



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 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> 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 67<sup>TH</sup> 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 67<sup>th</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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.