

AFRICAN UNION

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***STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOLEMN
LAUNCHING OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL,
ADDIS ABABA, 25 MAY 2004***

Mr. Chairman of the Assembly of the African Union,

Many of our partners, Representatives of Governments, Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations coming from everywhere- America, Asia, Europe – have wanted to share these moments with us.

We want to thank them for their presence, their support and their commitment.

I would like, particularly, to hail the presence in our midst of the Representatives of the UN Secretary General, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, the Commission of the European Union, Commissioner Nielson, for their constant support.

The Facility established by the Commission of the European Union to strengthen the Peace Fund is remarkable.

I am convinced that the Commission of the European Union will trust the leadership of the African Union as regards its management to defend both the interests of the Regional Communities and the African countries.

**STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOLEMN
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- **Excellencies Heads of State and Government,**
- **Distinguished Members of the Peace and Security
Council of the African Union,**
- **Invited Guests,**

From 25 May 1963 to 25 May 2004: 41 years ago, here in Addis Ababa, the Organisation of African Unity was established, with the main objective of uniting the Africans to liberate the Continent. On the occasion of Africa Day, I wish you all a Happy Anniversary.

I am, particularly happy to address you on this memorable day on the occasion of yet another important event for Africa: the solemn launching of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

You will recall, Distinguished Heads of State and Government, that it was on 9 July 2002, that the 1st Ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Durban, South Africa, adopted the Protocol relating to the establishment of AU Peace and Security Council. The Protocol was immediately opened for signature, ratification and accession by the Member States, and it entered into force on 26 December 2003.

Earlier, the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly, held from 10 to 12 July 2003, in Maputo, Mozambique, had, by its Decision Ass/AU.Dec.16 (II) on the implementation of the Protocol, authorised the Executive Council to take the necessary measures for the operationalization of the Peace and Security Council, in case the Protocol entered into force before the Session of the Assembly in July 2004 in Addis Ababa.

Pursuant to that decision, the 4th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, held in Addis Ababa, from

12 to 16 March, 2004, elected the 15 Members of the Peace and Security Council. The PSC, thus elected, held its 1st Session on 16 March, 2004 at which it adopted its Rules of Procedure. It then submitted its Report to the Executive Council. The Council adopted, on behalf of the Assembly, the Rules of Procedure of the PSC, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Protocol relating to the establishment of the PSC. Executive Council decided that the PSC start its work immediately. In that regard, the PSC has since that time held eight (8) sessions during which it considered several issues related to peace and security in Africa and adopted important decisions.

Furthermore, the Executive Council recommended the solemn launching of the Peace and Security Council at Heads of State and Government level on 25 May 2004, Africa Day.

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, Invited Guests,

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union, composed of 15 elected Member States, is a permanent organ, requested to promote peace, security and stability in Africa, preventive diplomacy and restoration of peace. It also deals with the management of disasters, humanitarian actions and post-conflict reconstruction.

The Protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council asserts the importance of good governance in the efforts for conflict prevention and management. In this regard, the Preamble stresses what the development of institutions, the dissemination of a strong democratic culture, the observance of human rights and the rule of law represent for the promotion of lasting peace and stability as well as conflict prevention. These dialectical links are repeated and highlighted in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Protocol.

I want also to recall that this precious instrument of the African Union has the power to anticipate and prevent policies likely to lead to genocide or crimes against humanity. It also monitors the progress made by States in the promotion of

democratic practices, good governance, the rule of law, the protection of fundamental liberties, the respect for the sanctity of human life and observance of the International Humanitarian Law.

To carry out properly its mission and attain the objectives laid down within the framework of the principles of the African Union, the PSC, as you are aware, must depend on a Continental Early Warning System, a Panel of the Wise, a Standby Force, a Special Fund or Peace Fund and a Committee of Chiefs of Staff. The Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution mechanisms of the Regional Economic Communities should be integrated into the security architecture of the Union which would then assume the main responsibility for the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa.

In the fulfilment of its mandate, the PSC cooperates and works in close cooperation with the UN Security Council, the appropriate UN Agencies and the other international organizations as regards issues of defence, peace, security and stability in Africa.

Distinguished Members of the PSC, Invited Guests,

The Peace and Security Council is indisputably an important tool placed at the disposal of the African Union. Used with the same political will, as the one that presided over its designing and adoption, this tool will enable the African Union to meet the aspirations of the African peoples for peace, security and defence of the interests and integrity of the Continent. It will enable Africans to take up, with dignity, the issues of peace and security which the historical exigencies and the constraints of globalization seem, henceforth, to impose on them. In that perspective, the PSC must mark a radical break from the past. The African Union must provide it with the necessary capacities to enable it carry out its tasks.

In this regard, Member States must absolutely break off from improvisation and systematic recourse to external assistance.

They must demonstrate their remarkable political will to free the tool they have established from crushing external dependence. The contribution expected from the external partners should become, once again, what it should never have ceased to be, that is an additional support. I am convinced that the more we mobilize ourselves within the Continent, the more the international community and our traditional partners will support us and increasingly we shall solve our problems in honour, dignity and consideration for others.

