MEETING BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
AND THE AU HIGH-LEVEL AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION IN LIBYA

NEW YORK, 15 JUNE 2011

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. HAMADY OULD HAMADY, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
COOPERATION OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA, AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL,
ON BEHALF OF THE MINISTERIAL DELEGATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION
HIGH-LEVEL AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE CRISIS IN LIBYA
STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR OF THE AU HIGH-LEVEL AD HOC MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON LIBYA, NEW YORK, 15 JUNE 2011

President of the Security Council,
Permanent Representatives of the Member States of the Security Council,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish, from the outset, to discharge the pleasant duty of thanking the President and members of the Security Council for placing on their agenda this interaction between the African Union (AU) High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on Libya and the Council. This meeting certainly marks another milestone in the innovative and action-oriented partnership which we are striving, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter, to develop between the AU and the United Nations, in order to respond with the required effectiveness and flexibility to the challenges of peace and security in Africa. My colleagues, members of the AU ministerial delegation, and myself welcome this interaction, which is both appropriate and timely.

As you are aware, this meeting is a follow-up to the request contained in the Decision on the Peaceful Resolution of the Libyan Crisis adopted by the extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, held in Addis Ababa, on 25 May 2011. Undoubtedly, it provides a unique opportunity for our Committee to brief the Security Council on the efforts deployed by the AU since the onset of the crisis in Libya, to share with you our concerns and anxieties, as well as to agree on ways and means to expedite the search for durable peace in Libya. Moreover, this interaction forms part of the implementation of the mandate of the High-Level ad hoc Committee, to foster coordination of efforts and to seek the support of the different partners towards the speedy resolution of the crisis.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting with your august Council is taking place at a critical time in the evolution of the situation in Libya. The conflict, which, since February 2011 is tearing that country apart, is entering its fourth month, while the military operation carried out by the Coalition, under the coordination of NATO, since late March, and within the context of UN Security Council resolution 1973 (2011), has been going on for almost three months, and has just been extended for the same length of time.

On the ground, we observe a very worrying humanitarian situation, as has been rightly underlined, on 9 May, by the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Valerie Amos, right here at this Council, and again in Geneva, on the 19th of the same month. At this very moment that we are deliberating here on the situation in Libya, we have to bear in mind the untold suffering inflicted on Libya’s civilian population, for whose protection resolution 1973(2011) was adopted in the first place, as well as the plight of the African and other migrant
workers who are desperately seeking to get out of Libya, and the hundreds, if not thousands of people, who died at sea.

Each passing day, the continuation of the military operation in Libya poses new challenges, both regarding the prospects for a successful democratic transition in Libya and the security and stability of the countries of the region.

This situation very much demands the attention of the United Nations and that of the AU, on account of their primary duty to promote peace, security and stability. It, once again, highlights the moral as well as the political imperative of finding a speedy solution, in order to end the suffering of the civilian population, create conditions conducive for lasting peace in Libya, and spare the region new difficulties, which risk plunging it into instability, with all the attendant consequences.

The African Union is particularly concerned about the present turn of events. Our concern is all the more deep, since the crisis in Libya has obvious regional implications, and Libya’s neighbours, in both North Africa and the Sahel-Saharan belt, are the ones that suffer the most from the impact of the current situation and will pay the heaviest price should the conflict continue to get worse. Tens of thousands of African migrant workers have had to return to their countries of origin without any real prospects of socio-economic reintegration, in view of the various constraints facing our countries. It is obvious that the burden thus imposed on our countries will inevitably lead to social tensions likely to degenerate into political crises. Reliable information on the proliferation of arms from Libyan arsenals can only further heighten our anxiety, given that some countries in the region are facing latent rebellions or are emerging from conflict, not to speak of the scourge of terrorism.

