



OPENING STATEMENT

BY

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COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS

**ON THE OCCASSION OF THE RETREAT BETWEEN THE PSC AND THE
DPA ON ENSURING GREATER SYNERGY BETWEEN THE AFRICAN
GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE (AGA) AND THE AFRICAN PEACE
AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE (APSA) AS PART OF THE YEAR OF
SHARED VALUES**

BANJUL, THE GAMBIA : 08 SEPTEMBER 2012

Your Excellency Dr. Momodou Tangara, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of The Gambia

Honourable Minister of Interior, Representative of the Minister of Justice and Senior Officials of the Government of The Gambia

Chairperson of the Permanent Representatives Committee

Chairperson and Members of the African Union Peace and Security Council

Distinguished Representatives of the AU Organs and Institutions

Representatives of UN Agencies and the wider AU Partner community

Representatives of the Regional Economic Communities

Acting Director of Political Affairs and officials of the African Union Commission

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I warmly welcome you all to this Retreat between the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) of the African Union Commission, convening under the theme *“Ensuring Greater Synergy between the African Governance Architecture and the African Peace and Security Architecture, as part of the activities of*

the Year of Shared Values”, I would want at the outset, on behalf of the African Union, to express most sincere appreciation to the Government and People of The Gambia for the warm welcome and truly African hospitality that has been accorded to all participants since our arrival in this smiling coast of Africa, I would also like to acknowledge and salute, in a special way, the presence of the distinguished Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of AU Member States, members of the Peace and Security Council for making time out of their busy schedules to honour our invitation to this Retreat. The presence of representatives of the AU organs and other stakeholders active in the terrain of democracy and governance in the Continent is also most encouraging and I would want to express our gratitude for their continued support.

Honourable Minister

Distinguished Guests

Dear Participants,

Our Retreat here today, the first of its kind between the PSC and the DPA, should be considered, in my humble opinion, a milestone development. Not only does it mark the first palpable step between the DPA and the PSC in implementing the decision of the 18th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council (EX.CL/Dec.635(XVIII)), which urged the AUC to ensure greater synergy and coherence between the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), it also symbolizes a true meeting of the minds between actors with a continental mandate on democracy and governance and those with the mandate on peace and security. I am certain that the outcome of this gathering will lead us one

step closer to the common vision of the African Union of “*an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena*”.

Indeed, our collective aspiration for a free, fair, sustainable and prosperous Africa dictates the development of policies and programmes that can guide us in achieving such a goal with efficacy and efficiency. For this reason, I am confident that we all expect over the coming two days to engage with each other in an open, honest and constructive dialogue as we strive to establish policy guidelines that will enhance synergy and create the required opportunities and space for increased interactions between the AGA and the APSA. With the Peace and Security Council Protocol, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and other relevant instruments as our guiding tools, permit me through these brief opening remarks to start reflecting on some of the areas where DPA and the PSC could mutually maximize their effectiveness and impact.

First and foremost, given the interdependency and correlations between good governance and democracy and the sustenance of peace and security, the promotion of democratic practices and principles such as transparency and accountability, the rule of law and the promotion and protection of human rights as part of the efforts by the PSC to prevent conflicts as reflected in Article 3 (f) of the PSC Protocol is an important starting point. Needless to say, bad governance, lack of respect for the rule of law and violations of human rights are often at the heart of grievances that contribute to and fuel conflicts in our societies. As such, our discourse and actions on conflict reduction and prevention can never be

robust enough or complete if independent from matters related to good governance, the rule of law and human rights.

Closely related to this, the mechanisms established towards the promotion and sustainability of peace will have to be thoroughly grounded in democratic governance principles. The DPA will share, during tomorrow's sessions, information and perspectives related to the AGA, with the purpose of exploring with the PSC how DPA's mandate and programmes can facilitate PSC's agenda in its conflict prevention efforts. Mindful that the implementation of conflict prevention measures can be maximized when in harmonization with democratic policies, the DPA would like to further learn from the PSC on how it can assist the PSC in its established activities. More concretely, it is of crucial significance in one word that DPA and PSC identify areas that are conflict-sensitive in order therefore to strengthen the design towards rapid, coordinated and more effective conflict preventive responses.

