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**14TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALISED TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, SAFETY AND SECURITY**

12 MAY 2022

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

**OPENING STATEMENT BY H.E AMBASSADOR BANKOLE ADEOYE, COMMISSIONER FOR
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY DURING THE 14TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE
SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, SAFETY AND SECURITY**

12 MAY 2022, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



- **H.E. Sidiky Kaba, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Senegal and Chair of the Meeting of Ministers of the 14th Ordinary Meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS),**
- **Members of the Bureau of the STCDSS,**
- **Ministers of Defence and Representatives of Member States,**
- **Representatives of Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat and on my own behalf, I would like to warmly welcome you to the 14th Ordinary Session of the Ministers of Defence, Safety and Security.

Let me also take this opportunity to pay tribute to all AU PSOs personnel that are in the field contributing to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism from the Horn of Africa to the Sahel, particularly those that have paid the ultimate price in the cause of peace. Let me express my heartfelt condolences again to the Government and people of the Republic of Burundi for the loss of the brave and gallant Burundian military personnel who were attacked by Al-Shabaab recently in Somalia. Such instances points to the dire need for us to remain vigilant and steadfast in our efforts to prevent and eliminate terrorist threats on the continent.

Mr. Chair, Ministers and Members of the Bureau of the STCDSS,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On assumption of duty as Commissioner for the new Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), I articulated five (5) key strategic priorities inspired by the Agenda 2063 and the AU Institutional Reforms as follows:

1. To re-energize AU Early Warning, Conflict Prevention & Mediation;
2. Ensure integrated Capacity for our PSOs particularly in the areas of Conflict Management & Resolution;
3. Strengthening Democracy & Good Governance;
4. Inclusive Smart Partnerships for Human Security;
5. Strategic Coordination & Implementation Modalities.

Within this context, my vision is premised on achieving in implementation of the African Peace and Security Governance Architecture.

In this regard and cognizant of the importance of conflict prevention and mediation, the key strategic priorities of the PAPS Department focuses on the promotion of open, democratic and inclusive societies, to empower resilient communities, improve lives, and support socio-economic development and human security efforts across the continent. This also includes efforts aimed at strengthening existing capacities for peace operations and the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

This focus takes note of the rising trend of trans-national and trans-regional conflicts, including acts of terrorism and violent extremism, which are intrinsically linked with transnational organized crimes as well as drugs and human trafficking. The current and emerging pattern of conflict calls for a re-examination of our existing mechanisms and capacities at the continental, regional and Member States levels to efficiently address the multiple security challenges on the continent.

As part of efforts to further enhance our current approaches, I will highlight six (6) key initiatives that the Department is facilitating to address these multiple challenges:

First, PAPS will be conducting a PSO lesson learned Forum in September this year, to identify lessons and best practices from the current five (5) AU mandated and authorised PSOs, namely:

- a. AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) that recently transitioned to the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS);
- b. AU Observer Mission in the Central African Republic (MOUACA);
- c. Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (MNJTF) in the Lake Chad Basin;
- d. Group of Five Sahel Joint Force (G5 Sahel);
- e. SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM).

The core objectives of the Forum will be to facilitate information exchange, experience sharing and identification of best practices on decision making by our relevant policy organs, mission management, as well as exit strategy, transitions and liquidation of PSOs.

Secondly, the planning for a Maritime Exercise that aims to enhance interoperability of the ASF in addressing maritime security threats in the continental waters. The Exercise will enhance the role of the ASF in support of maritime security efforts by RECs/RMs and Member States in mitigating maritime threats on the continent.

Thirdly, the Commission is also ensuring that the equipment we have at the CLB is utilized, and have facilitated donation of some of these equipment to AU Member States and to RECs/RMs in support of peace and security efforts in the continent. In this regard, Niger and Burkina Faso were provided with demining equipment to support counterterrorism operations, South Sudan received tents and generators to support cantonment of ex-combatants, whilst Somalia was provided with computers, printers and a number of office

accessories in support of its elections processes. In addition, IT equipment (computers and accessories) for the AU Military Observers Mission in the Central African Republic (MOUACA), as well as assorted amount of equipment for SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) and MNJTF have been donated. The Commission is also facilitating the inclusion of requested equipment into the shipment of donations from the Republic of China to the Group of Five (G5) Sahel countries.

Fourthly, as was discussed yesterday in the meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Staff, the Commission also notes the resurgence of Unconstitutional Changes of Government in the continent, as a serious concern for the Union. In this regard, and in a bid to seek comprehensive solutions to this challenge, the Commission convened a meeting in Accra, Ghana in March 2022, and discussed this critical issue and its implications for the continent. The Accra meeting reiterated the resolve to fully implement the existing national, regional as well as continental tools for good governance. The meeting further highlighted the need for us to address development challenges, particularly socioeconomic inequalities and marginalization, as well as shrinking civic and political space for effective democratization processes. The need for the promotion of free and fair elections in AU Member States was also reiterated.

Fifthly, the Commission is also facilitating several efforts to enhance its capabilities and mechanisms to ensure a comprehensive approach in the prevention and response to terrorism and violent extremism on the continent. This includes support to Member States in the review and adoption of counter-terrorism measures, through African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), strengthening of legislative frameworks in the implementation of relevant strategies and plans and deployment of PSOs in response to the growing threat of violent extremism and terrorism.

As part of the efforts to address the scourge of terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, an Extraordinary Summit will be convened in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 28 May 2022. The Summit is expected to engender actionable commitments by member states and agree on roles of the RECs/RMs and the Commission in support of Member States' efforts to address these critical issues.

Sixthly, additionally, the Commission is concerned about the adverse effects of climate change on socio-economic developments and security. We recognize the complex link between climate change, peace and security in Africa. The PSC is seized with this matter and has held several sessions on it. The Commission is also working to support the convening of COP 27, by the Arab Republic of Egypt later this year.

I wish to reiterate that the directions provided by the STCDSS are always critical in taking forward critical peace and security priorities. In this regard, I call to provide clear directions to the Commission, how best we should continue coordinating our collective efforts to address the current multiple peace and security challenges in the continent. Let me end by reiterating the Commission's continued to.

I thank you for your kind attention, and wish you fruitful deliberations.

African Union Commission (AUC)

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STCDSS

Ordinary Meeting

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Declaration of the 14th Ordinary Meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security Held on 12 May 2022, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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