

AFRICAN UNION		UNION AFRICAINE
الاتحاد الأفريقي		UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 5517700/+251 11 5182558/Ext 2558

Web site: www.au.int

Directorate of Information and Communication

PRESS RELEASE

“Peace, security and infrastructure development are inextricably linked and should be pursued simultaneously” said Commissioner Abou-Zeid



Aswan, Arab Republic of Egypt – 13 December 2019: H.E. Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, attended the “Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development” which took place on 11-12 December in Aswan, Egypt under the auspices of H.E. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Egyptian President and Chairperson of the African Union.

The Forum presented a high-level platform for African Heads of States and Governments, global leaders, heads of regional organizations and financial institutions, civil society and prominent international experts to discuss concrete solutions to move forward the agenda for sustaining peace and development in Africa.

The Forum was also preceded by two-days workshop on the African Union’s agenda for silencing the guns in preparation for next year’s celebration of the Agenda 2063’s milestone flagship project “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020” aiming at a peaceful and secure Africa by the year 2020.

Officially opening the Aswan Forum, H.E. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi said “We must continue to work together, to turn the page on a painful history of conflicts in Africa, which has negatively affected the continent’s developmental aspirations”.

H.E. Commissioner has successfully addressed various sessions of the Forum where she stressed the crucial need for adopting a holistic approach to tackle the issue of peace and security in the Continent. She highlighted the clear linkages between peace and security,

and infrastructure and energy development, as the prerequisite for sustainable development in the Continent.

In this context, Commissioner Abou-Zeid underscored the efforts the African Union is putting through various programmes to make development agenda one of the key strategic priority towards achieving a stable, prosperous and secure Continent. This will add credence to Africa's pursuit for accelerated integration and stronger economic growth. She spoke on the increasing recognition of infrastructure development as prerequisite for peacebuilding with the aim of minimizing the potential for violent conflicts worldwide. She said that "in absence of peace and security, Africa cannot develop but also that without development both Africa and the World cannot have enduring peace as conflicts arise in part due to development failure".

"Peace and development are two sides of the same coin. Peace, stability and prevention of violent conflicts are inherently tied to sustainable development. Success today depends not just on preventing conflicts in the traditional sense but on finding ways of fighting poverty, inequality and deepening inclusion" added Dr Abou-Zeid

The Commissioner further highlighted the need for action-oriented discussions on the role of youth, women in peacebuilding efforts and the importance of giving the right attention to issues of climate change and cybercrime. She also emphasized the need to leverage the pivotal role that the private sector and multilateral cooperation should play in stabilization, post-conflict reconstruction and development by creating jobs in support for social cohesion and provision of services and goods.

Commissioner Abou-Zeid addressed the panel on "Energy Security" where she highlighted the focus on energy for peace, as well as energy for development. She discussed the impact of energy on security and the potential role of the African Union in promoting cooperation to prevent energy-related conflicts across Africa.

"Technology is the game changer" noted Dr Abou-Zeid to stress the potential for technology in Africa. She called upon Member States to work collectively to adopt urgent actions in protecting millions of newly connected Africans from cyber security threats.

The Forum will be organized every year to open new channels and contribute to provide new solutions and visions for the African challenges in achieving peace and sustainable development.

For further information contact

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: dic@africa-union.org | Web Site: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

Media inquiry Contacts:

Esther Azaa Tankou / Head of Information Division / AUC / Tel: +251 911361185 /

E-mail: yamboue@africa-union.org

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