Statement by the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department
1084th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council on Living Together in Peace
17 May 2022: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Delivered by Dr. Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, Director for Conflict Management Directorate, Political Affairs Peace and Security Department

Your Excellency Ambassador Churchill Ewumbue-MONONO, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cameroon to the African Union and Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council for the month of May 2022

Excellencies, Esteemed Members of the Peace and Security Council,

Excellencies, Representatives of AU Member States,

Excellencies, Representatives of the RECs/RMs,

Excellencies Representatives of UNESCO and Amani Africa,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

First, on behalf of the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador, Bankole Adeoye, I wish to thank Cameroon, for including this important item on the Provisional Programme of Work of the Council for May 2022.

As you are aware, Excellencies, in 2017, the United Nations General Assembly declared 16 May of each year as the International Day of Living Together in Peace, as a means of promoting peace, tolerance of diversity, inclusion, understanding, and solidarity across the world, following the efforts deployed by Algeria. Today, we are here to celebrate this very important day.

Each year, on this occasion, this esteemed Council hosts a session to reaffirm the commitments to international cooperation as a critical approach to solving the economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian or security challenges our Continent is facing and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The session also serves as an
opportunity to encourage Member States and the wider international community to continue to foster and promote national reconciliation and tolerance of diversity with a view to promoting stability and sustainable growth, including by engaging with communities, religious groups, and other related stakeholders, through community service initiatives, and by promoting mutual forgiveness and compassion.

However, the world and Africa in particular, continues to face enormous challenges that threaten the realization of the noble goal of Living Together in Peace. Among others, I wish to highlight some of these challenges as follows:

**First**, the increasing security threats across the Continent, including terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organized crime and illicit financial flows, coupled with the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government, continue to undermine unity, prosperity and collective aspirations of the Africa that we genuinely desire and deserve. The negative impact and implications of violent conflicts are far reaching with diverse humanitarian, material, financial, socio-economic and psychological costs.

Our collective desire and commitment to achieve a peaceful and secure Africa, has culminated in the adoption of the Agenda 2063. This is because, peace, security and stability are not only part of the aspirations of Agenda 2063 but also because they are necessary preconditions for sustainable development and for the common good of all Africans. It is, therefore, time to reaffirm our commitment to materialize our Agenda 2063 “the Africa We Want”, in particular, to work hard towards silencing the guns by 2030 and rekindle hope to the vulnerable communities in the Continent.

**Second**, the world continues to face unprecedented health, socio-economic crises which have been aggravated by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters. This crisis has had a devastating effect on the global order, impacting social, economic and political efforts across the globe including Africa. This crisis has also brought to light deep-seated disparities in the world and glaring challenges that can lead to social insecurity. The crisis has further demonstrated the hollowness of the global health rhetoric of equity, as well as the weaknesses of a health security-driven global agenda. The lessons from the fight against the pandemic teaches us how the world needs to come together and demonstrate the critical need to reimagine and repair the broken systems of global health, solidarity and equity among nations.

**Third**, climate change and global warming have continued unabated. Consequently, many regions of the world and Africa in particular, have been affected greatly in recent times by the adverse effects of climate change, including by El Nino-related droughts, floods, erratic rainfalls, desertification, and the attendant humanitarian disasters, including food insecurity, internal displacement of populations, and loss of livelihoods of farming communities. Here, I should underscore that no country or region is immune to climate change and that no country or region can successfully address climate change challenges individually.
In fact, joint international and coordinated efforts in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change becomes a must. As for the African context, Member States, RECs/RMs and partners should actively pursue integrated approaches to boost climate change resilience and to pay particular attention to prevention and further improve communication on climate change phenomena so as to effectively enhance disaster preparedness and risk reduction. There is also a need for RECs/RMs to share their experiences, lessons and best practices in addressing the adverse effects of climate change, including to develop more effective synergies at all level in order to ensure better coordinated efforts.

**Fourth,** Africa has continued to demonstrate its commitment to multilateralism, grounding its actions on mutually beneficial cooperation in addressing the complex challenges of peace, security and development as envisaged in the AU Constitutive Act and the UN Charter. Over the years, Africa strongly supported multilateralism and the work to improve global governance in international development cooperation, including safeguarding the international system with the United Nations at its core as Africa continued to adhere to the universal values of humanity - peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom.

This Council would recall that, in the last three to four years, multilateralism has been challenged as evidenced in the global trading and economic management system, as well as the recent non-equity health access in the COVID-19 pandemic response, due in part to isolationist and protectionist policies adopted by some countries. This underlines the need to strengthen international cooperation and uphold multilateralism towards peaceful coexistence, critical to the maintenance of the word peace, stability and shared development and prosperity.

**Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen**

In a world in which we regularly witness conflict and tensions, acts of hatred, rejection of others and discrimination, the pursuit of peace and the will to live together harmoniously is more crucial than ever, and it demands international cooperation and solidarity. It is, therefore, imperative to address all forms of religious, ethnic, racial and cultural marginalization and exclusion through, among others, national reconciliation, inter-religious dialogue and transitional justice. We must therefore act urgently and collectively to build a shared future where we can all live together in peace and harmony.

I thank you.