



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

REMARKS TO AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT
“AN INTEGRATED, PROSPEROUS AND PEACEFUL AFRICA”Addis Ababa, 18 February 2023

Under strict embargo until delivery at approx. 10:00 a.m. , Addis Ababa time, on 18 February 2023

Please check against delivery here:

<https://au.int/en/videos/20230214/opening-ceremony-36th-ordinary-session-au-assembly>

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by recognizing President Macky Sall for his leadership as Chair over the last year.

President Assoumani, we look forward to working with you as incoming Chairperson.

And I want to commend all of you for uniting around the theme of “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa.”

The African Union is taking inspiring steps to help realize the enormous potential of this great continent.

Africa is poised for progress.

Agenda 2063. The Decade of Women’s Financial and Economic Inclusion. The continent’s abundance of natural resources. And its greatest advantage of all — its people, representing a diverse range of cultures and languages.

In particular, I’m pleased to see your strong focus on job-creation and the enormous potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

This represents a truly transformative pathway to job-creation and new sources of prosperity for Africans, especially for the youth.

I applaud the exciting progress that has been made so far, and the commitment of President Issoufou as champion of this important effort.

The United Nations is honoured to be your partner — and I am proud of our work together.

The ties between the African Union and the United Nations have never been stronger.

But I also recognize the enormous tests that Africa — and indeed our world — is facing on virtually every front.

I recently addressed the UN General Assembly on the multiple, inter-linked challenges confronting our world — greater than any in our lifetimes.

In many ways, the people of Africa are bearing the brunt of these crises.

A dysfunctional and unfair global financial system that is failing developing countries when they need it most.

A cost-of-living crisis — exacerbated by the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Climate chaos — that the people of Africa did very little to cause — that is whipping up floods and deadly droughts, putting communities and lives at risk and displacing millions.

And peace and security threats often involving interests — and profits — far beyond the continent's borders.

Excellencies,

Across all these areas, the message is clear.

Africa needs action.

First — Africa needs economic action.

Africa is rich with potential.

But it is not rich in global support.

Investing in African pathways to prosperity requires finance.

And developing countries are repeatedly left in the lurch.

The global financial system routinely denies them debt relief and concessional financing, while charging extortionate interest rates.

As a result, vital systems are starved of investment — from health and education, to green technology, social protection and the creation of new, sustainable jobs.

Meanwhile, women and girls are still not receiving the support and investment they need — in the classroom, in the workplace, in civil society and across political systems.

African countries cannot invest in these critical areas and climb the development ladder with one hand tied behind their backs.

I have called for a new Bretton Woods moment to radically transform the global financial architecture.

The beating heart of this system — its every decision, mechanism and process — should be the needs of developing countries.

They should have a far greater voice in global institutions — including financial institutions.

We need a new debt architecture that provides debt relief and restructuring to vulnerable countries — including middle-income countries — while providing immediate debt suspension and write-downs to countries in need.

Multilateral Development Banks should transform their business model and accept a new approach to risk.

This includes massively leveraging their funds to attract greater flows of private capital into your countries.

It means scaling-up guarantees and adopting first-loss positions in coalitions of financial institutions to support developing countries.

And it means integrating disaster and pandemic clauses into all debt contracts.

I will also continue pushing G20 leaders for an SDG Stimulus to support the Global South.

The SDG Summit this September must be a breakthrough moment in delivering support for developing countries and reforming a broken global financial system.

I will continue standing with you in this fight.

Second — Africa needs climate action.

The brutal injustice of climate change is on full display with every flood, drought, famine and heatwave endured on this continent.

The countries least responsible for the crisis are feeling its most devastating impacts.

Meanwhile, several African countries are demonstrating strong leadership on climate.

This includes Kenya's green economy strategy, the effort to protect the tropical forests of the Congo, South Africa's Just Transition Energy Partnership and the AU's ambitious Green Stimulus Programme. I am encouraged by the leading role that African Small Island States are playing in championing the Great Blue Wall Initiative, which combines climate action, nature conservation, sustainable financing, and the development of the Blue Economy, as part of the same continuum.

The world must decarbonize.

But we need to ensure that the transition to renewable energy is a just transition — one that addresses Africa’s energy access and development challenges.

