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Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the statement of the President of the Security Council dated 16 December 2014 ([S/PRST/2014/27](#)), in which the Council requested that the Secretary-General submit an annual report on ways to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU). The report provides an update on the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, the current status of the partnership and efforts to enhance the partnership between the two organizations. It also provides a description of the activities carried out by UNOAU since the issuance of my previous report ([S/2018/678](#)), in July 2018, including those carried out on issues reflected in Council resolutions [2378 \(2017\)](#) and [2457 \(2019\)](#) and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

II. The United Nations and the African Union strategic partnership

2. A strong partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is essential to effectively seek solutions to the increasingly complex peace and security challenges in Africa. The two organizations are leveraging their respective comparative advantages towards achieving the common objectives of enhancing peace and security, promoting human rights and good governance and implementing Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

United Nations Security Council and African Union Peace and Security Council

3. Greater consultation in the decision-making of the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council remains critical for



achieving strategic convergence and coherence in addressing peace and security challenges in Africa. On 19 July 2018, in New York, the members of the two bodies held their twelfth annual joint consultative meeting, at which they reviewed peace and security issues, in particular the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan and the progress made on implementing the African Union flagship initiative, Silencing the Guns by 2020. The two organs have committed themselves to strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, including through joint missions to conflict areas in Africa.

4. During the reporting period, my special representatives and envoys continued to brief the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council, jointly with their African Union counterparts, enabling the Councils to take into account the perspectives of both organizations in their decisions. The Peace and Security Council also conducted field missions to the Central African Republic, Somalia and South Sudan to gain first-hand insight into the realities on the ground. The field missions were supported by the United Nations and provided an opportunity for the Peace and Security Council to interact with my special representatives and with other officials in those three countries.

5. The three African non-permanent members of the Security Council continued to provide a critical link between the two Councils, increasingly articulating African perspectives and common positions on issues of concern to the continent. In New York, they invited the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations, the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to provide monthly briefings on the programme of work of the Security Council. In Addis Ababa, the African Union Commission and UNOAU facilitated monthly coordination meetings between representatives of the incoming President of the Security Council and the Chair of the Peace and Security Council to share information and, where possible, enhance coordination and synergies between the agendas of the two Councils.

United Nations Secretariat and African Union Commission

6. The strategic partnership between the Secretariat and African Union Commission continued to deepen. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and I have continued to prioritize the development of a systematic, predictable and strategic partnership. Since the signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security in April 2017 and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in January 2018, the partnership has been characterized by more frequent and constructive exchanges, as well as more systematic coordination. In my address at the thirty-second ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in February 2019, I noted that there had been a quantum leap in strategic cooperation and that we were now better positioned to address our shared challenges.

7. On 6 May 2019, in New York, the Chairperson of the Commission and I convened the third African Union-United Nations annual conference, at which participants welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the two joint frameworks mentioned above. Conference attendees also agreed to strengthen joint efforts towards the implementation of the African Union initiative on silencing the guns in Africa by 2020, in line with the press statement of the 829th meeting of the Peace and Security Council and with Security Council resolution [2457 \(2019\)](#). Meeting participants further welcomed the strengthened cooperation aimed at promoting gender parity and the leadership of women, including in peace and mediation processes, as well as at advancing sustainable development and economic

growth. The Chairperson and I further emphasized the importance of taking decisive action on climate change and underlined the urgency of the issue and the need for a significant increase in political will. The meeting highlighted the remarkable solidarity and leadership shown by African countries in advancing the normative framework for the protection and assistance of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. Conference attendees also reviewed current challenges to peace, security and development on the continent, including in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, South Sudan and the Sudan and in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

8. On 6 December 2018, in New York, the Chairperson and I signed a joint declaration to renew our ongoing commitment to peace and security, including through cooperation for African Union-led peace support operations, and to promoting good governance, sustainable development and human rights on the African continent. In the declaration, we recognized the progress made to date in enhancing those operations, in particular in human rights and conduct and discipline compliance, in joint planning and reporting and in financial management. We welcomed the adoption of the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations by States Members of the United Nations and various intergovernmental organizations in September 2018 and reiterated that African Union peace support operations were a vital tool in the international peace and security architecture, including in peace enforcement and counter-terrorism. We made a commitment to further collaboration to ensure continued progress in that area.

9. In July 2018, the Deputy Secretary-General conducted a joint high-level solidarity mission, under the auspices of the African Women Leaders Network, to Chad, the Niger and South Sudan, together with the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security, the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, my Special Adviser on Africa, my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and my Special Adviser for the Sahel. They were joined by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. The mission served to highlight the participation and leadership of women in peace and security, development and humanitarian issues in the three countries, with an additional focus on zero tolerance for gender-based violence and climate security challenges in the Sahel. Members of the delegation conducted field visits in Bol in Chad, Maradi in the Niger and Wau and Malakal in South Sudan, where they engaged with women, young people and the wider population affected by conflict. Joint high-level field visits by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations, and their counterparts in the African Union Commission, were also carried out in the Central African Republic, Libya, South Sudan and the Sudan.

