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ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION

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**DRAFT JOHANNESBURG DECLARATION
ON SILENCING THE GUNS IN AFRICA**

**‘SILENCING THE GUNS: CREATING CONDUCTIVE CONDITIONS FOR
AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT’**

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**‘SILENCING THE GUNS: CREATING CONDUCTIVE CONDITIONS FOR AFRICA'S
DEVELOPMENT’**

We, Heads of State and Government of the African Union assembled to deliberate and consider the efforts deployed by African Union and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and resolution (RECs/RMs) to silence the guns in Africa,

Guided by the principles enshrined in the Constitutive Act of our Union, the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the relevant provisions of the Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP) and other relevant policies, as well as our shared values, in particular respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of our countries,

Also guided by the vision of our Union to “build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena”,

Recalling the Solemn Declaration adopted by the 50th Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity/ African Union (OAU/AU) on 25 May 2013, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in which the Assembly of the Union pledged not to bequeath the burden of wars to the next generation of Africans and undertook to end all wars in Africa by the year 2020, as well as decision Assembly/AU/Dec.630 (XXVIII) by which the 28th ordinary session of the Assembly, held in Addis Ababa, on 30 – 31 January 2017, adopted, following submission by the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020,

Reaffirming our full commitment to prevent conflicts and to end existing ones in order to create conditions conducive for realizing a conflict-free Africa,

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT:

- I. ***The African Union and its Member States*** have made significant progress in addressing the root causes, triggers and drivers of conflicts/crises in the

Continent, working with the RECs/RMs, in the effort to achieve the AU objective to silence the guns as espoused in the Solemn Declaration adopted by the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU on 25 May 2013 and in the AU Agenda 2063.

- II. ***Africa still faces multiple and complex challenges***, particularly gaps in governance; terrorism; violent extremism; the surge of Foreign Terrorist Fighters from outside the Continent; illicit circulation of arms/weapons; corruption; illicit financial flows; transnational organized crimes, drug trafficking, human trafficking, siphoning of benefits from natural resources away from the population; foreign political and military interference; outbreaks of epidemics and pandemic; impact of climate change and slow process of ratification of AU instruments, among others. These challenges continue to hamper efforts to accelerate integration and socio-economic development in the Continent.
- III. ***In addressing these multiple challenges***, it is critical to ensure political commitment and active engagement of all Member States, including taking all necessary measures to strengthen our common institutions and provide them with the necessary powers and resources to enable them to effectively discharge their respective mandates. In this vein, it is necessary to continue tapping from the energies of the grassroots populations/African citizens. It is also imperative to fully implement our relevant normative frameworks and ensure accountability for non-compliance with these frameworks, in line with our collective responsibility and commitment to the principle of Non-Indifference as enshrined in our Constitutive Act.

WE HEREBY DECLARE:

Our unwavering commitment to the full implementation of the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration , with the objectives of preventing and ending conflicts and wars in the Continent in line with the vision and aspirations in Agenda 2063. In this regard, we **commit** to:

1. ***Take all necessary measures*** to promote Africa's leadership and ownership of our peace and security agenda by strengthening our continental and regional institutions through the provision of the necessary powers and

resources to enable them discharge their respective mandates as they relate to the promotion of peace, security, good governance and development;

