



WELCOMING REMARKS

BY

COMMISSIONER OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS PEACE AND SECURITY

**AT THE 6TH MEETING OF THE PRC SUB-COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS,
DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE**

24 MAY 2021

VIRTUAL

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Members of the PRC Sub Committee on Human rights, Democracy and Governance;

Distinguished Colleagues;

All protocols, duly observed;

It is my privilege to be with you today on the 6th meeting of PRC Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance among all of you, my previous compatriots and friends.

I also wish to congratulate the newly minted Chair, my brother H.E Amb. Taonga Mushayavanhu of Zimbabwe and wish him the best on his Chairpersonship along with the members of the Bureau.

Your Excellencies;

I am sure you will agree with me that this Sub-Committee is one of the most important and critical sub committees dealing with issues that is at the core of our Continent's agenda – Human Rights, Democracy and Governance.

Allow me to take you through memory lane - the idea of this Sub-Committee first came on the AU – PRC Joint retreat with the then Department of Political Affairs in Mombassa Kenya on 13-15 July 2009. Although it was a long time coming, the PRC sub Committee's final decision to be operational was made by the Decision of the Executive Council's 33rd Ordinary Session held from 28-29 June 2019 in Nouakchott, Mauritania. That decision was key in providing the basis for the formal establishment of the Sub-Committee after which it had its inaugural meeting take place on 18th October 2019.

The Sub-Committee during its tenure and with the leadership of the first Chair – Senegal led by my brother Amb Mouctar Diop have made considerable strides of which I can mention some;

- 1.** It held a total of 5 meetings where the majority was held amid a global pandemic;
- 2.** Finalized and Adopted the TOR – adopted by silent procedure on August 17 2020 via email;

3. Finalized adopted the Work plan for 2020 – adopted by silent procedure on August 17 2020 via email;
4. Held several exchanges on COVID-19 and impacts with the leadership of the then Commissioner of Political Affairs – H.E Minata Samate Cessouma;
5. Discussed about the theme of the year for 2020 Silencing the guns and provided feedback on the concept note provided and way forward;
6. Participated in the AGA 9th High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Governance and Human rights;
7. Received briefings on the work of APRM and AUABC on their interventions; and
8. Received briefings from DPA on the draft AU guidelines for Elections in the Context of COVID-19 and other public health emergencies among other things.

This accomplishment is commendable and gives me considerable confidence in my new role as the Commissioner of Political Affairs Peace and Security Department.

As you are already aware, my office took over at a critical point in time where our union is going through transitions in line with the AU reforms. I am tasked to not only oversee its implementation but also ensure its success in delivering for our continent.

I do believe that this Sub-Committee can play a part in serving as a strong hinge that will link the work of the Union to the national level; serve as a policy interface between different institutions working on Human rights, Democracy and Governance; contribute to the synergies that will be created by AGA and APSA and provide guidance to the revamping of the Union's work going forward.

Your Excellencies,

As you are aware governance deficit is one of the structural root causes of conflicts in Africa with corruption, marginalization and election violence bringing even strong nations of our continent to their knees.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic there has been reversals of democratic governance values in our nations with violent conflicts and popular protests manifesting. The

trends and patterns of violent conflicts in the continent are also becoming complex and intertwined with far reaching negative effects on the citizenry.

We can all agree that, no matter how much we try we cannot aspire to achieve Agenda 2063 without dealing with structural root causes of conflict through building resilient democracies, and accountable governance along with due respect for human rights.

I foresee the Sub-Committee will play a considerable role on these mighty agendas.

Through your 2021 work plan, my team and I at the PAPS department are ready to work hand in glove with you to implement the work plan but also contribute to the bigger picture of creating a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

I look forward to engaging you further and work with you to develop practical strategies that can benefit our member states and in extension our citizens.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and reiterate my office's willingness to follow up and support the implementation of your mandate.

I thank you.