

AFRICAN UNION



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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
455^{ÈME} MEETING AT THE LEVEL OF
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

NAIROBI, KENYA

2 SEPTEMBER 2014

OPENING STATEMENT
BY THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

- **H.E. Idriss Deby Itno, Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council,**
- **H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya,**
- **Excellencies Heads of Delegation of the members of the Peace and Security Council,**
- **Distinguished guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to humbly begin by thanking President Idriss Deby Itno, Chair of the Council, and the other members of this organ, for convening this important meeting devoted to the issue of terrorism and violent extremism, in fulfillment of the decision adopted during the recent Malabo Summit. Your presence here today is testimony to your commitment to address a scourge that has blighted the African security landscape in recent years.

The Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, regrets that she could not be here personally. This is because she is engaged with matters concerning the quest for appropriate continental response to the Ebola outbreak which has become another not only of health but also security concern to the Continent. She conveys her best wishes for the success of this meeting, and assures the Council of the Commission's determination to continue supporting Member States in more effectively addressing the threat of terrorism and violent extremism on the continent. On Ebola, given the huge social-economic impact of the crisis there is urgent need for a coordinated and collective response at the level of the Union. After extensive consultations it has been agreed that the Executive Council convene on the 8th September in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for an Extra-Ordinary Session that will include Ministers of Health and relevant experts to develop an appropriate response to the Ebola crisis.

The choice of Nairobi as the venue of this meeting is highly symbolic. It is an expression of our Union's solidarity with Kenya and its people, as they confront the terrorist threat arising from Al-Shabaab activities. We will not forget the shocking acts that engulfed this city just one year ago, during the Westgate attack. I would like to express AU's appreciation to President Uhuru Kenyatta for his personal commitment and for all the arrangements made by his Government for the successful holding of this meeting.

I wish to acknowledge the presence of our partners, to whom I would like to reiterate AU's appreciation for their support. We look forward to an enhanced collaboration in addressing more effectively the issue at hand.

- **Chairperson,**

The African continent has made great strides in dealing with its traditional security challenges. Interstate and civil conflicts have declined significantly, and the continent is now governed by norms and instruments that have zero tolerance for unconstitutional changes of Government. Through these norms, we have cemented the principles of democracy and good governance.

We have also made considerable progress in consolidating peace and facilitating recovery in countries emerging from conflict.

Our Union has exerted tremendous efforts in deploying robust peace support operations that have had a positive impact on reducing violence, protecting affected populations, defeating rogue elements and creating conditions for meaningful political processes and sustainable peace. We have shown the creativity necessary to develop adaptable and tailored operations to address particular situations.

It is befitting at this juncture to pay tribute to the Peace and Security Council for the critical role it played in these achievements. Indeed, since its establishment, a decade ago, the Council has demonstrated an exemplary commitment in advancing our shared vision of a conflict-free Africa.

While taking pride of the progress made, we should, however, remain mindful of the daunting challenges ahead. The conflicts and crises affecting Libya, South Sudan, Somalia, the Central African Republic and the Northern part of Mali are a stark reminder of the need for continued engagement by the Council and the entire membership of the Union, to bring about the peace and security our people are yearning for. We have to do all it takes to silence the guns.

I would like, at this juncture, to express the AU's deep concern at the prevailing situation in Lesotho and the threat it poses to the stability of that country and the principles that are at the core of our Union, most notably the rejection of unconstitutional changes of Government.

We reiterate the Chairperson Dlamini-Zuma call to the parties to seek a negotiated solution within the confines of their country's constitution.

- **Chairperson,**

The efforts made to date have not been easy. The challenges that we have and continue to face are massive but our learning curve has been steep; we have learned that the onus is on us to deal with our problems.

It is with the same determination, commitment and recognition of the responsibility that lays upon us that we must address the challenges for which we are gathered here today.

When the 2nd Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Syrte in February 2004, agreed on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, it did so on the basis of a definition of security that went beyond traditional state-centric notions to one that is informed by the changing international environment, which imposes additional challenges such as transnational organized crime, mercenarism,

proliferation of arms, as well as terrorism, which is this focus of this meeting.

In the past decade, we have witnessed a rise of violent extremism and terrorism.

This threat not only undermines the security of our States, but the very values of religious and ethnic tolerance and harmony that have for long characterized the diverse societies and the democratic values that the continent is striving for.

