



STATEMENT

**H.E. AMB. MINATA SAMATE CESSOUMA
AU COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF

AFRICA DAY

**25 MAY 2022
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**



**Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

It is an honour for me to take part, today, 25 May 2020, in the Africa Day commemoration, which, this year, is celebrated under particularly difficult circumstances for the humanity, due to the Corona virus. This pandemic of COVID19 does not unfortunately spare the African continent.

For centuries, Africa suffered immensely from slavery and colonialism, which contributed to Africa's underdevelopment.

I salute the memory of the African heroes who fought for the liberation of the African continent from the colonial yoke. The cement of this struggle was pan-Africanism and the quest for African unity, with the creation, on May 25, 1963, of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa. It was about advancing the total liberation of the continent from colonialism, the ideals of Pan-Africanism, the unity and continental integration of Africa.

The transformation of the AOU into the African Union with the adoption of its Constitutive Act of the in 2000 and launch in 2002, you will agree with me that each 25 May is important day for us Africans.

In 2013, the continent celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the OAU/AU under the theme: Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. This was a celebration of Africa's liberation over the past fifty years. At that occasion, reaffirming their determination to build an "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena", the African leaders adopted the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration covering eight (8) key priority areas, namely:

- African Identity and Renaissance;
- Struggle against colonialism and self-determination;
- Continental integration;
- Social and economic development;
- Peace and security
- Democratic governance;
- Africa's destiny; and
- Africa's place in the world.

It is in this same vein that they *pledged not to leave the burden of conflict to the next generation of Africans and to end all wars in Africa by 2020.*

This is the year 2020 and it is clear that our continent is still plagued by different types of conflicts. It is for this reason that I salute this year's celebration on the theme "Silencing guns: creating conducive conditions for Africa's development".

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Our Agenda 2063 dovetail neatly into the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, which sustainable development goals No. 16 aims to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

How can we then silence the guns in Africa? Silencing the guns is all about preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. In that sense, Agenda 2063 put emphasis on this theme and the 2020 theme roadmap is clear on the issue. However, I would like to emphasize a few points:

1. A sustainable strategy to silence firearms must directly address the root structural causes of violent conflicts in Africa, namely (a) development deficit, (b) governance deficit, (c) peace deficit and (d) climate change.

These socio-political and economic challenges are sources of forced displacement in Africa and continue to threaten peace, security and the structural transformation of Africa.

2. Good governance and strong public institutions are essential conditions for silencing the guns in Africa. Aspiration 3 envisions an "Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law". Every effort should be made by AU member states to ratify and domesticate for effective implementation of the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063 envisions "a peaceful and secure Africa". It is important that AU member states effectively implement the provisions of the 2002 Protocol on the Establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council.

3. Silencing the guns for a socio-economic and political stability depends to a large extent on the quality of its public institutions and the services they provided, democratic and viable institutions. This brings me to the electoral process on our continent. Our countries must then scrupulously implement the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

4. Silencing the guns on the continent presupposes that we are guided by responsible, equitable, inclusive, transparent governance in the management of countries' resources, participatory, consensus-oriented as well as justice, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

5. The COVID 19 pandemic represents a multi-sectorial challenge for African States; its leads us to learn lessons from good governance, which is essential for the social cohesion, peace, stability, security and the development of our continent.

6. The inclusion of women and youth in all processes and in all spheres of society.

The Architecture for Peace and Security in Africa (APSA) and the African Governance (AGA) are complementary and mutually reinforcing. It is imperative that these two instruments are put in synergy. Good governance and peace are prerequisites for socio-economic development.

To conclude, Silencing the guns in Africa is within our reach if all Africans, without exception, work to “rid the continent of wars, civil strife, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts, and to prevent genocide”.

I thank you for your kind attention.