INAUGURAL JOINT CONSULTATION
BETWEEN THE AU PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL (PSC)
AND ECOWAS MEDIATION AND SECURITY COUNCIL (MSC) AT
AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL

OPENING REMARKS BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JAINABA JAGNE, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA TO THE AFRICAN UNION AND STAND-IN CHAIRPERSON OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL FOR APRIL 2024

ABUJA, NIGERIA, 24 APRIL 2024
Excellency Co-Chair, Ambassador Musa Nuhu, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to ECOWAS, Chair of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council;


Excellency, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security

Excellency, Ambassador Abdel-Fatau Musah, ECOWAS Commissioner Political Affairs Peace and Security

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Sisters and brothers from the media fraternity

All protocols observed, good morning,

At the outset, allow me to introduce myself as we are meeting for the first time in this format as members of the AUPSC and ECOWAS MSC. My name is Jainaba Jagne, I am the Permanent Representative of The Gambia to the African Union and the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council for the month of April 2024. I will be co-chairing this important inaugural meeting today with my brother Ambassador Musa Nuhu, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to ECOWAS and Chair of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council who we just heard from. My brother Ambassador Nuhu, I thank you very much for your efforts towards making this inaugural meeting happen. Let me also express our gratitude to you for being our generous host.

Excellencies,

Today, we are not only marking history but we are also making history. This is the first joint meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Economic Community of West African States Mediation and Security Council, twenty (20) years since the establishment of the PSC. I must say that it is indeed a great honor for me to co-chair this historic inaugural meeting today, a meeting that was long awaited. I welcome you all here this morning in my capacity as co-chair.

We are meeting here today based on the mandates vested in our two Councils, the AU and ECOWAS, to address peace and security challenges in the Western region. We understand that the PSC has a continental mandate, and this mandate, in line with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA), must be complemented by the efforts of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs). It is for this reason that we need to emphasise the critical role and absolute necessity of our collaboration and coordination in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts.

Excellencies,

Our continent is currently faced with the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism and the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of governments, which has serious negative
consequences for peace, security, and stability in our communities. Unfortunately, data shows that the western part of the continent is the most affected by both issues. Four (4) out of six (6) AU Member States suspended due to coup d’etats are countries from West Africa. This has never happened in the history of the African Union, and I believe in the history of the ECOWAS as well. According to the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism, the West African region is the most affected by the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism on the continent, in terms of attacks, deaths, and casualties. Together, we can reverse this unfortunate trend.

These events are happening despite significant efforts made over the years by our governments, and the continental and regional institutions, particularly the AU and RECs/RMs, to promote and consolidate democracy as well as the entrenchment of various normative instruments adopted by the AU to address these challenges, including targeted sanctions against coup plotters.

As such, this meeting will be an opportunity for our two Councils to brainstorm on the effective means and ways of preventing and responding to the recurrences of UCGs. We must find alternative options and tools to effectively address the crises and challenges that beset our continent.

It is also a very good occasion to further reflect on the proliferation of terrorist groups that threaten peace, security and development, as well as the territorial integrity of the member states directly affected by these unfortunate events. This underscores the critical need for stronger cooperation between the PSC and RECs/RMs to enhance efforts to address security challenges posed by the spread of terrorism and violent extremism.

Excellencies,

This is one of the first meetings of the PSC engaging the RECs/RMs, and I promise you that we will not stop here. The intention is to regularize these meetings with all the RECs/RMs. It is also our aim to strengthen our relations by ensuring that we have regular and close consultations on peace and security matters. We need to work as one. Our one strong common voice will enhance our continental and regional efforts and prevent or deter any external interference. By such actions, we will own our peace agenda.

Our agenda today ranges from discussing issues of unconstitutional changes of government and terrorism to exchanging ideas on how we should mobilize our own resources to fund our peace agenda. I believe this is doable once we demonstrate our strong collective commitment and political will to succeed. At the AU, we have started the process of developing modalities for the use of the Peace Fund as directed by the Executive Council. In the mean time, however, we are in a position to use the Crisis Reserve Facility to make specific and targeted interventions in areas of need. This year, Member States took a historic decision and raised funds to fund ATMIS from Member States contributions. This is one of the key achievements our Union. We need to do more. Joint fundraising between the AU and ECOWAS is one of the possible issues to discuss and explore.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate the urgent need to regularize this kind of engagement we are having today. We can even agree on how often we should meet and whenever possible to consult on issues that are on the agenda of the PSC and MSC ahead of our meetings to synergize our decision-making processes.
As I conclude, I expect this meeting to re-energize our efforts on leveraging preventive diplomacy to forestall UCGs, and terrorism and violent extremism; strategize joint actions by our two Councils for the countries in the West African Region; and enhance coordination, synergies, and regular engagements.

I thank you all for your attention.