

Africa's Youth Are Rewriting the Peace Story: My Unforgettable Journey at the Continental YPS Stocktaking Conference

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Walking into the Continental Stocktaking Conference on Youth, Peace and Security felt like stepping into a living mosaic of Africa. Every corridor hummed with energy. Different languages floated through the air. Diverse faiths, cultures, and generations converged with one shared belief: youth are not the future of peace; youth are the structure holding peace together right now.

We arrived with the Nuru Trust Network team, the ED Mary Yvonne Ododa and Kevin Waigwa the CTO ready to listen, learn and to share as well as to showcase Peace-verse, and from the very first moment it felt like being welcomed into a continental family. People didn't just care about the YPS agenda. They lived it. They breathed it. And for three days, we experienced what real inclusion, real hope, and real action look like.

Day 1: The Spark That Lit the Room

The first day struck with clarity. The conversations did not tiptoe. They confronted the truth directly: Africa's peace and security future will depend on how boldly we empower young people to drive implementation of UNSCR 2250.

We explored the urgency of moving youth from symbolic participation to real influence. We questioned how to protect YPS spaces from political manipulation. We argued for stronger inter-generational partnership because no progress survives if generations are working in silos. And we emphasized evidence. Without documentation, there is no accountability. Without accountability, there is no progress.

Presenting Peace-verse during the networking sessions was a moment of pride for us at Nuru Trust. The feedback was sharp, generous, and inspiring. People saw the value of a grass-root verification-grade system that documents youth action, strengthens early warning ecosystems, serves the marginalized and bridges youth insights to institutions in real time. Their excitement fueled ours.

Day 2: Structure, Trust, and the Power of Lived Experience

If Day 1 was the spark, Day 2 was the blueprint. The conversations shifted from ideas to architecture. Collaboration became the backbone of continuity. Governance structures and national focal points emerged as essential for coalitions that want to last beyond one funding cycle.

Climate change was re-framed as a peace and security crisis, not just an environmental concern. Gen Z movements were acknowledged not as noise but as expressions of democratic demand needing pathways into policy influence. Trust remained the heartbeat

of the day. Predictable coordination, ethical use of technology, stronger youth representation, and verified data became the recurring chords in every room.

The group reflections painted a shared African reality. Financing gaps. Coordination struggles. The need for localization. Yet beneath these challenges lay a deeper message: our struggles are connected. Our solutions must be too.

Day 3: A New Rhythm for the Continent

The final day felt ceremonial and historic. The Conference introduced a Common Impact Framework built around five Vital Signs of Progress for YPS.

Increasing Positive Youth Agency by elevating young people's ability to lead peace-building. Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Responsiveness so institutions can meaningfully support youth.

Improving Inter-generational Trust and reducing polarization between communities and generations.

Improving Safety and reducing violence that targets or marginalizes youth.

Improving Resourcing for YPS by securing flexible, dedicated, and sustainable financial and political support.

This culminated in a joint endorsement of the Accountability Road-map and the Joint Declaration. To stand there, united with champions of UNSCR 2250 from across the continent, felt like witnessing history crystallize.

We danced. We talked. We laughed. We imagined a better Africa. And at every turn, I felt honored to represent Nuru Trust Network and to showcase Peace-verse as a contribution to the future we are building.

We left knowing that the youth are not asking for space in peace-building.

We left the conference with conviction.

We left with community.

Youth are shaping it.

Youth are defining it.

Youth are leading it.

And we are committed to walking this journey with them, every step of the way.