10. The fifteenth and sixteenth meetings of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security were held in New York on 22 September 2018 and in Addis Ababa on 12 February 2019, respectively. Relevant commissioners of the African Union and under-secretaries-general of the United Nations discussed progress made in the implementation of the United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. At those meetings, Senior officials held discussions on the most pressing peace and security challenges in Africa, including the situations in the Central African Republic, Libya and South Sudan, as well as in the Great Lakes region, in the Horn of Africa, with a focus on Somalia, in the Lake Chad Basin and in the Sahel, in particular Mali. They underlined the importance of strengthening collaboration, including in relation to the women and peace and security agenda, the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and the sustainability and predictability of funding for African Union peace support operations.

11. The Secretariat and the African Union Commission conducted a technical-level joint review in August 2018 on the implementation, over the previous two years, of two pilot knowledge exchange programmes in the areas of operational support, namely the staff exchange programme and the participation of Commission staff in the senior mission leadership and resource training programme of the Secretariat. The review team concluded that the programmes were significantly beneficial for both organizations and recommended their continuation with minor modifications. The Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support subsequently agreed to further institutionalize the programmes.

12. The twelfth annual United Nations-African Union consultative meeting on the prevention, management and resolution of conflict was held in Addis Ababa on 11 and 12 March 2019, with technical-level participation from the African Union, the United Nations and the regional economic communities. Meeting participants discussed regional dynamics on the continent; ways to prevent conflict, sustain peace, support mediation processes and implement peace agreements; and support for electoral processes. In addition, from 20 to 22 March 2019, the African Union Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized a multi-stakeholder dialogue to discuss collaboration on conflict analysis and early warning mechanisms at the country and regional levels.

13. It is important to highlight that the restructuring of the peace and security architecture was also aimed at improving the ability of the United Nations Secretariat to serve as an effective partner to the African Union. The establishment of the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa within the new shared regional structure of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations brings together the relevant expertise previously found within the former Department of Political Affairs and Department of Peacekeeping Operations. As a result, there is now a United Nations Headquarters focal point for issues relating to the partnership with the African Union on peace and security and a single office responsible for providing unified strategic, political and operational backstopping for UNOAU.

III. The United Nations and African Union operational partnership

Challenges and opportunities to peace and security in Africa

14. The challenges to peace and security faced in some parts of the continent are increasingly complex and volatile. While progress was made in resolving the conflicts in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, those situations have remained fragile and require continued engagement and support by the international community. The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has also remained fragile, in particular in the eastern part of the country, and was complicated by the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease. The situation in Somalia has remained largely unchanged since my previous report, while the security situations in Libya and the Sahel have deteriorated significantly.

15. As indicated in my 2018 report, the primary underlying structural challenges to achieving lasting peace and security in Africa continue to be political and socioeconomic exclusion and discrimination; weak governance, including with regard to the rule of law, human rights, the delivery of basic services and the equitable management of natural resources; and the effects of climate change and food insecurity. Those weaknesses are compounded by external interference and proxy conflicts, violent extremism and terrorism, organized crime, corruption and the absence of effective State authority in some parts of the continent. The impact of

climate change on peace and security in Africa continues to increase stress on already vulnerable communities in the Horn of Africa, the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel. A comprehensive and coordinated approach involving international, regional and national stakeholders is required to address those problems.

16. In Libya, the escalation of violence and the increasing reported influx of sophisticated weapons and ammunition posed a continued threat to peace and security in the country and the greater Sahel region. The stalled political process and the current security situation further undermined the prospects of holding elections. On 4 April, the Libyan National Army under General Khalifa Haftar launched a military offensive to capture Tripoli, resulting in a stalemate between the Army and the United Nations-recognized Government of National Accord.

17. In Mali and the Sahel, and throughout the Lake Chad Basin region, the increasing threats of terrorism and violent extremism perpetrated by terrorist groups allied with Al-Qaida, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara and Boko Haram, as well as the proliferation of militias, continued to pose major challenges to collective efforts to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development. The effect of climate change was also seen on scarce natural resources, notably around Lake Chad, as were the linkages with intensified conflicts along community lines involving the Fulani pastoralists and the Tuareg communities, spreading from northern through central Mali.

18. In the Horn of Africa, political transitions continued to pose challenges to already fragile countries, and political fragility was further complicated by external interference. The rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea introduced new dynamics in the region. Moreover, a political breakthrough in the Sudan helped to initiate a transition to civilian-led rule. Challenges remained, however, including the slow implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, the tense relations between the Federal Government of Somalia and the country's federal member states, tensions between Kenya and Somalia and tensions in parts of Ethiopia.

19. In the Central Africa region, the overall political, peace and security situation remained tenuous. Several countries continued to experience protracted armed conflict, including activities by non-State armed groups, as well as marked humanitarian crises, often with significant transborder dimensions, and terrorism. At the same time, the signing of the peace agreement in the Central African Republic, on 6 February, by 14 armed groups, under the auspices of the African Union and with support from the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), was an important milestone towards a durable political solution in the country. Resource mobilization emerged as a major challenge for the implementation of the agreement.