2. **Fully implement** the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA), which guide Member States, as well as the RECs/RMs in their efforts to consolidate governance; prevent, manage and resolve conflicts; and undertake post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction and development
3. **Eradicate** all root causes, triggers and drivers of conflicts, particularly by ending illicit arms/weapons circulation and use; removing socio-economic disparities and the widening inequalities among our citizens; addressing impunity through enhancement of continental, regional and national institutions;
4. **Redouble** efforts to control and curb the illicit flow of arms/weapons into Africa, including through commemoration and more robust conduct of the Africa Amnesty Month in September, each year, to accelerate the collection and disposal of such arms; we **agree** to address the flows and movements of illicit arms/weapons in Africa, and curb the inflow of illegal arms/weapons into Africa; we **mandate** the PSC to develop a mechanism for naming and shaming those foreign actors and entities which sponsor the influx of illegal arms/weapons into the Continent;
5. **Deploy** efforts and resources necessary to prevent and defeat terrorism and violent extremism, as well as transnational organized crimes in the Continent; in this respect, we **commit** to resource and equip the African Standby Force, including embedding within it a Special Unit for Countering Terrorism, to support Africa's efforts to eliminate the scourge of terrorism;
6. **Accelerate** efforts to address all structural factors that facilitate illicit financial flows, including weak institutional governance and corruption; in this context, we **undertake** to strengthen and improve governance by combating corruption, trafficking and transnational organized crime, as well as cybercrime; investing more in addressing the problems of tax evasions and tax havens, as well as trade-based money laundering;

7. **Take strong measures**, in line with the provisions in the AU Constitutive Act, the PSC Protocol and the African Common Defence and Security Policy, as well as the United Nations Charter, to rid the Continent of the threat posed by foreign political and military interferences in African matters, including interference related to sponsoring armed terrorist groups and Foreign Terrorist Fighters from outside the Continent;
8. **Reaffirm** the primacy of political solutions and peaceful settlement of all conflicts, and **undertake** to fully implement all provisions of signed peace agreements, with a view to facilitating amicable and durable solutions to the conflicts/crises in our Continent;
9. **Take ownership** of guaranteeing the nexus between peace, security and development in our Continent; in this regard, we **agree** to continue providing the requisite support to ensure effective implementation of post-conflict stabilisation, reconstruction and development activities, including through the African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Cairo, Egypt, in countries emerging from conflict and prevent relapse;
10. **Ensure** effective entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area in January 2021, with a view to ushering further opportunities for accelerating and strengthening the processes of integration and socio-economic development in the Continent, as an imperative for realizing sustainable peace;
11. **Urge** all Member States to ratify the Lome Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa, together with its Annexes related to the development of Africa's Blue Economy, as well as the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and the African Union Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation, in order to strengthen our efforts towards preventing and ending conflicts;
12. **Reiterate our strong commitment** to end all remnants of colonialism in Africa and the unlawful occupation of the Chagos Archipelago of Mauritius, the Comorian Island of Mayotte, the Malagasy Islands;

13. **Continue to create** a conducive environment, including by fully implementing all available AU instruments, for the effective participation of women and youth in the peace and development processes at national, regional and continental levels, with a view to enhancing the important roles and contributions of women and youth in the promotion of sustainable peace, security and development in the Continent;
14. **Totally address** the plight of the refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, as well as other vulnerable groups in Africa and to this effect, we **recommit** to eliminate root causes of this phenomenon and ensure their protection by fully implementing the relevant regional, continental and international instruments and policies;
15. **Mobilize** resources from within the Continent, to ensure predictability and sustainability of funding for our peace and security activities, within the spirit of enhancing our ownership and leadership of in the implementation of our continental peace and security agenda;
16. **Further consolidate** the strategic partnership between the AU and the UN in the area of peace and security, and **reaffirm** our commitment to multilateralism as embodied in the UN Charter and **commit** to work with international stakeholders to sustain and enhance multilateralism to address international peace and security issues;
17. **Decide**, within the context of AU Agenda 2063, to extend the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa for a period of ten (10) years (2021-2030), with periodic reviews every two (2) years; and **further decide** to extend the commemoration and conduct of the Africa Month during September of each year for a period of ten (10) years (2021-2030).

As Heads of State and Government of the African Union, mindful of our responsibility and commitment, we pledge to act together with our Peoples and the African Diaspora to realize our vision of Pan Africanism and African Renaissance aimed at achieving a conflict-free and prosperous Africa.

Adopted by the 14th Extra Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, on 6 December 2020.