



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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REMARKS AT THE AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

Addis Ababa, 15 February 2025

Excellencies,

President Ghazouani – thank you for your leadership.

Presidente João Lourenço - parabéns e aguardo com expectativa a oportunidade de trabalhar consigo como novo Presidente da União Africana.

President Lourenço – congratulations and I look forward to working with you as the incoming African Union Chair.

I also want to thank the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki, for his eight years of support and commitment to multilateral solutions.

Excellencies,

The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union has never been stronger.

Together, we see an Africa brimming with hope and possibility.

You have a booming, enterprising population, including the largest number of young people in the world.

You have some of the world’s best renewable resources.

The African Continental Free Trade Area is poised to turbocharge the region’s economy.

And calls to address the legacies of colonialism and slavery are growing louder, as reflected in your theme this year – and as reflected in the leadership of so many passionate voices for the liberation of Africa such as the great Dr. Sam Nujoma of Namibia whose life we celebrate and whose loss we mourn.

The world must never forget that Africa is the victim of two colossal and compounded injustices.

First, the profound impact of colonialism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The roots stretch back centuries and the bitter fruit continues to affect Africans and people of African descent to this day.

Decolonization, in itself, was not a panacea.

Political independence did not free countries from structures based on exploitation and decades of economic, social and institutional underinvestment.

It is high time for reparatory justice frameworks.

Second, Africa was under colonial domination when today's multilateral system was created -- and that injustice endures.

Look no further than the United Nations Security Council.

There is no excuse that Africa still lacks permanent representation in the 21st century.

I will keep working with the African Union and all Member States to ensure the representation Africa needs and the justice you deserve – including with two permanent members of the Security Council.

And we will keep pressing together for an international financial architecture that is no longer outdated, dysfunctional and unfair.

Correcting age-old injustices is essential to address here-and-now challenges.

And the good news is that we have many of the solutions we need.

Last year, you helped drive that effort at the United Nations, with the Pact for the Future.

I thank Africa for its support.

Our task now is to make those commitments a reality.

South Africa's G20 Chairmanship could not come at a better time.

Let me point to four areas for action.

Excellencies,

First, we must push for peace, security and alleviating appalling levels of human suffering.

Sudan is being torn apart before our eyes -- and is now home to the world's largest displacement crisis and famine.

As we near the holy month of Ramadan, it is time for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

The international community must come together to stop the flow of weapons and the bankrolling of bloodshed.

The strong partnership between the African Union and the United Nations can provide an anchor for a broad multilateral coalition to end the war in Sudan.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congolese people have been suffering – yet again – from a brutal cycle of violence.

And the fighting that is raging in South Kivu – as a result of the continuation of the M23 offensive -- threatens to push the entire region over the precipice.

Regional escalation must be avoided at all costs.

There is no military solution.

The deadlock must end – the dialogue must begin. And the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC must be respected.

The conclusions of the recent joint EAC-SADC Summit offer a way forward – namely, a path towards a ceasefire, and new momentum for regional efforts based on the Luanda and Nairobi processes.

Now is the time for swift implementation.

And you can count on the continued support of the United Nations, including MONUSCO.

In the Sahel, we are working with partners to boost sustainable development and for a renewed dialogue to strengthen regional cooperation including counter-terrorism efforts.

The clear and present threat of terrorism is undermining peace, security and sustainable development across Africa and beyond.

We are urging predictable funding for the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia.

And as we gather here in Africa, I know all our minds are also very much on Gaza.

A resumption of hostilities must be avoided at all costs. The Palestinian people have suffered too much.

I welcome efforts by the parties to abide by the ceasefire agreement – and urge action for a permanent ceasefire and release of all hostages.

Peace is possible in the Middle East – and that starts with tangible, irreversible and permanent progress toward the two-State solution.

A viable, sovereign Palestinian State living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel is the only sustainable pathway for Middle East stability.

Excellencies,

On all fronts, we stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the African Union to advance security, stability, human rights and the rule of law.

Through our Joint Framework on Peace and Security...

Through our joint roadmap – which builds on the UN Security Council resolution to help finance AU-led peace support operations through assessed contributions...

And through our full support for your Silencing the Guns initiative, and the establishment of the African Humanitarian Agency.

Excellencies,

Second, we must keep working together to deliver the AU 2063 Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Key areas can drive progress —gender equality, clean energy, food systems transformation, and digitalization.

The UN-AU High Level Strategic Dialogue can support these efforts – as can the Food Systems Summit Stocktake Moment here in Addis Ababa in July.

In parallel, we must drive action on finance.

Developing countries face an SDG financing gap of \$4 trillion.

Meanwhile, African countries pay up to eight times more to borrow than developed countries. Twenty are in or at risk of debt distress.

The Pact for the Future supports international financial architecture reform that reflects today's economy and ensures fair representation.

It calls for making Multilateral Development Banks bigger and bolder – so they can facilitate greater levels of investment and leverage far more private finance at reasonable cost.