Terrorists tell us that there is no room for religious co-existence in Africa, that people should not have a say in who governs them or how they are governed, that our youth must eschew modern education, that the sciences that have given us vaccines and modern technology are an evil invention, that our young girls are commodities to be bought and sold in the market place, that the due process of law and the human right to a fair trial is unnecessary and that human life is worthless. These perverse ideas do not come out of any holy book but exists only in their depraved minds.

But make no mistake, these groups are more than thugs with rifles and home-made bombs. They are calculated organized survivalists driven by material interests. They have been able to exploit the conditions of porous borders and limited government presence and regulation, which have allowed transnational crime to flourish. They are engaged in various criminal activities, including human trafficking, drug trafficking, illicit trade and the lucrative business of kidnapping at ransom. These activities have enabled them acquire significant financial resources to recruit

and arm followers to continue on with their terror campaigns.

In the Sahel, various criminal and terrorist groups that have long found a safe haven in the vast Sahara colluded to produce the greatest threat to the territorial integrity of Mali. In Nigeria, the group commonly known as Boko Haram has emerged as a serious threat to this country and its neighbors. The group's brutality knows no limits, as demonstrated by the April 2014 kidnapping of over 200 school girls. Witnessing the terrified looks of those young girls in the video footage, the callousness and cruelty of their captors and the helplessness and despair of their families shocked our conscience and offended the deepest sense of our humanity.

In Somalia, thanks to the unwavering commitment of the troops contributing countries and the support of the international partners, we have been able to deal significant setbacks to Al Shabaab, create the conditions for the re-building of the Somali state and restore the hope of our Somali brethren in a brighter and peaceful future. However, daunting challenges remain.

In Central Africa, the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA has, since its establishment, significantly weakened the capability of this group.

- **Chairperson,**

As you are aware and as you stated it, our Union has developed a comprehensive and robust counter terrorism framework. In 1992, it adopted the Resolution on the Strengthening of Cooperation and Coordination among African States in which it pledged to fight the phenomena of extremism and terrorism. This was followed in 1994 by the Declaration on the Code of Conduct for Inter-African Relations in which the Union rejected all forms of extremism and terrorism.

These political declarations were later strengthened by the adoption of the 1999 Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and its 2004 Protocol.

Other important instruments include the 2002 Plan of Action that focuses on practical measures to strengthen border security, criminal justice response, intelligence sharing and operational coordination. Indeed only last week the African Intelligence Services held their meeting here in Nairobi aimed at pursuing efforts to work together. The CISSA report is available for your perusal.

On its part, the Commission, including through its African Centre on the Study and Research on Terrorism, has continued to provide member states with various forms of support, including capacity building of its law enforcement agencies, national and regional threat assessments, and a platform for the exchange of information, experiences and development of joint plans.

The Commission has further ensured that Council remains abreast of related matters through the submission of annual reports on terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.

Steps are also being taken to support the Council in operationalizing its sub-Committee on Counter-Terrorism.

Furthermore, and in response to country and region specific challenges, a number of innovative cooperative mechanisms have been put in place. The RCI-LRA in Central Africa and the Nouakchott Process in the Sahelo-Saharan region are illustrative of such an innovative approach.

The AU counter-terrorism instruments, combined with those developed at the global level, together provide an adequate framework and provide the guidance necessary to prevent and combat terrorism. What we need to focus on now is not the elaboration of further legal instruments and mechanisms, but the effective implementation of the existing ones. This requires renewed political commitment. More specifically, I would like to call on Member States that have not yet done so to urgently take the steps required to become parties to the relevant African and international instruments. Such steps should go hand in hand with renewed efforts to fully implement the provisions contained therein.

While we have to take the steps necessary within the framework of the rule of law to protect our populations and eliminate these violent groups, we need to also address why their message appeals to

some of our youth and why they find a sense of belonging among them.

It is imperative that we deal with the social and other conditions that contribute to radicalization and the emergence of terrorism, in order to provide our people and youth with the alternatives that would delegitimize the terrorists' narrative. We must address the social, ethnic and religious tensions that the terrorist groups exploit to turn communities against each other. We need to renew their confidence in government's ability to address their needs, through good governance, democracy, inclusion, social justice, and socio-economic development, all which are enshrined in the Constitutive Act of our Union.

Our efforts at fighting terrorism cannot be disassociated from the task of resolving existing conflict and crisis situations and consolidating peace where it has been achieved. Nowhere is this task more urgent than in Libya, Somalia, Northern Mali and other affected areas.

It is the Commission's expectation that this Summit will commit to the actions and mechanisms that we have agreed on and to put their weight behind their timely and effective implementation.

Yours Excellencies, I thank you for your kind attention.