

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**ADDRESS TO THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 30TH ORDINARY SESSION
OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

Addis Ababa, 28 January 2018

EMBARGO UNTIL DELIVERY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Your Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda and Chairperson of the African Union,

Your Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here in Addis again.

I commend President Alpha Condé for his leadership over the past 12 months.

And I congratulate incoming chairperson President Paul Kagame.

Last year, I came to Addis with respect and gratitude, to seek opportunities to deepen our strategic partnership.

I said I know Africa as a continent of resilience and hope. I committed to build a higher platform of cooperation with you. And I was inspired by your vision for Africa's future.

In just one year, we have entered a new era of partnership with Africa

We held the first United Nations–African Union Annual Conference at summit level. Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat and I signed the UN-AU Framework on Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

Yesterday, we signed a second framework, on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Our solid partnership is also grounded on sound principles of human rights and good governance.

We are working together successfully across the continent.

With Africa firmly in the lead, we can and will do more.

I stand here on behalf of the United Nations system and reaffirm our strong commitment to the member states and the people of Africa.

I strongly believe Africa is one of the greatest forces for good in our world.

Excellencies,

As we move forward together, I see five areas for strengthened partnership.

First, peace and security.

Let me begin by thanking African governments for leading the way in contributing troops and police to help save lives and keep the peace around the world.

We will never forget the service and sacrifice of all those who have given their lives for peace.

Our first shared obligation is to confront the root causes of conflict by strengthening prevention through diplomacy and mediation.

We also have an obligation to do much more to end conflicts and forge peace.

In the Central African Republic, we fully support the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, and I urge all partners to move this forward under national leadership.

In South Sudan, we have aligned our position with the African Union and IGAD [the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development], and we are enjoying extraordinarily close cooperation.

The United Nations-African Union partnership on peace and security is fundamental to building a safer world for all.

It is rooted in solutions that are Africa-owned, Africa-driven and Africa-led.

Excellencies,

As I just told the Security Council, the United Nations needs a more strategic approach to peace operations.

In too many cases, peacekeepers are deployed indefinitely where there is little peace to keep.

Targeted by multiple armed groups, with no political solutions in sight, sometimes UN peacekeepers are confined to a containment role.

The number of peacekeeping casualties doubled from 2016 to 2017.

This is unsustainable.

We are already working to address this challenge in three ways.

UN peacekeeping must be more focused, and based on realistic expectations. Peacekeeping is a tool to support political solutions led by national actors. We cannot afford mandates that look like Christmas trees.

Peacekeeping operations must be stronger and safer, better led, trained and equipped, more mobile, flexible and agile, with better intelligence.

Finally, I want to mobilize greater support for peacekeeping operations and troop-contributing countries.

But UN peacekeeping is not the solution to all crisis situations.

We need different missions for different contexts, including peace enforcement and counter-terrorist operations.

Partnership with the African Union and sub-regional organizations offers us the means to achieve this.

AMISOM is demonstrating how an African-led force can conduct offensive operations against terrorists, while helping to provide security for a political process.

The G5-Sahel joint force will tackle terrorism, instability, human trafficking and drug smuggling in this troubled region.

The Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram is also tackling terrorism, in the Lake Chad Basin.

But these operations need the support of the entire international community.

That is why, in recent discussions on the Sahel, I have consistently advocated at the Security Council for Chapter VII mandates and adequate, predictable and sustainable funding, including assessed contributions. I am committed to continuing this advocacy.

Peace in the Sahel, as in Somalia and the Lake Chad Basin, is a global good.

The world should invest in it.

Excellencies,

The second area for strengthened partnership is inclusive, sustainable development.

Our two agendas – the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 – are mutually reinforcing.

Eradicating poverty in all its forms is our overarching priority.

National ownership is the way forward.

The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is fundamental to creating a sustainable world.

We must recognize that we have not yet mobilized the full support of the international community for all the Sustainable Development Goals.

Big gaps remain, particularly with respect to industrialization, water, energy, infrastructure and the environment.

We need to bring quality education within reach of all.

Developing countries need financial and technical support to achieve their aspirations in these areas.

