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**REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION,
MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT, AT THE OPENING OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE
HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON LIBYA**

ADDIS ABABA, 17 APRIL 2018

Mr. Chairman of the High Level Ad Hoc Committee at Ministerial Level,

Distinguished representatives of the Member States of the High Level Committee,

Distinguished Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you to Addis Ababa and to the headquarters of the African Union. This meeting is a new step in our collective action to find a solution to the Libyan crisis and thus sustainably promote peace, security, stability and reconciliation in that country.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Ministers and other Heads of delegation here present. By travelling to Addis Ababa, you, once again, bear testimony of your commitment and that of your respective countries to fulfil the mandate entrusted to the High-Level Committee on Libya.

I thank the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Libya, our brother Ghassan Salamé. I commend the determination and dynamism with which he carries out his heavy responsibilities.

His presence in our midst attests to the dynamism of the partnership that the African Union and the United Nations are endeavouring to build in the service of the cause of peace in Africa.

May I also highlight the resolute action of President Denis Sassou N'guesso, who heads the High-Level Committee on Libya. This action is particularly remarkable and reflects his PanAfrican commitment.

The Committee, as you know, are to be a vector of solidarity or, more precisely, of mutual aid: by helping Libya, we are helping ourselves, as it is true that the stability of Libya is also an asset for the whole continent, especially in this phase of acceleration of the African integration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This fifth meeting of the High-level Committee, at ministerial level, is being held in a context of continued stalemate in the Libyan political process and persistent volatility of the security environment. The hopes raised following the meeting in Brazzaville, in September 2017, unfortunately have not been fulfilled.

Despite the care of the international community, Libyan actors have so far been unable to overcome their differences. The lack of a consensus on the revision of the Libyan Political Agreement is a clear illustration of this.

Selfish interests and parochial concerns of all kind have prevailed over the general interest.

Many criminal groups and militias operate in the Libyan territory and continue to engage in unspeakable abuses and trample underfoot the most basic humanitarian standards.

The authority of the State is all but nominal. As a result, terrorist groups have been able to establish themselves in various parts of the Libyan territory.

This situation poses a twofold threat: to Libya, of course, and its people, whose aspirations for well-being and freedom have been betrayed; but also to the neighbouring countries, which pay a heavy price because of the instability and insecurity that are today the main characteristics of the Libyan situation.

The fate of African migrant workers tragically illustrates the seriousness of the situation and the depth of the abyss into which Libya has fallen.

For us, at the African Union, this is a source of serious and constant concern. This situation is morally intolerable. Everything must be done to put an end to it.

I seize this opportunity to commend the close cooperation that has developed between the African Union, the United Nations and the European Union, within the framework of the Troika we are piloting. The objective is to help the repatriation of African migrants and put an end to despicable attacks on the human dignity to which they are subjected daily at the hands of criminal groups.

This action will be pursued.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The overall situation is, therefore, most alarming. It calls for an even more sustained action on our part.

From this point of view, if there is one thing that the efforts made in recent years have shown, it is the need for us to work together, to enhance our complementarities and to promote synergies. No organisation, no entity can, on its own, take up the challenges at hand.

This fact underlines the importance of this meeting.

By bringing together the neighbouring countries and other actors, the relevant regional entity and the world organisation, it makes it possible to pool the efforts of one and the other, to ensure that they all converge towards the only goal that is worthwhile: putting an end to the Libyan tragedy, enabling the reconstruction of a legitimate authority accepted by all and making Libya a beacon of peace and stability.

I would like to underscore here the central nature of the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations. Libya affords the opportunity to demonstrate its relevance and undeniable value added.

In our action in the coming period, priority must be given to establishing conditions conducive to the organisation of elections envisaged by the Libyan actors. These must be a milestone in the stabilisation of Libya and not a factor aggravating existing cleavages.

To do this, it is essential that reconciliation between the Libyans progresses. The joint organisation of a Reconciliation Conference by the African Union and the United Nations is, therefore, most appropriate. The aim is to mend the social fabric and re-establish the minimum bases of wanting to live together.

With regard more specifically to the African Union, it is crucial that we increase our involvement to fully play the role expected of us and better support the Ad Hoc Committee in fulfilling its responsibilities. Three actions must guide these efforts:

- (1) the relocation of our Office for Libya to Tripoli to operate as closely as possible to the realities on the ground;
- (2) raising the level of daily interaction of our Office with the Libyan and international actors; and
- (3) the reactivation of the International Contact Group on Libya, as decided by the African Union Summit last January.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

However, let us not delude ourselves: no international effort can replace the will of the Libyan actors to iron out their differences and put the interest of their people above the narrow considerations that have hitherto prevailed and thwarted all attempts at mediation.

The fact that two million voters have already registered for the upcoming polls is a powerful expression that the Libyan people are fed up. May their cry of distress be heard!

I wish full success to your deliberations.