stakeholders to contact/partner with the AU-IFDF to generate evidence-based reviews on peace, security and development in the continent.

10.2.7 EFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION

The Forum has engaged in worthwhile interventions in Africa. However, little effort has been made to deliberately ensure that findings from this practice are documented and disseminated widely through videos or on knowledge-sharing platforms such as AU summits, national, regional or global platforms. There are two key questions that emanate from the role KM plays in promoting the Forum's agenda: (i) to what extent does KM contribute to and propel the strategic direction of the Forum; and (ii) what role does KM have to play towards achieving the Forum's strategic goals?

10.3 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR THE AU-IFDF – A NEW APPROACH

10.3.1 OBJECTIVES

- i.** Ensure that accurate information relating to the work of interfaith dialogue, conflict prevention and peacebuilding is collected, curated, well organised and shared with relevant stakeholders in the sector across the continent to nurture a well-informed policy making process based on evidence.
- ii.** Facilitate the availability and access to accurate information on the work of the AU-IFDF.
- iii.** Support the Steering Committee and staff to have a clear understanding of the work of the AU-IFDF and their role towards the attainment of the Forum's objectives.
- iv.** Facilitate the use of information generated by the Forum to improve the AU, RECs and CSOs' operations.

10.3.2 KM APPROACH

The AU-IFDF's KM approach should be three-tiered, consisting of a highly interconnected process that seeks to (i) identify, (ii) curate and (iii) disseminate knowledge in ways that are accessible, user-friendly and impactful. This is to ensure that, in the long run, the KM process will allow the AU-IFDF to stand out even more as an indispensable player contributing towards the prosperity of Africa. The three-tiered approach will comprise of the following:

— Tier 1

Establishing partnerships: the Secretariat of the AU-IFDF (when established) will identify key partners to collaborate with towards realising the goal of the Forum's KM agenda. Such partners will include mainly the AU and its organs and unit, research institutions, RECs and other CSOs that have a focus or interest in the AU-IFDF's sphere of influence.

Recruiting contributors: efforts will be made to regularly introduce the AU-IFDF's work on knowledge curation, documentation and dissemination to the AU, RECs, civil

society actors and academics who could potentially be interested in contributing to the body of knowledge on dialogue, conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Africa.

Leveraging themes and programmes implemented by the AU-IFDF: the Forum's themes and key programmes will constitute a solid foundation on which knowledge products will be developed. As such, the Communication Specialist (when engaged) will non-exclusively prioritise knowledge products that give preference to analysis on issues related to AU-IFDF themes. This will give room for informative knowledge pieces that courageously document interfaith dialogue praxis across the continent.

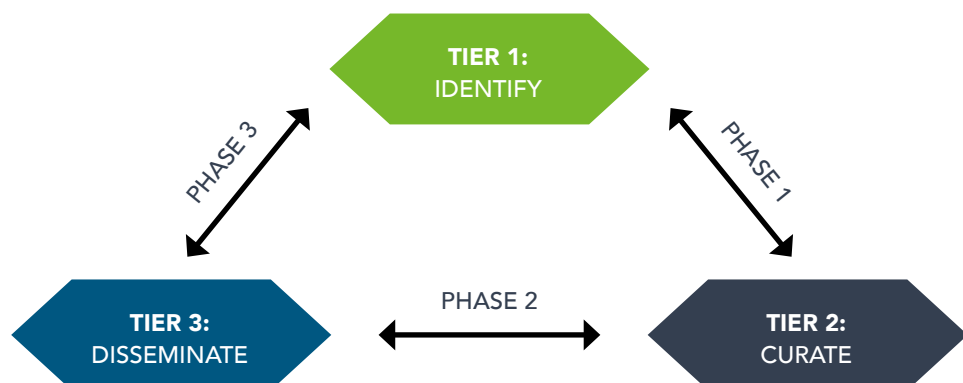
— **Tier 2**

Efficiently facilitating knowledge curation and documentation: once contributors are identified, the Communication Specialist will initiate and maintain an effective process of knowledge curation with contributors. This will take into consideration the time invested in delivering/finalising knowledge products. Emphasis will be placed on the quality of the products to ensure that final knowledge products are well appreciated and illicit interest in potential users.

