

**REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY  
DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE AFRICA PLATFORM ON CHILDREN AFFECTED BY  
ARMED CONFLICTS, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 5 JULY 2021.**

**Excellencies,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Children's Voices,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It is my singular honour and privilege to welcome you all this afternoon to the launch of the Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts, an initiative established to support African Children living in difficult conditions, due to the outbreak of war, insurgency, terrorism or military occupation caused by political unrest.

Indeed, the conceptualization of the Africa Platform is to serve as an informal, advisory and supportive network of AU Member States, UN agencies, international partners and civil society organizations, committed to preventing and protecting children from the impact of the scourge of war, armed conflicts and violent extremism.

**Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,**

Your presence with us today underscores your commitment to this noble cause and your determination to urgently and collectively address grave violations against our children's rights in order to prevent more children from facing the horrors of war.

Certainly, children have no business in conflicts and most significantly, shouldn't be victims of wars or be killed, maimed, kidnapped, trafficked, sexually exploited, abused or denied their rights to childhood and access to life-saving humanitarian assistance. **We must stop this war on African children!**

**Excellencies,**

It is heartbreaking to note that the number of children in Africa who are killed, maimed, recruited as child soldiers or used as human shields, body amours and bombs is alarming. Similarly, the number of schools and hospitals constantly attacked, looted, destroyed or used for military purposes, is more

staggering today than last year; making the scale and severity of these violations, abuses and attacks an issue of general concern. **As such, these grave violations against our children must stop!**

**Excellencies and Dear Friends,**

Silencing all guns in Africa is the surest and the most sustainable way to end these grave violations, if we must ensure that we bequeath to our children, the Africa we want. As you know full well, children cannot wait for all guns to be silenced before they enjoy their rights to be protected from wars, therefore, the buck stops on our table, since these girls and boys trapped in armed conflicts today, have no major role to play, but ourselves.

**Excellencies,**

Children are our future and our hope for a stable, peaceful and prosperous Africa. If we protect our children today by preventing conflicts and cordoning off radicalization that fuels extremism, then we will be protecting our future and safeguarding the Africa we want.

For this reason, the African Union and the international community must do everything possible to avail children the rights to childhood and promote their interests by protecting their wellbeing, under the peace and security agenda.

To this end, the Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts being launched today, demonstrates our total rejection of war against children and solidifies our collective commitment to do much more in order to make Africa safer for all children. Therefore, that collective action to promote the rights and welfare of the African child, in line with the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, needs to be demonstrated now.

**Excellencies, Colleagues, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I invite you all to be part of this initiative and to enthusiastically participate in the activities of The Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts. The schedule of activities for this novel Platform will be shared in due course with you. We will be working closely in the Africa Platform with the AUC Department of Health, Humanitarian and Social Development, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), UNICEF, UNESCO, Safe Schools Initiative, the Paris Commitments and Principles on the Protection of Children in Armed Conflicts, the Paris Principles

Steering Group, the UN SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict, Peace and Security Council (PSC), Member States, RECs and Regional Mechanisms, as well as DPS.

Let me conclude by thanking Save the Children for supporting the launch of this Platform, which is very dear to my heart. Let me also thank our international partners, including the Governments of Norway and Sweden for their generous support to the child protection agenda of the African Union.

**We must join hands together to free children from wars and listen to children's voices crying for peace, stability, quality education and a better future!**

I thank you!