I call on all Member States to uphold their commitments to Official Development Assistance, outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

But development aid alone cannot meet our objectives.

We must tap many sources of funds - public and private, domestic and international – through innovative financing mechanisms.

With countries in the lead, we will harness the power of partnerships that bring together knowledge, capacity, skills and finances.

Countries must also be able to mobilize their internal resources, through improved governance, rule of law, tax reform and the elimination of corruption.

I am encouraged by your commitment in this area.

But the international community also has a role in fighting tax evasion, money laundering, and the illicit financial flows that are depleting Africa's resource base.

Commented [CD1]: French

Excellencies,

Women and young people must lead the development agenda.

Women's full participation makes economies stronger and peace processes more successful.

Ending violence against women and girls and child marriage, and increasing women's participation in decision-making, are prerequisites for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

Africa has the largest concentration of young people in the world.

Harnessing the demographic dividend, through investment in quality education, skills and job creation, will unleash unprecedented resources of energy, talent and creativity.

Excellencies,

The third area for cooperation is climate change – the defining threat of our generation.

African countries make a minimal contribution to global warming – but they are paying the maximum price.

Climate change is hampering development, with serious implications for peace and security.

And climate change is moving much faster than we are.

We now see signs of hope.

Carbon markets are growing. There is broad recognition that green business is good business.

This creates vast opportunities for African countries.

But we will need a huge leap in financing and investment to implement the Paris Agreement.

Developed countries must fulfil their commitment to mobilize \$100 billion of climate finance per year by 2020.

I will convene a Climate Summit in September 2019 to build momentum and ramp up ambition, strengthen resilience and forge structural changes to the global economy.

I count on your continued engagement and support.

Commented [CD2]: Portuguese

Excellencies,

The fourth area for our strengthened cooperation is migration.

Let me state clearly: migration is a positive global phenomenon.

It powers economic growth, reduces inequalities, connects diverse societies and helps us ride the demographic waves of population growth and decline.

I condemn the widespread abuse and exploitation of migrants that are a stain on our common humanity.

We must maximize the benefits of orderly migration, while stamping out abuses and prejudice.

This requires better coordination between countries of origin, transit and destination, and more legal pathways for migration.

This will remove incentives to break the rules, and support efforts to crack down on abuses.

Development cooperation policies must also take human mobility into account and provide opportunities for people to live in dignity in their own countries.

Migration should always be a choice. An act of hope – not despair.

Developed countries must base their policies on facts, not myths.

For example, south-south migration exceeds south-north. There are more African migrants in other African countries than in Europe.

You have much to teach the world about a positive, constructive approach to migration.

I count on your contribution to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration – an important collective priority for 2018.

Excellencies,

This year, 2018, is African Anti-Corruption Year. This is the fifth area for our strengthened partnership.

I commend your decision to highlight this scourge, and offer you our strong support.

Corruption contributes to the trafficking of people and drugs, and the plundering of natural resources and wildlife. It can undermine trust in governments, compromising peace and security.

It is estimated that for every dollar given in official development assistance, a dollar is lost to corruption.

The consequences are far-reaching and devastating.

The UN is working with national anti-corruption commissions to end impunity and bring perpetrators to justice.

Combatting corruption, tax evasion and illicit financial flows requires an unimpeachable commitment to transparency and accountability.

Together, we can end this menace and make sure that public funding and investments go where they are needed most.

Excellencies,

This year also marks another significant moment for Africa and the world – the centennial of the birth of a great father of Africa: Nelson Mandela.

Through his life and example, Madiba reminded us that to make progress, we must always look forward, no matter how difficult that might be.

Nelson Mandela had every reason to feel bitter about the past.

But he transcended his personal history to bring his country, and our world, hope of a brighter future.

Today, around the world, we see scepticism about multilateralism.

But I strongly believe that moving forward together, the United Nations and the African Union can show that multilateralism is our best and only hope.

Together, we can lead the way to a brighter day.

I look forward to continuing our joint work, for Africa and the world!

Thank you.

EMBARGO UNTIL DELIVERY