STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RAMTANE LAMAMRA,
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TO THE 6TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT
ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

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Honorable Dr. Moussa Idriss Ndele, President of the Pan-African Parliament,

Honorable Members of the Parliament,

Distinguished Guests

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning, and welcome to Addis Ababa

On behalf of the AU Commission and on my own behalf, I would like to first of all, express my sincere gratitude to the Pan African Parliament (PAP) for inviting me to address this august gathering, focusing on the status of peace and security in Africa.

This session could not have been held at a better time than now, when we are starting a new year but also with indelible memories of the eventful 2011, a year we will always remember as “the year of unprecedented political changes in parts of Africa and the rest of the world”. I hope 2012 will be a better year in terms of consolidating the gains made and preventing crises and conflicts by addressing their root causes.

In discharging its mandate of promoting peace, security and stability on the African continent, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) continues to engage in efforts aimed at preventing, managing and lastingly resolving conflicts and crises situations in different parts of the continent. The implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is on course. The AU, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RMs) continue to deploy robust collective efforts towards the full operationalization of the African Standby Force and the Continental Early Warning System. A fully operational APSA will create more opportunities for conflict prevention and effective resolution of conflicts on the continent. As a matter of fact, prevention should become the linchpin of all AU-RECs/RMs peace efforts.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Since your 4th Session, where I spoke on the same subject, we have realized some progress in some situations, while in other situations there are still outstanding challenges to be addressed.

The African peace and security landscape is ever changing. In addition to the traditional threats to peace, security and stability on the continent, a new pattern of threats is emerging, which demands from us, flexible, appropriate, timely and robust responses. Indeed the popular uprisings that swept through parts of North Africa last year, offer many compelling lessons for the present and for the future. We need to be proactive rather than reactive. We need to make sure that our policies fit hand-in-glove with the legitimate demands and aspirations of the people. Furthermore, we need to address poverty, unemployment and destitution as well as
the social inequalities prevailing in our countries, because these were found to be at the tap root of these uprisings.

Tunisia has made some notable and confidence building progress, following the demise of the previous regime early last year. The Constituent Assembly elections were held successfully and a transitional government was constituted to work on a new constitution with a view to comprehensively address all the factors that led to the revolution. In Egypt, although some progress has been achieved including the holding of legislative elections, we are still witnessing recurrent demonstrations in parts of the country, and mainly in Cairo’s Tahrir Square. The Commission will continue to work with the Egyptian authorities and other stakeholders and to extend every possible support for the successful completion of the transition process, which remains on track. It is worth noting that the democratic space that has been opened by the revolution is irreversible. Understandably, building democracy is not an event, but a process.

The Commission continues to monitor the situation in Libya. Although progress is now being achieved in restoring peace, security and stability in that country, there are still a number of challenges to be urgently addressed, ranging from the daunting task of national reconciliation, disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating (DDR) all former combatants to Security Sector Reform (SSR), so that there is one integrated national defence force, national and public safety and proper security institutions/structures. The AU is in the process of establishing a Liaison Office in Tripoli, to be headed by a Special Representative, to assist, in cooperation with the partners, in the efforts aimed at stabilizing the situation in Libya, promoting national reconciliation and inclusivity, and facilitating the transition process towards democratic institutions.

In Cote d’Ivoire, constitutional order was restored following the legitimate accession to power, of President Alassane Ouattarra, the elected President. To ensure the successful conclusion of the institutional normalization process, parliamentary elections were held on 11 December 2011, while the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR) established in September 2011, to promote reconciliation has continued to carry out its mandate. The AU continues to accompany the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Cote d’Ivoire, with emphasis being placed on national reconciliation and peace-building to prevent relapse back to conflict. Other remaining challenges facing that country include disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as security sector reform.

As far as Darfur is concerned, there has been some progress in the implementation of the Doha Agreement. The Darfur Peace Process is also proceeding well, thanks to the relentless efforts of the UN-AU hybrid Mission (UNAMID) and the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP). The political, security and humanitarian situation in Darfur has significantly improved, thanks to the efforts of UNAMID and other international bodies as well as the Government of Sudan.

Regarding South Sudan, I would like to indicate that, since my last briefing to this Parliament, on 17 May 2011, some significant achievements have been recorded. On 9 July 2011, South Sudan declared its independence and effectively seceded from the North to become Africa’s
'newest and youngest' State. On 15 August 2011, South Sudan formally joined the AU to become its 54th member. However, the country is still facing other challenges that include cattle rustling, proliferation of small and light weapons, disarmament of thousands of civilians, as well as DDR and SSR processes.

Regarding Sudan-South Sudan relations, a number of outstanding issues remain unresolved, within the context of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, post-referendum and post-independence arrangements. These include the citizenship of the Southerners living in the North and Northerners living in the South; border security; financial arrangements; Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Abyei; access by the South to the oil pipeline running through the North, just to mention a few. The AUHIP is working with the parties to ensure the implementation of the June 2011 Abyei Transitional Agreement, after which it will present proposals to the presidents of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan, regarding the final status of this region. The AUHIP is currently facilitating ongoing consultations with all the parties with a view to finding mutually acceptable lasting solutions to all the outstanding issues.

