Security Council

Statement by the President of the Security Council

On 19 May 2021, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Peace and security in Africa", in accordance with the procedure agreed in light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and set out in S/2020/273, the President of the Security Council issued the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council reaffirms its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security and its readiness to strive for sustainable peace in all situations under its consideration.

"The Security Council expresses grave concern about the devastating impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has caused severe socioeconomic, political, humanitarian and security repercussions, and further exacerbated existing conflict drivers in Africa.

"The Security Council emphasizes that combating the COVID-19 pandemic and sustainably recovering from it requires greater national, regional, and international cooperation and solidarity, and a coordinated, inclusive, comprehensive and global international response with the United Nations playing a key coordinating role.

"The Security Council expresses appreciation for the efforts of Member States in combating the pandemic and commends the leadership of the African Union in responding to the pandemic in Africa to date. The Security Council stresses the need for greater support to African countries, especially those conflict-affected countries, and regional and sub-regional organizations, in order to recover from the pandemic and build back better in a more just, equal, equitable and inclusive manner, including through providing necessary medical supplies, including safe and efficacious tests, treatments and vaccines and supporting African countries in strengthening their health systems.

"The Security Council expresses concern that Africa has only received 2% of all vaccines administered globally and reiterates the need to enable equitable access to quality, safe, efficacious, and affordable COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines to all, including the most vulnerable, alongside support to strengthening health systems to ensure effective delivery and invites continued, increased and accelerated donation of safe and effective vaccine doses from developed economies and all those in a position to do so to African countries in need, particularly through the Access to COVID-19 Tools

(ACT) Accelerator, COVAX Facility and other relevant supplies and assistance as appropriate, and commends the efforts of member states in this regard.

"The Security Council acknowledges ongoing discussions in connection with efforts for waiving intellectual property protections for COVID-19 vaccines under relevant WTO framework and easing global trade in support of providing access to vaccines to everyone in need, including to African countries, and further stresses the need to improve availability of raw materials and support the voluntary transfer of technology and know-how on mutually agreed terms in order to increase production capacity.

"The Security Council emphasizes the importance of addressing the fundamental root causes and drivers of conflicts in Africa and calls for all stakeholders to intensify their efforts towards the realization of the objectives outlined in the AU Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

"The Security Council welcomes the African Union's determination to rid Africa of conflicts and create conditions favourable for growth, development and integration of the continent as encapsulated in its goal of Silencing the Guns in Africa.

"The Security Council reiterates that, in order to support a country to emerge sustainably from armed conflict, there is a need for a comprehensive and integrated approach, that incorporates and strengthens coherence between political, security, development, human rights and rule of law activities, and addresses the root causes of conflicts, including through strengthening the rule of law at national and international levels, promoting sustainable economic growth and development, poverty eradication, political, religious and cultural tolerance, freedom of opinion and expression, social cohesion and inclusiveness, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy, gender equality, respect for, and protection of, human rights, and facilitating reintegration and rehabilitation.

"The Security Council reiterates its commitment to work with the Secretary-General to pursue all possible avenues to prevent and end armed conflicts in Africa, including through addressing root causes of armed conflicts in Africa in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable manner by promoting dialogue, mediation, consultations, political negotiations and other peaceful means while enhancing humanitarian, development and peace-building efforts.

"The Security Council recalls the need for inclusive and effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes (DDR), including those relating to the release and reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups, with the involvement of affected individuals and local communities, while respecting the need to fight against impunity, and encourages greater efforts at national and local levels to make such reintegration sustainable, timely, appropriate and gender-responsive.

"The Security Council stresses that reforming the security sector in post-conflict environments is critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, promoting poverty reduction, rule of law and good governance, extending legitimate State authority, and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict, and further stresses that, in this regard, a professional, effective, and accountable security sector and accessible and impartial law-enforcement and justice sectors are equally necessary to laying the foundations for peace and sustainable development.

"The Security Council reaffirms Security Council Resolution 2532 (2020) and reiterates its demand for a general and immediate cessation of hostilities and a durable humanitarian pause in all situations on its agenda, including in Africa.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of creating an environment conducive to national reconciliation, transitional justice and social and economic recovery in African countries emerging from conflict, and calls upon the United Nations system, the international community and all partners to support the efforts of African countries to promote political, social and economic inclusion.

