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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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ADDRESS TO THE AFRICAN UNION

Addis Ababa, 27 January 2013

Your Excellency Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of Ethiopia,
Your Excellency Boni Yayi, President of Benin and Chairperson of the African Union,
Your Excellency Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union
Commission,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to join the leaders of Africa at this year's milestone Summit.

Fifty years since the founding of the Organization of African Unity, I am here to celebrate with you – and to look ahead to the next half-century of progress.

We just observed a minute of silence to mark the passing of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and President John Atta Mills of Ghana. The peaceful transfer of power that followed their deaths was a testament to the deepening of democratic norms and values across the continent.

Excellencies,

As Secretary-General, I have visited nearly 30 African countries. In each place, I listened – to the leaders and the people.

I have seen countries emerging from war and those with long-established peace. I have seen innovation, imagination and the tremendous determination of Africa's people to thrive and prosper.

Africa has the experience to forge solutions to its own challenges and contribute to our global goals of inclusive growth, social justice and protecting our environment.

Some of the world's fastest-growing economies are in Africa. Many countries have made important gains towards the Millennium Development Goals. More African

children are in schools, especially girls. More clinics are helping more women survive childbirth. More African women sit in Government and key decision-making positions.

And here let me add my congratulations to the new Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. I look forward to working closely with the new AU leadership.

I welcome this progress. But like you I am still concerned about the hundreds of millions of Africans living in poverty.

That is why we are pushing for results. I count on all of you to attend the Special Event on the MDGs at the General Assembly this September. We must accelerate our efforts as we near the 2015 deadline.

At the same time, we are looking beyond 2015. Next week, the High-Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda will meet in Monrovia. I thank Panel Co-chair President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia for hosting this vital meeting.

Success will depend on ownership by governments and civil society.

Our destination is clear: A future where Africa's wealth enriches all of Africa's people. Where misrule is only found in history books. Where Africa's goods get a fair price on the global market. Where global partnerships mean shared prosperity.

African countries averaged a remarkable 5 per cent growth over the past decade – and are projected to grow by even more than 5 per cent by 2014.

But economic expansion is not an end in itself. Wealth cannot remain in the hands of the few.

Inequality is a recipe for instability.

Africa is the world's youngest continent. Youth here yearn for jobs and a life of dignity. We must invest in them.

Let us put a special focus on Africa's girls and women. They can drive peace and development. Later today, we will spotlight our goal of ending maternal deaths.

We must also stand against all forms of violence. We especially need to speak out against rape and sexual violence in conflict. Governments must support victims and end the culture of impunity. I urge the males here to join my Network of Men Leaders and all to support our COMMIT to End Violence against Women campaign.

I applaud the African Group for leading the General Assembly's adoption of its first-ever resolution calling for an end to female genital mutilation.

Africa has made tremendous progress in reducing both HIV infection and AIDS deaths. The UN will continue to support you as we work for an AIDS-free generation, especially by ending HIV in newborns.

All of these gains will contribute to sustainable development. But lasting progress demands that we also address climate change.

The United Nations is proud to support the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative. I hope all African countries will continue to contribute to progress on climate change and my Sustainable Energy for all Initiative. This can open the way for enormous gains.

Next year, I am going to convene a summit meeting to mobilize political leadership for a legally binding global treaty on climate change.

At the same time, the international community must honour its commitments and step up development assistance to Africa. It is not enough for leaders to set targets on aid and trade. They have to follow through with results.

With so many donors facing fiscal pressures, I have warned them against reducing official development assistance. We need investments in development in order to fix the world economy. And beyond practical economic considerations, we have a moral obligation to help the poor and vulnerable people of our world.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Development is critical to peace – and peace is essential for development.

Our partnership aims to bring greater stability to Africa.

The UN, AU and others are working together in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On the sidelines of this Summit, I hope that regional leaders will endorse a Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework to address the structural causes of the recurring cycles of violence.

The UN Mission, MONUSCO, is doing everything possible to protect civilians. We are considering establishing a peace enforcement capacity within the Mission to address the threat of armed groups in eastern DRC.

Mali is under threat from extremist armed insurgents. I welcome the timely bilateral assistance to the Malian army in response to the Government's request.

As ECOWAS speeds up preparations to deploy AFISMA, I encourage the Malian authorities to embrace a comprehensive political process. This includes agreeing on a roadmap leading to the full restoration of constitutional order.

We are determined to do what we can to help the people of Mali in their time of need. Humanitarian agencies are helping suffering civilians. The United Nations has also sent specialists on the military and political tracks. This is a moral imperative for all in the international community. I have presented to the Security Council my recommendation on the logistics support package for AFISMA. And I am personally committed to ensuring that the United Nations stands ready, once the regrettably necessary combat operations are over, to undertake a major system-wide effort for peacebuilding, governance and security sector reform, physical reconstruction, and regional cooperation.

In Sudan and South Sudan, the parties have taken positive steps to resolve outstanding issues. But they should make more progress in meeting their agreements. I am especially concerned about the dangerous humanitarian situation in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States. I call on the authorities in Sudan and South Sudan to immediately begin direct talks to allow urgently needed humanitarian assistance to reach affected civilians.

In Somalia, the United Nations and the African Union continue to work closely together. The departure of Al-Shabaab from Kismaayo and other areas opened space for peacebuilding. Better security is helping to solidify Somalia's democracy.

Later this month, I will present recommendations to the Security Council on a new UN presence in Somalia, including ways to strengthen the UN-AU partnership on the ground. I will work to secure urgently needed funding for AMISOM.

The international community must continue to urge national actors in Guinea-Bissau to come up with an inclusive transitional arrangement and roadmap for the full restoration of constitutional order.

In the Central African Republic, the restoration of peace and security depends on the parties observing the agreements they signed in Libreville earlier this month. They must also resolve long-standing governance, security and development issues.

I am pleased to welcome Palestinian National Authority President Abbas here. I count on the African Union's continued support to help Palestinians and Israelis forge a credible political path that will meet the legitimate aspirations of both sides.

Excellencies,

Development and security demand democracy, accountability, shared responsibilities and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Peer Review Mechanism – which is now ten years old – show this continent's commitment to protect people from abuse and deepen democratic governance.

This year the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons entered into force. It is the world's first treaty to protect people who have fled within the borders of their countries.

You have fulfilled and expanded the vision of your founders. We see this in the peaceful transitions of power. We see this in the adoption of enlightened laws and constitutions. And we see Africa's progress in the vibrant civil society that can challenge corruption and demand the good governance all people deserve.

Africa can draw inspiration from its record of achievement to manage the many complex transitions ahead.

As we celebrate Africa's unity, I call on you, its leaders, to build on your proud traditions and uphold this continent's commitment to peace, sustainable development, democratic rule and human rights – here and around the world.

Thank you.