OPENING STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BANKOLE ADEOYE, AU COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY DELIVERED BY ALHAJI SARJOH BAH, DIRECTOR, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
Your excellency, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union for December 2021, Honorable Demeke Mekonnen,

Your Excellency, Minister of Foreign Affairs of People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and the Host of the 8th High Level Seminar, my elder brother and mentor, Honorable Ramtane Lamamra,

Your Excellency, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia and Coordinator of the African Members of the United Nations Security Council, Honorable Othman JERANDI,

Excellencies, Ministers and Deputy Ministers present,

Excellencies, Permanent Representatives to the African Union and to the United Nations,

Distinguished invited guests and partners,

Ladies and gentlemen,

All protocol observed.

1. From the onset, and on behalf of the Commissioner of Political Affairs, Peace and Security H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, I wish to sincerely applaud the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Algeria for the Pan-African gesture of hosting this very important High Level Seminar on the promotion of peace, security and stability in our Continent. As many of you would know, this gesture comes as no surprise at all, as some of us still fondly remember that, this Seminar is a brainchild of Algeria and particularly, Minister Lamamra when he was the Commissioner for Peace and Security. Through the Seminar, Minister Lamamra laid the foundation for the eventual creation of what we know today as the A3. Indeed, it was Algeria, which generously hosted the 1st series of the High Level Seminars, starting in December 2013 to 2016.

2. I would like to extend special appreciation to Members of the PSC, in particular the Chairperson for December 2021, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for including this Seminar in the monthly programme of the Council.

3. I would like, on behalf of H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security, to sincerely apologize for the inconveniences that some of our high level Participants experienced in traveling to this important meeting. I would like to reassure you that the Department under my leadership will look into the shortfalls of the logistical arrangements and address them adequately, with our partners, for a more seamless preparation for the 2022 session.

4. I warmly welcome all of you to this historic and Great City of Oran, particularly to this 8th High Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa. It is my fervent hope that, with the
unmatched warm hospitality afforded to all of us since our arrival, we have all managed to rest and are now well dispositioned for the Seminar.

5. Before I go further, I sincerely commend Tunisia and Niger for a sterling job in effectively representing our Great African Continent, by relentlessly promoting, defending and articulating common African positions and interests in the decision-making processes of the UN Security Council on matters relating to peace and security in Africa. Many milestones have been achieved during your tenure, as members of the Security Council. Africa is proud of your commendable accomplishments.

6. I also seize this opportunity to warmly congratulate the Republics of Gabon and Ghana on their well-deserved election to the United Nations Security Council, joining Kenya, as the new Members of A3 with effect from January 2022. To the two sisterly countries, I would like to emphasize that, Africa will continue to expect effective articulation, promotion and defence of Continental interests and positions within the Security Council. Indeed, Africa will continue to expect the same, if not better, levels of unity of purpose, preservation of gains achieved, and amplification of the African voice, as well as the enhancement of the current momentum. Above all, Africa will continue to expect common messaging and coherence of voices between the PSC and the A3.

7. Allow me to express the gratitude of the AU Commission to all our partners for their continued support to the organization of this Seminar in the spirit of promoting collective security through multilateralism.

**Excellencies, distinguished participants**

8. As many of you may recall, this Seminar, which has now been institutionalized and regularized, is a forum essentially dedicated to preparing the newly elected A3 to more effectively articulate, promote and defend common African positions and interest in the Security Council.

9. The significance of the Seminar lies in its utility as a forum for reflection that allows participants to exchange views, experiences, best practices, lessons learned, and to provide concrete recommendations on how to enhance effective responses to issues of peace, security and stability in Africa. Thus, this forum serves as a unique platform for close interaction between the PSC and the A3, including the outgoing and the incoming Members, as well as friends of the Seminar.

10. On its part, the AU Commission, through the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department and the Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations, in New York, will remain at the disposal of the A3, to provide the necessary support that they may require in the execution of their mandate.

11. Apart from the main objective of the Seminar, namely, enhancing cooperation between the PSC and the A3, this year’s Seminar will also focus on the deepening understanding of the
Africa Governance Architecture and the threat of terrorism in Africa. These are key issues that impact the work of the newly created Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security given its overriding mandate of promoting AGA-APSA synergies through alignment of political, governance and stability initiatives.

**Excellencies, distinguished participants**

12. Our Continent continues to grapple with a number of security threats ranging from violent conflicts; the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government; terrorism and violent extremism; influx of foreign fighters and mercenaries; proliferation of illicit weapons; the adverse effects of climate change; epidemics and pandemics such as the Ebola virus and COVID-19.

13. You will agree with me that, most of these threats to human security know no boundaries. As such, there is a compelling need for concerted efforts at regional, continental and international levels, to ensure collective multilateral responses to the global challenges that we are confronted with today. For Africa, in particular, there is also a critical need for an amplified voice in the United Nations Security Council.

14. It is in this regard that the A3 becomes an extremely critical actor within the UN Security Council. Consequently, there is a strong imperative to improve coordination, communication and coherence between the A3 and the PSC to enhance strategic convergence. Needless to say, this requires the strengthening of the capacities of both the PSC and A3 to enable them to discharge their mandates in an effective and efficient manner and in the interest of Africa.

15. The PSC and the A3 clearly demonstrate Africa’s commitment to multilateralism. We should therefore use this opportunity to reflect on and provide a clear roadmap for our collective efforts to achieve the goals enshrined in Agenda 2063 especially its flagship program of Silencing The Guns.

16. Without a doubt, the current A3 have prominently given due credence to the African Diaspora by embracing the A3+1 operational formula in its diplomatic engagements and coordination. This is highly recommendable and I hereby acknowledge the tangible cooperation and smart partnership with St. Vincent and Grenadines in complementing the African voice in the UN Security Council. Please, Excellencies, join me in applauding here and now the participation of Ambassador Rhonda Inga King, Permanent Representative of SVG to the UN (who will arrive later today) for her immense contributions to the African cause in the UN Security Council. Africa is stronger, bolder and more effective when all Africans identify with the AU agenda for sustainable peace and development.

17. Before I conclude, I would like on behalf of all participants to this High Level Seminar, to extend our gratitude to the Governor and the local authorities for welcoming us to “Oran Al-Bahiyah!”
18. I would like to conclude by encouraging all participants to engage in fruitful deliberations that would enhance our collective appreciation of the challenges at hand and how to resolve them.

I thank you for your kind attention.