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PROMOTING THE UN PEACEKEEPING PARTNERSHIP: GLOBAL COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION
Excellencies esteemed members and organizers of the Beijing International Forum on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Permit me to express my gratitude to the organisers of the Beijing International Forum on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and for inviting the African Union Commission to participate in this very important conference on a topical issue. Let me seize this opportunity to thank the government of the People’s Republic of China for the invaluable support it has rendered to the African Union not only in its Peace Support Operations endeavours but in other areas such as the fight against Ebola and COVID-19 pandemics on the Continent.

Excellencies and distinguished participants, since the deployment of the AU’s first peace support operation (PSO) in 2003, the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) have engaged in a range of collaborative initiatives in the area of peacekeeping and conflict management on the Continent. The areas of collaboration have primarily focused on conflict prevention and crisis management, and are aimed at fostering coherence and cohesion between the two institutions. The partnership between the two institutions has been institutionalized through The UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. The Joint Framework serves as the bedrock for the relationship between the two institutions and has ensured a degree of predictability in the partnership. This is a clear departure from the ad hoc approach that characterized engagements before the signing of the Joint Framework in 2017.
As we are aware, the UN Security Council is vested with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. For its part, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security, and stability in Africa – pursuant to Article 16(1) of the PSC Protocol. Building on the principles of complementarity and subsidiarity pursuant to Chapter 8 of the UN Charter, the two decision making organs have forged a partnership that allows for regular consultations on matters relating to Africa’s stability. Although the partnership is still a work in progress, the level of consultation, coordination, and synergy has improved significantly over the past decade. For its part, the PSC has emerged as a pivotal actor on issues of peace, security, and governance, and is the nerve-centre of the African Peace and Security and Governance Architectures (APSA/AGA).

Since its establishment in 2002, the AU has initiated and continues to lead a variety of peace, security, and stabilization initiatives on the Continent. In doing so, it has entered into a number of complex and diverse partnerships with the UN, EU, and other partners. The partnerships are borne of the recognition that no one institution or member state can adequately address the types of inter-related security and other transitional challenges that the world is confronted with today. The current global fight against COVID-19 is a glaring example of the need for greater and deeper cooperation between the AU, UN, and other multilateral institutions. To date, the AU, often in partnership with the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms as well as coalitions of African states, has deployed over twenty (20) Peace Support Operations and two (2) support missions in response to the Ebola Outbreak on the Continent. In most of these instances, the AU has partnered with the UN with varying degrees of success. It is important to
note that collaboration between the two institutions in the area of Peace Support Operations has grown exponentially.

Distinguished participants, let me, at this juncture, draw your attention to a number of operational partnerships between the AU and the UN over the past fifteen years.

First, the AU’s deployment of its Mission in Darfur, Sudan (AMIS) provided the first major opportunity for the two institutions to collaborate in operational terms. AMIS, which was deployed at the height of the conflict in Darfur, contributed to stabilizing the situation, thereby laying the foundation for the first ever hybrid mission between the two institutions, the UN-AU Hybrid Mission in Sudan (UNAMID). The transition from AMIS and establishment of UNAMID marked a high point in the collaboration between the two institutions in the area of Peace Support Operations. The experience in this instance demonstrates the imperative to strengthen the capacities of the AU to serve as first responder to address conflicts on the Continent. It is also important to note that these interventions contribute to the UN’s primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, especially as it relates to Africa.

The second major area of collaboration is in Somalia in the context of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) Somalia. The Mission was first mandated by the AU PSC in 2007 for an initial six-month period, with the assumption that it would transition into a UN Mission. The envisaged transition did not materialize and after fifteen years of operations and significant progress, AMISOM has now transitioned to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Following the directives
of the AU Policy Organs, ATMIS aims to directly hand over security responsibilities to the Somali Security Forces (SSF) in 2024. The significant support of the UN, including the much-needed UN Logistics support to AMISOM/ATMIS operations, cannot be overemphasized as it provides some predictability in enhancing the operations of ATMIS. This predictable logistics support that is sourced from UN-assessed contributions marks an important step in the development of workable and practical formulas for the financing of AU-led peace support operations.

In addition to these two major collaborative ventures, the AU continues to support deployments in other areas, most notably, in the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel, and more recently, Mozambique. In the Lake Chad Basin, the Commission continues to support the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) with technical and logistics support and is playing a crucial role in the implementation of the Regional Stabilization Strategy (RSS) to ensure early recovery and stabilization of areas affected by the Boko Haram Terrorist Group. Stabilization interventions through the RSS are important complementary steps to the success of military operations by the MNJTF. In the Sahel, the AU is providing support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force, especially in the Liptako - Gourma areas, the triangle between Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. As part of its support, the AU Commission conveyed a Ministerial Meeting in Bamako, Mali, in November 2019 on access to natural resources and conflict between communities which culminated in the adoption of the Bamako Declaration. In Mozambique, the AU is providing support to the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) through the provision of equipment from the Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroun, for the enhancement of the capabilities and operations of the mission, and facilitated financial support for the Mission. It is evident that the AU’s engagements in the area of peace support operations are
undertaken in partnership with a range of actors, including the RECs/RMs, the EU, and key bi-lateral actors such as China.

Distinguished participants, our engagements in the area of peace support operations have brought to the fore some important lessons that I would like to share with you.

The first is that cooperation and coordination between the UNSC and the PSC are critical to the success of any peacemaking endeavor on the continent.Whilst progress has been made over the past decade and a half, more needs to be done to optimize the partnership between the two decision-making organs.

Second, in addition to the AU-led and supported missions, Africa remains the largest troop and police contributor to UN peace support operations on the continent. In essence, this means that Africa is shouldering the bulk of the manpower responsibility for the promotion of peace, security, and stability on the continent.

Third, that AU led Missions such as AMISOM/ATMIS in Somalia and AMIS in Darfur have made significant contributions to the stabilization efforts in those theatres. In other cases, AU-led missions, such as AFISMA in Mali and MISCAR in the Central African Republic, paved the way for subsequent UN missions to be deployed.

Fourth, that ad-hoc coalitions have yielded significant successes in counterinsurgency and peace enforcement operations, as in the case of MNJTF in the Lake Chad Basin and AMISOM/ATMIS in Somalia. In the Lake Chad Basin
successful operations by MNJTF have led to the return of a significant number of internally displaced persons and refugees. However, there is a strong need and urgency for sustained support for the stabilization phase in that region. The same applies to Somalia.

**Distinguished participants,** I would like to conclude by stating that there is ample evidence that demonstrates the imperative for an enhanced AU-UN partnership in peacemaking generally and peace operations specifically. It is therefore important to ensure that the partnership is properly structured and supported with the required financial and material resources. Addressing the issue of financing of AU-led missions in a sustainable and predictable manner would be an important step towards consolidating progress in this area.

Consequently, as the AU continues to make progress in consolidating and operationalizing its Peace Fund, UN support is critical in enhancing the AU's current efforts to promote peace, security, and stability on the Continent

I thank you.