20. The Southern Africa subregion remained generally stable. At the same time, there were apparent risks to political stability stemming from public discontent over the lack of accountability for alleged acts of corruption, the abuse of authority and the politicization of key institutions of democracy. Recent waves of natural disasters (Tropical Cyclones Idai and Kenneth), combined with acute economic and financial crises and the emerging threat of violent extremism, could worsen the plight of vulnerable communities and undermine the recent gains made through democratic transitions.

21. The United Nations continued to work with the regions and governments of the affected countries to address those challenges through conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Both the interconnectedness of the peace and security situations and the relations between and within States illustrate the importance of seeking common regional approaches. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission and I are also exploring ways to strengthen existing mechanisms

for coordination and an integrated response to challenges relating to peace and security, development and climate change in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

Partnership in conflict prevention and peacemaking

22. The United Nations continued to work closely with the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms striving to prevent conflict through political dialogue and mediation efforts.

23. The African Union increased its efforts to fast-track the implementation of its Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative, and the United Nations provided advice and direct support for the initiative, including technical assistance to the African Union Peace and Security Department in support of its conflict prevention and mediation initiatives. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs supported the operationalization of the Mediation Support Unit of the African Union, including through the development of a draft mediation training manual. It also assisted in the organization of a policy dialogue workshop led by the African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, held in Addis Ababa on 11 and 12 October 2018, which brought together leading peacemakers in Africa who agreed to develop an action plan to fast-track implementation. As part of the 2019 Africa Dialogue Series, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, in close cooperation with the African Union Commission, held a session, on 21 May 2019, on the contribution of youth to sustaining peace and sustainable development and discussed their role in implementing the Silencing the Guns initiative.

24. Following the adoption by the Security Council of its resolution [2457 \(2019\)](#) in support of the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative, I asked the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa to establish an inter-agency task force to coordinate and enhance United Nations support for the initiative. On 10 April 2019, the United Nations launched the Task Force to support the African Union Initiative on Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, which was tasked with developing priority areas for increased support for implementing the initiative. That effort was carried out in close consultation with the African Union Commission and in line with the priorities of the African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020. Subsequently, in May 2019, at United Nations Headquarters, the African Union Commission presented its “fast-tracking action” strategy and held consultations with the Secretariat and Member States to galvanize additional support. On 7 July, the African Union Assembly endorsed the topic, “Silencing the guns: creating conducive conditions for Africa’s development”, as the African Union theme for the year 2020.

25. On 10 and 11 July, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Government of Kenya, in cooperation with the African Union, hosted the first African Regional High-level Conference on Counter-Terrorism and the Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, which helped to mobilize support for African efforts in those areas. In the margins of the Conference, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, together with the African Union Commission, the Government of Kenya and the United Nations country team in Kenya, organized a side event on the role of African youth in silencing the guns, bringing together over 50 youth representatives to discuss good practices and proposed actions in support of the initiative.

26. The Secretariat and the African Union Commission continued to conduct regular conflict prevention and joint horizon-scanning meetings. They also conducted joint technical visits to regional economic community headquarters to share information, carry out joint analysis and strengthen working relationships. Support for strengthening the participation of women in mediation and conflict prevention

continued, in particular through the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa), by assisting in the development of policy documents, outreach strategies and training, capacity-building and field deployment activities.

27. The key impact of international, continental and subregional alignment was illustrated in Madagascar, where collaboration among the African Union, the United Nations, the Southern African Development Community and other partners prevented the deterioration of the political crisis and facilitated peaceful, free, fair and credible elections on 7 November and 19 December 2018. In the Comoros, despite efforts led by the African Union following the controversial referendum of July 2018, challenges remained, with limited progress made in breaking the political deadlock.

28. In West Africa, the United Nations worked in Guinea-Bissau in close collaboration with the other members of the group of five international partners represented in the country, namely, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union, to provide good offices in support of efforts under the Conakry Agreement on the implementation of the ECOWAS Road Map for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea-Bissau. Those actions led to the successful conduct of the legislative elections on 10 March 2019, the appointment of a prime minister and the formation of a government, as well as to the decision to set the presidential elections for 24 November 2019. In Liberia, in May and June 2019, the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations fostered a dialogue between the Government of Liberia and the opposition group, the Council of Patriots, to create the conditions for a peaceful protest by the latter, thus guaranteeing respect for the right of citizens to peaceful demonstration while ensuring the preservation of law and order.

29. Furthermore, the United Nations worked closely with countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) to strengthen the capacities of public institutions in cross-border issues, in particular on community safety and social cohesion in the Liptako-Gourma region (Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger) through a UNDP project. In helping to address the structural challenges in the Sahel, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs fostered closer ties with regional bodies, especially the permanent secretariat of the G5 Sahel, not only to create coherence between the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and the G5 Sahel strategy and its Priority Investment Programme, but also to enhance alignment, synergy and coordination with partners' strategies in the region. In that regard, the Department provided financial and technical support for the establishment of the Sahelian Threat Analysis and Early Warning Centre in Burkina Faso, while continuing to provide support to the Sahel Ministerial Coordination Platform. The Platform brings together countries of the region and international partners to promote coherence between the 17 existing Sahel Strategies and to enhance synergy of action in their implementation. A technical secretariat, jointly led by UNOWAS and the African Union, has been established to support the regular work of the Platform along four thematic groups on security, governance, development and resilience.

