

AFRICAN UNION
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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

AFRICAN UNION 2012 HIGH-LEVEL
RETREAT OF SPECIAL ENVOYS AND MEDIATORS

*Transforming the African Peace and Security
Context in the Next Decade: Appraisal and Opportunities*

5 – 6 NOVEMBER 2012
CAIRO, ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION,
DR. NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA
5 November 2012

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSION, DR. NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA TO THE 3RD AU
COMMISSION HIGH LEVEL RETREAT OF SPECIAL ENVOYS AND LIAISON
OFFICES**

5 NOVEMBER, 2012, CAIRO

Your Excellency, Mr. Mohamed K. Amr, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt,

Your Excellency, Mr. Nabil El Arabi, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States,

Commissioners, Peace and Security and of Political Affairs

Representative of the Republic of Benin, Chair of the African Union,

Representative of the Republic of The Gambia, Chair of the Peace and Security Council for the month of November 2012,

Distinguished representatives of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution,

Distinguished Representatives of the United Nations, the European Union, *La Francophonie* and bilateral partners,

Your Excellencies Former Presidents, High-level representatives, Special Representatives and AU Liaison offices

HE Romano Prodi

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me express my pleasure in welcoming you to this historic city on the banks of the eternal Nile. Our sincere gratitude to the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for its legendary hospitality. Since the first Retreat in 2010, the Egyptian Government has been with us in this endeavour, and its support has continued even through the challenging political and social transition of the past two years.
2. We also sincerely thank President Mohamed Morsi, his government and the people of Egypt for their continued strong commitment to the African Union and their determination to ensure that Egypt fully plays its role.
3. We extend our warmest appreciation to the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the Cairo Regional

Center for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa (CCCP), which have supported the planning and convening of this Retreat.

4. Permit me to thank all the participants for accepting the AU's invitation, and we look forward to their contributions during the next two days. In this regard, we pay special tribute to our colleagues from the United Nations, whose presence here is a testimony to the evolving partnership between the AU and the UN in the pursuit of peace, security and stability on the continent. We are equally indebted to other partner organisations, namely the European Union, La Francophonie and the League of Arab States, as well as to the bilateral partners, experts and civil society representatives for converging in Cairo for this Retreat.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. This Retreat coincides with the 10th anniversary of the African Union and offers an opportunity to collectively review the achievements in the area of peace and security during this period, and to reflect upon the lessons and challenges.
6. As we also prepare for the Golden Jubilee of the OAU/AU next year, the Retreat must help us to find ways to move more speedily towards the objective of a prosperous, peaceful, democratic and conflict-free Africa, that our people are yearning for.
7. The Cairo Declaration on the ***Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution*** adopted in June 1993 stated:

'...when the (Founders) met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to found the Organization of African Unity, they were guided by their collective conviction that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are legitimate aspirations of the African peoples, and by their desire to harness the natural and human resources for the advancement of the Continent in all spheres of human endeavour. The (Founders) were fully convinced that to achieve these lofty objectives, conditions for peace and security must be established and maintained.'
8. The work of the OAU and the ten years of the AU, demonstrated our collective concerns for peace and stability, by addressing seemingly intractable conflicts on the African continent. The OAU/AU took action,

including mediating among conflicting parties, deploying peacekeeping missions and other related tasks, even before establishing the Peace and security architecture.

9. In the past decade, the African Union has evolved a framework for lasting and sustainable peace and prosperity for the continent. Based on our vision, this framework is informed by the principle of non-indifference; popular participation in activities of the Union; responsiveness of Member States to the rights and needs of their citizens; leadership and ownership of the continent in its affairs. This has been translated into concrete actions to make a difference in the lives of ordinary Africans.
10. Clearly, these undertakings have been challenging, but we can take pride of the achievements made. The Peace and Security Council is increasingly working more effectively and has become an indispensable link to the UN Security Council.

