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UN Statement

delivered by

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at

**The African Union Peace and Security Council:
Open Session on ‘Living Together in Peace’**

Addis Ababa,
10 November 2019

Check Against Delivery

Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished Members of the Peace and Security Council,

I would like to thank you for convening this meeting, which provides an opportunity for a discussion on the importance of how ‘Living Together in Peace’ can be achieved in Africa. The observance of these important thematic issues is an opportunity to jointly reflect on, raise awareness about and mobilize political will and resources to address global problems and to think creatively about their resolution.

As we reflect on the theme of today’s session, we need to remind ourselves that ‘peace’ is not merely the absence of conflict, but rather a set of values, attitudes, traditions, and behaviours that enable societies to live together in harmony. This entails adhering to principles of tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism and inclusivity, cultural diversity, dialogue, understanding, freedom, justice and democracy.

These are values that are also encompassed in the African spirit of ‘ubuntu’ – which recognizes the humanity and value of others, and the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect.

Chairperson,

Creating a culture of peace is a multi-dimensional task, spanning across political, economic, social, educational, religious and cultural spheres of action. It is therefore important that we commit to adopting holistic and inclusive approaches to achieve it. ‘Peace’ is a collective responsibility that requires us to look beyond sectoral and

institutional boundaries, share information, adopt innovative and creative approaches and create true partnerships at all levels.

Actions that need to be taken range from promoting understanding, tolerance and solidarity, including through inter-faith, inter-cultural and inter-generational dialogue; to promoting a culture of peace through education, from early childhood to adult education; to addressing inequalities among identity groups, including unequal access to resources, services, and decision-making.

We further need to ensure sustainable and inclusive development, foster democratic participation and good governance and promote the rule of law and respect for all human rights. This includes guaranteeing the full and meaningful participation of women, youth and ethnic minorities in decision-making processes and eliminating all forms of discrimination against them.

Chairperson,

We are witnessing concerning conflict trends around the globe, including in Africa. These include protracted conflict situations, the rising threat of violent extremism and the spread of the ideology of hate, persistent inequalities and human rights violations, to new challenges posed by the adverse effects of climate change. There is a clear need for increased political will, strengthened multi-lateral engagement, as well as more inclusive and proactive approaches to appropriately address these challenges. Most importantly, we need to ensure that we address emerging peace and security issues as early and decisively as possible.

Both, the UN Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, have, on numerous occasions, underlined the urgent need to focus our

collective efforts on conflict prevention. The Secretary-General has outlined several key priorities in this regard, including an increased focus on early warning and early action by mapping, linking, collecting and integrating information from across the international system; supporting national capacities for facilitation and dialogue; and ensuring the easy and rapid deployment of good offices, mediation, crisis response and peacebuilding services.

The partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in peace and security is particularly relevant in this regard, and the two organizations have included the identification of root causes of conflict, good offices and mediation, cooperation on electoral matters and governance as well as the protection of human rights as essential themes of the partnership, among others.

Finally, Chairperson,

I would further like to encourage the Council to institutionalize the observance of the ‘International Day of Living Together in Peace’ as part of the global celebrations on 16 May each year. I would also like to reaffirm the continued commitment of the United Nations to strengthening the partnership with the African Union in peace and security – and thereby contributing to creating the conditions necessary for ‘Living together in peace’.

Thank you