In Nigeria, the religious extremist group, Boko Haram, is threatening normalcy, peace and security, particularly in the north of the country. It is fanning religious extremism and acrimony. We need to urgently address this extremist and terrorist menace in support of the Government’s efforts aimed at resolving all security issues in that country.

In Somalia, a unique window of opportunity was opened following the defeat of Al Shabab in Mogadishu, early in August 2011, as a result of the combined effort of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces. Nearly 99% of Mogadishu has now been liberated from Al Shabab. Ethiopia and Kenya have also intervened to assist the AMISOM and TFG forces to ensure that the momentum gained in Mogadishu is not lost and also to bring more decisive pressure to bear on Al Shabaab throughout the country. However, the humanitarian crisis affecting the country still compels our sustained attention and that of the rest of the international community. There is also need to ensure the security of humanitarian corridors.

At its 307th meeting, the PSC endorsed the new Strategic Concept for future AMISOM operations, which was also forwarded to the UNSC for its endorsement. Our ultimate aim is to ensure that the necessary resources in terms of force enablers and multipliers are timely availed to AMISOM to enable it to implement the new strategy successfully in support of the political objectives set for the Mogadishu Roadmap. The TFG Forces should also be empowered to play an active role in the new and evolving security landscape.

On behalf of the Commission, I would like to pay tribute to the AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), in particular Burundi and Uganda for their commitment to the cause of peace and security on the continent and Somalia in specifically. I would also like to thank Djibouti for beginning to deploy its forces in Somalia and to appeal to all Member States to contribute in building the capacity of AMISOM so that ‘African Solutions to African Problems’ becomes a reality. I also salute the already significant contribution made by Kenya in the Middle and Lower
Jubba and Gedo regions, jointly with the TFG forces, as well as by Ethiopia in support of the TFG and AMISOM forces, which have contributed to the weakening of Al Shabaab extremists.

In Madagascar, SADC has made significant progress, with AU’s support, in facilitating the process leading to the return to constitutional normalcy. Elsewhere, notably, in Niger, Guinea, Comoros and Burundi, we are sparing no effort in ensuring that our post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction endeavors effectively prevent the relapse back to conflict and crisis.

The peace process in Western Sahara remains at a stalemate. On its part, and alongside the UN, the AU continues to strive towards a lasting solution to the impasse. It was in this perspective that the Chairperson of the Commission and I undertook a visit, on 13 December 2011, for consultations with the President of the Sahrawi Republic on the eve of the convening of the 13th Congress of the Polisario Front.

I commend the Republic of Zambia for the smooth transition following peaceful democratic elections that saw President Michael Sata smoothly succeeding former president, Mr. Rupiah Banda. Smooth transitions should be the hallmark of our elections. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the elections faced some challenges, but stability is gradually returning to the country. Every effort must be made to consolidate peace and reconciliation in the country.

Mr. President, Honourable Members,

One of the main security threats confronting the continent today, is the proliferation of weapons in North Africa and the Sahel region. Related to it is the growing threat posed by armed criminal and terrorist groups including the activities of the Lords Resistance (LRA) and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Indeed, Africa, like other parts of the world, continues to face the complex interrelated threats of terrorism, piracy and transnational organized crime. These threats require concerted efforts of the entire international community, including PAP, to effectively combat.

It is therefore imperative that we make renewed efforts to address the root causes of conflict and to do so in a holistic manner in order to avert crises. We must scrupulously implement the existing instruments, particularly those relating to democracy, elections, governance, and rule of law and human rights. The recent increase in election-related and governance-linked crises is a trend that must be arrested before it reaches unmanageable proportions. The deepening of democracy and improving political and economic governance could significantly contribute to our efforts to effectively prevent conflicts, and ensuring durable peace security and stability on the Continent.

May I, therefore, appeal to the Pan-African Parliament to deploy the necessary efforts to ensure accelerated signature, ratification and domestication of AU instruments relating to democracy, good governance, and peace and security on the Continent by all Member States that have not yet done so. The fact that PAP is composed of representatives of ruling and opposition parties on the continent, while at the same time being the representative body of
African peoples, equips it with necessary capacity to influence governance and election trends for the better. Undoubtedly, PAP could play a locomotive role in the AU’s Make Peace Happen Campaign, which aims at promoting a culture of peace throughout the continent.

It is my hope that this session will go a long way in placing our Continent on a track of renewed momentum and more vigorous initiatives aimed at democratization and democratic consolidation and structural prevention of conflicts.

Let us all work harder to make Africa the peaceful, developed and integrated continent that we, as Africans, aspire to, for the benefit of future generations.

It is my well-considered opinion that the Pan African Parliament will be able to fulfill all its potential for the benefit of Africa only once our Member States grant legislative powers to this august Institution within the process of integration and democratic consolidation of the continent. I personally hope that this historic decision will be made sooner rather than later.

I wish the 6th Ordinary Session of the Pan African Parliament every success, and to all of you a happy and prosperous 2012.

I thank you