

**United Nations
Office to the African Union**



**Bureau des Nations Unies
Auprès de l'Union Africaine**

UNOAU

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TO THE

**UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
DEBATE ON 'COOPERATION BETWEEN THE
UNITED NATIONS AND REGIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING THE AFRICAN
UNION'**

18 November 2016

Your Excellency the President of the Security Council,

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by expressing my profound appreciation to the President of the Security Council for convening this important debate on the topic ‘Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations including the African Union.’ Your presence at this debate, Your Excellency, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, Foreign Minister of Senegal, is an illustration of the importance your country and the Security Council attach to partnership between the United Nations and the African Union.

In September the Secretary-General issued his first report on *strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the Work of the United Nations Office to the African Union*. In this report the Secretary-General notes: “There is an urgent need for new and stronger ways to address international peace and security challenges. Stronger partnerships with regional organizations, in particular with the African Union, can enable us to respond early, swiftly, coherently and decisively to prevent and manage conflict.”

On 29 September the AU Peace and Security Council held a briefing on ‘Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations (UN) and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa,’ which I was invited to address on behalf of the Secretary General, and the PSC subsequently issued a communiqué which welcomed the report of the UN Secretary-General and commended the significant progress achieved in AU-UN partnership in the past five years. To strengthen it further, the PSC called for a more systematic, predictable and strategic partnership between the two Organizations.

It should also be recalled that the Security Council and the General Assembly have repeatedly called for stronger engagement between the United Nations, the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms in conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa. Indeed, the principle of partnership with regional organizations is enshrined in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, and Article 3 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union encourages international cooperation taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations.

Excellencies,

As you are well aware, the conflicts we face in Africa today have grown in scale and complexity posing a greater threat to international peace and security. These conflicts cause, besides intolerable loss of life and widespread destruction of resources, desperate humanitarian situations and unimaginable human suffering. We have witnessed the erosion of political and civic rights, while economies regress and social development gains are reversed.

Terrorism and violent extremism, trans-national organized crime, piracy and other threats to maritime security, as well as threats caused by weak or ineffective governance institutions, electoral disputes and political and economic exclusion, are some of the challenges African countries face. Poverty, unemployment, demographic pressures and climate change are also increasingly impacting on their peace and security.

Dealing with these complex threats is not an easy feat. While the United Nations Security Council has ultimate responsibility for international peace and security, and has invested greatly to address these threats in Africa, and the AU and its RECs have continued to exert all efforts to do the same in the continent, it is clear that neither the UN, nor the African Union or the RECs can address these threats acting separately. Collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union and the RECs is an absolute necessity.

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

The increased collaboration between the UN, the AU and the RECs in addressing conflicts over the last decade amounts to a large body of practice, particularly in the area of peace operations and mediation.. I am pleased to note that the UN Secretariat and AU Commission are making good progress in strengthening cooperation and collaboration between the two Organizations. We have better coordinated interventions, for instance, in Sudan and South Sudan where the AU High Level Implementation Panel led by former President Thabo Mbeki has ably led mediation efforts with the support of the UN Special Envoy and many other partners; or Burundi, where both the UN and the AU support the efforts of East African Community's facilitator, former President Benjamin Mkapa. In addition we have daily working-level interactions, weekly and monthly meetings at various levels, including by VTC-link to

both headquarters, and the Joint Task Force of senior UN Secretariat and AU Commission leadership twice a year.

In peace support operations, the UN continues to support the AU Commission to manage and operationalize African-led peace operations mandated by the AU Peace and Security Council and authorized by the UN Security Council. These range from the AU's engagement in Somalia, to the MNJTF's initiative against Boko Haram and the Regional Task Force's engagement against the Lord's Resistance Army. Our collaboration also includes supporting the AU as the first responder such as in the crises in the Central African Republic and Mali.

