



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY BANKOLE ADEOYE, COMMISSIONER
FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND PEACE AND SECURITY, AT THE 1067TH
VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN
SESSION ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA.
ADDIS ABABA, 3RD MARCH, 2022**

Your Excellency Prof Mafa Sejanamane, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho and Chairperson of the AU PSC for March 2022,

Excellencies, Members of the Peace and Security Council,

Your Excellency Cessouma Minata Samate, AU Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development,

Excellencies Permanent Representatives of Member States,

Distinguished Representative of the UN Office to the African Union,

Distinguished Special Envoy on Youth of the Chairperson of the Commission

Distinguished Representatives of RECs/RMs to the AU,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Kingdom of Lesotho, and, indeed, the entire PSC, for including this very important topic in the Programme of Work for the month of March, 2022. This points to the PSC's commitment to implement its previous decisions on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), particularly in providing updates on the status of progress in the

implementation of the 10-Year Implementation Plan of the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security (CFYPS).

The session is also a reflection of the AU's recognition of the important role that youth play in contributing to Africa's peace, security and development at national, regional and continental levels, and even the global level. Through relevant organized youth groups and networking, a lot can be achieved by the youth in helping promote values underpinning a culture of peace and institutional resilience, from community all the way to the global levels.

To that end, while we welcome the second cohort of African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAPs), let me thank the first cohort for their demonstrated commitment and worthwhile contributions to our shared agenda for peace, security and development. The AYAPs and the Office of the Youth Envoy play key roles in bridging the gap between the youth peacebuilders and policy-makers. This has helped produce positive results. For example, the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security and its 10-Year Implementation Plan is the first ever continental strategic document for the purpose of advancing YPS and has become a model for other regions.

To further mainstream youth participation in peacebuilding, the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security is setting up YouthWise as a strategic complement of PanWise and FemWise in line with the decision of the just concluded 35th Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government.

It is also important that we acknowledge and express gratitude to the youth who have made sacrifices towards promoting peace and security on the continent. While many made personal sacrifices during the highpoint of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, many responded positively through programming on the AU's 'Silencing the Guns' flagship project. Others have continued to engage in initiatives ranging from advocacy, preventing and countering violent extremism, capacity building, post-conflict reconstruction and development and promoting peace processes.

EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS,

I would like at this juncture to share a quick overview of the Continental Framework on YPS based on its five key priorities.

- **Participation:** advocacy on the framework which included encouraging stakeholders to work towards developing National Action Plans (NAPs), was implemented in Mali, Uganda, Seychelles, Kenya, Nigeria, Liberia and Cameroon. And the RECs/RMs were actively involved. This year, these advocacy missions are priority deliverables of the AYAPs. To achieve the other elements in this category, I have approved a Young Peacebuilders Mentorship Programme aimed at developing youth leadership qualities and skill sets for peacebuilding. The modalities for financing and implementation are under preparation.
- **Prevention:** focused essentially on the enhancement of capacities, this is a continuous process which is based on our appreciation of knowledge, skills and experiences that our young women and men already possess.

Central to the delivery in this key priority area is the focus on peer-to-peer and experiential learning. This approach was evident in the Inter-Generational Dialogues on the CFYPS; Training of Trainers on the 2021 Theme of the Year and follow-up training at the national level; and implementation of the favourite projects of the first cohort of AYAPs.

These included online social entrepreneurship trainings which culminated in a 5-day residency program in Southern Africa; training on conflict prevention and mediation in Central Africa, training on sexual and gender-based violence in East Africa, sensitization training of youth against radicalism, violent extremism, conflict prevention, mitigation and response in West Africa; and a sensitization workshop on the roles and contributions of youth to peace and security in North Africa.

- **Protection:** whereas efforts were made to build youth capacities relating to International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law in

2021, this year, the focus is now more on reaching those living with disabilities and displaced populations including refugees. A plan of action is being prepared to engage with camp authorities in Uganda, which hosts the largest refugee population, with a view to integrating their young residents in AU-related activities. The emphasis will be on the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.

- **Disengagement and reintegration:** the program created platforms for the interaction of key stakeholders to enhance their voices and influence. The program also promoted policies, legislation and programmes of the AU aimed at effective repatriation, resettlement, disarmament, de-radicalization, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of youth through building their capacities.
- **Partnership and collaboration:** it is gratifying to note the increasing strategic partnerships with internal and external stakeholders on the YPS programme. This year we are also working with our partners under an AU PAPS/UNDP collaboration, to help prioritize and address complex political transitions in Africa. The AGA Youth Engagement Strategy especially in the area of giving youth their voice and influence in governance, will be leveraged in synergy with the Y4P programme. Details on this will be made available to the PSC later.

Here, let me appreciate all our partners that have provided support to the Y4P Africa Program as we look to increase the resources at their disposal.

In this regard, my office is also finalizing the modalities to ensure that the Youth also benefit from increased financing available through the utilization of the Peace Fund. Within this priority is the target to develop guidelines/toolkit for the implementation of the CFYPS. While this has reached its final technical stages, I will humbly request that the PSC, through its Committee of Experts, validates it as it did with the Framework.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,

On this note, I would urge the PSC to also kindly:

- **Acknowledge** the key role of youth in peace and security in Africa.
- Reiterate the PSC's commitment to effective mainstreaming of youth role in peace, security and development , including in the other key area of governance;
- **Commit** to continue prioritizing youth issues in the business of the PSC,
- Accordingly **reaffirm** support for the AGA Youth Strategy and YPS as two interconnected initiatives requiring synergy of action.
- **Commit** to promote youth roles in managing complex political transitions in Africa
- **Commend** the first cohort of Africa Youth Ambassadors for Peace for outstanding commitment and spirit of volunteerism,
- **Welcome** the second and new cohort and reassure them of continued support.

The Africa we want is essentially an Africa of the youth. May we continue to work with the youth in a healthy inter-generational synergy to keep our shared Vision on track.

I wish you successful deliberations.