STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR SMAIL CHEGUI, COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA: STRENGTHENING PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN AFRICA
20 NOVEMBER 2018
Excellency Ma Zhaoxu, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations and President of the UN Security Council for the month of November

Distinguished Members of the Security Council;

The UN Secretary-General, His Excellency António Guterres

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Mr. President, on behalf of the African Union and on my own behalf, let me start by thanking you and the People’s Republic of China for demonstrating your unwavering support and commitment to peace and security in Africa.

From the onset, I wish to extend, on behalf of the African Union, condolences to the governments and people of Malawi and Tanzania, the United Nations family for last week’s tragic loss of UN peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the fallen soldiers.

Allow me also to express appreciation for the invitation to brief this Council on this very important subject of enhancing capacities for peace and security in Africa. As a Union, we always appreciate the focus you dedicate to peace and security in Africa during your presidency. In this regard, we always yearn to use this platform to reiterate our position on the level of commitment and cooperation we require of the United Nations to guarantee the effectiveness of our strategic partnership.

Mr Secretary-General, I am also grateful for your comprehensive presentation and pay tribute to your tireless efforts to consolidate and further promote the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations, including in the area of peace and security. I would like to assure you of the African Union and Africa’s full respect and support to all our joint endeavours which we continue to enhance.

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!
The issue of peacekeeping reform is of shared and critical interest to the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. Last year’s Security Council High-Level Debate on Peacekeeping Reform, and the ensuing Resolution 2378 (of 2017) – which was preceded by Resolutions 2320 (of 2016), presented an important locus on which to continue monitoring our efforts towards effective partnership, enhanced cooperation and peacekeeping reform.

Since my briefing to this Council on this topic last year, the African Union has not spared any effort in expediting key priorities that contributes towards strengthening our partnership. Today’s meeting thus offers the opportunity for me to highlight three major areas that we have achieved considerable progress on, which are also areas of mutual concern and interest to our two institutions.

First, you will note that we continue to facilitate key processes of the revitalized Peace Fund which we launched this past Saturday 17 November 2018 on the sidelines of the 11th Extraordinary Assembly on the AU Reform. The launch of the Peace Fund was preceded by the inaugural meeting of the Board of Trustees whose members were also appointed last week. This board will ensure effective management and accountability of the Peace Fund. As I speak, we have recorded US$60.5 million contributions by AU Member States to the Peace Fund. This represents the highest contribution since its establishment and based on additional commitments expressed during last week’s Assembly, we are projecting to reach US$100 million contribution by early 2019. This accelerated momentum is a key component of our collective efforts to guarantee AU’s access to UN Assessed Contribution that we seek to have agreement on in the resolution to be adopted by this Council in the coming weeks.

Second, the AU Commission has recorded significant progress in enhancing its existing human rights compliance framework for African Union Peace Support Operations. Allow me to reiterate that ensuring compliance and accountability to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and Conduct and Discipline is not new to the AU. These international norms and standards have always been part of our mission planning and management processes long before the discussions on predictable and sustainable financing of African Union peace support operations began. For instance, since the AU's
first deployment in Burundi in 2003, the AU and our Member States have been ensuring preventive, response and remedial measures to avoid and respond to any violations of these norms and standards by personnel. This includes pre-deployment training of all PSO personnel, signing of Memorandum of understandings with Troop and Police Contributing Countries to confirm responsibilities of the AU as well as the conduct of court martials and public prosecutions in mission areas and in the countries of alleged perpetrators. Thus, our current efforts are focused on enhancing these existing frameworks which we are facilitating jointly with the UN, with support also from the ICRC to ensure common standards and processes.

**Third**, our concrete partnership in particular theatres of operations like Somalia, continue to offer us greater opportunities to enhance greater cooperation and consultation between our two institutions. Since 2013, the African Union and the United Nations have jointly undertaken four AU-UN Joint Reviews of the African Union Mission in Somalia (Somalia). These processes have allowed for greater joint analysis, planning, and cooperation between the two Secretariats. The recent joint engagements of the AU and UN Special Representatives in Somalia to urge the Federal Government and Member States of Somalia to resolve their current political differences through constructive dialogue, points to the inevitability of our joint work to maximise our prospects for greater success and achievements. However, more needs to be done to facilitate joint visits to these theatres as well as regular consultations between our two Councils to guarantee greater coherence and convergence of strategic direction and tasks in AU PSC Communiques and UN Security Council resolutions on same issues.

**Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

We are firmly convinced that the above serves as a guarantee of the mutually reinforcing commitment of our two Secretariats to further align our processes for enhancing or joint efforts. Thus, we urge this Council to also further enhance its strategic engagement and framework with the AU Peace and Security Council. In this regard, we urge members of this Council to seize the opportunity of adopting the UN Security Council resolution that will be tabled in the coming weeks on the need for AU's access to UN Assessed Contribution for operations authorised by the UN – on a case by case basis. This we believe will bring the
international community one step closer to establishing a more effective, predictable and sustainable framework that will enable us to achieving peace and security on the continent.

**Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the African Union understands the objective and aim of the resolution which is currently being negotiated by Council Members. As the AU, we believe that this resolution, when adopted, should indicate that this Council, in principle, agrees on the use of UN assessed contributions for AU mandated peace support operations authorised by the UN Security Council on a case by case basis. In this regard, the draft resolution is not intended to tie the hands of this Council to any unending support as it offers a platform for proper consultations on each conflict situations that will require such support, before any decision will be made. In this respect, we urge that the resolution, when adopted, is not overloaded with conditionalities that will further delay us in making progress to more effectively prevent and manage peace and security in Africa.

We believe that further conditionalities will not represent the spirit of the “Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace Security”, signed on 19 April 2017. This is why our two Secretariats are currently finalising a Joint Communique that the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the UN Secretary General will be signing before the adoption of the December resolution. Thus, the reaffirmation of the commitment to the AU-UN partnership and in particularly in operationalising the AU Peace Fund as well as in enhancing common and harmonised standards of our existing Human Rights Compliance and Accountability Frameworks and mechanisms will address all the additional steps that needs to be addressed.

**Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

On this note, we believe that without the political cooperation and support of this Council, the attainment of collective security within Africa and beyond will be difficult to achieve. In this regard, we continue to count on the political leadership and guidance of AU member States, especially those in the UN Security Council, in the realization of our institutional mandates.
I thank you.