



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26 February 2013

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to inform you that I will convene a thematic debate entitled **“Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts in Africa”**. This event will be held at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York on Thursday, April 25th, 2013.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Organization of the African Unity, predecessor of the African Union (AU). Therefore, the debate offers an excellent opportunity to reflect on the journey the continent has traveled and take stock of African efforts aimed at resolving conflicts through peaceful means on the African continents.

The thematic debate aims to support ongoing initiatives within the UN and the AU to address many challenges facing the African continent, especially peace and security as well as development related challenges. The UN has over the years recognized the critical need to give special attention to the needs of the African Continent in both security and development areas. It is envisioned that these discussions will strengthen mutual understanding between Africa and international interlocutors for sustainable development and stability.

I hope that the debate will provide an excellent opportunity to celebrate the AU’s substantial legacy of achievement and also serve as a blueprint for how cooperation between the UN and the AU can be further strengthened in the time ahead.

This one-day interactive debate will start with an opening session, keynote addresses, high-level morning session, consecutive panel sessions in the afternoon as well as closing remarks.


A concept note is attached to this letter.

I extend an invitation to Member States to be represented at the highest possible level.

I look forward to an active and future-looking debate.

Updated information will be available on the website of the President of the General Assembly.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Vuk Jeremic

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

**THEMATIC DEBATE OF THE 67TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON
“PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS IN AFRICA”
25 April 2013 · New York**

Concept Note

I. Context

Despite the decline in the frequency and number of conflicts in Africa in the last decade, the continent is still vulnerable to strife as evident in the situation in, for instances the Sahel, the Great Lakes and the Horn. The African continent absorbs the bulk of the peace and security activities of the United Nations (UN), and an estimated sixty per cent of UN operations involve Africa. On their part, African leaders have shown their strong political commitment and willingness to resolve conflicts as prerequisites for the promotion of continental economic integration agenda and development.

Furthermore, this commitment to peace, security and development has been reiterated with the adoption by the General Assembly of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) in 2001 and fostered through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in 2003. In particular, the operationalisation of the various components of the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) such as the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, the Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise and the African standby force are clear indications of this resolve and constitute the basic framework for addressing the myriad of peace, security and development challenges on the continent. African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as building blocks of the African Union, have also played a significant role in continental efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

Against this background, and recognizing the importance of both forging strategic partnerships and arrangements between the United Nations and regional organizations, the President of the 67th session of the UN General Assembly, will convene a thematic debate of the General Assembly entitled the “*Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts in Africa*”.

The thematic debate is also organized in recognition and celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and is being held within the theme of this year’s General Assembly session --“Adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means”. It is anticipated that the General Assembly will adopt a declaration in the form of a resolution in support to Africa and the Organization of African Unity’s 50th anniversary.

II. Fostering AU-UN Cooperation around the nexus peace, security and development

Within this context, AU-UN cooperation has evolved over the years including through an increased focus on the recognition that many challenges are interlinked, and that advancements in development, peace, security and human rights are mutually reinforcing. Preventing armed conflicts and setting the stage for economic growth and development have been a core pillars of the UN’s work since its founding.

In furtherance of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the UN and AU have been engaged in peace and security cooperation that date back to the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Following the 2005 World Summit outcome, the UN Security Council adopted a number of resolutions including S/1631 (2005) and S/2033 (2012) reiterating the need for increased coordination and consultation between AU and UN as well as to support capacity-building. Moreover, the AU and UN signed in 2006 the Addis Ababa Declaration on “Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union (TYCBP)”.

In 2008, the General Assembly High Level Meeting on Africa’s development needs re-emphasized that peace, security and development are inextricably linked and called for strengthening the global partnership for Africa’s development. To give an impetus to this global partnership and tackle the nexus of peace, security and development, in 2012, the General Assembly adopted resolution 66/293 establishing the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa’s development.

