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Office of the Commissioner for Peace and Security

REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR SMAIL CHERGUI

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

**AT THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
“PEACEBUILDING IN AFRICA”**

**28 JULY 2016
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to express the gratitude of the African Union to the UN Security Council and also to Japan for organizing this Open Debate on the subject: “Peacebuilding in Africa”. The high calibre of distinguished delegates gathered in this room shows the importance we all attach to this critical issue of peacebuilding in Africa.

As you all know, the African Union has, in 2013, celebrated fifty years of existence, following the birth of the continental body in 1963, under the theme: *Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance*. While we remember the great strides the continent has made in the economic, political and social domains, we are also aware that there are still numerous challenges to peace and development in Africa. We therefore need to continue to undertake sustained, bold and innovative initiatives and endeavours, inspired by ambitions which led to the birth of the AU and its predecessor, the OAU.

It is in this context that theme of today’s open debate resonates well with our vision of ensuring a better Africa for all our citizens, especially for women and youth, who are particularly affected by the dramatic consequences of conflicts, and who often find it hard to access the resources that will ensure a better livelihood, thereby contributing to nation-building. Experience has shown that any failure in ensuring consolidation of peace is to be clearly viewed as a threat to peace and human security, and it is a reality for many countries in Africa, especially those emerging from conflict.

I wish to underline that the AU's authoritative policy framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), endorsed ten years ago by the Executive Council, outlines six indicative elements that provide the foundation for achieving sustainable PCRD, namely: security; humanitarian and emergency assistance; political governance and transition; socio-economic reconstruction and development; human rights, justice and reconciliation; and women and gender. The policy requires the African Union to work with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), relevant UN agencies and other institutions and African Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), in a collaborative manner to realize and consolidate PCRD in post-conflict and conflict-prone States.

Since the adoption of the PCRD Policy, the Commission has taken a number of steps towards its implementation. These include identification of joint activities in support of implementation of peace agreements in AU Member States emerging from conflict and conducting needs assessment missions, consolidating and scaling up security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives, sustained collaboration with Regional RECs/RMs and civil society organizations. The engagements have also been geared towards developing and implementing regional strategies for women's effective participation in peace and security frameworks at regional and national levels, implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and Peace Strengthening Projects (PSPs) in areas of deployment of AU Peace Support Operations, and through the AU Liaison Offices.

Secondly, all PCRD programmes and policies are obliged to mainstream gender and comply with global UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women,

peace and security and related AU instruments. In furtherance of fostering women's empowerment and gender equality, the Commission sponsored initiatives to promote women's participation in democratic processes and institution building in post-conflict settings.

Thirdly, the Commission continues to engage a number of partners in the implementation of the PCRD Policy. The UN Peace Building Commission and other UN agencies, the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa, civil society organizations, and bilateral actors are some of the key partners that have been engaged thus far.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year, as we celebrate ten years of the AU PCRD Policy, we need to consider the evolving global peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction discourse and how it impacts our response in light of interconnected strategic, structural and operational challenges. As a dynamic organisation, the African Union has taken note of the review of the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture, the report of the Advisory Group of Experts and that of the High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations and the Global Study on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. I wish to outline several lessons that we have learned, and which can build on more effective Peacebuilding in Africa.

Firstly, the most obvious lesson is demonstrated by the recent relapses of several post-conflict countries into violence and instability, highlighting the crucial necessity for coherent PCRD strategies and interventions in Africa.

Secondly, and in view of the magnitude and complex challenges of PCRDR, more attention must be given to coherence and coordination of all actors to enhance synergy of action, and integrated planning and operations, which effectively lead to the structured and effective implementation. This will require close coordination at the strategic, policy and operational levels. With a view of consolidating PCRDR implementation by the AU and RECs/RMs, and the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, and in light of the two UN reports on peacebuilding and peace support operations, we look forward to reflecting and advancing creative joint modalities on how to move forward in addressing the current persisting reality of disjointed and incoherent peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction implementation, and work towards efforts with other peace and security programmes both at the AU, RECs/RMs and Member State level for greater impact.

Moreover, if properly calibrated, PCRDR interventions would be critical to the AU's conflict prevention strategies. This requires taking into consideration the regional dimensions and trans-national nature of conflicts in Africa, which necessitate the formulation of PCRDR interventions that address these realities.

Further, with a view of addressing limited sharing of lessons learned and best practice across the UN and AU, the African Union and the UN Peacebuilding Architecture should explore practical modalities of sharing experiences focusing on measures to develop appropriate tools for knowledge management and information sharing, that can empower the continental and regional mechanisms to respond to PCRDR Policy implementation initiatives. In this regard, an annual meeting between

the African Union and the UN to share experience, lessons learned and progress on the implementation of the PCRCD Policy should be institutionalized.

Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen

There are a number of interconnected challenges with financing that we have had to find more innovative ways of addressing. Firstly, one such innovation is the Africa Solidarity Initiative (ASI) whose funding conference was launched at an African Solidarity Conference (ASC), in July 2013 in Addis Ababa, as part of activities marking the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU. The aim was to mobilize both in-kind and funding support for post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts in the countries emerging from conflict. Whereas most donor processes and conferences concentrate primarily on financial pledges, the ASI prioritizes various in-kind contributions from African countries. These include sharing of expertise, best practices, offering training facilities, exchange familiarization schemes and capacity building.

The overall goal is to promote a paradigm shift that promotes African self-reliance driven by the motto: *“Africa helping Africa”*. Let me emphasize the fact that this Initiative does not seek to overlook the support from traditional and new partners in any way. Rather, it seeks to provide an opportunity for Africa to generate additional *“out-of-the-box”* ideas for addressing post-conflict reconstruction and development challenges and contribute towards a renewed sense of promoting intra-African solutions to the complex challenges of post-conflict reconstruction and development.

The implementation of this initiative will also take into account existing initiatives for post-conflict reconstruction in Africa (undertaken by African countries), as well as any other emerging initiatives such as the global dialogue on fragility (New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States?) and the related G7+ group of developing countries on these issues, and promote further efforts towards a harmonized conceptual understanding on the transition-recovery development continuum in the African context.

It is our expectation that the ASI will galvanize the private sector, as an important stakeholder in reconstruction and socio-economic development. The contribution made by the private sector to the AU's fight against the Ebola virus outbreak provides invaluable lessons.

At this juncture, I equally stress the need for local perspectives and empowerment of the marginalised as key to sustaining peace. The effort to involve local communities and convert their in-kind contribution and indigenous knowledge into coherent plans and programmes requires patience, greater resources and poses security risks where conflict persists. Yet identifying mechanisms for local participation and empowerment is critical to sustaining peace.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction in Africa is to move beyond partial success, the Commission and the UN Peacebuilding Architecture need to consider developing a joint ten-year strategy for implementation, with a robust

monitoring and evaluation that would enhance the peace dividends in Africa for many families, communities and societies.

What we need is for both the African Union and the UN to fulfil their roles, which would consolidate sustainable peace, human rights and development in Africa. In doing so, we stand better prepared to anticipate future conflicts and adapt our interventions accordingly.

I thank you for your kind attention.