2ND SECOND REGIONAL SECURITY SUMMIT
14 MAY 2016
ABUJA, NIGERIA

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR SMAIL CHERGUI
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

AT THE SECOND REGIONAL SECURITY SUMMIT
o His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
o His Excellency Idriss Deby, President of the Republic of Chad and President of the African Union;
o His Excellency Francois HOLLANDE, President of the France Republic;

1. I would like, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA, to express our profound gratitude to His Excellency President MUHAMMADU BUHARI and the people of Nigeria for taking this timely initiative of convening this Summit and for receiving all of us with their usual hospitality and distinction. On the issue of our agenda today, the people of Nigeria and Africa, and the International Community owe you Mr. President credit and respect for your determination and resolute action in combating Boko Haram Terrorist group with the evident gains recorded today.

2. Your Excellences, You would recall that, at the AU Peace and Security Council at the level of Heads of State and Government decided, on 28 January 2015 to support the efforts of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) Member States and the Republic of Benin through the deployment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), and on 3 March 2015 endorsed the Concept of operations (CONOPS) agreed upon at the Yaoundé meeting, increasing thereafter the troops strength from 7,000 to not more than 10,000 military and other personnel, with a view to facilitating the effective implementation of the mandate and tasks of the Multinational Joint Task Force.

3. Subsequently, the AU Peace and Security Council noted with satisfaction the adoption by the UN Security Council, on 28 July 2015, of Presidential Statement S/PRST/2015/14 in which it, inter alia, called upon the international Community and donors to support the Multinational Joint Task Force operations on the fight against Boko Haram.

4. Since July 2015, significant progress has been made towards the full operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force to enable it to effectively carry out offensive operations against the Boko Haram terrorist group. Although successes were achieved against Boko Haram, the group still retains the ability to carry out isolated attacks in the Lake Chad Basin area and continues to hide in isolated rural areas and Sambisa forest. We would like to seize this opportunity to commend the determination and engagement of the LCBC Member States and Republic of Benin against the terrorist group. As mentioned earlier this regional initiative is a true reflection of our collective effort for peace and stability in the continent, using African resources as the primary means for intervention.

5. I wish to indicate that the African Union and international partners recognize the efforts made by LCBC and Benin towards strengthening their relationship and their
collective effort to combat Boko Haram Terrorist volatile activities in order to create a safe and secure environment in the areas affected by the activities of Boko Haram terrorists. Nigeria, in particular, has made huge financial contribution towards the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force; this has enabled several key activities take place to date, including the establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force Headquarter temporal site and Sector headquarters as well as the sustenance of its forces. I would like to use this opportunity to appreciate the support being provided by our international partners.

6. It is worthy to note that the increased cooperation and synergy between the Multinational Joint Task Force Forces and national/multinational forces within and around Multinational Joint Task Force area of operations is commendable and should be sustained. In light of the threat posed by Boko Haram to the people and communities within the LCBC region, the AU PSC at its 567th meeting on 14 January 2016 renewed the mandate of Multinational Joint Task Force for another 12 months effective from 14 January 2016. The Commission therefore reiterates the necessity to mobilize the international community to support the regional effort of the LCBC Member States and Republic of Benin to rid the region of Boko Haram terrorist group.

7. The African Union and the Lake Chad Basin Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding for mobilization of additional support to the Multinational Joint Task Force on 16 October 2015, while the Support Implementation Agreement (SIA) was signed on 29 January 2016. The implementation of both agreements is key and therefore request that the AU and LCBC work hand in hand to ensure compliance and applicability. It is however critical to note that the exemplary model of primary financing for the operation against Boko Haram serves as a good model for future peace support operations which regional organizations must emulate.

8. It is equally important, to state that based on partners pledges the AU has commenced the procurement processes of services and equipment to provide additional support to the MNJTF which include procurement of 100 utility vehicles for operational use; process for the construction of MNJTF Headquarters and two Sector Headquarter camps; enhancing ground and air mobility with utility vehicles, Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) and In-Theatre air assets; provision of Command, Control, Communication, Information System (C3IS); support in the areas of Intelligence, Reconnaissance and Surveillance (ISR) service; provision of medical services and sundries; provision of IT services and equipment; and the payment of salaries of recruited staff. The AU has also recently completed the installation of V-SAT Communication equipment at the MNJTF HQs to have a link with AU HQs, which has been completed and is in its testing phase. Furthermore, it give me great pleasure to inform you that once the Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroun, is fully operational, it will be at the disposal of the MNJTF if required.

9. Other activities of AU regarding extension of support to MNJTF operations against Boko Haram have been:
a. Provision of communication and other equipment from the liquidated MISCA operation in Bangui, Central Africa Republic (CAR) and successful coordination of their delivery to N’Djamena, Chad. The United States of America assisted in airlifting the equipment to Chad.

b. Procurement and delivery of 14 (fourteen) utility vehicles and Information Technology (IT) equipment for the MNJTF Headquarters.

c. Activation of the Strategic Support Cell (SSC) at AU Headquarters and recruitment of Officers to among others coordinate and manage additional support to MNJTF generated by AU and AU Partners.

d. Holding of the Donors Conference in support of MNJTF operations against Boko Haram on 2 February 2016. Most of the pledges made were bilateral to LCBC Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). The EU pledged 50 (fifty) million Euros to AU Peace Facility in support of MNJTF operations. United Kingdom (UK) committed 5 (five) million Pounds to AU Peace Facility for the operationalization of MNJTF.

e. Recruitment of 35 (thirty five) Local and International staff in different disciplines into the Mission Support Team (MST) and Civilian Component structures supporting MNJTF HQ.

f. A Joint Technical Assessment Mission by the AU, United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), European Union and the United States Office to the African Union (USOAU) was conducted from 21 - 25 March 2016 in order to among others further ascertain the MNJTF priority requirements. A number of recommendations were made and already being implemented. A list of priority requirements was generated and procurement process for some items is already going on based on the UK committed funds.

- Excellences,
- Ladies and gentlemen

10. It is essential to quickly bring Boko Haram nefarious terrorist activities to an end particularly as this has negatively impacted the humanitarian situation within the region. Current statistics have it that out of the 2.4 million people displaced in the region, about 1.8 million are in Nigeria. Some 94,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 6,000 refugees have been reported in Chad, while about 130,000 IDPs and over 60,000 refugees in Cameroun. Niger host approximately around 58,000 IDPs with 95,000 refugees.

11. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 592nd meeting, held on 19 April 2016, in Addis Ababa, dedicated an open session to the theme: decisive role of de-radicalization policies in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. The Council noted that violent extremism is a major threat to African peace and security, therefore addressing violent extremism both by preventive and counter actions is critical in
the quest for a stable and prosperous Africa in line with the peace goals established in Agenda 2063. To this end, the AU will not relent in its support to the MNJTF.

12. Security efforts will not be enough to confront the current challenges. This collective effort seen today should also cooperate various measures to deal with radicalism which are extremely complex, multifaceted, and often intertwined. There is also the need to accelerate efforts aimed at preparing the ground for post conflict stabilization and rehabilitation of the areas affected by Boko Haram insurgency.

13. Once again, this Summit is very timely for us to embrace this collective and unified approach to effectively scourge of the region terrorism. I therefore wish to thank the Federal Government of Nigeria for hosting this important event and the Heads of States and Governments of the Region for their sustained collective efforts to bring an end to the Boko Haram menace and to this end revive the economic activities of the region that has been negatively impacted by violent activities of extremist groups.

I thank you, Your Excellences.