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TO: Our Africa Partners and Friends:

FROM: Dr. Ernest Uwazie, Director, Dr. Jessie Gaston, Board Chair
Ambassador Al-Hassan Conteh Co-Chair, Africa Peace Fellows Board
Gen. Abdulrahman Dambazau, Co-Chair, Africa Peace Fellows Board

RE: COVID-19 Peace & Solidarity Message: We Are in This Together!

Without any ambiguity, the 2019 novel Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) is very real and deadly, and no country, race, age, or class is immune to its transmission or adverse effects. Clearly, this pandemic has disrupted various development plans, devastated many families and livelihoods, challenged the global community, and equally threatened both the weak and powerful. While the global responses to COVID-19 have been stabilizing in some situations and disruptive in others, we are particularly concerned with the situation in Africa. Africa, with its developing economies, faces higher hazards because of a relatively lower health system capacity and significant vulnerable populations, as well as other risk factors. Our thoughts go out to those who have been adversely affected. We salute those on the frontlines on the streets and health facilities, and thank all who have demonstrated their generosity and responsibility. We are all in this together, in solidarity of purposeful community, steadfast commitment to peace, compassion for one another, and collective hope for a resolution. Together, we are optimistic that resilient Africa will overcome the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, we believe that a new generation of peace leaders shall evolve with a clearer understanding of our interconnected world and greater consciousness of the environment.

We appeal to one and all to take the COVID-19 Pandemic seriously and heed the necessary precautions. Please, peacefully obey and support established government policies and public health protocols for the prevention, social mitigation, care, and provision of services to the vulnerable populations, including the poor and victims of the likely increase in domestic violence. We appeal to all social services personnel and institutions to utilize restorative justice strategies and peaceful conflict resolution skills in their work and advocacies during this delicate and most difficult period. Do no harm! Be impartial and fair to all! To our conflict resolution supporters, practitioners and experts, seize the moment to create and apply innovative resources and methods for the greater good.

As we struggle with the fear and anxiety of confronting the unknown, and horrific common enemy, we shall take responsibility and apportion no blame to others. We are confident of a brighter future. Let us therefore unite, irrespective of political persuasion, partisan affiliations, or any group identities; remember the true, caring natures of our common humanity. We are all children of the same Creator who endowed us with the abilities of peace, generosity and forgiveness. Let us inculcate the strength and courage to remember and reach for the holiness



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and spirituality within us. Although the current situation may wobble the very foundations of our souls, let us rise and meet the challenges ahead with dignity and compassion.

It is difficult to support one another when we must physically isolate ourselves. It is equally formidable to maintain a semblance of normalcy when our traditions, social and economic structures are torn apart by a deadly and contagious virus currently without our control.

Yet, we must keep in mind that none of us is an island. We stand on the shoulders of others, including farmers, laborers and frontline healthcare workers as well as peace officers. We have no better choice than solidarity to save our common humanity.

Peace and harmony may be gifts, but they are gifts we are all capable of creating, receiving and giving. With people globally now afraid, angry and in a state of panic, it is imperative that we remain in touch with our capacity to bring peace into the world. When we ourselves are in an understandably panic state, we must take a deep breath and remember whom we really are: the role models that the current situation deserves.

We have the blessing and the gift of life. Let us now show through our actions going forward that we deserve that approbation and endowment. We are confident that there will be a brighter tomorrow with our collective display of humanity.

Peace & Health, Always!