

AFRICAN UNION

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UNION AFRICAINE

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SOLEMN LAUNCHING OF THE
PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
25 MAY 2004,
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/AHG/ST.(X)

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA.
ISSUED BY THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE
MEMBER STATES OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
OF THE AFRICAN UNION

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA,
ISSUED BY THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
OF MEMBER STATES OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY
COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 25 May 2004, for the solemn ceremonial launching of our new Council and having reviewed the state of peace and security on our continent, have adopted the following Statement:

1. The establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union marks an historic watershed in Africa's progress towards resolving its conflicts and the building of a durable peace and security order. Our meeting today is both a reaffirmation of our commitment to the promotion of a stable, secure, peaceful and developed Africa, as well as a significant step towards realizing the ideals enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the Union and the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council. It is also a reflection of our desire to assume a greater role in the maintenance of peace and security in Africa.

2. Over the years, we have signed and ratified several Protocols and Declarations that signaled our collective commitment to peace, as well as the rejection of the use of force in settling disputes. Unfortunately, some of these have not been fully implemented. The continental peace and security architecture that we are putting in place needs to be nurtured and strengthened, to enable our Union meet the aspirations of our people for sustainable development. To this end, we shall ensure that the authority vested in the Peace and Security Council is fairly and proactively exercised.

3. We undertake to ensure that we shall at all times move first, in a timely manner, to address conflicts in our continent. We, therefore, realize that this endeavor must be backed by the resources and commitment of our Member States, with the full and active support of our peoples and international Partners. We are determined to deal effectively and objectively with each and every conflict as it arises, using every means at our disposal.

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4. To achieve our objective of creating the conditions for durable peace and development on the African continent, we are determined to address the root causes of such conflicts in a systematic and holistic manner. We are mindful of the fact that to accomplish these goals, we must set for ourselves and achieve ever-higher standards in the areas of human rights, democracy, good governance and conflict prevention, which are a prerequisite for achieving the socio-economic development and integration of our continent.

5. We recognize that the foundation for peace and security in Africa is intrinsically linked to the concept of human security. Accordingly, we reaffirm our commitment to the promotion of a comprehensive vision of human security.

6. We shall also move speedily, to implement Africa's Common Security and Defence Policy, and strengthen the common values underpinning peace and security in the continent.

7. We shall not shrink from decisive actions to overcome the challenges confronting the continent. Henceforth, there will be no conflict on our continent that will be considered to be out of bounds for the African Union. Where grave abuses of human rights, crimes against humanity and genocide occur, the Peace and Security Council must be the first to condemn, and take swift action, consistent with the letter and spirit of the Constitutive Act of the Union and other relevant instruments that we subscribe to.

8. Our Member States should commit themselves to support the African Union Peace Fund in concrete terms, including raising the statutory contribution from the AU regular budget to the Fund.

9. We are resolved to establish the African Standby Force, and to ensure that sufficient troops and observers are made available for rapid deployment when and where they are required.

10. As we take stock of the landscape of conflicts and peacemaking initiatives on our continent, we remain gravely concerned at the prevalence of conflicts in different parts of Africa. However, we note that there are encouraging signs of progress in the efforts towards resolving some of these conflicts. We, therefore, urge that the relevant principles from the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Protocol establishing the PSC, serve as the basis for a continental renewal plan, to tackle conflicts on the continent.

11. Against the backdrop of these challenges that we are confronted with, we are committed to fostering political dialogue as the essential mechanism for preventing recourse to insurrection and armed struggle. We shall also address ourselves to the other underlying issues that have contributed to conflict and insecurity, including ethnic and religious extremism; corruption; exclusionary definitions of citizenship; poverty and disease, with special attention on the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has now become a security problem on our continent; the illegal exploitation of Africa's renewable and non-renewable natural resources; mercenarism; the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons; and the continuing toll exacted by anti-personnel landmines.

12. We shall also work tirelessly to prevent and combat the phenomenon of terrorism through the effective implementation of the relevant international and AU instruments, including in particular the Algiers Convention of 1999 and the Plan of Action of 2002. We equally undertake to work with the international community combating terrorism.

13. We shall continue to strengthen our close working relations with the United Nations Security Council, bearing in mind that the UN Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of global peace and security, and Africa is part of that international community.

14. We welcome the establishment of the Peace Support Operations Facility by the European Union and look forward to its support for initiatives to be undertaken under the authority of the African Union. We shall continue to rely upon our major partners in the America, Asia and Europe, to show solidarity with our efforts in the spirit espoused by NEPAD, the African Union programme that seeks to build a partnership based on indivisibility of peace, security, good political and economic governance.

15. On the occasion of the solemn launching of our Peace and Security Council, which has coincided with the celebration of the Africa Day, we, the Heads of State and Government of member states of the Council, hereby commit ourselves to the building of an African continent that is not only at peace with itself but is also at peace with the rest of the world.

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Statement of Commitment to Peace and Security in Africa, issued by the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union

African Union Commission

Peace and Security

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