8TH ANNUAL RETREAT OF AFRICAN UNION
SPECIAL ENVOYS AND MEDIATORS ON THE
PROMOTION OF PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY

N’DJAMENA, REPUBLIC OF CHAD
24–25 OCTOBER 2017

N’DJAMENA DECLARATION ON THE EMERGING GLOBAL ORDER,
MULTILATERALISM AND AFRICA
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1. The 8th Annual High-Level Retreat of African Union Special Envoys and Mediators on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa was convened in N’Djamena, Republic of Chad, from 24 to 25 October 2017, on the theme “The Emerging Global Order, Multilateralism and Africa”. The Retreat was organized by the African Union Commission and hosted by the Government of the Republic of Chad. The African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes provided technical support for the Retreat.

2. The Retreat was officially opened by H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission, who provided a detailed assessment of the peace and security landscape in Africa, including the functioning of the various institutions that Africa has put in place under the African Peace and Security Architecture and offered guidance on the deliberations to take place during the Retreat. The opening ceremony also featured statements by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Amb. Smaïl Chergui and H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the UN General Assembly and Foreign Minister of Slovakia, through a recorded message, as well as by H.E. Amb. Haile Menkerios, UN Under-Secretary General and Head of the UN Office to the African Union. Representing H.E. Idriss Déby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad, and on behalf of the Government of Chad, H.E. Mr. Pahimi Padake Albert, Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad provided welcoming remarks.

3. H.E. Mr. Hifikepunye Lucas Pohamba, former President of the Republic of Namibia and newly appointed Chair of the AU Panel of the Wise, and General Abdulsalami Abubakar, member of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan provided the keynote speeches of the Retreat focusing on the historical perspective and assessment of Africa’s place in the global system, reflecting on the multiple facets of multilateralism, and the risks and opportunities for the African continent of the newly emerging world order.

4. The Retreat brought together former Heads of State, Senior Representatives of the AU Commission and its Special Envoys/Representatives and High Representatives, Mediators and Members of the Panel of the Wise, as well as members of the Pan African Network of the Wise. Moreover, the Retreat was attended by several Special Representatives and Envoys of the UN Secretary-General and Senior Representatives of UN agencies; the League of Arab States; senior officials representing the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF); the European Union (EU) and bilateral partners. Also in attendance were representatives of civil society organisations, think tanks and academia.

5. Held within the context of the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the on-going AU reform process, this Retreat constituted an additional step to give practical expression to the letter and spirit of the OAU/AU 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 25 May 2013, in which African leaders pledged not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans and undertook to end all wars in Africa by Year 2020. Furthermore, the N’Djamena Retreat aimed at generating further momentum for advancing the vision of Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, as elaborated in the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa.
During the two-day Retreat, discussions focused on a wide range of issues revolving around this year’s theme “The Emerging Global Order, Multilateralism and Africa”. Particular focus was made on global politics and governance issues, including the emerging challenges to multilateralism, as developed since 1945 with the creation of the United Nations, the state of international peace and security, as well as issues of economic and environmental governance. Participants reviewed the situation of the currently emerging global order with a view to identifying opportunities for African multilateral organisations and challenges to be overcome. In so doing, the Retreat reviewed Africa’s potential for tackling its challenges, particularly in conflict prevention, conflict management and sustaining peace. Furthermore, the Retreat reflected on Africa’s experience and potential in setting and implementing the global agenda in full partnership with the RECs/RMs and its strategic international partners, particularly the United Nations, the European Union and the League of Arab States, as well as bilateral partners.

Participants expressed deep concern at the evolving uncertainty regarding the future of the multilateral international order and its negative impact on the state of international peace and security. They further noted with serious concern the deepening rifts in international relations, questioning the extent to which the fulfilment of existing norms and established practices of international and regional organizations can still be respected and supported. Participants also expressed deep concern over the emerging pattern of unilateral actions by some countries that undermines the very foundations of multilateralism, which, deplorably, is taking place amidst prevailing conflicts and threats to international peace and security, including terrorism and violent extremism, trafficking and use of illicit arms, drug and human trafficking, irregular migration and the consequences of climate change. Furthermore, the participants called for robust measures against the scourge of illicit financial flows as this is one of the factors contributing to the persistence of violent conflicts and corruption in the Continent.

Having reflected on the relationship between globalization and multilateralism, the participants acknowledged that at times, regional organizations may not be able to tame the contemporary forces of globalization, as witnessed in the global financial crisis which unfolded across the globe in 2007. In this context, being more proactive in international fora, co-ordinating and harmonizing positions in Africa, as well as with other regional organizations, is an imperative.

Participants underscored that a rule-based multilateralism remains the prime mechanism for enhancing cooperation in order to address the global issues of peace and security, economic and environmental challenges. Whilst affirming the need to further democratize the UN system, they reaffirmed the primacy of the United Nations as the global forum for legitimate, effective and inclusive multilateralism to address the multiple challenges facing the international community. While recalling Africa’s role and contributions in reshaping the jurisprudence of International Law, they also expressed support to existing legal norms, as well as to a genuine process of codification and progressive development of International Law in order to promote friendly relations and cooperation between UN member states and the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts.

