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CHAIRPERSON, AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
FOR MARCH 2015 AT THE
9TH ANNUAL JOINT AUPSC AND UNSC CONSULTATIVE MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 12 MARCH 2015

Your Excellencies
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is such a great honour and privilege for me to represent the African Union Peace and Security Council as its Chairperson for the month of March 2015, the woman’s month, at this important Joint Annual Consultative Meeting between the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and United Nations Security Council (UNSC). It is equally touching that this meeting is taking place here in Addis Ababa, Africa’s political and diplomatic capital city and Headquarters of the African Union. Addis Ababa is also the seat of the United Nations Regional Office for Africa, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Did you know that Addis Ababa is the third largest place where the United Nations has immovable property after New York and Geneva? The Secretary-General of the United Nations has visited Addis Ababa in the last 6 years of his tenure more than any other city hosting United Nations Offices. Need I say more about the importance and influence of the African Union Headquarters? The facts and statistics speak for themselves!
Let me, on behalf of the African Union Peace and Security Council; welcome you all to the 9th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting of our two Councils here in Addis Ababa, under clear African skies. It gives me great pleasure to co-chair the meeting with the President of the UNSC for March 2015, Ambassador Francois Delattre, Permanent Representative of the French Republic to the United Nations. It should not be regarded as coincidence or luck that France, a permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council, and one of the biggest contributors to United Nations Peacekeeping Missions, both financially and with regard to troops, should be President of the United Nations Security Council at this important and crucial time in global politics. It is also not surprising that it is during France’s Presidency of the United Nations Security Council that the Council is undertaking a field Mission to Africa, most notably the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Burundi.

The tears of the French people have barely dried from their eyes due to the cowardly and tragic terrorist attacks carried out against the French Satirist Magazine Charlie Hebdo, and today they are again mourning the loss of three of France’s most prominent sports personalities. Our sincere and heartfelt condolences go out to the Government and people of France during this sad and trying time. Condolences are also extended to the troop contributing countries that lost their peacekeepers in the United Nations Mission in Mali and the Sahel in Kidal just a few days ago. May their souls rest in eternal peace, and may their sacrifices not be in vain.

My own country, Namibia is a product of international solidarity through the African Union and the United Nations. We are one of the few OAU/AU and UN success stories and we are fortunate enough to still enjoy democracy, peace, stability and security 25 years after we first gained our independence on 21st March 1990. For this reason and based on our painful past, we try to assist, within our limited means, towards the maintenance of peace, stability and security on the African Continent.
Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me hail the tremendous milestones that out two Councils have achieved since the inaugural annual joint consultative meeting held in Addis Ababa in 2007. Since we last met in New York in June 2014, Africa continues to grapple with violent conflicts and relapses into cycles of violence, as well as with emerging threats ranging from increasing incidences of terrorist attacks and abductions, religious extremism, cross-border organized crime syndicates, human and drug trafficking, illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons with increasing magnitude. Africa is also facing numerous threats to development such as poverty, disease, terrorism and the devastating and negative impacts of climate change, to name but a few.

This Annual Joint Consultative Meeting provides our two Councils with the opportunity and an ideal platform for an in-depth reflection and exchange of views on a number of issues on the peace and security agenda, the challenges currently facing not only Africa but the whole International Community, and on how best to enhance our cooperation in addressing these challenges together and in a spirit of mutual trust and respect.

I wish to appeal to both Councils that, in reflecting on the peace and security challenges facing Africa today, we should also dedicate attention to reviewing our previous Joint Communiqués and assess the progress we have made, the challenges we continue to face and the opportunities at hand and those that lie ahead.

Our two Councils should also focus on the best means and ways of effectively addressing the root causes of the conflicts and crises prevailing in Africa. I believe that if we continue to work together and coordinate our efforts, we will certainly achieve better results in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts, not only in Africa, but the world over. I am glad that, in generating the agenda for this joint meeting, we have developed an innovative method in our cooperation and focusing on conflict prevention.

Our agenda today has very topical issues ranging from the Great Lakes Region, South Sudan, Darfur, Somalia, Central African Republic, combating the Boko Haram Terrorist Group, Libya, Mali and the Sahel. Equally important are issues relating to the review of United Nations Peace Operations and the enhancement of our cooperation in the area of conflict prevention.
It is our consultation today that should put our efforts together and agree on how best we can deal with these crises and conflict situations, in order to save the lives of innocent citizens, especially women and children, who bear the brunt of the atrocities committed and suffer the most from such armed conflicts.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am also happy to share with the UNSC that the AUPSC and the European Union Political and Security Committee undertook their first joint field mission to Mali in February 2015. The Joint Field Mission, which I had the honour and priviledge of Co-Leading on the side of the AUPSC was an eye-opener and very fruitful, as reflected in the outcome joint statement of that mission. This is one of the good examples of going into the field to gather primary information and interact with stakeholders, which our AUPSC and UNSC cooperation can draw lessons from.

I wish to propose that the AUPSC and UNSC look into the possibility of undertaking joint field missions to conflict and post-conflict areas in Africa, starting in 2015. We should also maintain periodic video-tele-conferences at the level of the Chairperson of the AUPSC and the President of the UNSC on a regular basis, as well as ahead of and in between our annual joint consultative meetings. We should look into the possibility of holding joint consultations on the margins of the AU Summit that takes place in Addis Ababa every January and also hold such meetings on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York every September.

It would also be a good idea to hold informal meetings on a regular basis between the AUPSC and the A3 and non-permanent members of the UNSC based in Addis Ababa and also between the UNSC and the A3 and non-permanent Members based in New York, respectively. Two such informal interactions were held in 2014 and 2015 during the AUPSC Chairmanship of Mozambique and UNSC Presidency of Luxembourg and also during the AUPSC Chairmanship of Guinea and UNSC Presidency of China respectively. Such regular contact and interaction will enable us to maintain constant communication and exchange views on issues of mutual concern in certain conflict situations before decisions are eventually taken by the United Nations Security Council. It is also important to assist our two Councils in sharing and harmonizing our respective programmes of work for better coordination and consultation.
Your Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

The year 2015 is a most important and significant year not only in the African context but on the international arena. The Theme of the African Union Summit for 2015 is “2015 Year of Women Empowerment and Development Towards Agenda 2063”. This year also marks the 30th Anniversary of the Third World Conference on Women held in Nairobi, Kenya, 20th Anniversary of the Fifth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China (Beijing plus 20); Fifteenth Anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which was adopted by the Security Council on 31st October 2000, during Namibia’s Presidency of the Security Council when it was serving as a non-permanent member. In fact, as we hold these important consultations between our two Councils, women from all over the world are meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York for the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 59). CSW 59 is reviewing the progress achieved since the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995 (Beijing plus 20).

I am looking forward to meaningful and constructive deliberations leading us to the next positive page of our growing relationship and very fruitful cooperation in the area of peace and security within the context of AU-UN cooperation and partnership. Let me wish us all a successful meeting.

Asante Sana

Muiro Obrigada

Choukrane

Gracious

I thank you.