INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BANKOLE ADEOYE, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE INDUCTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

MASERU, LESOTHO, 23 MARCH 2022
Excellency, MATŠEPO RAMAKOAE, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations of the Kingdom of Lesotho;

Excellency and dear brother, Prof. MAFA SEJANAMANE, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho and Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council for the month of March;

Excellencies, Members of the Peace and Security Council;

Excellencies, newly elected Members of the Peace and Security Council;

Excellency Catherine Mwangi, High Commissioner of the Republic of Kenya to South Africa and former PR to the AU - an alumnus of the Council

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Maseru today conjures a significant symbolism for the Induction Program of the African Union Peace and Security Council.

The Kingdom of Lesotho has a special place in African history, not just because of her breathtaking natural beauty, rich water resources and amazing culture which testify to the deep roots of the Mountain Kingdom, but its defiance in the face of oppression and injustice contributed to the victory over apartheid.

Lesotho served as the nucleus of African resistance to the inhumanity wreaked by apartheid, racism and racial discrimination - As warriors in heart and mind, hedged in 100% on all sides by the brutal and brutish strength of the apartheid regime, the good people of this mountain kingdom stood up for Liberty and Freedom; Justice and Right Action; Equity and Equality.

Against all the odds, Africa triumphed over injustice because countries like Lesotho stood up to be counted.

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, we salute you, the great Kingdom of Lesotho. And in so doing, we also appreciate the contributions of all African Union Member States to the enthronement of Fundamental Freedoms and Democracy, as we contend today with the new and emerging security threats of unimaginable proportions.

I would also like to express our profound gratitude to our gracious and hospitable host, the Government and the People of the Kingdom of Lesotho, for the warmth and generosity.

The Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) for the month of March 2022, H.E. Ambassador Prof. Mafa SEJANAMANE, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho, deserves special mention. I applaud your sterling and inspiring leadership of this Esteemed Council and your efforts towards organising the PSC Induction Program.

It is indeed my special honour and with great pleasure that I address you, on the occasion of the induction of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the Union.
Excellencies,

Of utmost significance at this juncture is to extend, again, my warmest and heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected Member States for the PSC. I am fully confident that your election brings with it the essential vigour and renewed commitment in the Pan Africanist spirit of finding African Solutions to African Problems to achieve our collective security given the multifaceted threats bedeviling our Continent presently.

The African political governance, peace and security landscape is witnessing unprecedented challenges. Thus, requiring a commonality of purpose and determination, dexterity in pursuit of diplomacy to prevent and resolve conflicts, the boldness and strategic leadership of unbounded dimension and the tenacity of a brave, courageous and decisive Peace and Security Council. This will help foster the promotion and preservation of the stability we cherish towards our shared prosperity in 1 East African Member State and 3 West African Countries.

Excellences / Hon Minister; Chairperson of the PSC - and Distinguished Delegates

With a true sense of duty, I faithfully acknowledge and commend, without exception, the outgoing PSC Members for the great work achieved during their term. The outgoing Council held 85 official sessions in 2021 (the highest number of engagements in the Peace and Security Council since 2018) - this contributed immeasurably to setting the high-impact pace for the peace agenda on the Continent.

The outgoing Council members doggedly fought against the menace of terrorism and violent extremism. They equally recorded the historic landmark of standing up firmly against the resurgence of military autocratic rule. They also raised the bar in the condemnation and suspension of the perpetrators of unconstitutional changes of political power.

I believe very strongly that the outgoing Council creditably defended and safeguarded the inherent principles of democracy and good governance within the dictates of the Protocol establishing the PSC and the AU Constitutive Act. The just concluded AU-inspired Reflection Forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Government successfully hosted in Accra, Ghana, from 15 – 17 March 2022, symbolized the creative energy of the Council whose term ends in exactly 9 days (31st March 2022).

Excellencies,

Proudly, we affirm that the voice of the AU reverberated across the Continent - thanks to the custodianship of the cherished principles and practice in depicting zero tolerance against attempts to erase constitutionalism and the Rule of Law.

Noteworthy, is the Roll call of Honour introduced for the first time, in an Induction Program of the AUPSC - Each Member served the Union with unparalleled diligence and devotion; unalloyed commitment and uncommon wisdom.
To the outgoing Council, we praise your vision, your commitment in the service of Africa - Well done all!

