PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
368TH MEETING AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL
22 APRIL 2013
DAR-ES-SALAAM, TANZANIA

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY RAMTANE LAMAMRA,
AU COMMISIONNER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY
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Excellency Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania,

Honorable Bernard K. Membe, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chair of the Peace and Security Council for the month of April 2013,

Honorable President Joaquim Alberto Chissano, International Mediator for the situation in Madagascar,

Honorable Minister and members of the Peace and Security Council,

Invited guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like, on the outset, to say how delighted my colleagues in the Commission and myself are to be here in Dar-es-Salaam for this important meeting of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU). I would like to express our appreciation to the Tanzanian President, Government and people for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to us since our arrival. I bring to you, Excellency President Kikwete, the warm greetings of Dr. Dlamini Zuma, the Chairperson of the Commission, who could not be with us today due to other pressing commitments.

I thank our partners who are attending this meeting. While committed to the promotion of African leadership and ownership in grappling with its challenges, we are also mindful of the fact that success in our endeavors requires a strong partnership between the continent and the other members of the international community. Achieving peace and security in Africa will go a long way in furthering collective security as provided for in the United Nations Charter.

Mr. President,
Honorable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The present meeting is taking place at an opportune moment as Africa prepares to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Organization African Unity/African Union, next May, in Addis Ababa, and, indeed, through the continent.

When we look back at the last fifty years, there are many reasons to be proud of what we have achieved. It suffices to mention the liberation of the continent from the yoke of colonial and racial domination, the strides towards ending violence and conflict, the gains recorded in the democratization processes, and the progress made with respect to economic development and integration.

These achievements provide inspiration and hope as the continent and its people look forward to continuing their endeavors over the next fifty years and address the many
challenges lying ahead. The realization of a conflict-free, prosperous, democratic, well-governed, integrated and united Africa remains our ultimate goal.

Tanzania has made major contributions to those achievements. Notably, Tanzania was host to the OAU Liberation Committee, which played such an instrumental role in the liberation struggle and the emancipation of the continent. At critical junctures in the history of the OAU, when political differences and diverging approaches threatened to destroy our continental institution, the wisdom of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere was what made it possible to overcome the difficulties then at hand and preserve the higher interests of the continent.

Tanzania played an active role in helping to resolve some of the most intractable African conflicts. I have here in mind the outstanding contribution made by the late Julius Nyerere to the resolution of the conflict in Burundi, against all odds.

Allow me to pay tribute to President Kikwete, who both as former Foreign Minister and now in his capacity as President of the United Republic of Tanzania, has shown an exemplary commitment to the advancement of our continent. He demonstrated leadership and resolve in addressing the separatist crisis in the Comoros. He was, as Chair of the AU and a neighbor, instrumental in finding a solution to the post-electoral crisis in Kenya, in 2007/2008. He actively contributed to the work of the AU High-Level Panel on Côte d’Ivoire. His continued contribution to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Great Lakes Region also deserves recognition and commendation.

Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, a three-term Secretary-General of the OAU now a member of the AU Panel of the Wise, also helped make the History of Africa as the continent had to adjust to the fundamental changes brought by the ending of the Cold War.

Mr. President, Honorable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Africa has made a major step in its quest for lasting peace, security and stability with the establishment of the AU and the putting in place of the African Peace and Security Architecture in 2002. The Peace and Security Council is the locomotive of this continental architecture. Since its launching in 2004, the PSC has actively pursued its mandate of preventing, managing and resolving conflicts on the continent. In so doing, the PSC has been actively seized with various crises on our continent.

Significant gains have been made in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, as demonstrated by the encouraging developments in Somalia, a country once considered as doomed, the improvements in the relations between Sudan and South Sudan, and the recovery by Mali of its territorial integrity threatened by a mixture of criminal, rebel and terrorist groups. The recent developments in the Great Lakes Region, notably the signing, in Addis Ababa, on 24 February 2013, of a Framework Agreement outlining a set of commitments by the different stakeholders in DRC and the region, are a source of hope for a region that has had more than its share of conflict and violence on the continent.

However, major challenges continue to face the AU and its Peace and Security Council. For one, we need to consolidate the progress I referred to earlier. This requires sustained efforts and a long-term commitment by all concerned.
Second, we have to address the recurrent crises being faced by some of our Member States, such as Guinea Bissau and the Central African Republic. These call into question basic principles of our Union. While making every effort to assist these countries in restoring legality, we have to remain steadfast in our rejection of unconstitutional changes of government and recourse to armed rebellion to further political claims. Africa cannot afford any hesitation in this respect. It is only by standing up to the principles enshrined in relevant AU instruments that we can safeguard peace and prevent further trouble on the continent.

Third, there are longstanding conflicts that have so far defied all attempts at peace making. Allow me to mention here the conflict over the territory of Western Sahara, as well as the stalled peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the challenges that continue to be encountered in the relations between Djibouti and Eritrea.

The Golden Jubilee should be used as an opportunity to inject the much-needed momentum in the efforts to consolidate peace where it has been achieved and resolve outstanding conflicts. It should also be an opportunity for all our Member States to recommit themselves to the founding principles of our Union and to advance the cause of democracy and good governance, as the best way and means to prevent conflict and sustain peace.

Mr. President,
Honorable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this juncture, I am honored to refer you to the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in Madagascar to which today’s meeting is devoted. I wish to report that all the stakeholders in Madagascar are engaged, one way or the other, in efforts to return their country to constitutional order. Africa has deployed unrelenting efforts, and continues to do so, in support of the efforts of the Malagasy stakeholders.

Tanzania, alongside other African countries and in its capacity as the Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation, is making a significant contribution towards the efforts to restore constitutional order in Madagascar.

Progress has clearly been made, as shown by the steps taken to implement the Roadmap agreed to by the Malagasy stakeholders. This meeting is expected to thoroughly assess the situation, with a view to identifying what further measures are needed to achieve the objectives set and what the continent, through the Peace and Security Council, can do to facilitate the completion of the transition process and the holding of free and fair elections.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our appreciation to President Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, for finding time in his busy schedule to come to grace this ministerial meeting of the Peace and Security Council with his presence.

I wish this meeting every success.

Thank you.