

**AFRICAN UNION**  
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**P. O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA Tel.: (251-1) 115511475,**  
**Email: [icpeacesecpol@yahoo.com](mailto:icpeacesecpol@yahoo.com)**

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**ADDRESS BY H.E. DR. JEAN PING, CHAIRPERSON OF THE  
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, AT THE SECOND AFRICAN UNION HIGH-LEVEL  
RETREAT ON THE PROMOTION OF PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY IN AFRICA**

**CAIRO, EGYPT,  
4 SEPTEMBER 2011**

- **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt,**
- **Secretary-General of the League of Arab States,**
- **Former Heads of State,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen members of the AU Panel of the Wise,**
- **Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa,**
- **UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations,**
- **UN Assistant Secretary-General, Head of UN Office to the AU,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen representing *la Francophonie*, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the European Union,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen Special Representatives/Envoys of the AU, as well as and the United Nations and other partner organizations,**
- **Distinguished representatives of the civil society,**
- **Mr. Mo Ibrahim and other members of the Advisory Council of the Year of Peace and Security,**
- **Eminents experts,**
- **Dear participants,**

I would like, from the outset, to welcome you all to this High-Level Retreat on the Promotion of Peace and Security in Africa.

This Retreat, which was launched in 2010, as part of our **Make Peace Happen Campaign**, focuses this year on the theme **“Strengthening Political Governance for Peace, Security and Stability”**.

To some of you, this is not a new event, as you have had the opportunity to attend the first Retreat at this same venue. Others are joining us for the first time. To all of you, I am very delighted and thankful to see that you have found time from your busy schedules to be with us in another Retreat.

The fundamental objective of this gathering is to enhance our collaborative efforts towards the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. The Retreat affords us an opportunity to sink to the bottom of the issues that are, for the most part, relevant to the current developments, which have been taking place in Northern Africa since January 2011, known as the **Arab Spring**, and to discuss issues of common concern.

At his juncture, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Egypt for hosting this Retreat and for all the facilities offered to ensure its success. We are closely following the efforts by the Egyptian stakeholders to bring to a successful conclusion the current transition and usher in a new dispensation based on democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, as well as good governance. I would, once again, like to assure them of the AU’s full support.

Equally, I am very grateful to our partners, namely the Cairo Regional Centre for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peace-keeping in Africa (CCCPA), the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD Centre), for their support and commitment.

Finally, I would like to express AU's appreciation to the Government of Finland and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their financial and material support, which made it possible for us to gather and work here so comfortably.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Participants,**

Last year's Retreat, which was organized under the theme "**Make Peace Happen in Africa in 2010 and beyond: Developing Common Strategies and Enhancing Coordination**", was undoubtedly successful. The Retreat adopted the *Cairo Call for Peace*, which reiterated our common resolve to make peace in Africa a reality and outlined concrete steps to be taken to this end. In adopting the Call, we were motivated by the cry for peace emanating from the African people and the pledge, by the continent's leaders, to deal, once and for all, with the scourge of conflicts and violence.

In particular, the Cairo Call for Peace:

- emphasized that the onus for conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding falls primarily on national stakeholders;
- stressed the importance of comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction and development programs in countries emerging from conflicts; and
- underlined the centrality of the culture of peace, in particular through education, so that future generations can be spared the scourge of war and violence.

The Retreat also agreed on the need for continued documentation and recording of lessons learnt and assessments of past and current processes. It called for continued research efforts to deepen our knowledge of the issues confronting us and enhance the effectiveness of our responses.

I am glad to report that in the period that has elapsed, the AU, working closely with its partners, has continued to follow up on the provisions of the Cairo Call for Peace. We have remained actively involved in efforts to prevent the occurrence of conflicts in the first place, resolve crises in countries and regions torn apart by violence and consolidate peace where it has been achieved. We have also continued to focus our attention on the threats posed by terrorism, transnational crimes, piracy and other related scourges.

Clearly, while our efforts have not always been successful, some commendable progress has been made. Allow me, in this respect, to highlight the holding of the self-determination referendum in South Sudan, which has since joined the AU as its newest Member State, the end of the post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, the significant advances made by AMISOM and the forces of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in Mogadishu, and the pursuit of post-conflict reconstruction efforts in many of the African countries that have been able to overcome conflicts and violence.

We should remain steadfast in our resolve and provide all the support required to the efforts being made on the ground. We should continue to emphasize the importance of national leadership and continental ownership for the achievement of sustainable peace. We should, bearing in mind the regional and international dimensions of many of the conflicts affecting our continent, endeavor to promote and strengthen regional approaches.