30. In the case of Libya, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and I have called for an immediate ceasefire and a return to the peace process and continued to advocate for a single road map, while acknowledging the complementary roles of both organizations. I visited the country in April 2019, as did the Chairperson. Those visits followed a joint visit conducted in March by the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security and my Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, to support United Nations-led efforts aimed at reaching a political settlement to end the conflict there. My Special Representative for Libya continues to provide weekly written updates on developments in the country to all members of the Libya Quartet, including

the African Union, and has honoured all invitations to brief the African Union intergovernmental mechanisms dealing with Libya, including the Ad Hoc High-level Committee on Libya. It is imperative that those efforts continue.

31. Through my Special Adviser on the Sudan, the United Nations coordinated with the African Union and Ethiopia and supported their efforts to facilitate a consensual and civilian-led transition in the Sudan. I welcomed the signing on 17 August 2019 of the Political Agreement and the Constitutional Declaration, which paved the way for a transition to civilian-led rule. I also called on all stakeholders to continue the timely, inclusive and transparent implementation of that Agreement and to resolve any outstanding issues through dialogue. In Darfur, the African Union and the United Nations continued to plan for a transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, with a view to preventing a conflict relapse following the drawdown of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020. On the basis of the joint strategic review of UNAMID conducted in April 2019, the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council recommended the development of a joint political strategy for post-UNAMID engagement to support Sudanese interlocutors in addressing any remaining conflict drivers.

32. In the Great Lakes region, my Special Envoy for Burundi worked closely with the African Union and continued to engage the political leadership of the East African Community in support of efforts aimed at ensuring political inclusivity and respect for fundamental freedoms ahead of the elections in Burundi, planned for 2020. Notable to that endeavour was the technical and logistical support provided during the fifth session of the East African Community-supported inter-Burundian dialogue, held in October 2018.

33. Both the United Nations and the African Union Commission expressed support for efforts to solve the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon through dialogue. In March 2019, the President, Paul Biya, agreed to a Swiss engagement to facilitate a dialogue process. In April, the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate from Liberia and member of both my High-level Advisory Board on Mediation and the African Women Leaders Network, Leymah Gbowee, led a visit to the country, jointly supported by UN-Women and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and in partnership with the African Union and ECCAS, to increase the participation and leadership of Cameroonian women in ongoing peace and reconciliation initiatives and highlight the worsening humanitarian crisis. On 2 July, the Africa Forum also announced that former African Heads of State would convene a symposium on Cameroon.

34. The United Nations also collaborated with the African Union in the area of human rights. On 9 February 2019, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at increasing cooperation on the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law. OHCHR also provided support for regional consultations with the newly launched African Union Youth for Peace Africa Programme and, in cooperation with the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, held a regional consultation on combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in Africa, on 26 April.

35. Cooperation also included the Act to Protect Children Affected by Armed Conflict campaign, which was launched with the African Union and the European Union in April 2019. In June, the Office of my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the African Union Peace and Security Department, on the occasion of the Day of the African Child, made a commitment to strengthen their efforts to prevent and end grave violations against children.

Partnership in peacekeeping and peace support operations

36. The United Nations continued to cooperate closely with the African Union and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms in peace operations contexts. Beyond operational issues on the ground, joint efforts were focused largely on the primacy of politics.

37. In the Central African Republic, an African Union-led mediation process, with key support from the United Nations and involving ECCAS and neighbouring countries, culminated in African Union-led peace talks in Khartoum and resulted in the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed in Bangui on 6 February 2019. The African Union, the United Nations and ECCAS remained engaged in support of the implementation of the Agreement, including through a follow-up meeting, held in Addis Ababa from 18 to 20 March, which led to the formation of an inclusive Government. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security visited the country from 8 to 10 January and from 15 to 17 April. The Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission also visited Bangui from 13 to 15 February, accompanied by the Assistant Secretaries-General for Peacebuilding Support and for Africa. Since then, the Peacebuilding Fund has developed a new portfolio of projects in support of the implementation of the Agreement.

38. In South Sudan, the African Union, the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) worked jointly to consolidate the positive developments in the peace process. From 7 to 10 October 2018, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, one of the co-chairs of FemWise-Africa and the Executive Director of UN-Women paid a joint visit to the country, to encourage the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan, signed in September 2018, and to advocate and support the role of South Sudanese women leaders and organizations in line with the 35 per cent minimum quota for women in national institutions established under the Agreement. The visit also promoted a protective environment for women in South Sudan. With growing uncertainty surrounding the peace process, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security and the IGAD Special Envoy to South Sudan conducted another joint mission to the country, from 10 to 11 May 2019, demonstrating the collective support of the three organizations for the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement, following the decision of the parties, endorsed by IGAD, to delay the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity for six months beyond the initially agreed deadline of 12 May 2019. In June and July, both the African Union and IGAD retained a focus on the situation in South Sudan, convening meetings to consider progress in the implementation of outstanding pre-transition tasks.