— **Tier 3**

Dissemination: the Communication Specialist will develop and operationalise a targeted knowledge dissemination/engagement strategy with the aim of ensuring that knowledge products are reaching the targeted audience for which they were developed. This is to increase the prospects of ensuring that the AU-IFDF's knowledge products are influencing change and development in Africa especially within the AU. The KM Unit will target and make use of online (YouTube, website, Facebook, Twitter, radio discussions) and traditional communication platforms (trainings, convenings, participation in conferences) to disseminate curated information.

Leveraging technology: technological tools are an indispensable asset in the KM process at the AU-IFDF. The KM Unit will leverage on existing technological tools in the documentation and dissemination stages of the KM process. As such, the documents directory, the e-directory, the website, and Files App from Office 365 will be valuable platforms on which all knowledge products will be stored. Furthermore, communication platforms such as YouTube and social media will be invaluable



10.4 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY STRATEGY

10.4.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to sustain and expand its partnerships in the public and private sectors and especially in the face of a competitive environment, the AU-IFDF needs a well-developed plan to promote its work to target audiences and stakeholders via the media, including online and offline communications. The strategy will be the framework for the AU-IFDF's direct and indirect communication with partners as well as the general public. The strategy also details how the AU-IFDF communication products are handled with the aim of gaining more visibility, sharing project results/impacts, showcasing success stories and best practices and developing exchanges on initiatives. In this way, the strategy is also developed with full consciousness of the methods of transmission of AU-IFDF's messages, ideas and works.

The strategy addresses some of the aforementioned shortcomings by stating simple, pragmatic goals and objectives, identifying audiences, and detailing a plan of action. It needs to be executed prudently, deliberately and ethically, taking into cognizance **that visibility gives credibility to an organization.**

The communications strategy will be anchored by a dedicated officer, with the active support of the AU-IFDF management and members of the Steering Committee, as the gateway of ensuring that information about the AU-IFDF and its various programmes is delivered to the targeted public. This arrangement will enhance the appreciation of the investment the AU-IFDF is making in fostering interfaith dialogues, conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Africa, as well as improve public perceptions of the AU-IFDF and raise its public profile.

— Goal

To promote AU-IFDF's work with the AU, member states, public, private, civil society, the media and community stakeholders via a structured plan in order to provide a platform for promoting and sustaining its activities and programmes in Africa. Specifically, the communications strategy describes how best to utilise existing communication resources to create visibility of AU-IFDF's programmes and increase public awareness of its work and impact.

— Objectives

- To partner with the media in changing mindsets, perception and attitudes on conflict, and promote non-violent behaviours and the use of dialogue and mediation in responding and transforming conflicts.
- To provide opportunities for interfaith organizations and the general civil society to influence policy makers on issues of peace and security in Africa.

- To increase the AU-IFDF's visibility in the public domain and consolidate its reputation as a key stakeholder in dialogue, conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Africa.
- To keep the media, public, institutions and agencies updated on important and unfolding events through regular publications and dissemination of AU-IFDF activities and events as well as key publications in the mass media.
- Showcase AU-IFDF stories and the positive impact of its activities and programmes at the community, national, regional and continental levels.
- To improve coverage of security issues in the press and diversify the pool of media covering them.

10.4.2 STRATEGIC APPROACHES

The strategic approach to increasing the AU-IFDF's profile is tailored towards effective delivery of key AU-IFDF messages and understanding AU-IFDF's work in achieving its goal of **"... promoting dialogue and non-violent responses to violent conflicts; providing the platform through interfaith and faith-based organizations will regularly exchange experience and information on issues of dialogue, peacebuilding and conflict transformation."** This strategy is anchored on two key approaches – increased visibility and building partnerships through the following strategic options:

- Consistent corporate identification
- Strengthened internal communications
- Effective media relations
- Strategic partnerships and collaboration with target audiences

10.4.3 COVERAGE AND PUBLICITY

To increase its profile and achieve higher visibility, the AU-IFDF needs to constantly engage with the mass media which remains an indispensable tool in enhancing an organization's profile in the public domain. This can be done by building on existing strategies to ensure that the AU-IFDF's work, activities and events (including resources) are given wide publicity on all media platforms. This will be achieved through utilising creative avenues to expand the Forum's visibility, as follows:

- Establish and ensure that all online platforms such as blogs, Facebook, twitter pages and YouTube are functional and effectively coordinated by the Communication Specialist to ensure uniformity.
- Build relationships with the media to enhance media coverage of the AU-IFDF's work and events to attain project goals, enhance brand values and build a positive image.

