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**STATEMENT PRONOUNCED BY THE AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS ON
BEHALF OF H.E. AMB. SMAIL CHERGUI, AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSIONER
FOR PEACE AND SECURITY:
DIALOGUE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHINA – AFRICA PEACE
AND SECURITY INITIATIVE**

6 February 2019

Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa

**Excellency Mr Sidiki Kaba, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Senegal,
Excellency Mr. Chen Xiadong, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
People's Republic of China,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is an honour for me to speak at this event this evening. The AU views China as an exemplary partner, and it has not gone unnoted that, since the early 1990s, Africa has always been the locus of the first foreign visit by the Chinese Foreign Minister. 2019 was no different, and the AU was proud to host Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Wang Yi on 3 January. China has also always seen the value of extensive consultations in determining the partnership priorities, as this meeting attests to. Moreover, the African Union acknowledges the important role played by people-to-people dialogue, the investment in human capital, and the myriad cultural and student exchanges which allow us to foster greater understanding between the two sides. In the area of peace and security, this manifested itself, in 2018, in the first China-Africa Defense and Security Forum. I hope we see much more of this in the future.

I wish at the outset to express the AU's appreciation for the significant support provided by the Chinese government to the AU's

peace and security efforts, including the packages of US\$ 100 million to the African Standby Force (ASF) and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC). Some of this has already been disbursed, in particular to the continental logistical base in Yaoundé, Cameroon. I am aware that the second tranche of this package is currently being put together, and I look forward to its delivery soon.

The last FOCAC Summit also saw China pledge an additional US\$80 million, and this dinner is an opportunity for us to begin discussions on how to use this generous package in a way that aligns with the priorities of the African continent.

What are the AU's peace and security priorities in 2019? Firstly, the AU envisages allocating some of the Chinese support to its ongoing peace support operations, namely the MNJTF, the G5-Sahel, as well as support to the police deployment in AMISOM. We hope to reach agreement with the Chinese side on this.

Secondly, the AU would want to use some of its support to the benefit of the five regional standby forces. The Commission is planning to send an assessment mission to the five regional standby force headquarters to determine their exact needs, and we will then get back to the Chinese side with a detailed assessment of the state of play and requirements.

Chinese support to the AU's peace and security agenda has, to date, been focused almost exclusively on military support in the development of the African Standby Force. This has been based on 2 considerations – firstly, China's deep-seated and longstanding refusal to get involved in internal affairs of other countries, which entails that conflict prevention and issues of governance, etc., are not eligible; and secondly, the priorities and needs of the AU, which identified the ASF as an initiative to be supported. While the AU respects and appreciates China's position on non-interference, we would like to explore ways in which China can increase its support to conflict mediation effort in the future, making use of the extensive leverage that it brings to the table. The support over the years to the AU's mediation efforts between Sudan and South Sudan, and in South Sudan itself, and in particular the support given to the AUHIP is a case in point. China played a critical role in bringing the parties to the negotiating table and to sign the peace agreements negotiated. The AU would like to see more support in this vein in other mediation efforts, since the ultimate objective is to reduce the need for the deployment of peace support operations.

The AU's flagship program in the area of peace and security is that of "Silencing the Guns", and I would like to propose that the AU and the Chinese side initiate discussions on ways in which China can support this program. The first step in this regard would be to

support the efforts by the A3, African members in the UN Security Council, acting under the leadership of Equatorial Guinea as UNSC President, to get a resolution adopted by the Council on Silencing the Guns.

With regard to the other resolution the A3 has been working on, namely a resolution on UN financial support to AU-led peace support operations authorized by the UNSC, the AU has not given up on these efforts. However, we recognize that global conditions right now may not be propitious for such a resolution. We look forward to China's support to keep the momentum going, to ensure the adoption by the UNSC of a resolution on financing that is drafted by Africa, within the spirit of African ownership.

This leads me to another point, which is of critical importance. The international system is under immense stress at the moment, and multilateralism is under threat, for reasons which we are all aware of. It is incumbent on us to do all we can to protect the multilateral system, while at the same time pushing to ensure the reforms necessary to strengthen it. To this end, we see our partnership with China as necessary to save the international system. We also see China's efforts to promote economic and trade integration, through its Belt and Road Initiative, as part of this global endeavor.

Excellencies, I started this intervention by remarking on how China is an exemplary partner that can be a role model to others in their dealings with Africa. It is my hope that other countries look at this partnership and learn from it and emulate it.

Thank you.