Even though the DPA regularly briefs the PSC on the state of elections in the Continent, and through this platform stimulates cooperation between the two structures in preventive diplomacy in pre- and post-elections disputes, another area that touches on broader collaboration and remains of mutual interest pertains to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. With its recent entry into force, it is imperative that efforts are concentrated on the Charter's implementation as well as on Member States' compliance with the collectively adopted values, principles and standards on democracy and governance enshrined therein. In ensuring that both these tasks are followed up through our joint modalities and comparative advantages, we too will be generating cost-effective

implementation and compliance evaluation systems and measures, and consequently strengthen our ability to curb any threat to Africa's development and stability.

Honourable Minister

Distinguished Guests

Dear Participants,

In reminding ourselves of, the Declaration of the 16th AU Summit on the theme *“Towards Greater Unity and Integration through Shared Values”*, which encouraged the AUC to ensure greater synergy between Peace and Security matters and Governance and Democracy, and of the earlier mentioned Decision of the 18th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, which again urged the AUC to ensure greater synergy and coherence between AGA and APSA, it goes without saying that working hand-in-hand rather than as two separate and alienated structures is not a choice but a necessity.

You will agree with me that the basis of the above decisions by our leaders is that sustaining peace and stability (reason d'être of APSA) demands concerted efforts aimed at strengthening democratic and governance institutions, credible political and electoral processes, respect for and the promotion on human rights, the rule of law and equitable social order and socio-economic development (reason d'être of AGA). The end goal, in my opinion, is building strong democratic and governance institutions that are robust enough to resist political instability and upheavals that are prone to hinder progress in sustainable development and greater prosperity.

Against this background, our deliberations at this Retreat should therefore concentrate on building greater harmonization between APSA and AGA as well as evolving practical modalities for achieving the aforementioned objectives. Considering the context of our Continent and the mandates that fall under AGA and APSA, tomorrow's sessions will focus on DPA's work in governance and democracy within the context of African Shared Values, Elections, Public Service and Local Governance, Human Rights, Transitional Justice and Humanitarian Affairs. Although the themes of these sessions sound DPA-centric, the objectives of these distinct and yet detailed sessions aim at ensuring wider understanding of how the APSA and AGA can reinforce each other. Indeed, by focusing on governance issues within the context of enhancing the cooperation between the two structures, the DPA seeks to provide to the PSC reflections on challenges that are not appropriately and adequately addressed under the APSA and vice-versa. Through this process, we should be well equipped to make well-informed decisions and define specific and tangible actions on the way forward.

In my modest attempt to guide you through the deliberations, allow me before I conclude to draw your attention to the following issues that I consider key in shaping the conclusions of our Retreat:

On the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, we should endeavour to focus on how the Charter could be fully operationalized so that it becomes the bedrock for democracy and governance on the Continent. In addition, it is crucial to discuss how implementation activities of the Charter can be assessed at national,

regional and continental levels so as to identify how and when change in policy direction is required.

Secondly, the interaction on elections should focus on how elections on the Continent can become more democratic, more peaceful and transparent. This is necessary because elections on the Continent have become a 'double-edged sword': well managed they contribute to peace and stability and nation building, poorly managed they have the potential to threaten the very fabric and stability of our societies. As we have seen in some of our Member States, poorly managed elections have tended to be more expensive in terms of the post-elections violence that often times follows them. With this in mind, it is important to consider how the role of the DPA and PSC can be enhanced in electoral processes in order to avoid the unfortunate incidence of post-election conflicts. This line of thinking also requires that we are able to invest time and resources in building the capacities of electoral institutions on the Continent to better deliver on their mandate.

The discussions on the recently adopted human rights strategy for Africa, the development of the comprehensive policy framework on transitional justice and the draft humanitarian policy framework could explore how the PSC can contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the policy orientations. The active involvement of the PSC in these evolving initiatives will no doubt contribute in no small measure towards a culture of lasting peace and stability in our Continent.

Honourable Minister

Distinguished Guests

Dear Participants,

In concluding these welcome remarks, let me restate my conviction that a strong partnership will be built during this meeting between the DPA and the PSC, as well as all the other AU organs that have a role to play in enhancing the synergies between the AGA and the APSA.

On that optimistic note, I reiterate words of welcome to all participants to this landmark event, thank you for your attention as I wish this all important Retreat between the PSC and the DPA on *“Ensuring Greater Synergy between the African Governance Architecture and the African Peace and Security Architecture, as part of the Year of Shared Values”*, successful deliberations and a fruitful outcome.