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Presentation by Amb. Smail Chergui, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security

AU-RECs-UNECA-AfDB Joint Coordination meeting

Lusaka, Zambia, 10-12 March 2016,

Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission,

Executive Secretary of the UNECA,

Chief Executives of the RECs,

President of the African Development Bank,

Chief Executive of NEPAD, fellow Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address you on our efforts at Silencing the Guns by 2020 as per the decision of the Assembly.

You will agree with me that, conflict within and between States in Africa, has contributed to socio-economic decline and the suffering of the civilian population more than any other factor. Some of the key drivers of violent conflict and crisis on the continent include: poor governance, social, political and ethnic exclusion; poverty and inequitable distribution of resources and wealth; violations of human rights; extremism; illiteracy; and youth unemployment among others.

It is against this background that the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government on 25 May 2013, adopted the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, in which they expressed determination to achieve the goal of a conflict free Africa, make peace a reality for all people and rid the continent of civil wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters, and to prevent genocide. They further pledged not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans and undertook to end all wars on the continent by 2020, a commitment that has taken practical expression in the AU initiative on *“Silencing of the Guns: Pre-requisites for realising a conflict-free Africa by the year 2020,”* which is now a key priority under AU’s Agenda 2063.

The Peace and Security Department then decided to incorporate the Assembly Declaration into a new African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Roadmap 2016 – 2020, that was developed jointly by the AUC and the RECs/RMs. While the first APSA Roadmap (2011-2013) was focused on the operationalization of the various APSA structures and tools, the new Roadmap is geared towards effective interventions on conflict prevention, management, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and development, which would contribute to the goal of Silencing the Guns by 2020.

Indeed, the development of the Roadmap was informed and driven by the spirit of collective security and self-reliance, which is underpinned by ownership, consensus and synergy between the AU and RECs/RMs. Moreover, it is anchored on, and geared towards achieving the objectives of the First Ten-Year implementation Plan of Agenda 2063.

The Roadmap provides a shared understanding of the results to be achieved by all APSA stakeholders, and articulates the roles and functions of each of them. It is built on five (5) thematic priorities:

First, Conflict Prevention (including early warning and preventive diplomacy):

The emphasis here is on intervening before violence occurs through addressing the root, proximate, and structural causes of conflict and applying the necessary preventive measures in a timely manner.

Second, Crisis/conflict management (including ASF and mediation): The focus here is to enhance the operational readiness of the African Standby Force (ASF), and increase the capacity of the AU and the RECs/RMs to plan, manage, deploy and sustain Peace Support Operations (PSOs). It also aims at building systematic and professional approach to mediation, with collaboration and coordination between the various actors and provision of expert support.

Third, Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, and Peacebuilding: The aim is to ensure that PCRD mechanisms at the AUC and within the RECs/RMs, as well as in post-conflict countries, are in place and operational to prevent relapse, in line with the AU PCRD Policy Framework adopted in 2006.

Fourth, Strategic Security issues: Here we are targeting the timeliness and effectiveness of response to strategic and emerging security challenges, based on the principles of human security. These challenges include, among others, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), illicit financial flows, landmines, explosives and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), terrorism, threats to maritime safety and security, human and drug trafficking and smuggling of migrants, climate change and cybercrime.

Fifth, Coordination and Partnerships: For the effective operationalization of the required capacities for conflict prevention, management and resolution in each stakeholder institution, considerable inter and intra-organisational coordination remains a priority. The full implementation of APSA and AGA are therefore predicated upon collaboration and coordination.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to the APSA Roadmap, I would like to indicate that the AUC has also taken practical steps in improving coordination and collaboration between the AUC, RECs/RMs and Member States with a view to Silencing the Guns by 2020. The development of the Noukachott and Djibouti Processes for the enhancement of security cooperation and intelligence sharing in the Sahel and Eastern Africa regions, respectively, are some of the measures taken to respond to existing and emerging security challenges such as extremism, terrorism and transnational

threats. The AUC plans to establish similar mechanisms in the other regions of the continent.

In adherence to the principle of subsidiarity and in the spirit of cooperation, the AU has often deferred to RECs in situations where they are better placed to serve as first responders. For instance, the AUC is working closely with the East African Community (EAC) in finding a sustainable solution to the situation in Burundi, just as it did with ECOWAS and SADC in Burkina Faso and Lesotho, respectively. We are convinced that the emerging division of labour between the AUC and RECs/RMs is critical to addressing the multiple and complex security challenges facing the continent.

At the strategic level, the AU PSC is increasingly consulting with the decision-making organs of the RECs on issues ranging from conflict prevention, management and post conflict reconstruction and development. The consultative process was formally agreed to at the Abuja Retreat of the PSC and similar organs of the RECs/RMs in September 2015.

So far, the AUC has convened three High-Level Retreats of Special Envoys and Mediators aimed at exploring concrete options and elaborating a Roadmap towards achieving the AU's goal of Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020. The Retreats emphasized the need for a holistic approach to tackling existing and emerging security challenges. The Retreats are proving to be crucial platforms in promoting dialogue, sharing experiences and exchanging best practices based on uniquely African peacemaking interventions.

In order to validate one of our response tools, the African Standby Force, the AU in collaboration with the RECs/RMs successfully conducted the first continental Field Training Exercise, AMANI AFRICA II which was hosted by SADC in Lohatla, South Africa in October-November 2015. The Exercise brought together over 5,500 military, police and civilians with their equipment from across Africa. The success of the Exercise demonstrated that Africa has the political will and capability to plan and deploy multidimensional peace support missions albeit with some challenges.

I would also like to point out that the Chairperson of the AU Commission has appointed Hon. Bineta Diop as the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security to add voice to the cause of women on the continent to ensure that violations against women stops. She has been involved in campaigns against gender based violence, particularly against women children in conflict situations. The AU has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse and exploitation by its personnel, military, police or civilians.

The issue of resource mobilization remains a major challenge that requires close partnership and collaboration between the AU, RECs/RMs and other relevant stakeholders, particularly at this juncture when the AU faces a challenge in financing the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). There is need for the AU to come up with a clear roadmap on how to secure 25% financing of its peace support operations, with the UN expected to provide the balance of 75% out of assessed contributions.

As a matter of urgency, the AU Peace Fund, which is one of the components of APSA, needs to be revamped. It is our hope that the recent appointment of H.E Dr. Donald Kaberuka, who is here with us today, as a Special Envoy for the Peace Fund, by the Chairperson of the AU Commission would generate the momentum required for mobilization of resources for the APSA, especially from within the continent. I would like to reiterate to my brother, Dr. Kaberuka my unflinching support in the execution of his mandate.

Excelencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to conclude my remarks by inviting all of us to join our hands together to achieve the Assembly's decision of Silencing the Guns by 2020, through the effective and efficient implementation of the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020.

Thank you for your kind attention.