

Third African Union-United Nations Annual Conference

New York, 6 May 2019

Joint Communiqué

On 6 May 2019, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres and African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat convened the Third African Union-United Nations Annual Conference, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The Secretary-General and the Chairperson welcomed the strong cooperation and collaboration between the two organizations, particularly in the implementation of both the “UN-AU Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security” and the “AU-UN Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

They expressed their commitment to continue to deepen the strategic partnership between the two organizations in addressing peace and security issues and achieving sustainable development issues in Africa through a more integrated approach. Continued collaboration for the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and other related instruments, including the Free Movement Protocol and the Single African Air Transport Market, was discussed, notably in view of their significant potential to boost regional integration, strengthen inclusive economic growth, generate jobs for young Africans, alleviate poverty and lead to more stable and peaceful societies. The Conference urged greater efforts to harness Africa’s youth dividend, notably with investments in health, education, data and in science and technology.

The Secretary-General and the Chairperson agreed to reinforce joint efforts towards the implementation of the AU initiative on Silencing the Guns by 2020, in line with the press statement PSC/PR/BR.(DCCCXXIX) of the AU Peace and Security Council and resolution 2457 (2019) of the UN Security Council. This will include enhanced collaboration in conflict prevention and sustaining peace, as well as a thorough review of the factors that explain the protracted nature of some of the conflicts facing the African continent, with the view to agreeing on joint and decisive action to overcome the identified challenges. They also took note of the progress made in the implementation of the Joint Declaration on cooperation for AU peace support operations signed on 6 December 2018 in New York, and encouraged further efforts towards its implementation.

The Secretary-General and the Chairperson welcomed the strengthened cooperation and continuous efforts to promote gender parity and women's leadership; increased participation and inclusion of women in peace and mediation processes as well as recognized their vital role and contribution to sustainable development and economic growth. They also lauded the continued joint high-level missions on women, peace and

security, and development, as well as the joint efforts to increase the deployment of more women peacekeepers.

The Secretary-General and the Chairperson emphasized the importance of taking decisive and immediate action on climate change. They underlined the urgency of the issue and the need for a significant boost in political will. In this regard, the Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit was highlighted as critical to mobilize the needed partnerships, resources and showcase concrete action and implementation of the Paris Agreement while also securing that no-one will be left behind. The meeting called on all stakeholders to come to the Summit with ambitious and realistic plans in line with the requirement of reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent by 2030 and getting to net zero emissions by 2050. Both leaders agreed to further strengthen the UN/AU cooperation on adaptation for climate change ahead of the Summit and beyond.

The two Principals discussed the overall progress on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 in Africa. With respect to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), they urged that both globally and on the African continent, building on the robust engagement, greater momentum will be needed in order to meet the goals by 2030. They urged further efforts to harness both public and private finance to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and towards low carbon and climate resilient pathways. The urgent need to ensure investments for development of robust data ecosystem at the country and regional levels, enabling evidence-based policy-making, as well as tracking progress of the two agendas, were underscored. They acknowledged the important role of technology and digital identity as a transformative force for African economies and achieving sustainable development and underpinned by the smooth implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. They agreed that the September 2019 SDG Summit and related meetings provide a unique opportunity to push for greater integration of the two Agendas and to encourage all actors to meet their commitments under a global partnership for sustainable development, particularly to the most vulnerable countries. The Secretary-General and the Chairperson further underscored the importance of addressing the root causes of crises through the peace, security and development nexus. They called for a continued integrated approach to promoting peace and security and upholding human rights as a foundation for sustainable development.

The meeting welcomed the declaration by the AU on the 2019 Theme of the Year "Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa", which aligns with the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (OAU Refugee Convention) and the 10th Anniversary of the 2009 AU Convention for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). The Secretary-General and the Chairperson highlighted the remarkable solidarity shown by African countries in this respect and welcomed the leadership of the AU and its Member States in advancing the normative framework for the protection and assistance of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. They looked forward to all Member States signing, ratifying and domesticating these instruments. They noted that there are no humanitarian but only

political solutions to humanitarian crises, including forced displacement in Africa, noting the burden imposed on host countries and communities, and urged all stakeholders to strengthen their collaboration and ensure coherent action towards durable solutions, including fostering the important transition from humanitarian assistance to development. They further emphasized the need for shared responsibility at both the continental and global levels and agreed to work together to advance this agenda.

