

Mr. Kamau (The PeaceBuilding Commission):

I would like to begin by commending you, Sir, for having organized this important and timely open debate on the cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. We appreciate the detailed concept note (S/2016/428, annex) to guide this debate. I also thank you, Sir, for having invited me to brief this meeting in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I would also like to recognize the presence of the members of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at today's meeting, and I too extend my welcome to them to New York.

Over the past decade, the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and other subregional organizations in Africa has grown significantly, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Our cooperation in the area of peace and security has been critical to our collective progress and achievements. Today's debate provides us an opportunity to review the status of the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. On 27 April, the Security Council and the General Assembly adopted identical resolutions — namely, General Assembly resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016) respectively — on the review of United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Those resolutions are comprehensive and far-reaching documents. They have introduced the notion of sustaining peace and the importance of national, regional and international efforts aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. Those resolutions have further strengthened the foundation of our cooperation.

Current global realities include an increasing number of violent conflicts, exacerbated by the deepening refugee crisis, rising terrorist threats and violent extremism. There is clearly a need to focus on conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of conflict. The primacy of politics should guide our collective work in peace operations. We must not let situations deteriorate into violent conflicts for us in order to react with security or military measures. We need to change our mindset away from military engagements and towards the prevention of conflicts. We can achieve that through horizon-scanning, shared joint analysis, dialogue, mediation and accompaniment in situations of crisis. We must re-focus our work on conflict resolution rather than on conflict management. That is the essence of our collective efforts for sustaining peace.

The peace and security challenges that we face are too extremely complex and interlinked for any single organization to address them alone. They call for collective action. To succeed in our goal of sustaining peace, we need to reframe and reprioritize our responses. We must never forget that peace is at the core of that for which the Charter stands for. It must run through all our collective efforts, ranging from conflict prevention to peacebuilding, peacekeeping, reconstruction and, indeed, sustainable development. That renewed approach to sustainable peace would allow us to best adapt to today's global realities. Rather than wait until a crisis breaks out and then make a default or template recourse in the form of a response, we need to integrate sustaining peace in our security, development and human-rights agenda. We feel that we cannot emphasize that point enough.

The twin resolutions I just mentioned foresee a Peacebuilding Commission that is proactively focused on assisting countries to prevent conflict and sustain peace. The PBC is expected to

become a more efficient and flexible convening platform for policy dialogue and for availing all countries that seek the support of the United Nations for achieving sustainable peace an opportunity to work through that platform. We are fully committed to making that a reality. In our commitment, we will continue to strengthen national ownership and leadership in our engagement, because we are convinced that the responsibility for sustaining peace is shared between the Government and all national stakeholders, including youth, women and civil society.

The new resolutions on the United Nations peacebuilding architecture also stress the importance of the partnerships and cooperation between the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union. The Peacebuilding Commission has been working closely with the African Union and the regional economic communities in Africa to increase synergies, enhance coherence and complementarity of our joint peacebuilding efforts. For instance, we have been able to work closely and, speaking in one voice, to complement our joint efforts to sustain peace in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic and Burundi. Similarly, over the past year the Commission has increased its focus on thematic, cross-cutting and regional peacebuilding challenges.

The Commission held regional discussions on peacebuilding in West Africa in January and April this year. Those discussions provided a unique opportunity to look at the growing cross-border challenges beyond the confines of specific countries. The discussions also centred on strategies to address the challenges that arise when working with the countries in the region, as well as when working within and in concert with the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Development Bank and other international and regional actors. We are looking forward to further strengthening and deepening this partnership in view of the new road map for the African Peace and Security Architecture. We are aware that this road map would provide a framework for practical measures to reorient the African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework.

The Peacebuilding Commission intends to use the momentum generated from these new resolutions, and the commitment of the Security Council and the General Assembly, to further enhance and institutionalize cooperation with the African Union. We will aim to arrive at an agreed framework for further consultations, exchange of information and analysis, and opportunities for joint initiatives aimed at sustaining peace in Africa.

I am planning to lead a delegation of the Peacebuilding Commission to West Africa in mid-June, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Senegal, to draw attention to the peacebuilding priorities and needs within the context of post-Ebola recovery. Our visit to Senegal, the current chair of ECOWAS, will provide an opportunity to discuss the regional peacebuilding challenges and priorities.

As we work together to strengthen our partnership, we also intend to leave no one behind. We must focus on the inclusive participation of young people in our peacebuilding efforts. It is evident that investing in young people guarantees peace and security, as well as development. It is our responsibility to provide young people with the opportunity to play their rightful role in peacebuilding and development.

Similarly, we must also acknowledge the importance of women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. We must particularly include gender-related issues in all discussions pertinent to sustaining peace, and promote the gender dimensions of peacebuilding, including through the strengthening of women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding. Importantly, we also intend to work very closely with Mr. Donald Kaberuka in the context of the African Peace Fund. We also look forward to working with him and to achieving greater success in raising additional funds for both the African Peace Fund and the broader Peacebuilding Fund of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In conclusion, we must link our joint peacebuilding efforts to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly A/RES/70/1) and the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. The opportunities contained in these mutually reinforcing and coherent frameworks must be supported to achieve inclusive growth, sustained development and peace and security for Africa.

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