Security Council Open Debate on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security:
Interdependence Between Security and Development
11th February 2011, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Mungwa, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

On behalf of His Excellency Ambassador Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, who is away from New York this week, I would like to begin by joining previous speakers in commending the President for having organized this debate on the interdependence between security and development, a theme of paramount importance to Africa as a developing region. The organization of this open debate is not only a mark of strong political support for this theme by the Council; it also illustrates the role the Council plays in generating new ideas to boost related efforts being made by Member States, bilateral and multilateral donors, United Nations agencies and regional organizations such as the African Union in its overall work for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We are grateful for the leadership of His Excellency Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Minister of External Relations of Brazil, who travelled to New York to preside over this meeting in person, and for the participation of the Secretary-General, the Ministers from Germany, Colombia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Portugal, India, Gabon, Costa Rica and Slovenia and the various other participants who made statements during this debate.

As the Security Council is aware, several countries in Africa have been the theatre of conflict linked to factors such as the illegal exploitation of resources, poverty and a lack of economic empowerment opportunities, unconstitutional changes of Government, often conducted with backing from illegal criminal networks, and a lack of opportunity, overall in particular for young people.

A new dawn has emerged in Africa, however, following intense efforts deployed by the continent to assume its share of responsibility for its own security and development. This new vision of renaissance and growth is set out in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and other instruments of the organization, which clearly assert the interdependence between security and development. One is not possible without the other, as has been affirmed by a number of speakers during this debate.

The African Union therefore, right from its launch, explicitly recognized that the persistence of conflict would undermine its broad democracy and development agenda, and therefore adopted a proactive approach to resolving conflicts in the continent. This approach emphasizes early response to potential conflict situations and active mediation on the continent in order to avert potential conflict situations. Furthermore, the policy shift from non-interference, as practiced by the former Organization of African Unity, to one of non-indifference in the African Union is a clear mark of Africa's commitment to eliminating the phenomenon of unconstitutional changes of Government that often lead to instability and insecurity, thus undermining democratic governance and development on the continent.

The African Union approach on the interdependence of security and development also underscores the core imperative of addressing the root causes of conflict in order to ensure social justice and thus attain sustainable development. Furthermore, the objectives of the Union's principles, as set out in articles 3 and 4 of its Constitutive Act, include clear provisions for the promotion of democratic institutions and respect for human rights, the rule of law and gender equality in order to strengthen popular participation and democracy. This is also vividly captured in the human security and development approach embraced by the African Union, which establishes the linkage between the financial and political stability of the State and the physical and psychological security of its people.

Though much remains to be done, Africa, with the support of the international community, has made significant progress in the ardent pursuit of this vision for security and development, both through thematically-focused initiatives and integrated programmes and projects. These include the multilayered and synergized continent-wide peace and security architecture of the African Union, which comprises the Peace and Security Council supported by the Continental Early Warning System, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the Panel of the Wise and the African Standby Force, to name just a few.

The experience of Africa in its peace support operations in contexts including Burundi, Chad, and currently Somalia, has illustrated that military and security services can indeed work in conjunction with civilian stakeholders to achieve socio-economic stability and recovery through the implementation of quick-impact projects incorporated within peace support missions, which should therefore be supported. These provide early peace dividends to local people and help in confidence-building and reconciliation, which are prerequisites for attaining sustainable peace and development in such situations.

The Continental Early Warning System of the African Union in particular is designed to ensure that development trends that could undermine or trigger insecurity are detected and addressed in a timely and preventive manner. This also emphasizes the importance of communications capability to the nexus between security and development.

The Panel of the Wise was established to draw on the wisdom and experiences of Africans with track records in addressing peace and security issues in order to provide early engagement with emerging situations of concern to prevent conflict from erupting and sapping already limited resources from development. However, it has also been well established that predictable and sustainable funding is crucial both for timely and effective conflict prevention and for the long-term consolidation of peace in order to sustain an environment conducive to development.

Ongoing processes of security sector reform should also help to enhance professionalization of the security sector, for instance to enable engineering and service corps to increase their contributions to national efforts to address the social and development needs of their peoples.

The African Union Border Programme, which has been mentioned by a number of speakers, is also seeking to address the challenges of secure movement around the continent and to help curb the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, as well as other illicit transborder activities that fuel conflict and undermine development in a number of areas around the continent.

As has been underscored by several speakers, the African Union fully shares the view that post-conflict reconstruction and development constitute a key track for promoting integrated security and development objectives in countries emerging from conflict. It is within this context that the African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework was adopted within just three years of the launch of the African Union. Related efforts, such as those of the African Ministerial Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in the Sudan, clearly demonstrate both the feasibility and the benefits of linking security and development in such contexts.

In the same vein, we continue to express the appreciation of the African Union to the Peacebuilding Commission for its efforts on the five African countries on its agenda, and in particular for the leadership of Brazil, which has been crucial to the advances we have seen in a number of situations.

Having said that, we are also aware that the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) process have revealed the extent to which Africa remains vulnerable due to the persistent socio-economic and development challenges it faces — a situation that has been exacerbated by the financial and economic crisis. Current trends indicate that several African countries are unlikely to attain the MDGs by the target date of 2015. The African Union therefore seizes this opportunity to underscore the importance of ensuring that all possible steps are taken to help the African States to meet the MDGs in order eliminate some of the socio-economic and root causes of instability and insecurity in a number of countries on the continent.

On its part, the African Union launched the New Partnership for Africa's Development to implement its vision of renaissance and growth, and we seize this opportunity to underscore the importance of stronger support from the United Nations and international community for its implementation. In this context, the African Union also continues to develop partnerships with various bilateral and multilateral actors and with the African diaspora, civil society and expert organizations, through which development and security are increasingly considered in an interlinked and integrated approach.

Furthermore, in its efforts to address some of the factors impeding the mobilization of resources for the continent's financial security and development, the African Union is currently conducting preparatory

processes towards establishment of pan-African financial institutions, as provided for in article 19 of the Constitutive Act of the Union. These include three key institutions — the African Central Bank; the African Monetary Fund, to be based in Yaoundé, Cameroon; the African Investment Bank to be based in Abuja, Nigeria — and a pan-African stock exchange. The African Union is counting on the support of the international community for the successful launch of these institutions in order to harness the nexus between security and development.

In conclusion, we wish to note that, in its observance of 2010 as the Year of Peace and Security in Africa, the African Union launched various peace and security initiatives that brought together Government, private sector and civil society actors. This experience confirmed the view that opportunities abound for promoting linkages between security and development on the continent. Therefore, enhanced assistance is essential for regional organizations such as the African Union so that they may fully develop the capacity to leverage such opportunities in order to promote development on the continent. The African Union thus re-iterates its readiness to continue to participate in policy debates such as that today in the Council, and to implement in the field related opportunities arising within the continent and in partnership of the United Nations and international partners.