39. In Somalia, a joint African Union-United Nations operational readiness assessment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was conducted in August 2018, focused on key areas of engagement as specified in Security Council resolution 2431 (2018). The assessment formed the baseline for the revised concept of operations for 2018–2021, in which guidance was provided for the implementation of the mandate in support of the Somali transition plan and the reconfiguration of AMISOM towards the progressive transfer of the responsibility for security to Somali security forces. Through the African Union-United Nations review of AMISOM conducted in March 2019, it was observed that the transition had made limited progress and that there was a need to regenerate momentum through integrated planning among security actors. Since then, AMISOM supported operations led by

the Federal Government of Somalia that resulted in the securing of population centres from Al-Shabaab in the Shabelle Hoose region near Mogadishu, while the United Nations coordinated related stabilization activities in the liberated areas. The findings and recommendations of the review team informed the renewal by the Security Council of the Mission's mandate, which was extended to May 2020.

40. The United Nations continued to engage with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and those of its neighbours, including during my recent visit to the country, with a view to addressing the threat of foreign armed groups in the eastern part of the country, through increased joint operations by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since August 2018, the United Nations, including MONUSCO and the World Health Organization, has provided extensive support to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the African Union and regional actors in responding to the Ebola outbreak. That engagement was further intensified with the appointment, in May 2019, of a United Nations Emergency Ebola Response Coordinator. MONUSCO provided significant security and logistical support for overall response efforts, including to the African Union technical assessment mission to Ebola virus disease-affected areas in north-eastern regions of the country.

41. In the Lake Chad Basin, the United Nations, including UNOAU, collaborated with the African Union and provided technical advice to the Lake Chad Basin Commission on the operations of the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram.

42. In the Sahel, the African Union Commission, together with UNOAU, visited the headquarters of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in Bamako, in February 2019, to review achievements, challenges and opportunities pertaining to the operationalization of the Joint Force. The visit enabled the African Union to identify areas of interest with possibilities for more engagement and to provide support for the full operationalization of the Joint Force, which remains hampered by equipment and training shortfalls. Such support has allowed the Joint Force to contribute to broader stabilization efforts in the Sahel, including in support of the implementation of the G5 Sahel Priority Investment Programme. In Mali, the African Union and the United Nations, through their respective peace missions and within the framework of ongoing international mediation efforts, continued to collaborate closely in using good offices and in engaging with the signatories to the peace agreement regarding its implementation, with progress reported notably in an accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

Partnership in peacebuilding and rule of law

43. The Security Council has repeatedly called for increased international support for regional stabilization and resilience efforts in the Lake Chad Basin region, stressing the need to address the root causes of instability and to prevent violent extremism. In that regard, my Special Representatives for Central Africa and for West Africa and the Sahel undertook a joint trip to the affected countries in the Lake Chad Basin region to mobilize political will for a comprehensive solution to the crisis. At the same time, stabilization efforts continued across the region, including in support for national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts. The support of the United Nations in the development and implementation of the African Union Commission/Lake Chad Basin Commission Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region provided a good example of cross-pillar cooperation. Such support included working with States members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission to develop tailored

and comprehensive approaches to addressing persons associated with Boko Haram. UNDP also supported the organization of the annual Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum, held on 17 and 18 July 2019, and launched the multimillion-dollar Regional Stabilization Facility for Lake Chad to finance and scale up the implementation of stabilization activities in the region.

44. The Security Council and the Peace and Security Council have recognized the importance of transitional justice mechanisms to ending impunity, promote accountability, reconciliation and healing. At their 12th annual joint consultative meeting, the two Councils expressed their conviction that the impending establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan would contribute to addressing impunity and to promoting justice and reconciliation. The complementarity between Goal 11 of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations, which are both aimed at increasing access to justice and enhancing the rule of law, provides an opportunity to advance existing collaboration between the African Union and the United Nations in the area of justice and corrections and the broader area of rule of law in Africa. Strengthening the capacity of UNOAU with regard to justice and rule of law could lead to stronger and more sustained engagement between the two organizations in these areas of work.

45. The United Nations continued to support the implementation of the African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform. That included support for the second Africa Forum on Security Sector Reform, held in October 2018 under the theme, "Promoting the continental agenda of security, justice and development", through which security sector reform was emphasized as a key conflict-prevention and peacebuilding tool, including as an early warning mechanism.

46. Working with the police component of African Union peace support operations, the United Nations, through UNOAU, continued to support the African Union police and military strategic support groups. Activities included policy development, training development and guidance for the planning element of the continental and regional standby forces on matters relating to military and police aspects of African Union peace support operations and the African Standby Force. The United Nations supported the participation of AMISOM police in two inter-mission retreats held for police components of United Nations missions deployed in Central and East Africa. UNOAU also supported the African Union in joint assessments of formed police units and individual police officers for deployment to AMISOM. Moreover, the United Nations provided technical assistance to the African Union in the development of a generic police predeployment training manual and supported the African Union from a police perspective during an assessment for security sector reform in the Gambia.

