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CONCEPT PAPER: PEACE DAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2012

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The aim of this concept note is to highlight the major activities of Peace Day and to serve as guidance for AU Member States and other stakeholders in their efforts in this respect.

II. BACKGROUND

2. The Make Peace Happen Campaign (MPHC) was launched in 2010 in the context of the 2010 Year of Peace and Security in Africa (YoPS), with the aim of:

- giving greater visibility to AU efforts in promoting peace and security in Africa;
- speeding up the implementation of commitments made by Member States in various AU instruments relating to peace and security;
- linking official efforts to promote peace and security with those being undertaken on the ground by grassroot communities;
- launching new initiatives on peace and security in Africa; and
- mobilizing resources to support peace and security efforts on the continent.

3. At its 16th Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, from 30 to 31 January 2011, the Assembly of the Union decided that, in order to sustain the efforts to Make Peace Happen, the steps taken and initiatives launched as part of the YoPS should be pursued and intensified. In this respect, the Assembly endorsed the recommendations made by the Chairperson of the Commission for the implementation of a long-term sustainability strategy, building on the achievements recorded and the lessons learnt from the MPHC and revolving around the following elements: (i) institutionalization of the celebration of Peace Day; (ii) communication and outreach to publicize the efforts of the continent and sensitize all stakeholders; (iii) partnerships with stakeholders, in particular the private sector and civil society; (iv) peace education; (v) support to African academic and research institutions, to enhance their capacity to explore the nature of African conflicts; (vi) support to peace building activities; and (vii) resource mobilization, in particular within the continent, in order to enhance Africa's ownership and leadership in the quest for peace in the continent.

4. The Assembly urged all Member States to provide the support required for the successful implementation of the MPHC sustainability strategy. The Assembly also urged all other stakeholders, including the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), civil society and private sector, to work closely with the AU and to take all necessary steps in this respect. The Assembly further urged the AU partners, including the United Nations, to extend the necessary support and cooperation.

5. The MPHIC offers an opportunity to review current efforts to peace-building on the continent, with a view to strengthening them and, where appropriate, launching new initiatives for peace and security. The MPHIC also seeks to open up spaces for all stakeholders to contribute towards making Africa a conflict-free continent.

III. OBJECTIVES OF PEACE DAY

6. Established by a UN resolution in 1982, Peace Day provides a single rallying point for the continent to show that peace is possible.

7. Peace Day aims at putting peace in practice, through a collective, cooperative moment of unity. Demonstrating and communicating peace dividends, such as how many people were able to access food and water due to the cessation of hostilities, will create an impact in the human psyche and motivate all stakeholders to work together to address the root causes of conflict and violence. The objective is to demystify peace-building and to portray it as the responsibility of all communities and all individuals.

IV. MODUS OPERANDI

8. In order to reach this objective, Member States, all relevant AU structures, RECs/RMs, civil society, academia and think tanks, private sector and other stakeholders, in coordination with the international partners, in particular the United Nations, are encouraged to organize events to mark Peace Day 2012, along the lines of the Decision adopted by the 15th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Kampala, in July 2010. In that decision, the Assembly “stresse(d) the critical importance of the United Nations-proclaimed International Day of Peace, on 21 September, as a way to provide a single rallying point for the continent to show that peace is possible, and endorse(d) the objectives being pursued and the activities planned, namely:

- (i) cessation of hostilities in all conflict areas;
- (ii) distribution of humanitarian aid, materials and services to communities in conflict areas, as well as in non-conflict areas, in critical need of these;
- (iii) one minute of silence to observe peace across Africa at 10.00 a.m. GMT;
- (iv) relevant developmental work and community support in all AU Member States to be carried out by members of the armed and security forces;
- (v) *One Day One Goal* football games; and
- (vi) *Make Peace Happen Lesson Plan* to be taught in all schools on Peace Day or during other relevant occasions”.

9. Throughout Peace Day, the AU and its partners will implement a communication strategy to ensure that the events taking place across Africa to mark the Day are widely

covered and reported live, via the national and international media (Radio and TV), social media (Facebook, Tweeter etc.), the www.peaceau.org website, and other web based media. The success of this initiative will heavily rely on all stakeholders submitting their programme of activities and alerting the Peace and Security Department of the AU Commission on their implementation, in a timely manner, in order to facilitate effective coverage.

10. The 2012 Peace Day is particularly significant to the extent that it will be celebrated within the framework of the 10th anniversary of the AU. It will also mark the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol. In this context, Peace Day offers the opportunity to enhance AU's visibility in the area of peace and security, highlighting its achievements in the past 10 years and giving renewed impetus to efforts aimed at addressing the challenges ahead.

V. EXPECTED OUTCOME

11. Peace Day is about mobilizing all stakeholders to commit to actions that make peace possible. The activities of a single day can energize Africans from all walks of life, helping to generate a widespread grassroots peace movement across the continent. The resultant upswelling of demand for peace, and actions to Make Peace Happen, may indeed help fulfil our common promise of a conflict-free Africa.

VI. DATE & VENUE

12. Peace Day will be celebrated on 21 September 2012 across the continent.

13. At the AU Headquarters, celebration of Peace Day will involve the following:

- Presentation of the 10 Years in the quest for Peace and Security Documentary (12-minute video);
- Statements by the AU and other stakeholders;
- Observance of a minute of silence;
- Launching of the Peace and Security Department website: www.peaceau.org; and
- Exhibitions by various stakeholders to showcase their activities in the promotion of peace and security in Africa.

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