

'Climate Change, Resources, Migration: Old and New Sources of Conflict in Africa?'

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Evolving or standing still? Africa's security architecture.

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I wish to thank the organisers for inviting me to this important International Expert Conference to share with you my thoughts on challenges facing the African Security Architecture in our collective and individual determination to overcome old and new sources of conflict on our continent. The focus of this Conference is not just relevant but also timely; it speaks to, among others, developments in the Sudan, the painful situation in Somalia, the difficult transition in Zimbabwe and Madagascar, as well as events currently unfolding in the Northern part of Nigeria.

Few years ago, as we transformed the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union, and established the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), we were confident that our continent was on course to claim the twenty-first century. We took a firm stance against unconstitutional change of government to rid our continent of the scourge of coups and established a necessary framework and mechanism to respond this challenge. We also have in place a continental framework for post-conflict reconstruction and development.

Our confidence was not misplaced. We have, indeed, seen how the birth of the African Union brought into being the emergence and evolution of our Peace and Security Architecture that has as its five pillars the Peace and Security Council (PSC); the Panel of the Wise; the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF) and, the relations with Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

This Architecture is not located in a vacuum but in a philosophy that is grounded in the recognition of the inter-linkage between peace and security, development and democracy. This approach has enabled us to embrace human security as the defining feature of a people-centred security for a politically stable and economically vibrant continent. This expanded notion of security propels us to embrace issues such as human rights, popular participation in governance processes, equitable development, access to basic necessities, poverty eradication, gender equality, and protection from natural disasters.

Since its inception in 2004, the PSC has demonstrated its resolve to live up to expectations in confronting conflicts especially in the Sudan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, *Cote d'Ivoire*, and Burundi. This response by the PSC included the deployment of Peace Support Missions in Darfur-Sudan and Somalia. Indeed the advent of the PSC has sounded a death knell to "non-indifference" and the principle of "non-interference" in the domestic affairs of African Union Member States.

We remain committed to the full operationalisation of the African Stand-by Force as a capacity we need to rapidly deploy Peace Support Operations as and when situations require. I am encouraged by progress in different regions of Africa towards the establishment of Regional Standby Forces that will eventually lead to the creation of the African Stand-by Force by 2010.

The establishment of the Panel of the Wise in February 2008 as another pillar of the Architecture was informed by the quest to find political solutions to some of the intractable and complex conflicts on the continent. I have no doubt that the five members of the Panel have the wealth of experience to fulfil the mandate of this structure. This has been demonstrated by their collective interest in issues of electoral-related conflicts in Africa which, as you are aware, is an area that has seen many challenges in some of our countries as they attempt to consolidate their democracies.

The coordination of efforts between the PSC and regional mechanisms have helped strengthen our capability to finding solutions to crisis situations such as in Madagascar where SADC is playing a key role and in Guinea and *Cote d'Ivoire* where the contribution of ECOWAS is pivotal. We have also come to appreciate the importance of working with other inter-governmental bodies, in particular the United Nations. It was for this reason that South Africa, during its term in the UN Security Council (UNSC), advocated for the strengthening of cooperation between the UNSC and regional organisations such as the African Union.

As South Africa, we have not hesitated in making our contribution to enhancing the capacity of our continental Peace and Security Architecture to realising the objectives that it was set for. We have played our role as a member of the PSC; we contribute to Peace Support Operations; and we are also humbled that one of our nationals serves on the Panel of the Wise.

These achievements that we have made since the birth of the African Union should not blind us to challenges lying ahead and what needs to be done as a remedial measure to overcome some of our difficulties in realising the full potential of our Peace and Security Architecture. One of the lessons we have learnt in this regard is that our response to conflicts has tended to focus on the manifestations rather than the root-causes of these conflicts, thus inhibiting our ability to deal decisively, with a long-term perspective, with this challenge. The envisaged Continental Early Warning System, once fully operationalised, will become an effective tool to help us factor root-causes in our approach to ongoing and future conflict situations.

We have also come to realise that peacemaking and peacebuilding are costly efforts, and our resolve to tackle these challenges in our continent has not been matched by requisite financial and related resources. Therefore, among other things, we need to find creative ways to consolidate our contributions as AU Member States to the Peace Fund as this will make it possible for the African Peace and Security Architecture to fulfil its mandate. It is in this context that we will also continue to engage our international partners in order to ensure that whatever support they provide is well co-ordinated and streamlined to make a direct contribution to our efforts to resolve conflicts.

Additionally, we should take on board new and emerging threats that may have been overlooked in the past, such as climate change which is fast becoming one of the greatest global concerns with an unprecedented impact on the stability and security of countries like ours.

I am certain that this conference is cognisance of the fact that while Africa is the least contributor to environmental hazards, it remains the most severely affected by the effects of climate change. Given the nature of African conflicts and their permeation across borders, several existing threats may be seen to be strengthened by climate change and these include resource conflict, territory and border disputes, migration, failing states, energy and food insecurity as well as water scarcity.

The security implications of climate change as a relatively new consideration means that the extent of its impact is yet to be adequately mapped out. A special effort is needed to further develop the discourse around these security implications in order to add political urgency to the climate change negotiations to be undertaken in Copenhagen towards the end of this year. In this regard, I am personally interested in the outcomes of this Conference for advise and ideas.

We have no illusions, with all these achievements and lessons we have learnt, that the road ahead will be easy. Conferences of this nature are a beacon we need to find our way through developments in the Sudan, the painful situation in Somalia, the difficult transition in Zimbabwe and Madagascar, as well as events currently unfolding in the Northern part of Nigeria. Our people have shown their readiness to play their role in bringing lasting peace to our continent. We have to work with them to silence the guns and break the back of poverty for future generations.

I thank you.