We are convinced that, ultimately, only a political solution will make it possible to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the Libyan people and to promote sustainable peace in that country. This is the conviction that has informed our approach since 10 March 2011, when the Peace and Security Council (PSC), meeting at the level of the Heads of State and Government, laid out a Roadmap for the Resolution of the Libyan Crisis. Previously, and in view of the developments that were then unfolding in Libya, following the commencement of the popular uprisings there, our PSC strongly condemned the indiscriminate and excessive use of force and lethal weapons against peaceful demonstrators, in violation of human rights and International Humanitarian Law, appealed to the Libyan authorities to ensure the protection and security of their own population, and underscored the legitimacy of the Libyan people’s aspirations to democracy, political reform and justice.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The key components of the AU Roadmap are now well known. Nevertheless, it would be useful to reiterate them, especially as misunderstandings have arisen, here and there, regarding the objectives being pursued and the actual intentions of our Union. These components are as follows: i) immediate cessation of all hostilities; ii) the cooperation of the relevant Libyan authorities to facilitate the diligent delivery of humanitarian aid to populations in need; iii) the protection of foreign nationals, including the African migrant workers living in Libya; and iv) the adoption and implementation of the political reforms needed for the elimination of the causes of the current conflict.

Clearly, nothing in this Roadmap could be legitimately interpreted to mean support for any one side. On the contrary, the objective is to afford the Libyans the opportunity freely to choose their leaders and to endow their country with a political system which fulfills their aspirations and is consistent with the relevant AU instruments, in a redeeming venture of renewal and democratic transformation consensually shaped and directed by the Libyans, in all their persuasions.

Since its establishment, the High-Level Ad Hoc Committee has been striving to facilitate a political solution. The actions undertaken include notably:

- the holding of several meetings, both at the level of the Heads of State of the member countries of the Committee and of the Chairperson of the Commission, as well as at the level of the Ministers and the Commissioner for Peace and Security;

- a visit to Libya, on 10 and 11 April 2011, during which the Committee met with Colonel Qaddafi, as well as with the representatives of the Transition National Council (TNC), to discuss the AU Roadmap and the ways and means of rapidly ending the crisis. This visit was followed by several meetings in Addis Ababa with the Libyan parties, at the end of April and at the end of May 2011, to pursue the dialogue thus initiated. Just this morning, before coming here, we held another meeting with the TNC; and

- the holding of a ministerial session of the PSC, on 26 April, as well as of an extraordinary session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and of Government, on 25 May 2011.

I would like to add that H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz, the Chair of the High-Level Ad Hoc Committee, has been in constant touch with his colleagues, as well as with the Libyan parties and international partners. In addition, President Jacob Zuma of South Africa, with the blessing of the Ad Hoc Committee, visited Libya to confer with Colonel Qaddafi on ways and means for an early exit from the crisis.
The AU Commission has also taken a number of initiatives within the framework of the relevant AU decisions, including: the convening, on 31 March 2011, of an experts meeting with the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the European Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to discuss the establishment of a ceasefire, as demanded in paragraph 1 of resolution 1973 (2011), and the modalities for its monitoring; the participation, as an invitee, in the three consecutive meetings of the Libya International Contact Group; and the pursuit, in a constructive spirit, of the dialogue with the international partners, both the bilateral and multilateral ones.

The High-Level Ad Hoc Committee seized the opportunity of the extraordinary summit, in May, to interact, once more, with the Libyan parties. On that occasion, the representatives of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, having reaffirmed their unconditional acceptance of the AU Roadmap, presented in detail the document submitted earlier on the “Mechanisms and means of the implementation of the AU Roadmap”. On their part, the representatives of the TNC presented a document entitled “General Framework of negotiations aimed at fulfilling the legitimate demands of the Libyan people, with the view to establishing a democratic constitutional order.”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The holding of an extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, just a month before the Summit in Malabo, demonstrates the seriousness of our concern over the developments of the situation in Libya, as well as our determination to speed up the process to end the suffering endured by the Libyan people.