- Regular promotion of the AU-IFDF's work through press conferences and newsworthy press releases to mark special events such as African Union Day, International Peace Day, World Disarmament Day, and International Women's Day of Peace as an avenue to project the organization's mission and vision in the public domain.
- Develop and manage a functional website and utilise its contents to boost twitter and Facebook accounts. Additional content can be sourced from Steering Committee members' contributions or summaries of their work which can be edited and tweeted.
- Regularly update the Steering Committee's member profiles on the website so the media can easily identify who to contact regarding specific topics.
- Carry out advocacy visits to media venues and create avenues for interactions with the media.
- Recruit a Communication Specialist and interns/national service personnel to undertake media-related activities.
- Develop Media Guidelines/code of conduct for Steering Committee members such as 'How to deal with the media'.
- Survey reports, working papers for conferences/workshops/roundtables, research reports and other relevant publications should be circulated to the media for adequate publicity.

10.4.4 INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

It is vital that each communication deliverer is aware of the Forum's policy and style in communication delivery. All AU-IFDF personnel should therefore be conversant with and uphold these principles to ensure uniformity:

- All Steering Committee members are representatives of the Forum and shall be coached and mentored to conduct themselves accordingly.
- All Steering Committee members should be conversant with the goals, mission and procedures of the Forum to improve efficiency and reduce conflict, especially given that they are residing in different locations.
- All Steering Committee members should be conversant with the proper communication etiquette applicable to his/her official engagement and the various medium for official engagement such as phone, memos, email, meetings and social interactions.
- Information shall be communicated via official email, letters, posters and billboards to stakeholders and partners.
- Steering Committee members will undergo refresher trainings on communication as may be deemed necessary to facilitate free flow of information.

10.4.5 CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Getting positive and consistent publicity can have an incredible impact on the work of an organization. Although media attention can get your message to a wider audience, “bad press” is inevitable and should be taken into consideration:

- Negative publicity is inevitable and therefore the AU-IFDF shall consistently monitor and address issues in the environment that could adversely affect its operations.
- The AU-IFDF shall create and maintain an emergency communications procedure to deal with any “emergencies”.
- In the event of “bad or negative publicity,” the AU-IFDF shall, as a matter of urgency, issue a public response directly addressing the issues raised in a factual and balanced way, avoiding emotions and sensationalism.

10.4.6 DOCUMENTARIES AND USE OF IMAGES

- All documentaries shall be handled by professionals who have shown competence in the handling of similar works. In this regard, Steering Committee members should identify their areas of competence and use them for the good of the Forum.
- A process of video documentaries, i.e. research, script conference, scripting, production of storyboard must be adhered to.
- No camera below the professional standard camera shall be used for such documentaries.
- No image portraying people in derogatory manner or capable of generating conflict shall be used in any of AU-IFDF’s publications. In this wise, conflict sensitivity procedures and awareness of cultural nuances will be the AU-IFDF’s watchword.
- Consent of persons whose photographs are being used must be obtained and documented either in written form or on audio/visual form before such images are published.

10.4.7 BRANDING

- All AU-IFDF publications shall comply with a style guide (to be developed), which shall run through all its products (letterheads, business cards, brochures, calendars etc). Uniformity of these documents shall be observed.
- The Communication Specialist shall provide agencies such as printing/creative houses with the organization’s logo and the style of presentation and ensure that they adhere strictly to the accepted format.
- The AU-IFDF name and logo must be presented to the target audiences in a consistent format and shall precede the company name in all presentations to enhance brand awareness.

- Adverts and advertorials shall be supervised by the communications specialist to ensure that language and visuals conform to the AU-IFDF principles and practices and should be handled by a competent agency.
- The fonts for AU-IFDF publications shall be as directed and approved by the Steering Committee on the advice of the Communication Specialist.
- A specific hashtag should be used every time a reporter does a story about the Forum.

10.4.8 BUDGET

This is a very critical aspect of any communications plan. Publicity is an expensive venture and any activity targeted at raising the profile of an organization has budgetary implications. For the effective implementation of this communications strategy, it is imperative to make the following budgetary decisions:

- Budget for supporting journalists to attend and specifically cover certain events which are of interest to the AU-IFDF.
- Budget for hosting a Quarterly Media Roundtable, bringing the media into direct contact with the AU-IFDF Steering Committee members to develop a greater bond with the media and impact on their views on issues of dialogue, peacebuilding and conflict prevention.
- Budget for consultancy for the publication of AU-IFDF books, journals, newsletter etc.
- Costs for the maintenance of a web presence.
- All communication budgets should be implemented jointly with the designated communications focal person.

