15TH ORDINARY MEETING OF AFRICAN CHIEFS OF DEFENCE STAFF AND HEADS OF SAFETY AND SECURITY, AND
12TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, SAFETY AND SECURITY

CAIRO, EGYPT
15 - 19 DECEMBER 2019

OPENING STATEMENT BY DR. ADMORE MUPOKI KAMBUDZI, DIRECTOR FOR PEACE AND SECURITY EXPERTS MEETING, 15 DECEMBER 2019
Major General Mohamed Saleh, Chair of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS) Experts Meeting

Members of the Bureau of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security,

Heads of Delegations and Generals,

Representatives of Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, and the Leadership of the AU Commission, let me start by thanking the Arab Republic of Egypt, current Chair of our Union, for hosting this 15th Ordinary Meeting of the African Chiefs of Defence Staffs and the 12th Ordinary Meeting of the Specialised Technical
Committee on Defence Safety and Security in this beautiful AlMasa Capital, in Cairo. We thank you for your generosity and hospitality, which is deeply appreciated by the African Union Commission. I also wish to thank the Member States and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) here present for participating in this very important meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our African brothers and sisters that have lost their lives in terrorist attacks in countries in the Horn of Africa, in the Sahel, and in the Lake Chad Basin, including those in Mogadishu during the recent attack at the Somali Youth League (SYL) Hotel close to Villa Somalia on Wednesday 11 December and the attack by suspected terrorists at a military camp in Inates in the western Tillaberi region of Niger. These attacks bear testimony to the expansive scourge of terrorism and violent extremism. By far, this phenomena is now the biggest threat to human security, state security and peace and security in general in Africa.
As you are aware, and pursuant to Article 14 of the Constitutive Act of the AU (2000), the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS) is mandated to meet annually and provide policy guidance and direction to the AU Commission on matters of defence, safety and security. This meeting, thus, serves as a platform for the Commission to provide progress updates and for priorities related to peace and security on the continent to be defined by the Member States.

The Commission has circulated to Member States the report of the Chairperson of the Commission, which highlights in details, the progress thus far achieved by the Commission since the 11th STCDSS meeting, which concluded on 12 October 2019. In this context, allow me to highlight some key milestones achieved as directed by last STCDSS meeting:

a. **First**, the 5th Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs (STCJLA) considered and adopted the Draft Rules of
Procedure for the STCDSS – with minor amendments. This will be submitted by the Commission to the 36\textsuperscript{th} Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in January 2020 and upwards to the Assembly of the Union for endorsement. Thus, this STCDSS is expected to use these Rules of Procedure (RoP) starting from the subsequent meeting in 2020, as we move forward.

b. **Second**, the Commission finalised the draft AU Doctrine on Peace Support Operations (PSO) following several Commission-wide and RECs/RMs consultations. The draft AU Doctrine on PSO is an embodiment of the core principles, practices and approaches that should guide AU’s approach to PSO, within the framework of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA), to promote peace, security and stability, as well as enhance good governance on the continent. It will also inform the revision of the ASF Concept that will be submitted to the next STCDSS. All these proposals need your action and guidance. These measures stand well as
contributions to the enhancement of AU efforts to silence the guns in Africa as part of the process to create conditions for building a conflict-free Africa.

c. **Third**, the AU Policy on Conduct and Discipline for PSO and the AU Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) for PSO were adopted by the AU PSC during its 813th meeting held on 29 November 2018. These policies are currently being implemented, including through their incorporation into current and new policies, guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Multi National Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (MNJTF). Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the Declaration of the 11th meeting of the STCDSS, the Commission requests Member States to provide updates on their efforts to incorporate these policies into their national legislation and training efforts.
d. **Fourth**, and as per the STCDSS directive, the Commission disseminated the draft Africa Border Governance Strategy and incorporated the comments and inputs received from Member States. The amended document is therefore submitted to this meeting for consideration and adoption.

e. **Fifth**, the AU continues to support implementation of the mandates of current AU-mandated and authorised PSOs and requests Member States their unwavering commitment and solidarity towards the achievement of their key priorities. This will contribute to silencing the guns and consolidate current efforts underway in support of peace efforts across the continent - from the Horn of Africa to the Sahel region and to the gulf of Guinea, as elsewhere in the continent.

Chairperson,

Generals and representatives of Member States!
Allow me also to provide updates on other key achievements recorded in implementing other key decisions of the Union relating to peace and security in the continent:

a. **First**, the appointment by the Chairperson of the AUC of a High Representative on Silencing the Guns, supported by a team that coordinates the efforts of the various departments of the AUC, is helping the Commission to facilitate implementation of priority initiatives in line with the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa. The Framework developed by the PSC on Silencing the Guns in 2018, was adopted by the Security Council as Resolution 2457 in February 2019. This resolution serves towards enhancing the support of the UN and its agencies to the AU in the implementation of this flagship project.