Participants noted that Africa has been both a major beneficiary and crucial contributor to the evolution and functioning of multilateralism. More specifically, they highlighted that Africa is a key player in global multilateral efforts. They recalled the central role of multilateralism in Africa’s decolonisation and post-independence experiences, including the struggle against apartheid.
Participants emphasised that Africa, through the African Union and the RECs/RMs, has a central role to play in countering the emerging erosion of multilateralism in accordance with the following principles: (i) respect for African ownership and priority setting in the spirit of mutual respect; (ii) flexible and innovative application of the principle of subsidiarity; (iii) mutual respect and adherence to the principle of comparative advantage; and, (iv) division of labour underpinned by complementarity.

11. Participants emphasized that the AU has a key role to play in this regard and can contribute to alleviate the multilateralism crisis. They acknowledged that the more AU is involved in elaborating decisions and strategies concerning the Continent within all international settings, the greater will be the chances of faithfully translating the envisaged solutions on the ground. Therefore, they emphasized the importance of building a strong and strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in order to enhance their joint efforts to promote peace, security and stability on the African continent. They welcomed with satisfaction the actions taken by the UN Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission, upon assuming duty, to consolidate and further enhance the strategic partnership between the two Organizations. In this regard, they welcomed the signing by the two leaders, on 19 April 2017, of a Joint Framework for UN-AU Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. They also stressed the need for all strategic partnerships to genuinely make significant contributions to meet the needs of all African people. They further encouraged all international actors to support Africa’s endeavour towards implementing the UN Agenda 2030 and AU Agenda 2063.

12. Participants welcomed the initiatives launched by the UN Secretary-General to reform the UN and preserve its role as a key actor of effective multilateralism. They emphasized that these reforms must clearly identify decisive and bold elements which can challenge the status quo in order to restore confidence in the capacity of the UN to stay relevant in face of multiple and severe criticisms. They also underlined the importance for these reform initiatives to keep a special focus on Africa as one of the main priorities of the UN with special attention to its specific needs as identified in Agenda 2063, as well as the importance of further enhancing and broadening the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations.

13. Participants underscored that the scope of UN reforms should not be confined to the Secretariat aspects, and called for the conclusion of the long-stalled processes concerning, respectively, the revitalization of the UN General Assembly and the reform of the UN Security Council. In this regard, they emphasized the importance of restoring the key role of the UN General Assembly as the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN, as well as the urgency of concluding the reform of the UN Security Council to correct the historical injustice done to Africa and to make it effectively democratic, transparent and truly representative in accordance with the Ezulwini Consensus (2005) and the Sirte Declaration (2005). They stressed that Security Council reform in the twenty first century would be a triumph of multilateralism.

14. Participants underscored the need for Africa to make full use of all existing means, channels and platforms in order to more effectively voice the Continent’s priorities at the international level. More specifically, to ensure that Africa is an effective player in global affairs, participants emphasized that African countries have no alternatives, other than to act in unity and solidarity to leverage on various international frameworks. They also emphasized the need to fully utilize the African Members
of the UN Security Council (A3) to spearhead African Common Positions on Peace and Security and to intensify their engagement to take leadership in shaping the architecture of UNSC Resolutions on African issues. Furthermore, while acknowledging the role of the African RECs/RMs and the need to further enhance cohesion between them and the AU, they called for Africa speaking with one voice to enhance its effectiveness and continental leadership responsibility.

15. Participants underscored that the African Union should enhance its engagements to safeguard multilateralism, while acknowledging and promoting the necessary reforms in the Continental Organization to ensure its effectiveness. They underscored that AU Decisions must not remain simply aspirational statements with no real force on the ground, and that there should be serious thinking on the best way/mechanism to ensure that these commitments are respected and effectively implemented. In this respect, the participants agreed that implementation of AU decisions, policies and instruments constitutes the larger part of the effort aiming at silencing the guns in Africa.

16. Participants emphasized the need to strengthen the full participation of civil society organizations, including women and youth in efforts to promote peace and security, as well as in the socio-economic development of Africa. In this regard, they welcomed the ongoing efforts of the AU to operationalize the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Peace Mediation (FemWise-Africa), an initiative to increase the impact and influence of women in peace processes in Africa.

17. While recognizing Africa’s potential to continue promoting and safeguarding multilateralism, the participants acknowledged the need for the Continent and its people to foster and enhance the kind of entrepreneurship that would avail the requisite economic and technological capabilities to ensure that Africa becomes a credible and indispensable player in global affairs.

18. Participants commended the AU Commission for the successful conduct of the 8th Retreat of Special Envoys and Mediators, emphasizing its value as a unique opportunity for candid inter-institutional dialogue and reflection on continental and global peace and security issues, especially conflict prevention, peace-making, peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

19. Participants expressed their sincere gratitude to the people and Government of the Republic of Chad for their warm welcome and hospitality, as well as for the excellent facilities provided to ensure the success of the Retreat.