



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

by

H.E. I Rhonda King

Permanent Representative

At the

**5th Informal Joint Seminar Between the Peace and Security Council of the
African Union and the United Nations Security - Silencing the Guns in
Africa: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development**

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Thank you Mr. Chair,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a staunch supporter of the Silencing the Guns initiative, which is critical not only for ending conflicts and unlocking Africa's development potential, but also to safeguard the needs and interests of youth who are disproportionately affected by gun violence.

In line with the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns, we emphasize that young people must be engaged as participants and beneficiaries of all security sector reform (SSR), disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), and all other initiatives to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We also underscore that the illicit arms trade also form part of the same political economy as the illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources, drug trafficking, and transnational organized crime.

Altogether, these complex challenges require robust and comprehensive strategies that bring together national governments, regional and sub-regional organizations, grassroots civil society actors and international partners to shape effective responses. To this end, we welcome the progress made, through inter-governmental and inter-agency coordination, to ratify and implement key treaties, protocols and conventions across the continent such as the Arms Trade Treaty, the Nairobi Protocol, and the Kinshasa Convention. We also welcome the continued efforts toward implementing S/RES/2457. However, we emphasize that these tools will only bear success if they are accompanied by comprehensive development strategies, based on national needs and priorities, designed to broaden public participation in legitimate socioeconomic activity.

We therefore use this opportunity, in light of the immense challenges posed by COVID-19, to call on our development partners to renew their efforts, by honouring their overseas development assistance commitments and providing greater debt relief, to support African countries in their quest for peace and prosperity in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. I thank you.