

**OPENING REMARKS BY  
H.E. KWESI QUARTEY, DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON,  
AT THE EXPERTS CONSULTATIVE MEETING  
5 MARCH, 2020**

**TOWARDS DEVELOPING AN AFRICAN HUMAN SECURITY  
INDEX – ON PRACTICES, METHODS AND DESIGNS**

Your Excellency Mr. Yukio Takasu, Special Adviser to the Secretary General on Human Security,

My Sister Dr. Thokozile Ruzvidzo, Director, Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division of UNECA

Mr. Gerald Mitchell, Deputy Head of Office and Director of Political Affairs, UNOAU,

Mr. Markus Awatre, Director, African Union Cooperation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung,

Colleagues from the United Nations and AUC,

Experts on Human Security Index,

Allow me, on behalf of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, to welcome all of you here today. Our task today is to deliberate on the multi-faceted and multi-dimensional aspect of Human Security in Africa.

This occasion is yet another opportunity to recognize and commend the combined and coordinated effort that our two sister organizations, the AU and the UN, in everything that we do.

We only recently concluded meetings on the RCM (Africa) and the 6<sup>th</sup> Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD-6) at the beautiful Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. Being in Zimbabwe, especially having the opportunity to visit the *Smoke That Thunders*, which somebody decided to name after Queen Victoria, the Empress of India – one begins to understand why Comrade Robert

Gabriel Mugabe (of blessed memory) and our illustrious in-law, was not the favourite person of our former colonial master, UK.

These meetings provided a platform for our two institutions to have a conversation on how to strengthen our collaboration in a more coherent and coordinated manner. The overall objective, as always, was to ensure the engagement of the African Union in the conception, inception and design of our joint development initiatives because our experience tells us that when we are able to think through our issues together, their actual implementation becomes that much easier and more effective.

As we gather here today to deliberate on the way forward to develop an African Human Security Index, we are satisfied that the AU is in the driving seat. In doing so, we may finally be getting close to the idea of continental planning that Kwame Nkrumah so fervently wrote about in his classic work *AFRICA MUST UNITE*. That is how the African Human Security Index both in design and implementation can truly meet the aspirations of the African people. That is the only way it can become people-oriented in a truly African sense.

I am delighted therefore to note that this meeting demonstrates our determination to closely work together to design and develop the first ever African Human Security Index. We particularly welcome the ideas provided by our Youth Envoy, Aya Chebi, to make the youth key drivers in Africa's developmental process. They are the future which in the timeless words of the Lebanese poet, Khalil Gibran, "we cannot see, not even our dreams."

Kwame Nkrumah, the visionary, had already seen this over 50 years ago when he stated:

"Across the parapet, I can see mother Africa, her body besmeared in the blood of her sons and daughters in the struggle to liberate her from the

clutches of colonialism. I can see cities of Africa becoming the centre of science, technology, of culture and development, and I can hear the immortals resounding the echo, that seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto you.”

What are these other things? The CFTA, the Single Air Transport Mechanism, the Common Passport, the Common African Citizenship, the African Central Bank, etc. He it was who famously described the shape of the continent, the African conundrum of poverty amidst wealth, that even the shape of the continent was a question mark, with Madagascar as the dot. Robert Nesta Kwabena Marley said it even more vividly:

“In the abundance of water, the fool is thirsty”.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The concept of human security was introduced two and a half decades ago in the UN General Assembly. We recognize and appreciate efforts countries like Japan have taken with the support of the UN towards operationalizing the concept. Indeed, threats that confront people’s lives on a daily basis are the critical starting point of the human security approach. It is therefore critical that our discussions today foster and assert the UNDP 1994 Human Development “people-centred” approach. This also centres on the question of governance, democratic governance, demonstrating what Abraham Lincoln called the government of the people, by the people for the people.

So, governance, by which we can only mean democratic governance, is key. In his classic work entitled *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*, Prof. Michael Porter, a professor of Competitive Strategy, had this to say:

“In the modern global economy, prosperity is a nation’s choice. Competitiveness is no longer limited to those nations with a favourable inheritance. Nations choose prosperity if they organize their policies, laws

and institutions based on productivity. Nations choose prosperity if, for example, they upgrade the capabilities of all their citizens and invest in the types of specialized infrastructure that allow commerce to be efficient. Nations choose poverty, or limit their wealth, if they allow their policies to erode the productivity of business. They limit their wealth if skills are reserved only for a few. They limit their wealth when business success is secured by family connections or government concessions rather than productivity. War or ineffective government can derail prosperity, but these are often under the collective control of citizens.”

The AU is open and ready to listen, learn, and to work with the experts and partners here to help in the development of an African Human Security Index, specific to the context of African countries and the challenges they face in the current global and regional setting.

The new definition by the Commission on Human Security (CHS), is a way to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment by protecting fundamental freedoms. All this fits in very well within the vision of the AU on Peace and Security, especially on *Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development*, the AU theme of this year, on an integrated Africa through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the aspirations within the AU Agenda 2063, specifically highlighting the need for the development of an African Human Security Index under its Flagship Project on *Silencing the Guns*, to strengthen its progress, and many other frameworks with partners such as the AU-UN Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

The African Human Security Index (AHSI) will be instrumental in meeting the aspirations of the continent in addressing the environmental, socio-economic,

peace and security, and governance challenges, as well as human rights dimensions.

It will further strengthen peace and advance progress towards implementation of the AU Agenda 2063 and UN SDGs 2030, while supporting efforts to effectively silence the guns on the continent, to ensure the prosperity of the African people.

We urge colleagues here present, representing the wide spectrum of the African Union, to come up with programmes and activities that touch on every aspect of the Human Security, to participate and contribute effectively to this Experts Consultative Meeting to ensure the design and development of a robust comprehensive and scalable African Human Security Index.

To conclude, perhaps you will allow me to recall the words of one of Africa's heroes, Amilcar Cabral, who once famously spoke thus:

“Always remember and bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children. Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies, expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories. Let us be precise. For us, African revolution means the transformation of our present life in the direction of progress.”

We are eager to hear from your recommendations on the way forward.

I wish you all fruitful discussions and deliberations.

Thank you.