

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 25 November 2020 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that South Africa will assume the presidency of the Security Council in December 2020. The President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, will preside over a high-level debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, with a specific focus on the African Union. The debate is scheduled to be held on 4 December 2020 at 8.30 a.m. (New York time).

In order to guide the discussion on the subject, South Africa has prepared a concept note (see annex).

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

(Signed) Jerry Matthews **Matjila**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa



Annex to the letter dated 25 November 2020 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council high-level debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, with a specific focus on the African Union, to be held on 4 December 2020

Context

1. The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is built on a legacy established under Security Council resolution [1809 \(2008\)](#), in which the Council recognized the importance of cooperation between the peace and security architectures of the two organizations and expressed its determination to provide greater effect to the relationship between the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council.
2. That partnership was further entrenched and expanded on under Security Council resolution [2033 \(2012\)](#), by which regular interactions between the two councils on matters of mutual interests also calling for strengthened cooperation between the Secretariat and the African Union Commission were institutionalized.
3. The partnership has also been characterized by more frequent and constructive exchanges since the signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an 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.
4. Therefore, for over a decade the United Nations has been working, along with the African Union, in the long-standing effort to end conflicts and maintain peace and security in Africa.
5. The Secretary-General submits an annual report, in line with the statement by the President of the Security Council of 16 December 2014 ([S/PRST/2014/27](#)), to provide an update on the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework, the current status of the partnership and efforts to enhance it. In view of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the report for 2020 also contains reflections on the impact of the pandemic on the partnership between the two organizations.

Objectives

6. The debate will serve as an opportunity for the Security Council and countries on the African continent to provide views on the effectiveness of the partnership in contributing to resolving conflicts and sustaining peace on the continent, including in contributing to achieving the ambition of silencing the guns in Africa.
7. It will also provide an opportunity to reflect on the progress made, through the partnership, in resolving conflicts in Africa, with a number of such conflicts on the cusp of resolution or in the post-conflict phase, while others near closure as items on the agenda of the Security Council.
8. The debate will also allow for reflection on the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in addressing complex peace and security challenges in Africa. Over recent years, the two organizations have worked towards deepening collaboration across the conflict cycle, recognizing their distinct advantages, shared values and common interests, firmly rooted in the commitment to

implement Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

9. Furthermore, a reflection on cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations will also be significant, particularly in the context of continued cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations.

Guiding questions

10. Participants may wish to consider the following questions:

(a) How has cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in support of the maintenance of international peace and security had an impact on efforts to resolve conflicts on the African continent?

(b) How has the Security Council utilized a conflict prevention approach and made use of Chapter VI of the Charter in terms of the pacific settlement of disputes, and how can this be improved?

(c) Has the Security Council paid sufficient attention to post-conflict reconstruction and development on the African continent?

(d) Is the current use of Security Council sanctions effective in the resolution of conflicts? Do sanctions facilitate or inhibit progress towards sustainable peace?

(e) What are the challenges in terms of the ability of the Security Council to execute its mandate on the African continent?

(f) Have United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions been successful on the African continent?

(g) How can the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union be leveraged to further advance the women and peace and security and youth and peace and security agendas on the continent?

(h) What specific contribution can cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union make in addressing the negative impact of emerging issues such as health emergencies on the maintenance of peace and security on the continent?

Format of the meeting

11. The meeting will take the form of a virtual debate at the level of Heads of State and Government on 4 December 2020, beginning at 8.30 a.m. (New York time).