47. The World Bank, UNOAU and the Department of Peace Operations supported the African Union Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Capacity Programme as it entered its third phase, the objectives of which are to: (a) streamline disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the overall political and conflict resolution process across the continent; (b) strengthen the operational response through urgent technical and capacity support to Member States and for peace support operations; and (c) foster institutional capacity-building, knowledge management and cross-institutional learning, in line with national and regional policy frameworks. In 2018, the African Union became a permanent observer of the 25-member Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and, in that capacity, supported the ongoing review of the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards.

48. Furthermore, the United Nations, led by its Mine Action Service, continued to collaborate with the African Union on mine action. That collaboration included the review and update of the African Union strategic framework on mine action; the

provision of technical advice in the development of an Africa-wide strategy for preventing and countering improvised explosive devices; and the development of an African Union policy on the management of recovered weapons in peace support operations. UNOAU provided technical information on explosive hazards along the border areas of Abyei and supported and provided technical expertise to the African Union in its engagement with the 11 State parties that have yet to fulfil their obligation pursuant to article 5 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In addition, predeployment training and technical support was provided to the Eastern African Standby Force and States members of the African Union to ensure the deployment of trained personnel and relevant equipment to deal with threats relating to improvised explosive devices.

IV. Support for African Union peace support operations

49. Following the signing of the joint declaration on 6 December 2018, cooperation on African Union-led peace support operations was strengthened to develop and implement frameworks on joint planning and decision-making; human rights and conduct and discipline compliance; and financial management and accountability for African Union peace support operations, pursuant to Security Council resolutions [2320 \(2016\)](#) and [2378 \(2017\)](#).

Update on the operationalization of the Peace Fund

50. Since my previous report, the African Union has made significant progress in operationalizing its Peace Fund, securing \$124 million as at July 2019, the highest level of assessed contributions since the establishment of the Fund in 1993. The Board of Trustees was appointed by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and held its inaugural meeting in November 2018. The Board held two further meetings, in February and May 2019, to review its rules of procedures, elect a Chair and Vice-Chair and to review the terms of reference of the Fund Manager. My Special Representative to the African Union participated, as an observer, in the latter two meetings of the Board.

51. On 2 May 2018, the Peace and Security Council had requested that the Chairperson of the Commission develop the financial and procurement rules and regulations of the Peace Fund, elaborate standard operating procedures and manuals, establish the Executive Management Committee and commence the recruitment of staff for the Peace Fund secretariat. A joint working group was established and developed a work plan to harmonize United Nations and African Union financial rules and regulations to ensure interoperability and a smooth transition to an African Union peace support operation, if mandated. The working group participated in the review of the Peace Fund rules and regulations, together with a broad spectrum of other interlocutors in May 2019. When the rules and regulations are finalized and agreed on by the Assembly, the joint working group will be able to formalize the financial reporting processes and procedures for relevant United Nations and African Union reporting to their respective Councils; review reporting and accountability frameworks for the five funding models proposed in the report of the Secretary-General on options for authorization and support for African Union peace support operations ([S/2017/454](#)); and develop joint financial planning assumptions and budgeting, monitoring, oversight and audit arrangements.

Update on joint planning and mandating

52. The Secretariat and UNOAU continued to provide technical expertise and advice in the review and development of relevant peace support operations policies, including doctrines, guidelines and standard operating procedures for AMISOM, African Union regional ad hoc security initiatives such as the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, as well as the African Standby Force. The joint review of AMISOM and the joint strategic assessment of UNAMID are examples of other joint exercises with outcomes owned by both Organizations.

53. In order to establish physical support requirements and work towards establishing harmonized processes, the African Union Peace Support Operations Division and UNOAU conducted joint visits to the Continental Logistics Base of the African Standby Force, located in Douala, Cameroon; the Global Service Centre of the United Nations, located in Brindisi, Italy; the Regional Logistics Depot of the Southern African Development Community Standby Force, located at Rasesa, Botswana; and the Planning Element of the Eastern African Standby Force, located in Nairobi. In June 2019, a team of African Union officials with managerial responsibilities in the areas of human resources, finance and budget, policy and logistics participated in a support-planning workshop sponsored by the Department of Operational Support to exchange ideas and best practices and to enhance synergies between the two organizations.

54. Potential United Nations support to the African Union upon mission start-up and during subsequent phases of planning and deployment will be further discussed, including through an envisaged African Union-United Nations regulatory framework. Developing joint planning and coordination structures on the basis of complimentary United Nations and African Union roles, responsibilities and accountabilities will be important in that regard.

