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Inaugural African Union Policy Conference Casts Spotlight on the Nexus between Peace, Security and Development in Africa


Dubbed “Promoting the Peace, Security, and Development Nexus: The Promise of Regional Integration”, the three-day Conference is convened by the AU Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank).

In his welcome address, Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Expatriates, Mr. Nasser Bourita, spoke of different strategies to secure peace across the continent as a necessary condition for development. The Minister proposed the setting up of a Development Fund, similar to the AU Peace Fund, to finance collective action in the area of socio-economic and human development. Further, he proposed the exploration of avenues and mechanisms likely to strengthen synergies and coordination between the various bodies in charge of sustainable development, peace and security and governance in Africa.

Echoing the same sentiments, AU Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals, Ambassador Albert Muchanga stated that this Policy Conference provides a platform to share insights into peace, resilience, and sustainable development issues, and reaffirmed the relevance and critical role of economic integration in supporting Africa’s peace and security efforts. He appealed for the outcome document to ensure the creation of “conditions for durable peace across all of Africa and substantively contribute to ushering in a new era of durable peace, security, stability, and, above all, inclusive growth and sustainable development anchored on continental economic integration”.

The Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, Ms. Amina Mohammed, specified that peace and development go hand in hand and that getting the Sustainable Development Goals on track required coordinated action by peace, political, humanitarian and development actors. She called on all participants to reflect on practical measures to
implement the development, humanitarian, peacebuilding nexus to deliver peace, security, and sustainable development everywhere in Africa.

“This includes strengthening joint conflict analysis, enhancing conflict prevention mechanisms, ensuring the meaningful participation of women in peace processes, and implementing joint initiatives to support humanitarian and political dialogue and development programmes,” she added.

Speaking on behalf of Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank Group, Ms. Hassatou N’Sele, Vice-President for Finance and Chief Finance Officer, underscored the need to mobilize scalable, “additional” and flexible resources to address the root causes of insecurity, enhance the capacities of states, rebuild trust within communities, and rehabilitate infrastructure that is adversely impacted by insecurity.

UNDP’s Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa emphasized that regional integration plays a critical role as a driver for mobility, employment and social cohesion, particularly in cross-border areas. Better understanding cross-border communities and mobility is critical for effective action.

“UNDP is committed to fostering collective action, working with the African Union Commission, the UN system and development partners, to address the continent’s new peace, human security and development challenges,” Ms. Eziakonwa asserted.

In her remarks, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, Ms. Hanan Morsy highlighted the strong link between trade and peace by providing evidentiary statistics from a recent ECA study on the subject.

“ECA’s study on realizing the Triple Nexus and Trade has made it clearer how trade impacts peace and propels countries towards sustainable development,” Ms. Morsy further noted.

Over three days, the meeting will consider and deliberate on a number of issues including: AU flagship projects; the nexus between Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainable Development, Peace, Prosperity and Stability; intra-African trade, industrialization and infrastructure development contribution to the transition from fragile contexts to sustainable development; updates on the Security-Indexed Investment Bond Initiative; UNDP research and original perspectives from speakers working on borderlands development; as well as the exploration of normative and institutional architectures provided by the AU and RECs in terms of peacebuilding, democratic governance, and post-conflict reconstruction; interventions of trade finance institutions such as Afreximbank and its partners are making to peace, security and development across the continent, and the opportunities for collaboration; and appropriate preventative responses to complex political transitions including unconstitutional changes of government in Africa.

The Policy Conference will feature plenary sessions, panel discussions, report launches, Q&A sessions and fireside chats with key personalities including political
leaders, the civil society and the private sector across the continent among others.

The gathering brings together over 300 representatives from the AU, the RECs/RMs, governments, development partners, defense and finance, African academic and research institutions, non-governmental organizations, women and youth and the private sector from around Africa.

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