Africa Dialogue Series - Opening Address

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Ladies, and gentlemen

It is a privilege to address you today on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

This is indeed an opportune time to take stock and chart the way forward to enhancing strategic partnerships in a context where multilateralism is being attacked, and questions are being raised on our collective capacity to achieve the shared goals of peace, prosperity, sustainable development and human rights for all.

How can the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, and our strategic partners, as part of the global partnerships context for development, contribute to fast-tracking the implementation of Agendas 2030 and 2063?

The African Union and the United Nations are currently working closely together on reducing risks and vulnerability due not only to political conflicts, and preventing crises caused for instance by violent extremism, economic shocks, intolerance, environmental risks and conflicts, social tensions, droughts and famines. One of the problems is the tension between the need for a long term strategic vision and the reality of short term mandating visions and budget cycles.

Within a context where multilateral frameworks seem to be under attack, this partnership led by the United Nations and the African Union creates a space for institutional innovations that can help build a more Peace and Development for a better world to live in.

The Joint UN-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, co- signed by the UN Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the AU Commission in April 2017, lay the basis for further improvements in the cooperation and coordination between the UN and the AU.

There is room for additional synergies between the UN's Agenda 2030 and the AU's Agenda 2063, and the "Silencing the Guns" flagship project of Agenda 2063.

These agendas and initiatives provide a set of shared principles and objectives that can be used to promote information sharing and coordination, so that through burden sharing and division of work, on the basis of comparative advantage and predictable joint engagement, the UN and AU are both able to improve efficiencies and overall effectiveness.

The implementation of the AU's financial and organizational reforms, that will strengthen its financial independence and organizational effectiveness, will be an important element in further enhancing the UN-AU strategic partnership. Greater predictability is a key element for this partnership, especially when it comes to joint programming, which involves human and financial resources.

In a globalized world with increased uncertainty, what lessons can the AU-UN partnership offer regarding the need to work collaboratively to solve global problems?

Implementing this AU-UN strategic partnership will be dependent on the following critical conditions:

1. **There needs to be enhancements and clarity of the UN-AU- RECs, and Regional mechanisms cooperation**. The principle of subsidiarity, as it relates to the UN-AU- RECs and Regional Mechanisms, and in the context of the emerging global peace and security architecture, needs to be defined and structured.

2. **National / Local Ownership**. It is important there is full endorsement and alignment of all international efforts with the principle of national and local ownership. However, this principle does not negate the fact that the AU, UN and sub-regional, bodies must take into account that not all national and local leaders are committed to sustainable peace. Some are pre-occupied with staying in power, regardless of the negative impact on their countries, people or the economy. Others need help to manage corruption and nepotism, or support to combat terrorism, or assistance to resist state-capture by transnational criminal organizations.

3. **The UN and the AU should support transformative processes that not only empower national and local ownership, but also enhance social cohesion and promote the inclusion of all parts of a society, by enabling equity and social harmony**. This will require the development of leadership values and skills, both within the UN and AU to support such processes, without becoming prescriptive or otherwise undermining national ownership, as well as the development of a future generation of leaders that put their communities, societies and nations above their own personal interests.

4. **There is now growing recognition that the type and pace of institution-building and democratization matters**: linear assumptions that more development leads to greater stability, or that good governance defeats insurgencies have been debunked. The standard models of the previous era have been based on sequenced approaches to stability, peace and development. Whilst in most situations the AU and UN are facing today (*for instance in the case of the Sahel, or AMISOM in Somalia*) there is need to support governance, security sector reform and development initiatives amidst ongoing conflicts.

5. **The combination of challenges facing the UN, AU, sub regional organizations, states and communities in Africa require a comprehensive approach**. A whole systems approach is needed to align the various dimensions (peace-security, Governance and development) behind a shared political and strategic vision.

6. **We must recognize that there is a significant body of knowledge on peacekeeping, but both the UN and AU are increasingly tasked to undertake stabilization operations**. There should be an emphasis on learning lessons and identifying best practices in the past, but now this approach is questioned, because of the pace of change, which makes such lessons and practices obsolete, and because it is now recognized that each situation requires its own context-specific response that should be arrived at together with the society in transition.

7. **Gradually, we should aim at rationalization and creating greater Coherence on Global partnership commitments regarding Africa's development: for example, FOCAC, TICAD, EU, USA partnerships, thinking coherently**. The foundation for NEPAD in 2000 was motivated by fostering three levels of ownership (local, national, international) that helped feed the design for Agenda 2063. Its implementation illustrates how critical it is to build global coherence by taking advantage of synergetic approaches, and financial, human and institutional resources to reach the stage planning development and sustaining peace for Africa.

In conclusion, excellences, ladies and gentlemen:

1. we should not forget to integrate the role of an emerging private sector in job creation and peace stabilization;

   and last but not the least,

2. Integrate gender and youth perspectives into early warning, prevention, mediation, peace operations, and peace building.

These aspects are often poorly connected with the peace, security, governance and even development aspects of planning, and much more needs to be done to integrate these economic and social dimensions into an integrated and coordinated systems approach to achieve the sustainable development goals and realize the AFRICA we want.

I thank you