Update on the development of a compliance framework

55. The development of a compliance framework for international humanitarian law, international human rights and conduct and discipline for African Union peace support operations remains a priority for the partnership and is an essential aspect for achieving greater accountability, transparency and protection for human rights. The United Nations worked closely with the African Union to develop key components of the compliance framework. Those efforts led to the development of policies on conduct and discipline and on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse, which were adopted by the Peace and Security Council in November 2018 and endorsed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in February 2019. The African Union, with the support of OHCHR and UNOAU, held workshops for the development of the training curriculum for the African Union compliance and accountability framework and the validation of harmonized compliance training standards. A joint workshop was held in Addis Ababa to identify key elements of a policy and standard operating procedures for the selection and screening of personnel for African Union peace support operations. At a joint workshop held with the United Nations in May 2019, the African Union Commission presented ongoing efforts to enhance its compliance framework, including the development of a compliance architecture and related staffing requirements.

Update on the development of a reporting framework

56. The United Nations and African Union have established a practice of joint reporting to deliver joint reports on AMISOM and UNAMID with regard to mandate delivery and recommendations. Discussions are currently under way to develop a joint reporting framework, which will establish clear, consistent and predictable reporting channels between the Secretariat, the African Union Commission and the two Councils. The framework would also include standardized reporting requirements depending on the type of reporting, including for general updates, joint assessment findings, fiduciary reporting and reporting on the compliance framework.

57. Fiduciary reporting for the African Union will become clearer when the financial rules and regulations for the Peace Fund have been agreed on by the African Union Assembly. Thereafter, the African Union-United Nations working group will consider how the United Nations, African Union and, potentially, European Union funding rules will apply to the five models mentioned in paragraph 51 above and develop options for a joint financial reporting framework.

V. Partnership with other regional organizations and arrangements

58. Recognizing the role of regional economic communities and regional mechanisms in facilitating the attainment of the objectives of the African Union-United Nations partnership, and in line with the ongoing institutional reform of the African Union, the United Nations prioritized technical-level African Union-United Nations meetings with representatives of the regional economic communities at their respective headquarters to identify synergies and areas for cooperation. Furthermore, in addition to regular interactions with the Peace and Security Council and a briefing to the African Union Permanent Representatives Committee, my Special Representative to the African Union also continued to meet with the permanent representatives to the African Union in their respective regional economic community configurations, so as to explore options for strengthening collaboration with the United Nations.

59. On 8 July 2019, the African Union and the regional economic communities held their first mid-year coordination meeting in Niamey, at which the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities and States members of the African Union were requested to prepare more detailed proposals on divisions of labour for consideration by the African Union Assembly at its upcoming ordinary session, scheduled to be held in February 2020.

60. I also attach particular importance to trilateral African Union-European Union-United Nations cooperation in support of effective multilateralism. On 23 September 2018, in the margins of the General Assembly, I discussed with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the President of the European Commission the importance of an effective multilateral system, youth empowerment and women's leadership, as well as the situations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Mali and the Sahel and Somalia. We noted the progress made since the establishment, in November 2017, of the joint African Union-European Union-United Nations Task Force in addressing the situation of migrants in Libya, including the voluntary return of more than 40,000 migrants and their reintegration, and pointed out the need for further efforts to dismantle trafficking and criminal networks. The European Union is also a fundamental partner in the Sahel region, through the provision of financing for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for

the Sahel; in Somalia, in support of AMISOM; and in the Central African Republic, in the implementation of the peace agreement.

VI. Activities of the United Nations Office to the African Union

61. UNOAU regularly engaged with the Peace and Security Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee, the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms and representatives of partners based in Addis Ababa. In those interactions, the Office sought to ensure political and operational synergy and coordination between the African Union and the United Nations. From August 2018 to July 2019, UNOAU provided 54 briefings to the Peace and Security Council. The Office also held meetings with representatives of the Security Council members accredited to the African Union and supported the establishment of the Group of Friends of the African Union-United Nations Partnership in Addis Ababa. In close consultation with the African Union, an assessment will be undertaken of United Nations-African Union cooperation and of the structure and capacity of UNOAU, as requested in Security Council resolution [2320 \(2016\)](#), in order to better meet the demands of the partnership.

62. In conjunction with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UNOAU continued to strategize and promote progress on the work of the Panel of the Wise, FemWise-Africa, the PanAfrican Network of the Wise and the African Union Mediation Support Unit. In November 2018, UNOAU supported the induction of 50 African women mediators into the FemWise-Africa roster, raising the number of registered African women mediators to 102. UNOAU also lent support to the deployment of African women mediators, including the first deployment to track-one negotiations in the Central African Republic in March 2019.

63. Furthermore, UNOAU and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa continued to work with the African Union to implement the decision of the Peace and Security Council at its 795th meeting, held on 20 September 2018, on the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, exploring modalities for an alternative security arrangement, under the lead of ECCAS, within the African Standby Force framework.

64. UNOAU and the wider United Nations system continued to support the African Union in its efforts to enhance the operational readiness of the African Standby Force, in order to enhance its capacity to respond to conflict. That support included contributing to the harmonization and revitalization of the structures of the Standby Force within the African Union Commission.