This includes wider access to technologies like battery-storage systems, components and raw materials.

The upcoming Transboundary Battery and Electric Vehicle Value Chain Initiative hosted by DRC and Zambia is a good example of the kind of effort required to find solutions.

But all these efforts must be matched by a tidal wave of support from developed economies.

They must deliver on the \$100-billion promise to developing countries.

Deliver on the loss and damage fund agreed to at the last COP.

Deliver on doubling adaptation finance.

Deliver on replenishing the Green Climate Fund.

And deliver on plans for early warning systems to protect every person in the world within five years — including the 6 in 10 Africans who lack these systems.

In September, I’ll convene a Climate Ambition Summit on our pathway to COP28 in December, where governments, business and civil society will demonstrate their commitment to reach net zero. And I’ll keep pushing for a Climate Solidarity Pact that mobilizes financial and technical support to accelerate emerging economies’ transition to renewable energy and keep the 1.5-degree goal alive.

Et troisièmement, l’Afrique a besoin d’action pour la paix.

L’ONU est fière d’être un partenaire de paix en Afrique.

Qu’il s’agisse de nos forces hybrides et programmes conjoints ;

du renforcement des processus électoraux et des transferts pacifiques de pouvoir ;

de nos efforts de maintien et de consolidation de la paix ;

ou encore de nos initiatives conjointes visant à mettre fin au terrorisme à travers le continent.

Mais notre travail devient chaque année plus complexe.

Le terrorisme et l’insécurité s’aggravent et les conflits sont plus nombreux.

Je suis profondément préoccupé par la montée de la violence des groupes armés observée récemment dans l’est de la République démocratique du Congo et par la progression des groupes terroristes au Sahel et ailleurs.

Et dans certains pays, des avancées démocratiques durement acquises s'évaporent sous nos yeux.

Je souscris à l'appel que vous avez lancé en faveur du rétablissement de gouvernements civils et démocratiquement élus au Burkina Faso, en Guinée, au Mali et au Soudan.

Nous savons que la paix est possible.

L'accord de cessez-le-feu conclu ici en Éthiopie sous l'égide de l'Union africaine, le cessez-le-feu instauré en Libye et les accords de paix au Soudan du Sud et en République centrafricaine, ainsi que les avancées observées en Somalie, sont autant de nouvelles porteuses d'espoir.

Nous devons continuer de lutter pour la paix.

Néanmoins, pour parler sans détour, les mécanismes de paix vacillent.

Le système n'est pas aussi souple et efficace qu'il devrait l'être.

Le Nouvel agenda pour la paix que nous proposons vise à donner un nouveau souffle au multilatéralisme et renforcer nos opérations de paix dans le monde.

Il a été pensé selon une vision holistique – identifiant les causes profondes des conflits et empêchant les graines de la guerre de germer.

Il doit définir une approche globale de la prévention, qui fait le lien entre la paix, le développement durable, l'action climatique et les droits humains, et qui s'appuiera sur une participation plus large des femmes et des jeunes.

Et nous sommes déterminés à intensifier le travail que nous menons avec l'Union africaine pour promouvoir des structures de gouvernance démocratiques et ouvertes. Nous continuerons de renforcer et d'améliorer le maintien de la paix.

Dans le même temps, nous appuyons sans réserve la création d'une nouvelle génération de missions d'imposition de la paix et d'opérations de lutte contre le terrorisme robustes, dirigées par l'Union africaine et dotées d'un mandat du Conseil de sécurité en vertu du Chapitre VII – ainsi que d'un financement garanti et prévisible.

Et nous devons continuer de renforcer notre collaboration sur des initiatives de paix majeures, comme nous l'avons fait avec le Groupe indépendant de haut niveau sur la sécurité et le développement au Sahel.

Je me réjouis d'œuvrer à vos côtés pour faire taire les armes et créer les conditions pour la paix – une paix indispensable aux 1,4 milliard de personnes vivant en Afrique.

Excellences,

Le XXI^{ème} siècle a tout pour être le siècle de l'Afrique.

L'ONU est déterminée à travailler avec chacun et chacune d'entre vous pour libérer cet énorme potentiel et surmonter les obstacles qui se dressent sur notre chemin.

Agissons pour l'Afrique.

Je vous remercie.

Embargoed until delivery