It urges effective action on debt.

And it commits countries to advancing an SDG Stimulus of \$500 billion a year.

We must push the world to deliver on these pledges, including at the World Social Summit and the Fourth Financing for Development Conference.

I will stand with Africa as a matter of justice and righting historic wrongs.

Excellencies,

Third, the climate crisis.

Climate disasters are tearing across Africa:

Destroying lives, upending livelihoods, devastating economies, and inflaming conflict.

At the same time, the renewables revolution is unstoppable, and creating huge opportunities.

Africa is poised to become a global clean energy powerhouse.
Yet today Africa receives just two per cent of global renewables investment.

Realizing Africa's potential requires access to affordable finance – including by implementing the COP29 finance decision fully and on time – and supporting development of a roadmap to realize \$1.3 trillion a year.

And I recognize initiatives such as Mission 300 which can seize maximum opportunity from the renewables revolution to power Africa, along with the \$2.2 billion pledged at last year's Clean Cooking Summit.

Excellencies,

Africa has contributed little to the climate crisis, yet is paying the price with record droughts, floods and heat.

Climate justice requires a massive investment in adaptation, and the international community bears an enormous responsibility.

Developed countries must double adaptation finance. And countries must significantly boost the Loss and Damage Fund.

Across the climate agenda, the G20 must lead the way, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

We recognize circumstances and capabilities vary around the globe -- and we also recognize all must do more.

Every country has committed to deliver new national climate action plans – or NDCs – this year that align with limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees.

These must cover all emissions, and the whole economy.

And they must contribute to the global energy transition goals agreed at COP28.

This is a chance to align national energy transition strategies and sustainable development priorities with climate action – to attract needed investment.

I urge you to take it.

We also need justice when it comes to your abundant critical minerals.

Too often, your countries are plundered – bound to the bottom of value chains – as others grow rich on your resources.

The work of the United Nations Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals is designed to help embed justice, sustainability and human rights across the value chain.

Africa's minerals must benefit Africa's people.

[FRENCH]

Excellences,
Excellencies,

Enfin, nous devons agir dans le domaine des nouvelles technologies, notamment l'intelligence artificielle.

Finally, we need action on new technologies, including Artificial Intelligence.

Près des deux tiers de la population africaine sont privés d'un accès fiable à l'internet.

Almost two-thirds of all Africans have no reliable internet access.

D'ici 2035, davantage de jeunes Africains rejoindront chaque année le marché du travail que dans le reste du monde réuni. Ils ont besoin des compétences nécessaires pour réussir.

By 2035, more young Africans will enter the job market annually than the rest of the world combined. They need the skills to thrive.

Nous avons une responsabilité historique : faire en sorte que l'IA profite à l'humanité tout entière, et pas seulement à quelques privilégiés.

We have a historic responsibility to ensure AI benefits humanity, not just a privileged few.

Cela demande de combler le fossé mondial en matière d'intelligence artificielle et d'aider les pays en développement à tirer parti de l'IA pour le développement durable.

That means helping developing countries leverage AI for sustainable development and bridge the global AI divide.

Je présenterai bientôt un rapport sur les modèles innovants de financement volontaire et les initiatives de renforcement des capacités afin d'aider les pays du Sud global à exploiter l'IA pour le bien commun.

I will soon present a report on innovative voluntary financing models and capacity-building initiatives to help the Global South harness AI for the greater good.

Le Pacte numérique mondial partage les ambitions du Pacte numérique africain : connectivité universelle, renforcement des capacités, et une gouvernance responsable de l'intelligence artificielle.

The Global Digital Compact shares the ambitions of the African Digital Compact — universal connectivity, capacity building, and responsible AI governance.

Il prévoit la création d'un Groupe scientifique international sur l'IA afin d'aider chaque pays à prendre les décisions politiques les plus éclairées en matière d'IA...

It calls for the creation of an International Scientific Panel on AI to help every country make the most informed AI policy decisions...

Et d'un Dialogue mondial sur la gouvernance de l'intelligence artificielle, pour veiller à ce que l'IA se développe de manière éthique, sûre et sécurisée – avec la pleine participation des pays en développement.

And for a Global Dialogue on AI Governance to help ensure AI develops ethically, safely, and securely – with a strong voice for developing countries.

Ensemble, assurons-nous que ces promesses soient tenues.
Together, let's ensure these commitments are honoured.

Excellences,
Excellencies,

L'ONU et l'Union africaine sont unies et déterminées à rendre justice à votre continent, sans laisser personne de côté.
The United Nations and the African Union stand united in our determination to deliver justice for your continent, leaving no one behind.

Nous disposons de bases solides pour aller de l'avant.
We have much to build upon.

Alors, ensemble, concrétisons ces engagements.
So, together, let's make commitments reality.

E digamos com uma só voz: Viva Africa !
And say with one voice: Viva Africa!

Obrigado.