The Secretary-General and Chairperson welcomed progress on the implementation of the January 2016 AU Assembly Decision on the Common African Position (CAP) on Humanitarian Effectiveness, including the broad consultative process towards the establishment of an AU Humanitarian Agency. They committed their full support to its operationalisation and integration within the international humanitarian system, and looked forward to a strengthened cooperation with the UN, through relevant agencies, including for the effective management of forced displacement in Africa.

The Annual Conference also reviewed current challenges to peace, security and development on the continent, including Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Horn of Africa, Libya, Mali and the Sahel, Sudan and South Sudan. The Secretary-General and the Chairperson agreed to jointly increase their support, in cooperation with Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms, for the peace, security, development initiatives and stabilization efforts in these countries, while consulting more closely, particularly with respect to political processes. They urged for robust action by the international community to address the root causes of crises, and alleviate the humanitarian crises and risks, as well as to strengthen resilience in vulnerable communities.

On the Central African Republic, the Secretary-General and the Chairperson welcomed the recent joint high-level AU-UN-EU visit to the country in support to the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed in Bangui, on 6 February 2019, under the auspices of the AU. They further called for robust support by the countries of the region and the international partners for the agreement's implementation.

On the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Conference welcomed President Félix Tshisekedi's priorities to strengthen human rights and resolve armed conflict in the eastern provinces, as well as to foster positive relations in the region. The meeting took note of encouraging signs with regards to the willingness of several armed groups to lay down their arms and called on the Government and its partners to make full use of this window of opportunity. In this regard, the AU and the UN resolved to continue their engagement in support of the consolidation of stability and democratic governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Finally, it was reiterated that continued dialogue towards the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework was necessary to end the recurring cycles of conflict affecting the region. The need for a joint approach with respect to Eastern Congo was discussed.

On Libya, the Conference emphasized the need to urgently mobilise the international community to deliver united and strong messages, including by the UN Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council, calling for an immediate ceasefire,

an end to external interference, protection of civilians, including migrants and refugees, and vital infrastructure, as well as a return to the peace process. The Secretary-General and the Chairperson noted the imperative for a single roadmap for Libya, while acknowledging the complementary roles of both organisations and regional actors. They further look forward to the successful convening of a UN facilitated National Conference; as well as of an all-inclusive Libyan National Reconciliation Conference in Addis Ababa, with the support from the United Nations.

The meeting reflected on the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the Sahel, especially in central Mali and Burkina Faso, as well as spillover effects into previously unaffected countries to the south of the region. The Secretary-General and the Chairperson reiterated that the full implementation of reforms envisioned by the Agreement for peace and reconciliation in Mali, including the development aspects, remained essential to the stabilization of the country and the sub-region. They called on the international community to rally in support of the G5-Sahel Joint Force and mobilize sufficient resources, including for the Priority Invest Plan (PIP), to tackle challenges to lasting peace and sustainable development. Greater alignment between the recalibrated UN Integrated Strategy in the Sahel (UNISS) and the AU Strategy in the Sahel was discussed. The Secretary-General and the Chairperson acknowledged the need to provide continued support to the AU-UN Ministerial Coordination Platform to help improve coordination and cooperation in the Sahel. The meeting noted the importance of a stronger coordination and leadership role for the AU in the Sahel. The Conference welcomed the reinvigoration of the Nouakchott Process, as a key mechanism to enhance cooperation in the fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime.

The Conference welcomed positive developments in the Horn of Africa and agreed on the need to reinforce ongoing collective efforts to consolidate peace and security. The Secretary-General and the Chairperson expressed their readiness to support the region as deemed appropriate. On Sudan, they welcomed and expressed support to the AU-led efforts to facilitate a consensual and civilian-led transition, in close coordination with the UN. They urged all stakeholders to engage in an inclusive dialogue to meet the aspirations of the Sudanese people for democracy, good governance and development. They called upon all concerned to exercise maximum restraint and expressed their strong resolve to work together to ensure peaceful transition and sustainable peace throughout Sudan. On South Sudan, they expressed their continued engagement in support of the implementation of the peace agreement. They called upon the parties to redouble their efforts to ensure the full implementation of the R-ARCSS, particularly the formation of Transitional Government of National Unity, adherence to the permanent ceasefire and security sector reform. They reaffirmed the continued commitment of UN and AU to support, in close coordination with IGAD, the achievement of a fair, inclusive and sustainable peace for the people of South Sudan.

The Secretary-General and the Chairperson agreed to convene the Fourth AU-UN Annual Conference in Addis Ababa in 2020. They also agreed to meet on the margins of the General Assembly and AU Summit to take stock of progress in the partnership between the two Organizations.