Against this backdrop, the prevention and resolution of conflicts, especially structural causes of conflicts, is an imperative task that requires intensification of efforts at all levels to nurture institutions, processes and systems that promote and bolster good governance and development in all spheres -- political, economic and corporate. The thematic debate will provide a platform for African Member States, African regional institutions, the international community, the UN and representatives of civil society organizations to reflect on progress made and challenges to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa.

III. Objectives

As we mark the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU under the 2013 theme -- “Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance”-- the UN will continue to engage with the African Union as it reflects on its achievements and challenges over the last fifty years. The thematic debate on “Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts in Africa” offers an excellent opportunity to contribute to this process. It is also anticipated that the debate will look at the nexus between peace, security and development as well as contribute to constructive dialogue on achieving long-term peace, stability and development goals in Africa.

It is also envisioned that these discussions will serve to raise awareness and mutual understanding of the nexus between Peace, Security and Development, while strengthening cooperation between the UN and AU. The debate is expected to renew the commitment of the UN to AU and feed into the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the OAU.

IV. Cooperation

The thematic debate is organized by the President of the General Assembly, and the African Union Commission has been invited to join in organizing it.

VI. Participants

The thematic debate will bring together High Level Officials from Member States, African institutions, UN system, and Civil Society Organizations.

VII. Modalities

This one day event will start with an opening segment, keynote addresses, a high-level morning session, consecutive panel discussions in the afternoon as well as closing remarks. A detailed programme of the debate will be circulated in due time.

Draft Programme
Thematic Debate on The Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts in Africa
25 April, Conference Room: 3 (NLB)

10:00	<p><i>Opening remarks by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremic, President of the General Assembly - H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General
10:20- 10:30	<p><i>Keynote Address:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H.E. Mr. Jean-Pierre Buyoya, AU High Representative for Mali and Sahel
10.30 -13.00	<p><i>High-level General Debate:</i></p>
15: 00 – 16:30	<p>Panel Discussion I</p> <p><i>“Fostering AU-UN cooperation around the nexus of peace, security and development”</i></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Mahmood Mamdani • Prof. Emmanuel K. Akyeampong • Prof. Abdul Karim Bangura • Dr. Cheikh Tidane Gadio <p>Moderator: Amb. Colin Keating, Founding Executive Director of Security Council Report.</p>
16:30- 17:50	<p>Panel Discussion II</p> <p><i>“Interactive Panel Debate 2: Panel 2: Complexity of conflict in Africa (Mali, Somalia, Sudan and Democratic Republic of the Congo)”</i> and efforts to address these challenges.</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Molefi Kete Asante • Mr. Vasu Gounden • Dr. Boubacar N’Diaye • Amb. Colin Keating <p>Moderator: Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa</p>
17:50- 180:00	<p>Remarks by the President of the General Assembly</p>



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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United Nations Informal thematic Debate of the 67th Session of the UNGA
on "Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts in Africa"

Address by

Mr. Pekka Haavisto
Member of the Parliament
of Finland

New York, 25 April 2013

(check against delivery)

Mr. President,

Conflicts are best solved by local and regional actors. They know the root causes and the parties best.

When dealing with conflicts in Africa, the main responsibility of solving them lies with African actors, institutions and partners. We welcome the active role played by the AU and ECOWAS among others, in solving ongoing conflicts.

At the same time, it is vital that the international community provides its full support to the African efforts in a sustained and coordinated manner. African ownership has been well demonstrated during the 50 years of existence of the OAU/AU, and we congratulate it on its Golden jubilee.

I believe that many conflicts can be prevented before they become a fact. Prevention may take many forms, however it often lies in the continuum of development, rule of law, peace and prosperity.

There is no peace without development and no development without peace. Both peace and development require respect for human rights. All three elements are strongly interrelated.

There is a need for a more *pro-active* approach for preventing conflicts taking place, escalating as well as preventing relapse. False notions of a conflict being "an internal matter" should not be an excuse for inaction.

