JOINT STATEMENT

The Inaugural Retreat of the Special Representatives of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Special Representatives and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General of the United Nations
16 October 2023, Cairo, Egypt

1. On 16 October 2023, the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) held the Inaugural Retreat of the Special Representatives of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCCs) and the Special Representatives and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General (SRSGs and SESGs) of the United Nations, in Cairo, Egypt, under the theme: “Enhanced Cooperation and Collaboration in Peace and Security”.

2. The Retreat took place under the auspices of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, and was co-chaired by the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga. The UN Special Representatives and Envoys expressed appreciation to the leadership of the African Union for the invitation to attend the 14th High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa taking place in Cairo, Egypt on 17-18 October 2023.

3. Following extensive discussion on: The AU and UN perspectives on the Prevailing and Emerging Peace, Security and Governance Challenges on the Continent; Concretely Strengthening Collaboration and Cooperation across the Entire Peace and Security Conflict Prevention to Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development; and Improving Collaboration and Working Methods between the AU Commission and UN Secretariat, the AU SRCCs and the UN SRSGs/SESGs:

   i. Recalled the Joint AU-UN Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed on 19 April 2017, which underscores the determination of both organizations to enhance the strategic partnership in thematic areas of common interest, including on preventing, mediating and resolving conflict and sustaining peace; addressing root causes of conflict; as well as partnership review and enhancement. They further recalled the importance of the AU-UN Framework for the Implementation of AU Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development signed on January 2018, which emphasizes the peace, security and development nexus and provides the impetus for structured,
systematic, results-oriented and institutionalized collaboration between the AU and the UN, translating these commitments into enhanced engagement.

ii. **Acknowledged** the complexity of peace and security issues on the continent, including climate change impacts, terrorism and violent extremism, and **emphasized** the imperative for sustained interaction and engagement between the AU Commission and the UN Secretariat towards comprehensively addressing the structural root causes and drivers of violent conflicts on the Continent.

iii. **Underscored** the importance of African ownership and leadership in addressing threats to peace and security challenges on the Continent, drawing on lessons learnt and best practices from achievements in peace and state-building initiatives on the Continent.

iv. **Committed** to support initiatives aimed at building effective state institutions and promoting inclusive governance, with commitment to the engagement and empowerment of women and youth in decision-making processes on peace, security and sustainable development on the Continent.

v. **Agreed** to work towards aligning positions on complex political transitions to complement the implementation of decisions adopted by the two organizations and to explore modalities to support enhanced democratic governance in Africa.

vi. **Reaffirmed** their commitment to further enhance joint conflict prevention and mediation initiatives, including through joint field visits, while recognizing the importance of streamlining responses to conflict.

vii. **Reaffirmed** the significant contributions of AU-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) in maintaining regional and Continental peace and security and **underlined** the need for the provision of predictable, sustainable and flexible financing, including through UN assessed contributions, on a case-by-case basis.

viii. **Emphasized** the need to ensure effective and transparent governance of Africa’s natural resources and its equitable and fair distribution as a source of wealth and value-creation for Africa’s sustainable development.
ix. **Underscored** the need to reform the international financial institutions based on equity, solidarity and universality, and anchored in the principles of the AU Constitutive Act and the UN Charter, to address global inequalities and unequal development.

x. **Expressed** concern about the crisis of multilateralism while recognizing that the AU-UN partnership represents a model of international cooperation.

xi. **Renewed** their commitment to enhancing collaboration among the Member States, AU Commission, UN Secretariat, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms, and other relevant key stakeholders, in the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030.

xii. **Decided** to institutionalize and regularize the holding of the Joint Retreat as a platform to enhance information sharing toward forging a common understanding of the peace and security challenges and approaches to addressing them.

xiii. **Expressed** appreciation to the AU Commission and UN Secretariat for convening the Inaugural Joint Retreat, and to the people and Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for hosting the retreat; and looked forward to convening the next retreat in 2024 on a mutually agreed date.

*Adopted in Cairo, Egypt  
16 October 2023*