

Permanent Observer Mission of the
AFRICAN UNION to the
United Nations

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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TETE ANTONIO
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO
THE UNITED NATIONS, IN NEW YORK**

**UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE
ON COUNTERING TERRORISM, IN CONNECTION
WITH THE AGENDA ITEM "THREATS TO INTERNATIONAL
PEACE AND SECURITY CAUSED BY TERRORIST ACTS"**

**14 APRIL 2016
NEW YORK**

Mr. President,

Allow me first of all to congratulate you upon your assumption of the Security Council's presidency for this month and thank you for convening this important and very timely debate. I also thank you for providing us with a comprehensive concept note to guide our discussions.

Mr. President,

Today's debate is taking place against the backdrop of ever increasing challenges in the area of peace and security due to the rise of terrorism and violent extremism. The recent terrorist attacks in many capitals of the world which shocked the conscience of the international community, came as a further reminder of the magnitude of the challenges at hand.

I reiterate the African Union's (AU's) strong and unequivocal rejection of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as well as its strong condemnation of all terrorist acts, which cannot be justified under any circumstances whatsoever. I, once again, express the AU's solidarity with the affected countries and victims, whose plight should be fully acknowledged and addressed. It is also the strong belief of the AU that terrorism should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization. Likewise, terrorism should not be equated with the legitimate struggle of peoples under foreign occupation to achieve their inalienable right to self-determination.

Mr. President,

In Africa, terrorism and violent extremism are still representing the most serious of threats to peace, security and stability. This threat has, in the past decade, assumed greater proportions by expanding geographically and displaying unprecedented levels of violence in various parts of the Continent.

Confronted by these challenges, the AU and its Regional Economic Communities/ Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) remain committed and actively engaged in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. The relevant AU policy organs have articulated a comprehensive framework for the implementation of the AU and international counter-terrorism instruments in Africa. The 1999 Algiers Convention and its 2004 Supplementary Protocol, as well as the 2002 Plan of Action and the establishment of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), continue to provide a sound legal and institutional basis for enhanced cooperation among Member States, as we fight the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism.

The AU has also undertaken numerous capacity building initiatives, to enhance the capacity of its Member States to combat the scourge.

The commitment of the AU to combating terrorism and violent extremism was further demonstrated during the recent Summit of the AU Peace and Security Council held on 29 January 2016, which, among others, reviewed the AU's efforts against terrorism. The Summit reaffirmed the continued relevance of the instruments adopted by the OAU/AU over the past years and called for renewed efforts to combat extremism and radicalizing religious interpretations that foster intolerance and violence.

The PSC Summit also agreed to pursue and intensify efforts to support the establishment of regional cooperation mechanisms to address specific transnational threats in different regions of the continent. In this regard, it is worth recalling that a number of security cooperation mechanisms have been already established to encourage better coordination and exchange of information among Member States, notably within the frameworks of the Nouakchott Process, the Sahel Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL), the Djibouti Process for Eastern Africa, and the Eastern Africa Fusion and Liaison Unit (EA-FLU).

In this regard, the progress made on the ground by the Troop Contributing Countries to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in the fight against Al Shabaab terrorist group, should be commended and fully supported by all means possible by the international community. Any decrease of resources to AMISOM will significantly impact negatively on the gains realized so far.

Furthermore, the recent operationalization of the African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) will also greatly enhance the capacity of the continent to more effectively address the threat posed by terrorism and transnational organized crime.

With regard to the issue of financing of terrorism, the AU has expressed at many occasions, its deep concerns at the reported financial flows from outside the Continent in support of terrorist and extremist groups, and stressed the need to investigate the matter, with a view to determining the extent of the problem and making recommendations on the best means and ways of addressing it. It should also be noted that the AU prohibits the payment of ransoms in exchange of release of hostages and requests that this act be considered a crime.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the AU's commitment to fully shoulder its share of responsibility in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. We should also be mindful of the fact that the responsibility of fighting this scourge lies on all of us and that we need to act collectively to more effectively confront this scourge which not only undermines the international peace and security, but also the values and principles that have long characterized our diverse and democratic societies.

I thank you for your kind attention.