11TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, SAFETY AND SECURITY

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
12 OCTOBER 2018

Opening statement by
Ambassador Smaïl Chergui
AU commissioner for Peace and Security
Excellencies, Ministers of Defence and Representatives of Member States,

Chair and Members of the Bureau of the African Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Safety and Security Agencies,

Representatives of Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to welcome the Ministers of Defence and Heads of Safety and Security here present, as well as all representatives of Member States and RECs/RMs to this 11th Ordinary Meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security – the STCDSS. We recognise the importance you attach to this critical platform and its broader objectives. I therefore wish to assure you that the Commission works tirelessly to effectively implement the decisions adopted by the STCDSS for updates to subsequent meetings.

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to commend the hard work done by the Experts during the preparatory phase of this meeting, which in turn enabled the smooth deliberations of the Chiefs of Defence and Heads of Safety and Security during their meeting yesterday. As a result, I am confident that this 11th meeting of the STCDSS will continue with the same spirit of collaboration, and will conclude not only with a comprehensive document, but with a stronger commitment and
renewed sense of urgency to address the security challenges that confront our continent.

In this regard, I wish to briefly highlight the key milestones that have been achieved since your last meeting on 9 January 2018:

**First**: Since the inauguration of the Continental Logistics Base – the CLB – on 5 January 2018, progress has been made in stockpiling the first batch of strategic stocks that will facilitate rapid deployment. The process to preposition the second batch of equipment in the five Regional Logistics Depot of our RECs/RMs is also underway.

**Second**: Advancement has been made towards the finalisation of the draft MoU between the AU and RECs/RMs, which was initiated pursuant to the declaration of your 10th meeting. By the next meeting of the STCDSS, this milestone would have been achieved in line with the direction you will provide today.

**Third**: Consultation with RECs/RMs are underway towards the development of the AU PSO Doctrine. These consultation are expected to conclude next week, after which the drafting and validation process will commence. The revision of the ASF concept will also be facilitated subsequently in alignment to the strategic vision and objectives of the PSO Doctrine. I therefore wish to assure you that the draft PSO Doctrine will be submitted to your next session for consideration.
Finally: and in line with the directives that you will provide, the Commission looks forward to facilitating the process for the endorsement of the draft Policy on Conduct & Discipline; and the draft Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. These policies are critical for the credibility and effective operation of our PSOs. In this respect, I wish to express the AU’s appreciation for the support and efforts of Member States in enabling us reinforce our commitment to uphold international norms and standards.

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have enumerated only a few of the issues that pertain to the topics on today’s agenda. But I also wish to highlight other positive developments that have taken place in the past months.

First is the development and adoption of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of areas affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. The provides a framework for commensurate action to respond to the humanitarian, security and governance issues that allowed Boko Haram the territory to undertake its nefarious action.

Secondly, I am pleased to note that in 2016, the Ministers in charge of border issues adoption a declaration extending the deadline for the delimitation and demarcation of African borders from 2017 to 2022. This declaration will be submitted to you today through the Chiefs of Defence, Safety and Security. Additionally, and in consultation with member States, the AU Border Governance Strategy was elaborated and will be brought to your next meeting
for consideration - after consultations with Member states are concluded. I cannot overemphasize the important of this strategy which aims to practically respond to the range of developmental and security issues, and which will truly transform our borders from barriers to bridges.

Thirdly, I must underline the positive developments taking place in the Gambia and the deployment of an AU integrated team. This is a strong validation of our mantras of “African Solutions to Africa Problems” and “African Solidarity.

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are well aware that the peace and security challenges in Africa are growing in complexity. But I must also add that over the past years, the AU has devised important comprehensive tools and frameworks that if implemented fully and effectively, will ensure that we remain ahead in addressing the challenges at hand.

But I must also candidly express that we continue to face a serious implementation deficit. The recognition of the deficit in implementing the AU frameworks has informed and motivated the adoption of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa.

We now have the collective responsibility to give meaning and credibility to our own frameworks. With the same level of enthusiasm and commitment that has motivated us over the past years to develop the African Peace and
Security Architecture – APSA - we must now channel equal levels of commitment and resources to translate APSA into action on the ground.

The Commission remains fully ready to support Member States in their implementation efforts, but we cannot do so effectively without your leadership and support, including by availing the required human and financial resources. I therefore appeal to all AU Member States, through this august meeting, to renew efforts and commitment to APSA and to take full ownership of the AU frameworks and tools.

On this note, we look forward to your direction at the end of this meeting to continue enhancing our efforts to achieve our objective to silence the guns by 2020 towards ensuring a peaceful and stable Africa- the Africa We Want.

I thank you.