Excellencies, Distinguished guests

11. Our Retreat is taking place against the background of a mixed peace and security landscape in our continent and the world. We made progress, as demonstrated by recent developments in Somalia and between Sudan and South Sudan, as well as the continued consolidation of peace in countries that have emerged from conflict. At the same time, we are faced with worrying negative developments in Mali and the Sahel, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau, Darfur, etc.
12. More generally, the past five years have witnessed a resurgence of unconstitutional changes of Government and an emerging trend of election-related violence and conflicts. Africa is also threatened by the growth of organized crime (especially narcotics), human trafficking, piracy, the illicit exploitation of natural resources that fuel and fund conflicts, as well as border disputes. These undermine the efforts of the continent to strengthen governance and its development agenda.
13. We have to therefore address conflicts expeditiously because it conflicts delay development. At the same time, we have to implement an inclusive

developmental agenda, because the absence of development may lead to conflicts.

Ladies and Gentleman

14. The Founders of our Union fulfilled their mission to rid Africa of colonialism and apartheid. The mission of our generations is to ensure that we build *an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.*
15. Key to this mission is the development of the continent: to use its natural resources to the benefits of our people and countries; to invest in education, health, science and innovation; to diversify economies and industrialise; to strengthen intra-Africa trade and economic integration; to build continental, regional and country infrastructure and to expand agricultural production and food security.
16. The development we talk about must be inclusive, and must ensure people's participation in their own development. Our Good Governance architecture is therefore not only about accountable, democratic and effective governance, but also about citizen-driven development and participation. We must ensure that no individual, group or sector feel marginalise or excluded from the political, social and economic lives of their countries. It is this foundation that will help to address the root causes of conflicts, will give hope to our citizenry and will set us on the road towards prosperity and to capturing this century as ours.

Ladies and Gentleman,

17. We have already acknowledged the presence of so many of our partners, including the United Nations, who play a critical role in supporting continental efforts for peace and security. Together with them, we must also answer the question whether our efforts contribute towards speedy and lasting solutions, and help to address the underlying causes of conflicts.

18. The United Nations Security Council has the primary responsibility for facilitating and enhancing our collective and global peace and security. Its mandate to achieve this evolved after the second world war, focussing on peace-keeping. We should however ask the question, is this mandate adequate given the security challenges we face today?

How does it adapt to the emerging challenges, where often before keeping the peace, peace needs to be created? Shouldn't the United Nations Security look at its architecture, so that the responsibility of creating peace does not rest outside of it? In today's security environment, how should it effectively support regional organisations in the efforts to create and keep peace?

19. For an example, are the conditions in Somalia not ripe for the United Nations Security Council to now step in and help to keep peace, after the sacrifices made by African forces to create the conditions for peace? Is the UNSC adequately equipped to deal with the complexities of the conflict in Mali and the Sahel?

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman

20. Despite our achievements as the AU, we clearly must do more. Since this is a Retreat and a time for introspection, we should not shy away from difficult issues.
21. Our Retreat must therefore ask and answer the questions, which we also asked amongst ourselves as the AU Commission when we met yesterday:
- Are we effective in building timely African and global consensus, coordination and action when and before conflicts lead to widespread instability in countries and regions? Are there common lessons across our different experiences taken into?
 - Are our interventions sufficiently integrated to deal with increasingly complex situations: having to address security, peace, political and humanitarian challenges at the same time; whilst giving voice not only to the parties to the conflict, but also to those excluded such as women and youth?

- How do we strengthen synergy across what we do as Regional Economic Communities and the AU Commission, and with affected Member states and neighbours?
 - Do our interventions and prevention mechanisms also enable the affected countries and regions to address the underlying causes of conflicts?
 - And finally, how do we ensure that we find the balance between creating peace as a precondition for development, but also resolutely pursue our developmental agenda so as to minimise conflict, marginalisation and instability that so often fuel conflicts?
22. In our deliberations on these questions, we cannot fail to address how the peace and security landscape and architecture impact on the women of the continent, who are more than half the population. What voice and presence do they have not only in our humanitarian efforts, but also in our mediating, peace keeping and ultimately political processes as we seek to prevent, keep and maintain the peace?
23. In a similar vein, the overwhelming majority of our continent is young, and we have the potential to reap a demographic dividend from this fact. In creating and keeping peace, how do we ensure that young men and women go to school and get skills, that they find employment, are protected from harmful substances, instead of being used as child soldiers against their own people?

Distinguished guests

24. It is my sincere hope that this Retreat will give us an opportunity to reflect on our experiences and draw lessons, and answer some of these questions with a view to build a solid foundation for the future.

We wish you fruitful deliberations over the next two days.

I declare this Retreat open and thank you.