Where conflicts stem from unexpected external shocks, societies need be strong enough to tackle them. We need to make societies more *resilient*. Resilience should have its prominent place in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

If there are signs of any kind of instability, we need to focus on and solve the *root causes*. Root causes may be found in excessively centralized governance, unclear or unequal allocation of natural resources, high levels of unemployment, and more generally - in economic hardship. Such causes cannot be taken lightly and will not fade away by themselves – they need to be actively confronted.

The responsibility to confront root causes and to prevent conflicts lies in the hands of local, national and regional leadership. The role of the international community is to support these efforts.

The role of women in conflict resolution is essential. With half the population being women, no outcome is sustainable if women are not included in the process. Women need also be given leading roles in monitoring achieved results. Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security provide a good starting point. However, making resolutions a reality, requires full implementation of them and a need to be embedded in national cultures and processes.

We need to use effective methods for resolving conflicts. Finland promotes preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. One important means in this respect is mediation. Finland and Turkey have had a leading role in promoting mediation within the UN system and more widely. We appreciate that many African countries and the African Union are members of the Group of Friends of Mediation.

We need to ensure that there is capacity for mediation at the local, regional and global levels. We are keen to support capacity building in this respect. One example is our partnership with the South African organization Accord in the building mediation capacity of the African Union.

Mr. President,

Finland has been a partner of Africa for almost 150 years in a variety of areas. We have had mutual benefit from our fruitful cooperation. However, we would like to do more and look forward to intensify our cooperation in the future.

We want to work together with you - African partners - to find the best possible methods for partnership that best serves the current needs as well as those of a bright future!



MISSÃO PERMANENTE DE PORTUGAL JUNTO DA ORGANIZAÇÃO DAS NAÇÕES UNIDAS

**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal, H. E.
Ambassador Alvaro Mendonça e Moura, at the General Assembly Session
on the Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts in Africa
(New York, 25.04.2013)**

Thank you Mr. President,

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for convening this debate and for marking the 50th anniversary of the Organization of the African Unity with the opportunity to assess where we are and to look at the challenges ahead in the efforts aimed at resolving conflicts through peaceful means in the African continent.

Portugal naturally shares the views that have been presented by Ambassador Meyer-Harting on behalf of the European Union. Against that background, I would like to focus on three specific points that are of particular interest to my country.

My first point is the role that regional integration and regional organizations play in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Portugal strongly supports regional integration in Africa and stresses in particular the role played by regional integration in the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Regional organizations and multinational institutions in Africa have consistently strived to develop and implement political, economic, security and humanitarian mechanisms that add up to what possibly is one of the most ambitious projects ever devised in the interest of international peace and development. Recognition of these efforts and of the commitment of African governments and



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African nations to institutional, non-violent solutions must therefore be unequivocally expressed, especially today as we all celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Organization for African Unity.

My second point is that we must also recognize the vast challenges that exist both in managing daily operations in a sustainable multilateral system and in combining institutional, financial and human resources capabilities that are required to implement new and innovative initiatives in this field. This is why we believe that strengthened cooperation between international organizations is key to address multidimensional and transnational problems.

We are therefore proud to be an active participant of several multilateral initiatives with a strong focus on peaceful solution of conflicts, preventive diplomacy and mediation, as well as on development, promotion and protection of human rights and humanitarian assistance.

My third and final point is to highlight the importance of cooperation and coordination in particular country situations in Africa. We've seen the merits of international cohesion and united action in scenarios such as Somalia or Mali. We hope that international dialogue and complementary efforts can also contribute to restore the constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau and are committed to participate in the joint initiative by the UN, the AU, ECOWAS, the CPLP and the EU to that effect.

Mr. President,

As always, Portugal stands ready to engage in an open and creative discussion on ways to enhance and strengthen the articulation between the African Union



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and other actors involved in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa. Indeed, the success of the African continent in addressing its challenges represents our collective success towards achieving sustainable development, peace and stability.

Thank you for your attention.