On their part, the Members of the Peace and Security Council must understand that the PSC of the African Union is not the OAU Central Organ. The working methods must meet the exigencies of the mission entrusted to them. The decisions expected of the PSC must be strictly implemented by all the States concerned. It is with this consideration that the present ceremony of the Solemn launching of the Peace and Security Council has been designed to be a strong signal to the African peoples and the international community of our determination to put an end to the conflicts and wars which have ravaged the Continent for too long.

On the basis of your trust, Distinguished Presidents and Heads of Delegation, and aware of the powers given by the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, we shall assume all our responsibilities and shall keep you closely informed of the realities on the ground.

Integration will progress only in truth and in peace. The African Union will be built only on democratic bases, the rule of law, good governance and observance of human rights.

The arrangements negatively called « the African way » must not distort the sense of consensus, palava and the sense of compromise.

Let us have more confidence in ourselves and in our institutions. If we feel they are weak, let us strengthen them. Our partners must move in the same direction instead of holding our institutions in defiance. Nobody will build Africa in our place.

Nobody will establish lasting peace in Africa in the place of Africans.

Today, in Darfur, we must support the present determination of the Central Government of The Sudan, the preparedness of rebel movements, the continuous contribution of the Chadian Government and people to avoid a serious humanitarian disaster which can befall in the coming weeks and also avoid the regression of the ongoing peace process in Southern Sudan.

We need to know the truth about what transpired and what is happening in this region of The Sudan. We need urgent, exceptional activities, more than what we have done so far.

In Darfur as well as in the North of Uganda, “Africa must help Africa”, be it a little. And Africa is generally absent today in the ongoing humanitarian support.

Between the DRC and Rwanda, we must learn a lesson about the serious events that have taken place in this region, learn a lesson from the Rwandese genocide, give a chance to transition in The Congo to succeed, to peace and development in the Great Lakes Region.

We must take up the issue of the “Interhamwe” with the support of the two countries.

The deployment of UN troops in Burundi, taking over, as from 1 June 2004, from the worthy soldiers of the First African Mission, will enhance the ongoing logic of peace, particularly, if we bring together the enemy brothers.

Hats off to the African Mission in Burundi! Hats off to the African soldiers of South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique!

Distinguished Presidents and Heads of Delegations,

There is an urgent need to find a solution to the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea without calling into question the

ruling pronounced on the case. There must be a dialogue to definitively resolve the conflict.

In Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia and everywhere else, the commitment made by the Parties must be honoured. The logic of dialogue must prevail. But the progress will depend greatly on the measures to be taken to put an end to impunity and avoid anti-democratic solutions and thus support the high handed logic.

Following the serious events that took place in Equatorial Guinea and the request made by the Government of this country, we must be in favour of establishing an African Tribunal to try the mercenaries arrested and that in conformity with the principles of the rule of law and observance of human rights. Africa must not be the last refuge for mercenaries. This latest presence of mercenaries must be the last one in Africa as we have to make sure to prevent and manage the brutal expulsion of Africans from African countries.

Distinguished Presidents and Heads of Delegation,

The African Union must be provided with more financial and material means. The African Union must, henceforth, have the means for a more important political presence, indeed, a stronger military presence.

The Commission will do everything so that, as from 2005, the instruments provided for in our policy to combat terrorism and the Common Defence Policy be established, particularly, the establishment of the Algiers African Centre to Combat Terrorism, the Observation Zones, the Early Warning System, the Committee of Chiefs of Staff, the African Force through Regional brigades and the Panel of the Wise. Until then, it is important that pragmatic solutions be considered to make it possible to mobilize, in less than a week, the observers and troops, which we may need, each time when the need arises.

Distinguished Presidents and Heads of Delegation

We must affirm more than ever before the condemnation of the taking of power by force, by unconstitutional means and the will of the “putschists” to remain in power. We must link legality with legitimacy, in the name of the principle of “non-indifference”.

An illegal power is anachronistic today in Africa. Its existence compromises the very basis of NEPAD, but a legal power without legitimacy is irremediably doomed.

Presidents and Heads of Delegation

An Africa at peace cannot stand without a world a peace. Our security policy must be focussed on the notion of collective and general security.

What is happening today in the Middle East and particularly between Palestine and Israel concerns Africa. Africa must have its voice heard to condemn the death of innocent people in Israel and reject the occupation policy in Palestine, the destruction of houses, the death of innocent civilians, including many children. Africa must appeal to the parties to political dialogue in conformity with the Road Map. The people of Israel and the people of Palestine also have right to protection and security.

Distinguished Presidents and Heads of Delegation.

Today, more than ever before, the appropriateness of your historical decision to establish the African Union and the Peace and Security Council and to implement NEPAD, has come to light. This political will must be asserted and translated into deed. This great country, Africa, which you have set in motion, these new citizens who are standing up through your impetus, deserve this.

It is the only path of salvation for our peoples.

It is the only way to hold our place in a more interdependent and fairer world. We have no doubt that it will be so thanks to the popular will and your leadership.

May God help us.

May God guard Africa everyday and particularly on this day, 25 May.

I thank you.