**Excellencies and Distinguished Guests,**

To the incoming Council members, I welcome you all to the exclusive club of Permanent Representatives in the African Union Decision-Making Organ on peace and security.

It is almost twenty (20) years since the adoption of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, in July 2002, in Durban, South Africa, and eighteen (18) years since the PSC was launched on Africa Day, on 25 May 2004.

Undoubtedly, the mandate of the PSC remains ever relevant in our pursuit for “The Africa We Want” as envisioned in Agenda 2063. We cannot afford to falter in our efforts to Silence the Guns and push for the realization of the vision of Leaders for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa.

The Council remains the Centre of action in the AU system on the promotion and maintenance of peace and security. The outgoing PSC members and others before already laid the value-adding foundation for the practice of decision making on peace-making and peace building.

**Excellencies,**

Over the course of the next three days, we will collectively interrogate and analyse the governance, peace and security trends in the Continent. We will exchange information on the working methods of the PSC and the working relationships between the PSC and the Commission in its entirety, given the imperatives in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and African Governance Architecture (AGA).

The outcome of this Induction will set the stage for the trajectory of the Council.

In the spirit of change management under the overall umbrella of the AU Institutional Reform agenda, our Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) has introduced some innovative measures for this Induction exercise.

1. Certificates of Appreciation will be issued to the outgoing Members of the PSC in recognition of their remarkable and meritorious service during their respective terms on the Council. The certificates which will be presented on Friday are in three (3) categories:

   * AU Member State in the Council
   * Permanent Representative /Ambassador and the
   * Lead Expert on the PSC Committee of Experts.

2. A flag ceremony and Roll call of Honour will form part of the induction process.

3. In April, and as follow up on this Induction, the PAPS Department is planning to organize an intensive training session for the PSC Experts, focusing on gaining deeper knowledge of the operating system of the Council and drafting skills of the PSC communiqué.

4. To complement the Committee of Experts training, a new Capacity Enhancement Orientation for Defence Attachés of the AU Member States on PSC will hold in May 2022.
Indeed, what has worked and what does not work for Africa’s premier peace and security mechanism will be a cutting-edge component of this induction program.

Certainly, best practices for the Council in conflict prevention, Mediation and Early Warning and Early Response will serve to enrich our discourse this week. We will learn and unlearn at this groundbreaking event.

Excellencies,

It is self-evident that the difficult terrain of Africa’s peace and security demands a compelling agenda for peace that is premised on the PSC remaining a purpose driven collective; and laser-focused to make peace happen.

The Council is the hub for silencing the guns and concurrently the think-and do-tank on emerging priority issues of thematic inter-connection relating to the nexus between peace, security and development and the impact of climate change.

As the scope of the PSC widens, the character of the PSC should be fearless and influential. Africa is assertive in constructing a new international rules-based order. The African voice must be heard.

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests,

Permit me also to mention that, today we have our special guest, Ambassador Catherine Muigai Mwangi, the Ambassador of Kenya to South Africa who also happened to be the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the AU and was also a Member of the PSC. Her presence here signifies the bridge between the past and future, the outgoing Council and incoming one. This will certainly contribute to extensive lessons learned session. Thank you, Ambassador Catherine, for accepting our invitation.

As it has been a tradition, today we have partners who work closely with PSC member states in promoting its work. The representatives of CISSA, ISS and AMANI Africa are attending this Event to share their perspectives with us. ISS and AMANI Africa have been very instrumental in following and publishing articles/papers on the activities of the PSC, it is always important to hear comments from outsiders which helps the Council to reshape its organization of work.

I trust that by the end of this induction, Members of the PSC will have a basic appreciation of the scope of work and expectations in the fulfilment of the Council’s mandate.

In conclusion, the AU Commission, especially the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security and the PSC Secretariat, commits to providing all necessary and legitimately expected support to enable the Council to effectively discharge its mandate in accordance with the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

We stand ready and look forward to serving the Council, the Union, the Continent and its citizens.

I am eager to enrich our knowledge of the inner workings of the PSC.
In the age of cybersecurity, the fast-developing infamous and ignominious / despicable reputation of the social media, the technology and warfare, the impact of the Russia / Ukraine conflict on Africa in all ramifications, I want to end this statement by quoting an African icon, NELSON MANDELA who said, “I DREAM OF AN AFRICA WHICH IS AT PEACE WITH ITSELF”.

This is the essence of the African Union’s AGENDA 2063 - the African we want!!

I thank you for your attention.