Progress has also been made to enhance coordination between the AU and the United Nations in order to successfully address the common challenges facing us in the area of peace and security. Among others, I would like to mention the establishment of the AU-UN Joint Task Force, which brings together the relevant officials of the two organizations, for systematic review of situations of common concern, articulation of joint strategies and identification of the practical steps that need to be taken. In a few weeks time, the Joint Task Force will convene another meeting in New York. I have no doubt that this meeting will provide further impetus to the cooperation between the AU and the United Nations.

We have also completed the elaboration of the UN-AU Guidelines on Mediation, the objective of which is to facilitate collaborative efforts in the resolution of the conflict and crisis situations facing Africa. The Guidelines were drawn from consultations and workshops on previous mediation experiences.

It is critical that the AU and the United Nations continue to enhance their strategic partnership, bearing in mind the complexities of today's peace and security challenges in Africa, the need for innovative responses and the paramount importance of Africa's ownership and leadership. In this respect, I cannot but emphasize the need for a creative reading of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter on the role of Regional Mechanisms in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, building on the lessons learnt over the past years.

In pursuance of the request made by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, I will be submitting, in the coming weeks, a report to the AU Peace and Security Council, outlining the Commission's vision on the strategic partnership between the AU and the United Nations.

### **Distinguished participants,**

This Year's Retreat is being convened amidst the unprecedented political developments that took place over the past months in North Africa, first in Tunisia, then in Egypt and, finally, in Libya. In this latter country, the uprising took a more violent turn, evolving into an open conflict.

These events came as a result of a number of factors, ranging from the lack of freedom to increasing inequalities and high level of unemployment, especially among the youth, leading to social alienation. Significantly, the Cairo Call for Peace emphasized the critical importance of governance, respect of the rule of law, fair allocation of resources among all segments of the population and national leadership for the prevention of conflict and the promotion of sustainable peace.

Clearly, the AU, like other international players, did not anticipate these developments. This highlights the need to speed up the operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System. Fundamentally, however, the challenge is to generate the requisite political will so that these issues could be frankly debated at the level of the relevant organs of the African Union, and the countries concerned could bring the necessary cooperation to bear, as indeed is required of them under the PSC Protocol.

Nonetheless, the AU has reacted creatively. In other words, our Union was able to exhibit the necessary flexibility. It based its action not on a literal and dogmatic interpretation of the existing texts, but rather on the need to contribute to the attainment of the overall objective sought by the African Union, namely the consolidation of the ongoing democratization processes in the continent.

The North African uprisings have removed some of the ambiguities in the discourse of democratization across Africa. North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa can now draw from the same shared experiences of building systems that underwrite liberties, freedoms, and accountability. As stressed by the PSC ministerial meeting of last April, the uprisings in North Africa should be used as an opportunity for Member States to renew their commitment to the AU democratic and governance agenda, give added momentum to the efforts deployed in this respect and implement the political and socio-economic reforms which are called for in every particular national situation.

Against this background, this Retreat provides a unique opportunity to:

- discuss commonly applied parameters of governance;
- examine the implications and consequences of poor governance to peace, security and stability;
- identify and develop mechanisms and frameworks for addressing governance challenges;
- formulate policy recommendations that will strengthen governance on the continent; and
- enhance regional and international responses to governance-related conflicts.

In reflecting on all these issues, it is important to bear in mind that we are not starting from scratch. In the past two decades, the OAU and then the AU have adopted a number of instruments articulating common norms and high standards on governance, democracy and human rights. They constitute a comprehensive framework for systematic efforts at structural prevention.

What is now required is to work towards the effective implementation of these instruments. This requires that all Member States that have not yet done so speedily sign and/or ratify those instruments and that follow-up steps be closely monitored. In this respect, the Commission has intensified its efforts to sensitize the Member States concerned, and intend to undertake a thorough and systematic review of the status of the implementation of these instruments.

We eagerly look forward to the recommendations you will be making. We are fortunate to have in this room undisputable expertise and experience, academicians and policy makers, civil society representatives advocating, and rightly so, for the highest standards of governance and former Heads of State, who are well placed to bring to light the challenges involved in reconciling aspirations and the constraints of power.

I have no doubt that they will go a long way in enhancing our capacity to meet the challenges at hand and help our Member States emerge stronger and more responsive to the needs and aspirations to their people. They will facilitate joint action on the ground, based on proper diagnosis.

Your recommendations will also feed into the work of the AU Panel of the Wise, which has been requested to undertake a comprehensive review of the existing mechanisms relating to democratization and governance in Africa, and make proposals to the PSC at a meeting to be convened no later than December 2011.

I thank you.