

**BRIEFING BY AMBASSADOR SMAIL CHERGUI, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSIONER FOR
PEACE AND SECURITY TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL HIGH LEVEL
OPEN DEBATE ON “PEACEBUILDING AND SUSTAINING PEACE”**

NEW YORK, 25 APRIL 2018

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Members of the Security Council,**

First of all, I would like to commend the Peruvian Presidency for convening this timely and very important Open debate on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Your presence, Honorable Minister, as well as the high level participation among Council Members, bears witness to the importance of this debate and to your commitment to advance the agenda of sustaining peace. I also wish to express our gratitude for the kind invitation extended to me to share the perspectives of the African Union on this strategic discussion in view of our growing partnership with the United Nations.

In this regard, it gives me great pleasure and honor to speak in the presence of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres to whom I would like to reiterate our recognition as well as our strong support for his inspiring and tireless efforts to promote peace and stability in Africa in close partnership with the African Union. Only a week ago, I had the opportunity to brief the Council on one of the most visible parts of this strategic partnership illustrated by the recent successful field mission that I undertook, jointly with my friend Jean-Pierre Lacroix, respectively to Sudan and to Central African Republic. Thank you Mr. Secretary-General for your support!

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Members of the Security Council,**

Let me start by recalling that the very idea of peacebuilding and sustaining peace is strongly grounded in the long-enshrined principle that peace cannot be achieved without development or vice-versa and that both peace and development cannot thrive without human rights and good governance.

It's indeed this firm conviction that underpins the AU's approach in fulfilling its central mandate to achieve a peaceful and prosperous Africa. In line with the provisions of its Constitutive Act and the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and

Security Council (PSC Protocol), the AU has, over the last decade, assumed greater responsibilities on conflict prevention, management, resolution and post conflict reconstruction and development.

In the area of peacebuilding, the implementation of the AU Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (PCRD) has progressively enabled the Commission to take concrete actions to consolidate peace and prevent relapse into violence. At the core of the AU's interventions, is the need to build sustainable resilience with a view to enhancing structural transformation thereby preventing relapse. In short, the AU's approach to peacebuilding has preventive and stabilization dimensions.

Therefore, our engagement has been geared towards developing and implementing Quick Impact and Peace Strengthening Projects in areas of deployment of AU Peace Support Operations, and through the AU Liaison Offices. To date, the Commission has provided support to the Central African Republic, Liberia, Madagascar, Guinea Bissau, the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahelo-Saharan region and Somalia in a broad range of areas including strengthening of human rights institutions, scaling up of health facilities; capacitating educational institutions, and Security Sector Reform as well as Rule of Law reforms.

Currently, the AU is in the process of deploying Technical Advisors to support the Security Sector Reform as well as Transitional Justice processes in The Gambia. This is being done in furtherance of a decision of the Peace and Security Council which mandated the Commission to provide support to The Gambia, following a request by the new authorities of the country.

Going forward, the African Union plans to scale up its stabilization efforts on the continent. Our objective is to manage transitions from initial stabilisation which often carries a heavy military footprint to long-term peacebuilding focusing on reconstruction, revitalisation of public service institutions, and short- to medium-term socio-economic and political development. In the Lake Chad Basin, the AU and the LCBC are now in the process of finalizing a strategy that will rationalize the various initiatives aimed at stabilizing the areas affected by Boko Haram's activities. In the same vein, we are in the process of strengthening our stabilization efforts respectively in Somalia within the framework of AMISOM, and in Sudan through UNAMID.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

Recent relapses of several post-conflict countries into violence and instability highlight the need to do more to address, in a coherent manner, the structures, attitudes and processes that perpetuate conflict and instability.

In this regard, allow me to share some of the critical lessons learned, on which today's meeting can build to enhance our joint efforts towards achieving sustainable peace in Africa.

First, the urgent need to strengthen our cooperation in the prevention area. Conflict prevention remains the most cost effective tool, but yet the least resourced. The AU has developed a continental structural conflict prevention framework, which allows its Member States to engage in a voluntary process with the Commission to enhance their capacity to identify vulnerabilities to conflict at the very early stage and, on this basis, work out a mitigation strategy. With the support of the AUC, Ghana has just finalised its report, as the first country to volunteer for such exercise. I believe that this mechanism could present an additional opportunity for cooperation between the AU and the UN, in light on the Joint Framework signed last year.

Second, there is a need to shift from the current top-down approach to a more people-centered paradigm with a specific focus on peace dividends, especially for women and youth. This entails particularly incorporating local perspectives and empowering the marginalized communities. It also requires taking into consideration the regional dimension and the transnational nature of conflicts in Africa. The AU has already started incorporating this dimension in its joint effort with the different regional mechanisms.

Third, the importance of establishing close cooperation and working relationships among national, regional and international actors cannot be overemphasized. In this context, given that Africa remains the major regional focus of the UN Peace-Building Architecture (PBA), the partnership between the AU and the UN is crucial. The AU, through its PCRD, and the UN through its PBA have much to learn from each other's approaches and experiences, and from seeking greater cooperation and collaboration. The recently signed Joint AU-UN Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the subsequent Memorandum of Understanding between the AU Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office, provide a solid framework to strengthen cooperation in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts in

Africa. We welcome the commitment of the UN Secretary-General to consolidate and further promote our partnership in this area, as outlined in his recent Report on “Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace”.

Fourth, throughout the sustaining peace process, our collective endeavors will amount to too little, if there is no corresponding effort to mobilize adequate resources for the implementation of the defined priorities. No significant progress can be made without adequate financial resources and technical assistance to support concerned countries in sustaining peace. The main challenges that PCRD implementation has been facing are related to the amount of resources and expertise it demands and the high-level political and diplomatic engagement it requires to be successful. As you already know, the AU continues to make considerable efforts to assume greater responsibility for funding its peace activities. The progress achieved over the past 24 months in the operationalization of the Peace Fund which has already received 2/3 of the planned contribution for 2018, serves as a demonstration of the AU’s commitment. It will be recalled that Peace Fund is organised around three windows: the first should fund preventive diplomacy and mediation, the second institutional capacity and the third should fund peace support operations.

It is our hope that the ongoing efforts by the AU will help convince the Security Council to respond positively to Africa's demands in this regard. These demands are all the more legitimate, because sustainable funding for peace efforts in Africa should not be considered only as an African priority, but also as an international strategic imperative to respond to the complex and interconnected nature of threats to international peace and security.

Mr. President,
Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

This brings me to the end of my briefing. I wish to conclude by stressing again the strategic importance of the AU-UN partnership. The challenging and increasingly complex situations on the ground emphasize the need to enhance and to properly calibrate our concerted efforts to achieve sustainable peace in Africa.

I thank you for your kind attention.