

AU POLCIVEX - Exercise NJIWA
Official Opening - 31 Oct 2012- AU HQ
Remarks from the Embassy of Canada

(Check against delivery)

Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Excellences, Ambassadors, Distinguished participants to Exercise Njiwa, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to represent HE David Usher, Canadian Permanent representative to the African Union. Ambassador Usher wanted to be with us but was otherwise called to present His Credentials to the Ethiopian Presidency this morning. Here are the words he wanted to say today.

I am delighted to be here with you on the occasion of the opening of the Exercise NJIWA. Because this exercise is about nothing else than a groundbreaking future. A future where Africa has empowered itself with a unique and decisive capability to provide African answers to some of the most complex African security challenges.

Since the inception of this visionary goal, Canada is honoured to have been able to accompany Africa on its journey towards the establishment of an effective African Peace and Security Architecture. This Canadian support is part of our continued efforts to build international capacity to engage in peace operations in accordance with international norms. This is a G8 commitment and Canada is pleased to have repeatedly supported and delivered on this commitment.

Over the years, we have worked with African peacekeeping training centres, national Defence and national Police forces. Canadian support and expertise was also sought and provided at the regional level and at the African Union. And so it has been a genuine honour and a privilege to answer the African Union's call to deliver specific additional support in the area of civilian and police training which culminates in the opening of Exercise NJIWA today.

Allow me to thank here the African Union and particularly the Peace and Security Directorate for its trust and valuable collaboration. Thank you for inviting Canada to share the podium with you today. Let me thank also the Pearson Centre and CANADEM, two Canadian organisations which have enabled the actual sharing of the Canadian expertise in a flexible and responsive manner along high quality standards.

In parallel to these efforts, Canada continues to support ongoing humanitarian and peace-building operations throughout the African continent, including DRC, Somalia and Sudan where Canada has provided equipment support to the African Union Mission in Sudan and specific equipment and training assistance to several African countries deploying to the hybrid UN-AU Mission in Darfur.

These operations carry a significant amount of lessons learned that keep on informing and underscoring the need for an operational African Peace and Security Architecture.

The APSA is undoubtedly a bold and visionary answer to African security challenges which is to be led and directed by Africa. This development must be supported.

I am pleased to reiterate here Canada's wishes for a strong African leadership to prevent, manage and eventually end conflicts on the continent.

Wishing you all an excellent Exercise Njiwa.

I thank you