Essentially, the extraordinary summit:

- reiterated the AU’s conviction regarding the need for a political solution to the present conflict and, to this effect, endorsed the AU Roadmap for the Resolution of the Crisis in Libya, and expressed full support to the High-Level Ad Hoc Committee;

- stressed, once again, the need for an immediate end to all attacks against, and abuses of, civilians, as well as for an immediate ceasefire, with the understanding, and I wish to underline this point, that this ceasefire should be linked to the political process, especially the inclusive and consensual transition which should be put in place to undertake the necessary reforms that would culminate in democratic elections, to allow the Libyans to freely choose their leaders;

- while reiterating the commitment of the AU to resolutions 1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011), stressed the obligation of all Member States of the United Nations and other concerned international actors to fully comply with the letter and spirit of those resolutions. In this regard, the Summit had in mind the dangerous precedent set by one-sided interpretations of United Nations resolutions and the consequences it could have for international legality.
As you are also aware, the extraordinary summit expressed Africa’s surprise and disappointment at the attempts to marginalize the continent in the management of a conflict which directly concerns it, and more so when the role of the High-Level Ad Hoc Committee is formally recognized by the Security Council in paragraph 2 of resolution 1973(2011) and falls within the overall context of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter regarding the role of regional arrangements in the settlement of disputes among and within their member states. Additionally, as I have already emphasized earlier, Africa, in particular the countries of the region, is the continent which suffers most from the impact of the conflict in Libya, both in security and socio-economic terms. We cannot simply be spectators to calamities that befall us.

We are determined today, more than ever before, to continue with our efforts, motivated by the same conviction regarding the need for a political solution and the unique contribution which Africa can bring to the settlement of the conflict that plagues Libya. In this spirit, the AU will actively participate in the meeting scheduled to take place in Cairo, on 18 June, among the five international organizations involved, to facilitate the elaboration of a joint plan of action to move forward the quest for peace in Libya. Furthermore, the AU Summit in Malabo will be an opportunity for the Assembly of Heads of State and Government to decide on the next steps to take, in the light of the developments of the situation and the report of the High-Level Ad Hoc Committee to the Summit.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are here today to assure you of our commitment to an inclusive political solution that will enable the Libyans to agree on an approach that would be as consensual as possible to meet their aspirations to democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, aspirations whose legitimacy and fairness cannot be over-emphasized.

We are here to state how important it is that such a process be conducted and owned by the Libyan people, involving mutual concessions in a dialogue devoid of pre-conditions, in such a way that the democratization of their country would be the result of their actions and of the consensus they will reach. That, as experience has shown us time and again, is a condition for sustaining democratic gains and ensuring that the fratricidal conflict among Libyans would have no reason to persist.

We are here to make a plea for an immediate humanitarian pause, so that the pressing needs of the populations affected can be met, a pause that should be followed by a ceasefire linked to a political process, in particular to the commencement of an inclusive and consensual transition.

We are here to reaffirm that a lasting solution to the crisis in Libya requires a significant contribution from Africa and a close coordination among all the actors concerned, and to underscore the particular contribution that the High-Level Ad Hoc Committee could make to the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Libya, in accordance with the objectives of resolutions 1970(2011) and 1973(2011).
We are here to underline the solemn commitment of Africa to work closely with its multilateral partners, in particular the United Nations and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Libya, in the spirit of paragraph 2 of resolution 1973(2011) and respect for international legality.

Ladies and Gentleman,

In our management of the Libyan crisis, it is long overdue to articulate a holistic solution that would judiciously combine the priorities of the moment with regard to the need to protect the civilian population, the objective of the democratic transformation of a country whose political system has not known the institutional evolution that Africa has experienced in terms of governance since the early 90’s, and the sustainable promotion of peace and stability in Libya and in the region. Obviously, this dynamic of change in governance applies to Libya today, and the implementation of the required reforms would positively shape the future of the country.

We need to work urgently to address the short-term issues, without losing sight of what is required in the long-term.

We need to address the priorities arising from the situation on the ground, while inscribing our action in a vision cast into a long-term perspective, and which is based on the need to find solutions that can be sustained, precisely because they enjoy the support of all the Libyan actors, without marginalization or exclusion.

It is only on this condition that our contribution to Libya would be useful, and that the solicitude of the international community towards Libya would translate into peace, security, reconciliation and democracy.

The AU, whose action is solely driven by the objective consideration of the aspirations of the Libyan people, as well as by the legitimate concerns of the countries of the region regarding their long-term security and stability, will never shy away from its responsibilities. The AU will remain a loyal and effective partner of the United Nations, in general, and of your Council, in particular. It will remain a faithful and attentive friend of the people of Libya, under all circumstances.

More than ever before, the time for action has come, a concerted action in support of the shared values that underpin our partnership.

I thank you.