b. **Second**, a number of ASF policy processes are also being facilitated, including the draft ASF Exercise Planning Guidelines to guide and harmonise exercise
planning and conduct amongst the AU and RECs/RMs approved by the 11th ASF Training Implementation Workshop held in October 2019 in Windhoek, Namibia. The draft ASF Pledged Capabilities Verification Guidelines will also help in facilitating the conduct of periodic verifications to ensure predictable and ASF readiness for rapid deployment. The 12th Training Implementation Workshop was also conducted and provided recommendations relating to: (i) the review of current ASF training architecture to ensure it is more responsive to emerging threats and realities; (ii) facilitate the conduct of ASF component-specific exercises; (iii) explore lessons-learned exercises on ad hoc coalitions; and (iv) facilitate the ASF Planning Elements of AU, RECs/RMs to meet at least once a year to enhance cooperation, coordination and complementarity of effort.

c. **Third**, a draft AU Policy on Management of Recovered Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in PSOs has been developed to improve the management of Small
Arms and Light Weapons recovered from armed groups during the conduct of peace support operations. This policy, once adopted, will contribute to efforts to reduce the illicit circulation of SALW within and outside the areas of responsibilities of any AU PSO. This draft Policy was developed pursuant to the communique of the 584\textsuperscript{th} meeting of the PSC, held on 29 March 2016, and the implementation process of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa.

d. **Fourth**, a draft Regulation on Data Processing for the African Police Communication System (AFSECOM) has been developed by the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL). These Regulations provide the principles and rules governing processing and sharing of data on criminal activities to enhance coordination among Member States in the fight against transnational organized crime. This is part of efforts to address issues of terrorism and illicit arms proliferation.
and illicit financial flows which continue to fuel conflicts in the continent.

e. **Fifth**, we would like to inform this meeting that the implementation of the Maputo Strategic Work plan on the enhancement of the ASF will end in 2020. In this regard, this meeting needs to provide direction to the Commission regarding the development of a new five (5) year workplan on the enhancement of the ASF for consideration by the next STCDSS meeting.

All these efforts fall within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture and are part of the activities aimed at achieving the noble vision of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020 - to ensure a peaceful and stable Africa in line with the letter and spirit of Agenda 2063. In this regard, we continue to rely on the STCDSS guidance on how we can further enhance on-going efforts for the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa.
More specifically concerning the AU Assembly decision that the continental theme for the year 2020 is Silencing the Guns: Creating conducive conditions for Africa’s development, one can say that the year 2020 will represent an acceleration and concentration phase within the long-spanned AU flagship project on Silencing the Guns in Africa. We are cognisant of the fact that several drivers, actions and effects, ignite and fuel conflicts; introduce, and increase the illegal presence and use of guns in Africa. In this context, the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security, is the most institutionally and physically well equipped entity, at the operational levels, to make its great contribution to silencing the guns a reality in our Continent. We all aspire that our Africa becomes conflict-free. A combination of Member States defence, Safety and Security capabilities working in the field, would constitute a great asset to buttress our efforts to realise a conflict-free Africa.

Over the last two years, Member States may recall that the Commission, especially the Peace and Security Department, which works closely with this Specialised
Technical Committee, working under the guidance and direction of the Member States, the Assembly and the PSC, undertook a number of initiatives geared towards silencing the Guns. The Department continues to develop and enhance the policies, structures, mechanisms and resources to make ASF rapidly deployable. In this respect, we continue to enhance the role of women and youth in peace process.

A number of Member States have put at the disposal of the Commission more resources as required including the Air Lifts. Partners, including China and Turkey delivered equipment worth more that 30m USD to equip our ASF. It is expected that ASF Regional Logistics Depots start getting established to enhance ASF deployability.

While we review activities of operationalization of the ASF, looking at on-going AU mandated and authorised regional operations in the continent, we must not loose focus on the growing threat of terrorism, mercenarism, illicit proliferation of small arms (as what happened in Sahel, following the revolution in Libya) and
transnational illicit trade and crime. As practitioners, we must make sure that capacities of the security institutions of Members States and regions are well developed, guided and coordinated to deal with these emerging threats.

Thus among other outcomes, this meeting is expected to come out with tangible proposals on what the STCDSS process could practically do to the implementation of the theme of Silencing The Guns in the course of 2020.

An emerging consensus amongst Member States is that the Continent must focus its energy on developing what binds it and avoid creating new concepts that diverts its attention and energy. The Continent must make strengthening its capabilities a priority, and think of solving its own problems first, before thinking of other international capabilities. As the old African saying goes, “one has to put off the fire in his or her own house, before going to help a neighbour whose house has caught fire”. In this line, therefore, one has quickly in mind actions aimed at improving the
deployability of the ASF and strengthening controls against entry of illegal weapons into Africa, tied to doing the same to stem out the tide of illicit proliferation of the arms, especially amongst non-state actors, in the continent.

While this experts meeting will be looking at some of the key documents and ways to strengthen the Continent capabilities towards silencing the Guns, it should think proactively on how the national and regional security institutions should work to coordinate within their own national territories, across our RECs/RMS and in the continent itself, like in this meeting.

Thus, we look forward to the usual constructive deliberations and trust that this meeting will continue to stir us in the right direction to achieve the objectives of the Union. In particular, let me emphasize that the Commission provides you the support and updates needed. The STCDSS provides guidance on crucial peace and security issues,
more so, on silencing the guns at this critical juncture, given the December 2020 deadline set by our Leaders.

I thank you for your kind attention!