The following areas should be established or strengthened to be utilised in communicating AU-IFDF's products, programmes and activities:

- **Website:** a functional website should be regularly updated with information about the organizations' activities including news, events, publications, reports, announcements and staff profiles. It should have links to recent articles published in the media from video links to recent speeches, televised debates, and radio interviews given by designated IFDF Steering Committee members and staff.
- **Twitter/Facebook/Blog:** IFDF should be present on twitter and Facebook and make significant impacts on these two platforms. It should also create a blog to its online platforms which showcases incisive and well-researched articles on practical dialogue, peacebuilding and security issues, success stories, lessons learned and case studies from its work in the field.

10.4.9 E-NEWSLETTER

The AU-IFDF should establish and sustain a quarterly newsletter that captures key activities, events and programmes undertaken by the organization. The newsletter should act as a platform to celebrate the AU-IFDF's work and feature articles on its achievements, honours and awards.

10.4.10 OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Other publications to be undertaken and widely disseminated on all platforms include:

- Reports (quarterly, annual, project, research etc.)
- Policy briefs
- Training manuals
- Brochures
- Strategy documents
- From the Field series
- Lessons learned publications

10.4.11 INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

Develop specific information, education and communication materials that explain the key elements of the AU-IFDF programme and the implementation strategies in the form of leaflets, posters and handbills as well as other information, education and communication materials including T-shirts, face caps, silks etc.

Introduce standard guidelines and requirements for the use of AU-IFDF logos and promotional material, particularly relating to the implementation of the AU-IFDF programme (e.g. banner displaying logos must be at event venues).

10.4.12 MEDIA PARTNERSHIP

Explore partnership and agreements with several newspaper companies and TV networks to provide coverage on programme-related activities. The media shall be a key part of programme-related events/activities/workshops/seminars/roundtables/launch ceremonies etc.

CIDO: leverage on the strategic position of CIDO to organise side events at the AU and RECs summit and bring to the attention of policy makers the recommendations emanating from the AU-IFDF's programme. Insignia of the AU-IFDF including information, education and communication materials shall be on display at such events. Similarly, the AU-IFDF will use the opportunity of its participation at the regular AU briefing meetings to further the course of the Forum

10.5 SUCCESS FACTORS

Factors that will facilitate a successful implementation of the KM strategy include the following:

- Feasibility and usability; avoid a complex system with information overload.
- Dedicate resources (human, financial, technical).
- Effective support from management and programmes.
- Well-structured knowledge capture process that valorises the time and efforts of contributors.

10.6 SUGGESTED PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
Develop job description for and hire a Communication Specialist	Identify, manage, package and disseminate key information to advance the work of the Forum	Increased relevance, effectiveness and support for the Forum
Identify and initiate/enhance interaction with various stakeholders working on the implementation of Agenda 2063	Develop database of its key stakeholders and clients Identify the appropriate person at each of these organizations with whom to cultivate a relationship	Opportunities to communicate with AU-IFDF's key actors and clients in a systematic way
Develop a functional and user-friendly website and link to AU and other important partners' websites	Showcase the work of AU-IFDF and increase visibility	Greater appreciation of the work of AU-IFDF and more support for its work towards peace

ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
Produce information packages (such as press kits, flyers and brochures) to share with stakeholders	Provide basic information that will elicit further inquiries	Increased visibility for AU-IFDF
Develop a database of religious leaders, FBOs and relevant AU organs to work with AU-IFDF in the area of peace building and development in Africa and initiate consultations with them	Facilitate the availability and access to accurate information on the work of AU-IFDF	Accurate information relating to the work of interfaith dialogue, conflict prevention and peace-building is collected, curated, well organised and shared with relevant stakeholders in the sector across the continent to nurture a well-informed policy making process based on evidence
Develop and implement programmes for sensitisation and awareness creation regarding the role of religion and faith traditions in Agenda 2063 ⁵⁴	Encourage, build support and commitment from AU and other actors in Agenda 2063 community and deepen the collaboration with AU-IFDF	Greater appreciation of the work of the Forum
Institutionalise a leadership transition plan	Ensure continuity and maintain institutional memory	Increased institutional confidence and credibility

11. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review of

THE AFRICAN UNION

INTERFAITH Dialogue Forum

September 2020

— Background:

The AU-IFDF is a body established in Abuja, Nigeria in 2010 aimed at promoting sustainable peace through religious actors throughout the continent. In 2016, the Forum reconvened in Nigeria, with the support of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) and a Steering Committee of 12 members was elected to carry out the Forum's Declaration and promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the region. Since then, the Steering Committee has met four times and produced a Six-Year Strategy. The Committee was re-elected during the IFDF3 in Chad in November 2018.

