

## **Closing Remarks**

Distinguished guests, esteemed participants, partners, and friends,

As we gather here today to close this powerful training, organised by the University of Peace in Africa, I am filled with gratitude, hope, and a renewed sense of purpose. Peace Tree Network has been honoured to support this training through logistics and the co-ordination of a field visit, enabling you to witness firsthand the impact of community-led peacebuilding efforts.

### **About Peace Tree Network**

For those new to our work, Peace Tree Network (PTN) is a Kenyan nonprofit founded in 2001 and registered as a Trust in 2005. Our mission is to empower communities across Kenya and Eastern Africa to build sustainable peace through collaborative relationships among peace actors. At PTN, we envision a society rooted in mutual respect, accountability, and opportunities for sustainable development—where people live in harmony and embrace diversity.

To achieve this vision, our work focuses on:

- **Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding**
- **Human Rights Advocacy**
- **Gender and Development**
- **Good Governance**
- **Public Advocacy**

Our work primarily targets marginalised regions in Kenya, where we strive to uplift communities through meaningful peacebuilding, social justice, and governance initiatives. By promoting understanding and collaboration, we create environments where communities can overcome historical injustices and establish a peaceful future.

### **Rethinking African Security**

As we reflect on the purpose of this training, it's clear that peacebuilding cannot be separated from a broader conversation about security in Africa. At Peace Tree Network, we recognise that true security is about more than just the absence of conflict. It is about creating conditions where all individuals and communities feel safe, valued, and supported. This is the essence of "Rethinking African Security"—an approach that sees security not just through military and law enforcement but through sustainable peace, social equity, and inclusive development.

In this new paradigm, community empowerment, human rights, and accountable governance are critical. Security is a holistic concept, encompassing the right to personal and social security, economic stability, gender equity, and environmental stewardship. When we rethink security in this way, we acknowledge that sustainable peace requires addressing root causes—such as poverty, lack of education, and social injustices—that often fuel conflict. This is the work we are committed to at PTN, and this training has been an essential part of equipping you with the skills to bring this vision to life in your communities.

### **To Our Participants**

Participants, each of you has travelled from across East and West Africa, bringing a wealth of diverse experiences and perspectives. You embody the power of a united vision for peace and reimagined security for Africa. During these past days, you've explored new strategies, shared your stories, and opened yourselves to each other's realities. The relationships and skills you've developed here are critical in rethinking security within your own communities.

Remember, your role as peacebuilders is essential in crafting a new narrative for Africa's security, one that emphasises resilience, cooperation, and human dignity. You are the bridge between local realities and a future where peace and security are redefined to reflect the needs of every African.

### **To Our Facilitators and Trainers**

A heartfelt thank you to our facilitators and trainers who have imparted practical skills that will help our participants address security and peacebuilding challenges in holistic ways. Your expertise has shown how community engagement, conflict resolution, and resilience-building can redefine security from the ground up, empowering communities to be active agents in their peace and safety.

### **Looking Forward**

As we conclude, I encourage each of you to continue engaging with Peace Tree Network. Our commitment to rethinking security means we will be here to support you, share resources, and foster the collaboration necessary to build sustainable peace. We invite partners, donors, and like-minded organizations to join us in advancing this expanded vision of security—where peace, justice, and development lay the foundation for a secure and vibrant Africa.

Thank you once again for your dedication and passion. May the skills, friendships, and insights gained here inspire you as you continue your work. Safe travels, and may peace and security, in their fullest sense, guide you forward.

Thank you.