65. UNOAU, in conjunction with the Department of Operational Support, assisted the African Union in developing policy; conducting joint visits to United Nations Headquarters and facilities; planning and supporting logistics exercises with the African Union and its regions; operationalizing the Continental Logistics Base; and supporting the development of a regulatory framework within which the African Union could access United Nations support under certain circumstances. The Office provided advice in relation to African Union financial planning and reporting processes, the rules and regulations for the Peace Fund and a costing model to enable accurate forecasting and budgeting for African Union peace support operations and for the African Union strategic deployment stocks model, informed by a visit to the Global Service Centre and a follow-on workshop with the African Union and the Department of Operational Support. Support for further developing the African Standby Capacity roster, including through the training of recruiters and by supporting partners in developing the roster database, was also well received.

66. The Office also provided support to the African Union in the area of training delivery and other capacity development initiatives. That support included the development of regional exercise planning manuals and a training guide for senior mission leaders. UNOAU assisted in the development of a draft learning and development policy for staff of the African Union Commission, compliance and accountability framework training modules for the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram and a course on human rights and gender for AMISOM. Work was initiated to review and develop training curriculums for gender mainstreaming in peace and security matters at the African Union and within member States, as well as for the identification of and capacity-building for female police officers for senior leadership appointments.

67. Acknowledging the challenges with regard to safety and security faced by civilian staff deployed in African Union missions and in its offices across the continent, UNOAU initiated discussions and shared United Nations best practices on how to enhance the safety and security of civilian staff. UNOAU facilitated the visit by staff from the African Union Safety and Security Services Division to the Department of Safety and Security of the United Nations in New York, with a view to identifying good practices and exploring areas of common interest. While UNOAU and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) are the main facilitators and coordinators of United Nations offices working with the African Union on peace and security matters and on development work, respectively, they also meet with each other on a regular basis, to ensure cross-cutting coordination.

VII. Observations and recommendations

68. The United Nations and the African Union have made significant progress in developing a systematic, predictable and strategic partnership to address complex peace and security challenges in Africa. The strategic partnership has resulted in joint approaches and better-coordinated, coherent and effective initiatives to prevent, resolve and manage conflict on the continent. In that regard, I highlight in particular the results achieved in the Central African Republic through the close cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union Commission. I look forward to taking similar joint initiatives, in particular early preventive action that is informed by joint analyses and early warning data. I also intend to further strengthen our cooperation in support of African Union-led peace support operations, in particular on human rights and conduct and discipline compliance, as well as on joint planning and reporting and on financial management, as agreed in our joint declaration of 6 December 2018.

69. It is imperative that collaboration in the prevention, resolution and management of conflict include the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms as important partners in the global peace and security architecture. In that regard, I welcome the consultations between the peace and security organs of the African Union and the regional economic communities, including those conducted most recently in Niamey, in July 2019. I further welcome the discussions currently ongoing within the African Union to clarify divisions of labour on the basis of comparative advantages, including in the area of peace and security.

70. I look forward to the implementation of the commitment made by the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council at their twelfth joint annual consultative meeting, held in New York on 19 July 2018, in particular their intention to agree on the modalities for joint visits in Africa. The Secretariat stands ready to provide any necessary support.

71. On 7 July 2019, the African Union Assembly endorsed the topic, “Silencing the guns: creating conducive conditions for Africa’s development”, as the African Union theme for the year 2020. In that regard, I commend the Security Council for the adoption of its resolution [2457 \(2019\)](#) in support of the African Union Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and look forward to the active support of all members of the Council and the General Assembly in achieving the objectives of the initiative, which are in line with the Charter of the United Nations, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. As the next 15 months will be critical to advancing the initiative, I call on the international community, civil society and the private sector to support efforts aimed at silencing the guns in Africa. For my part, I will continue to coordinate and scale up support from the United Nations system to help to advance that central initiative.

72. At least 14 countries in Africa are expected to hold elections in 2020. Beyond the areas of work described in the present report, UNOAU, in close coordination with the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, intends to explore options to enhance support provided to the African Union in the area of elections. Cooperation in development, as well as in combating climate change and epidemics such as the Ebola virus disease, will also be important as a means to enhance peace and security on the continent.

73. I welcome the increased engagement of UNOAU with the African Union Commission and its member States. I also recognize the imperative for greater coherence and coordination within the United Nations system in engaging with the African Union. In that connection, I have reiterated the role of UNOAU and ECA as the main facilitators and coordinators of the strategic partnership with the African Union on peace and security and on development, respectively. In discharging those important responsibilities, I am mindful of the need to review UNOAU in order to better meet the growing demands resulting from the strengthened partnership in peace and security. I will therefore conduct an assessment, in the coming months, of United Nations-African Union cooperation and of the structure and capacity of UNOAU and will report to the Security Council on the findings, as requested in its resolution [2320 \(2016\)](#).

74. I pay tribute to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, for his continued leadership and unwavering commitment to the partnership with the United Nations. I also express my appreciation to the African Union, its member States and regional economic communities and regional mechanisms for their continued cooperation in addressing challenges to peace and security in Africa. Lastly, I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative to the African Union, Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, as well as the staff of UNOAU and all United Nations and African Union entities working to advance the cause of peace and security in Africa.