The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) is an international intergovernmental organization that was founded to enable, empower and encourage dialogue among followers of different religions and cultures around the world. KAICIID is implementing its interventions at both the global and national/regional levels, where it aims to promote dialogue for peace and reconciliation and foster an environment where religious actors work together to build trust for reconciliation and peace.

On behalf of the IFDF, KAICIID will recruit two international consultants (a senior Review Team Leader and a senior Knowledge Management Specialist) to undertake an independent review to assess the overall impact of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the region. The review findings and recommendations are expected to be used to develop knowledge and communications products highlighting achievements, challenges and what more needs to be done to enhance and leverage appropriate approaches to the specific IFDF context.

— **Objective:**

The core purpose of the consultancy is to produce an independent review of the representation and impact of FBOs in AU decisions and structures with a focus on the Peace and Security and Citizen and Diaspora Departments. Emphasis will be placed on the review of the work of the AU-IFDF and the activities of its Steering Committee, as well as its strategic positioning within the organization. This review will be made against the OECD DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The deliverables of the consultancy will also contribute to the development of strategic communications/advocacy products based on the review findings and recommendations aimed at enhancing the IFDF Strategy and increasing the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of interfaith dialogue in Africa.

— **Scope of work:**

- i. Map AU/IFDF initiatives/activities** on engagement with FBO vis-à-vis Agenda 2063 and COVID-19, including the organization's decisions and documents that refer to engagement with FBO/the religious community.
- ii. Analysis of the key factors** that facilitate or inhibit FBO participation and identify **good practices** on FBO engagement in the regional context.
- iii. Document IFDF's initiatives and impact** vis-à-vis **policy issues**, including A-2063 and COVID-19 through desk reviews and interviews with the IFDF Steering Committee members; compile case studies to elicit overall impact of the intervention to date.
- iv. Identify IFDF's key strengths and weaknesses** and suggest **recommendations** for improving its impact and facilitating its engagement with FBOs.
- v. Analyse IFDF's strategic positioning** and its **relevance and effectiveness** as a mechanism to strengthen the engagement of FBOs within AU.
- vi. Condense findings and produce a document** showcasing the work that has been implemented by the IFDF, to be used as an advocacy tool vis-à-vis other key actors within the AU.

— Methodology:

As per the ToR, the assessment methodology will employ mixed methods and an innovative approach for capturing and utilising results, such as using a participatory, inclusive approach to ensure that the views of traditionally excluded groups are represented – as much as possible, considering that there can be no physical missions to consult with stakeholders (all such consultations are to take place virtually in view of the COVID-19 pandemic). Three levels were established to analyse and validate information:

- **Level 1** will start with a desk review of information sources available through the AU and KAICIID, including information from progress reports, concept notes, training modules and guidelines, existing portfolio analyses of programming, and relevant evaluations and reviews.
- **Level 2** will involve more in-depth portfolio analysis of all relevant interventions utilising case study methods, where possible. Level 2 analysis will be primarily based on a document review and supplemented with consultation meetings with representatives of the AU, FBOs and all other relevant stakeholders to ensure a full internalisation of different perspectives on the effects of the interventions, trade-offs among stakeholders, and consensus regarding positive developments to date. In addition, where relevant, there will be online/Skype interviews with key stakeholders identified by the AU.
- **Level 3** will utilise outputs of Level 2 to deploy several evaluation methods ranging from further document review, semi-structured interviews and rapid assessment surveys (at least one survey must be carried out to capture information from the widest range of stakeholders) to observations and other participatory methods to systematically compare and analyse data to finalise case studies and identify characteristics and factors underpinning results to date.

The evaluation should also include an assessment of the extent to which programme design, implementation and monitoring have taken partnership strategy and gender issues into consideration.