Your Excellencies,

A review of UN-AU partnership so far, characterized by a widening series of ad-hoc collaborative engagements, amply demonstrates that it is time the two organizations move towards a more structured, systematic and predictable partnership - in short, a strategic partnership. We should not have to reinvent the wheel every time we face a new conflict in the continent. A structured, systematic and predictable partnership would mean that mechanisms are in place and working in both Organizations to ensure joint early and continuous engagement, from early warning and conflict prevention to mediation and peace support operations, and on to post-conflict reconstruction and development. Instead of the two organizations engaging in a series of ad-hoc engagements, they would need to adopt predictable and structured processes to address threats to international peace and security in the continent, based on common principles and burden sharing premised on comparative advantages. I must emphasize the value of the UN Secretariat and AU Commission undertaking joint assessment and analysis of emerging and current conflict situations, developing coherent strategies for conflict prevention or any other form of conflict management or resolution, and providing such facts, interpretations and proposals to the two Councils. The two Councils are, as a result, more likely to decide on common approaches that promote collaborative engagement.

Although the Security Council will always address each conflict on a case-by-case basis, there is more the UN Secretariat and AU Commission can do to bring a level of predictability and sustainability to managing peace operations in this manner. The conclusion of a "Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership between the United Nations and the African Union", which already exists in draft form, can potentially

institutionalize and further strengthen the strategic partnership between the two Organizations.

The UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council of course play the pivotal role in strengthening strategic partnership between the UN and the AU in the area of peace and security, and there has been significant progress over the last few years in strengthening collaboration between the two Councils. The 10th consultative meeting between the two Councils held in New York in May, provided an opportunity for a constructive and candid exchange of views. The recent joint meeting of the Councils to discuss South Sudan, which took place in September in Addis Ababa, is also an indication of the progress that has been made in the last few years. The A3 plays an important role in strengthening and facilitating Security Council and AUPSC relations. I firmly believe the two Organizations adopting a structured and predictable partnership would tremendously facilitate and enhance such engagement.

Excellencies,

The decisions of the AU Summit in Kigali on financing the Union and the Peace Fund should provide the means for Africa to finance a greater share of its conflict prevention and mediation initiatives as well as peace support operations. I strongly believe that the implementation of these proposals will strengthen the UN-AU partnership, because a stronger AU will be a more effective partner for the United Nations. The AU Summit decisions on financing must therefore be welcomed and positively responded to within the context of the strategic partnership proposed. Predictable and sustainable funding remains a major challenge for the AU, particularly in the three focus areas of the Peace Fund: conflict prevention, capacity building, and peace operations. The adoption of a strategic partnership, and implementation of the AU proposals within that context would enable the UN and the AU to engage more effectively and exercise our comparative advantage to address conflicts and sustain peace in Africa.

Importantly, the proposals on financing the Union and the Peace Fund also envisage a governance mechanism for the Peace Fund to ensure strong accountability and management systems, which are necessary to build the confidence of AU Member States and partners. The Finance Ministers of the African Union have decided on an implementation phase for these proposals throughout 2017. While the full details are still being outlined, we should commend the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government for their political commitment, and be prepared to provide technical support as required and if requested.

Excellencies,

The United Nations Office to the African Union is the UN's conduit for enhancing the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in peace and security. UNOAU will continue, under the guidance of the Secretary General and in collusion with the UN Departments responsible for peace and security, its close interaction with the AU Commission and Member States, to build understanding and enhance communication between the two Organizations. As stated earlier, UNOAU will also continue to conduct joint horizon scanning exercises, develop joint analysis and early warning with the AU, with a view to developing common understanding and action on conflict prevention, mediation and peace keeping. UNOAU will also continue to support institutional strengthening of the AUC as required so as to make the partnership more effective, and assist the AU to deliver on its mandates for common purpose. Strengthening the partnership requires intensifying day-to-day engagement to share views and analysis, seek common understanding of the issues and develop proposals for joint or coordinated action to address them. It involves reaching out to the whole of the United Nations and the African Union, to ensure that both organizations draw on all relevant contributions and, as much as possible, ensure coherence. We look forward to the continued support of the Security Council to ensure that UNOAU is adequately resourced to effectively fulfill its mandate.

I wish to thank you once again, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, and inviting us to make this statement, and through you thank all Security Council Members for their continued commitment to peace and security in Africa and support for our common effort. I also wish to place on record our appreciation to the AU Commission, specifically the Peace and Security Department and the Political Affairs Department, for their strong and steadfast support to consolidating our practical collaboration.

I thank you.