"The Security Council recognizes that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development, and that the work of the entities of the United Nations development system, in accordance with their respective mandates, through their support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, including in Africa, contributes to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa, when reducing people's needs, addressing risks for development programming and fostering resilience, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their national ownership, plans and priorities.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of socio-economic development for sustaining peace in Africa through economic development including transnational and trans-regional infrastructure development, industrialization, poverty eradication, job creation, agricultural modernization and promotion of entrepreneurship, and expresses the need for continued support to African countries taking into account their national priorities and needs. In this regard, the Security Council also underscores the importance of the rule of law in support of socio-economic development. The Security Council also notes that AU PCRD highlights the need for undertaking comprehensive institution-building to enhance good economic governance through the reinforcement of fiscal and financial management institutions in support of effective revenue collection, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and anti-corruption structures to ensure accountability and transparency.

"The Security Council recognizes the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of a number of African States, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, and emphasizes the need for adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies by the respective governments and the United Nations relating to these factors.

"The Security Council recalls the link between armed conflict and violence and conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine, calls on all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, urges them to protect civilian infrastructure and ensure the proper functioning of food systems and markets, and calls on the United Nations and all relevant stakeholders to work together in support of countries in armed conflict while taking into considerations their priorities, to strengthen food security, so as to lay foundation for sustaining peace.

"The Security Council recognizes efforts made by African countries in promoting and protecting human rights for all, while responding to and recovering from the pandemic.

"The Security Council welcomes continued commitment from African countries to fully implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda and its priorities, by ensuring and promoting the full, equal and meaningful

participation of women at all stages of peace, security and development decision making processes, including through mainstreaming a gender perspective, and remaining committed to increasing the number of civilian and uniformed women in peacekeeping at all levels and in all positions, including senior leadership positions. The Security Council further calls on the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

"The Security Council recognizes that youth should actively be engaged in shaping lasting peace and contributing to justice and reconciliation, and reaffirms their right to education and its contribution to the achievement of peace and security.

"The Security Council recognizes the crucial role civil society organizations can play in advancing peace and security in Africa, and in the COVID-19 response and recovery.

"The Security Council underscores the important contribution made by peacekeepers and peacekeeping missions to the maintenance of peace and security in Africa. The Council stresses the importance of continuity of operations and maintaining the ability of peace-keeping operations and Special Political Missions to deliver their mandated priority tasks. The Council welcomes the ongoing efforts of the Secretariat, troop contributing countries and host countries in this regard. The Council emphasizes that post-pandemic recovery in Africa may benefit from UN peace operations, where appropriate and within their mandates and capacities, and in this regard expressed grave concern at the security threats and targeted attacks against UN peacekeepers, and underscores the importance of safety and security of peacekeepers.

"The Security Council notes that successful implementation of the many tasks that peacekeeping operations could be mandated to undertake in the areas of security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; rule of law, transitional justice, and human rights requires and understanding of and acting with a perspective which takes into account the close interlinkage between security and development. In this context, the Council notes with appreciation the contribution that peacekeepers and peacekeeping missions make to early peacebuilding, including through creating a conducive environment which enables economic recovery and the provision of basic services.

"The Security Council welcomes the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission, and emphasizes the need to integrate peacebuilding and sustaining peace into efforts to build back better in Africa.

"The Security Council reaffirms the importance of addressing the underlying conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism in Africa, including by ensuring national recovery and reconstruction, enhancing good governance, and facilitating socioeconomic development in Africa including through job creation and promotion of entrepreneurship, and providing education and health care service for the promotion of the well-being of their people.

"The Security Council recognizes the role of regional and sub-regional organizations in understanding the root causes of many conflicts closer to home and to influence their prevention or resolution, owing to their knowledge of the region, and encourages the United Nations to work closely with regional and sub-regional organizations, especially the African Union, including in coordinating international efforts to support African countries as they address root causes of conflicts and promote inclusiveness in their post-pandemic recovery."

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