Security Council

Letter dated 18 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the Kenya presidency, the Security Council will hold a high-level virtual debate on cooperation between the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations and the African Union, on Thursday, 28 October 2021, on the topic "Renewing solidarity to successfully deliver peace and security in a changing conflict environment".

To guide the discussion on the subject, Kenya has prepared a concept note for the benefit of members wishing to participate in the meeting (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Martin **Kimani**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 18 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council high-level virtual debate on cooperation between the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations and the African Union on the theme: "Renewing solidarity to successfully deliver peace and security in a changing conflict environment", to be held on 28 October 2021

Objective

1.   The multilateral system, with the United Nations at its heart, and its regional counterparts under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, such as the African Union, has registered success in deterring wars between States. However, as the Secretary-General has indicated in his report *Our Common Agenda*, there has been a "rapid increase in non-State conflicts since 2010". The bulk of the Security Council agenda concerns conflict situations in Africa. Present trends holding, this is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future.

2.   The nature of conflicts is changing, making them more protracted, many States more fragile and the delivery of peace and security more difficult. The economic effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic have reversed years of development and sharply reduced the fiscal means of States; falling employment will place further strains on the social contract. The effects of climate change in different African regions, such as the Sahel, has induced migratory patterns that have increased conflicts over resources and strained States' ability to effectively control their territory. Al-Qaida and Da'esh affiliates have risen in number in multiple regions in the continent, joining global terrorism to local politics, and are existential threats to State continuity.

3.   Unless there is a renewal in the commitment of the United Nations, the African Union and subregional organizations, as well as their member states, to implementing, with energy and urgency, the existing mechanisms and agreements, conflicts will multiply, and their effects will have dire international implications. That renewal must start with a shared awareness of the changing conflict challenges on the continent. Such an awareness should lead to a responsiveness to the underutilized strengths and shortcomings of existing frameworks, approaches, institutions and missions.

4.   With the Secretary-General having issued his clarion call in *Our Common Agenda*, with its urgent recognition that humanity is at an inflection point, this is the right moment to take stock.

5.   The high-level debate will enable the Security Council to benefit from a consideration of the present state of cooperation in delivering peace and security between the United Nations, the African Union and subregional organizations, including in the light of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on United Nations-African Union cooperation (S/2021/763). The discussion will allow participants to:

      (a)   Offer their analysis of the present conflict trends and dynamics in Africa and globally;

      (b)   Take note of the potential strengths in existing peace and security mechanisms that can deliver a tangible effect if there is a renewed commitment to their implementation;

(c)   To better appreciate the normative, political and operational dimensions of "African solutions for African challenges" and how they can be supported and leveraged to deliver peace and security;

(d)   To assess how international, regional and national responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crises, climate emergencies and humanitarian crises can be better harnessed to support peace and security;

(e)   Identify innovative ways of strengthening partnership between the United Nations, the African Union and subregional organizations.

Background

6.   The maintenance of international peace and security is a collective responsibility. Effective and sustainable solutions to the challenges of maintaining international peace and security depend on strong partnerships and shared responsibility between the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations, as well as individual Member States.

7.   As provided under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations on regional arrangements, collaboration and productive burden sharing between the United Nations, regional, and subregional organizations is a practical and pragmatic approach in addressing both the traditional and contemporary threats with a great potential for sustainable success.

8.   During the twenty-first century, through the strengthening of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture, the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, African institutions have assumed greater responsibility in responding to threats to international peace and security, the attendant challenges and their implications for socioeconomic development.

9.   The main pillar of the Peace and Security Architecture is the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, which is supported, in the discharge of its mandate, by the African Union Commission, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force and the Peace Fund.

10.   The relationship between the African Union, which has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa, and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution is a critical component of the Peace and Security Architecture.

11.   Enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union can help solve the complex and multifaceted peace and security challenges on the continent. The two organizations have worked in tandem, strengthening their partnership and cooperation on matters of peace and security. This cooperation is founded on the Statement by the President of the Security Council of 28 March 2007 (S/PRST/2007/7), resolution 1809 (2008), resolution 2033 (2012), the 2017 Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, as well as the adoption in January 2018 of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

12.   The Secretary-General annually submits a report pursuant to the Statement by the President of the Security Council of 16 December 2014 (S/PRST/2014/27), on the progress of implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, the status of the partnership and the efforts made to strengthen cooperation.

13. However, despite the remarkable collaboration between the two institutions, there are trends in the peace and security landscape in Africa that call for strengthened cooperation and collaboration.

14. First, while some conflict and post-conflict situations have witnessed steady progress, others continue to lag behind, demanding new innovative and collaborative response actions.

15. Second, there remain disconnects between existing international approaches to managing and resolving conflicts and the reality of the conflicts the continent is grappling with.

16. Third, Africa continues to witness emerging multifaceted threats, including terrorism, violent extremism, piracy, transnational organized crime and trafficking, negative impacts of climate change and most recently global health pandemics or epidemics such as COVID-19 and Ebola virus disease outbreaks.

17. In addition, increasing geopolitical tensions and other global political, security and economic dynamics are exacerbating some of the conflicts and crisis situations on the continent. African countries are also grappling with a confluence of extraregional actors and interests that are increasingly making the continent a theatre of competing external interests with the risk of unintended adverse implications on regional peace and security.

18. Considering these trends, at its fourteenth Extraordinary Assembly the African Union decided to extend the implementation of the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa for a period of 10 years (2021–2030). More importantly, these trends are indicative of more opportunities for the United Nations, the African Union and regional economic communities/regional mechanisms to make further commitments and scale up collaborative efforts in response to the emerging and evolving peace and security threats.

19. The Security Council should be and must be seen to represent the collective will of the States Members of the United Nations. Among other things, progress is possible by building a systematic and predictable partnership that allows for coherence, flexibility, and sustainability, so as to strengthen their engagement while accounting for their different mandates, resources and interests.

Guiding questions

20. The following questions will serve to guide the debate:

(a) What changes are occurring in the political and conflict landscapes that are presenting new or additional challenges to the present national, regional and international mechanisms?

(b) How can the responses to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, weather emergencies and economic and humanitarian crises be better aligned to peace and security?

(c) What strengths are available to the United Nations, the African Union and subregional organizations that can be better harnessed?

(d) What are the perspectives of African countries on conflict that need to be better understood by the Security Council?

(e) What innovations are available for deployment to enable more effective cooperation?

(f) In what ways can the United Nations and other international partners better support the functioning of the African Union regional economic communities/ regional mechanisms in Africa?

Format

21. The event will be a high-level debate at the Heads of State and Government level and will be chaired by Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of Kenya.

22. The debate will take place via videoconference on Thursday, 28 October 2021, at 8 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

———————