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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1267TH MEETING AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
20 MARCH 2025

**STATEMENT OF H.E. MAHMOUD ALI YOUSOUF, CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION, ON
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON PEACE,
SECURITY AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA**

H.E Sune Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates and Chairperson of the PSC for March,

Excellencies, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Peace and Security Council,

Excellency, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner, Political Affairs, Peace and Security,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you, **Chair** for your important remarks.

It is clear Artificial Intelligence (AI) is having a transformative impact globally. And our continent also stands at the cusp of this revolution.

With AI holding immense promise for advancing development and solving persistent challenges, from boosting agriculture to improving healthcare and education, we have entered into a unique time of the human experience.

But more critically, in peace, security, and governance, AI presents organisations such the African Union and our Member States a strategic tool that could potentially revolutionise our ability to predict and prevent conflicts, counter terrorism, enhance security operations, and make governance more effective across the continent.

However, with the opportunities that AI brings, there are still grave challenges. Today, in Africa, we still experience threats such as armed conflict, terrorism, corruption, and entrenched inequalities.

And with AI's ability to spread rapidly, the introduction of complex ethical and security concerns now exist. This in the context of its potential misuse by non-state actors, cybercriminals, and terrorist groups – a phenomenon we are already witnessing.

Left unchecked, AI will amplify these threats, exploiting disinformation, cyber-attacks, and even autonomous weapons. Our response must be to pursue a balanced approach—one that maximises AI's benefits while mitigating its risks.

Although AI may seem in its formative phase, it is crucial for Africa to take an active role in shaping its governance. We must ensure AI continues to be used for peace and stability, rather than as a new tool for conflict among states.

In this regard, I am commending the PSC for taking proactive actions and including AI issues in the agenda of the Council. The first meeting of the Council on AI was in June 2024 under the chairpersonship of Uganda and called for the establishment of the AU AI Advisory Group on Artificial Intelligence, Impact on Peace, Security, and Governance. Commissioner Bankole has informed me that the Group has started working and it had its first meeting in March this year. These are progressing that we need to capitalize on.

Excellencies,

AI currently plays a pivotal role in preventing conflicts and sustaining peace.

Advanced early-warning systems powered by AI now analyse vast amounts of data — social media trends, satellite imagery, and economic indicators are being used to detect early signs of instability.

By identifying rising tensions, hate speech, or extremist mobilization in real time, AI is enabling authorities to intervene before violence erupts. Similarly, predictive analytics is now forecasting where conflicts are likely to flare up based on socio-political factors.

We also see the immense benefits of AI in peacekeeping and mediation.

This has been with some AI tools being used to map the interests and grievances of different conflict parties. Such tools can now assist peace mediators in choosing effective solutions. If used effectively, the integration of AI into peace efforts will allow us to respond faster and smarter to prevent violence across the continent.

Excellencies

Terrorism remains one of Africa's greatest challenges.

But AI offers new opportunities to counter this destabilizing threat to many of our countries. AI-powered surveillance tools can track terrorist movements, analyze suspicious financial transactions, and detect radicalization patterns on social media platforms.

Today, AI is also transforming financial intelligence tracking, as we observe terrorist groups move to using digital currencies and informal banking networks to finance their activities.

Through AI-driven forensic analysis, illicit cash flows can identify abnormal financial behaviors, to disrupt the financing of terrorist operations.

However, as many Member States know too well, AI can introduce security risks. Terrorist groups and extremist organisations are already leveraging AI for malicious purposes. AI-generated deepfake videos can be used for radicalization, spreading extremist propaganda, or impersonating political figures to create confusion and unrest.

These risks demand a proactive approach to AI governance, ensuring that AI remains a tool for protecting citizens rather than a weapon in the hands of adversaries.

Excellencies,

One of the most dangerous accelerators of conflict today is disinformation and hate speech, particularly online.

We must collectively work together to ensure AI can be a powerful ally in combating this issue. We must ensure AI can curb disinformation before it escalates and help safeguard social cohesion and national stability.

Member States must also partner with technology companies and civil society to strengthen digital literacy programs and ensure citizens can recognise and resist manipulation to use AI for disinformation.

On the importance of improving Governance and Transparency, AI can enhance governance by tracking public spending, detecting fraud, and reducing corruption. It can also automate processes to improve resource allocation and service delivery. In elections, AI can detect fraud, monitor manipulation, and analyze voting patterns to strengthen democracy.

However, unregulated AI poses risks like privacy violations and biased decisions. With Africa's digital divide and lack of infrastructure, we run the risk of exacerbating inequalities.

Excellencies,

To fully harness AI for peace and security while mitigating its risks, allow me to suggest a few actions Member States can pursue. These are the need to:

- Develop strong AI regulations;
- Strengthen counterterrorism AI capabilities;
- Enhance regional and international cooperation;
- Invest in capacity building; and
- Monitor AI's societal impact.

It is important to task the newly established AU AI Advisory Group on Artificial Intelligence, Impact on Peace, Security, and Governance to provide technical support to these points I have just mentioned, particularly on developing strong AI regulations.

Let me conclude by recognising the potential of AI in transforming peace, security, and governance across Africa. For this to happen, Africa must embrace this opportunity with foresight. In doing so, we can deter and also disrupt those who seek to use AI to create instability from within and outside the continent. It also means our first line of defence must be collaboration across all levels – government-to-government, regional organisations, civil society, and the private sector. Collectively, I believe we can use AI for peace and prosperity.

I thank you.