**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL: REMARKS TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL**

**“MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN STATE IN ADDRESSING GLOBAL SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES”**

**New York, 23 May 2024**

**[all-English]**

Mr. President, Excellencies,

I thank Mozambique for bringing us together to discuss Africa’s critical role in maintaining peace and security.

Today’s discussion is about peace in Africa itself — but also strengthening Africa’s role in peace and development globally.

Excellencies,

Africa is an important voice for the global good.

The continent is home to many examples of unity and solidarity in a fractured world.

We see this unity in Africa’s focus on ending poverty and hunger, supporting refugees fleeing across borders, and achieving sustainable development.

And we see it in the continent’s efforts to work together to build a modern, diverse, innovative and powerful continental economy to benefit all Africans.

From the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area.

To African countries leading the way on renewable energy systems like solar and wind — a continent with the potential to become a renewable energy superpower.

To Africa’s bold calls for reforming the global financial architecture so it better serves and represents the countries who need it most.

Mr. President,

All of these efforts require peace in Africa and beyond.

Too many Africans are caught up in the hell of conflicts, or living with the relentless danger of terrorism and violent extremism in their communities.

From the countries of the Sahel rocked by unconstitutional changes of government, uncertain political transitions, and a growing terrorist threat.

To the spread of terrorism and violent extremism in the Lake Chad Basin, Somalia and elsewhere.

To the continued violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Horn of Africa.

And to the deepening humanitarian nightmare in Sudan, now entering its second year, with increased hostilities in El Fasher opening an alarming new chapter in this conflict.

My Personal Envoy, Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, is working tirelessly on mediation efforts with all parties.

We need a concerted global push for a ceasefire, followed by a comprehensive peace process to end the bloodshed.

The death, hunger, disease and displacement fuelled by these conflicts are playing out against a bleak backdrop.

Many African countries are still suffering the impact of the pandemic, including higher rates of debt, limiting their capacity to fight poverty and hunger.

Meanwhile, climate impacts are escalating, including droughts and ferocious flooding — as we saw recently in east Africa.

Rising geopolitical tensions are also having an impact on the continent.

In some countries, we are seeing grave human rights violations and abuses, an epidemic of gender-based and sexual violence, a flouting of international law and a global climate of impunity.

The human cost of these conflicts is breathtaking.

And the cost to development is incalculable.

Mr. President,

Now is the time to unleash Africa’s peace power.

We need to strengthen Africa’s peace leadership — on the continent itself, and on the global stage.

First — we need peace in Africa itself.

Our partnership with Africa is based on the clear perception that we must work with the African Union based on the principle of African-led solutions for African problems.

The United Nations fully supports Africa’s pursuit of peace through the African Union’s flagship Silencing the Guns initiative.

We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our African partners to help ensure security, stability, and respect for human rights and the rule of law across the continent — in line with my New Vision for the Rule of Law.

We’re working closely with the African Union to strengthen the foundations of stable, peaceful societies — including democratic processes and institutions that people can trust.

We’re working closely with the African Union, ECOWAS and others to end the scourge of terrorism — including support for prevention, legal assistance, investigations, prosecutions, reintegration and rehabilitation, and human rights protection.

We fully support the establishment of the African Humanitarian Agency to help people caught within complex emergencies.

And we’re supporting key processes to build peace in places where it is in short supply.

I am pleased that this Council agreed to our longstanding call to support African Union-led peace support operations **—** including peace enforcement and counter-terrorism operations **—** with mandates from the Council and through assessed contributions covering a large chunk of the expenditure.

Resolution 2719 is a critical milestone.

Our two organizations will be developing a joint roadmap to take forward this important breakthrough.

Partnerships like this are central to the New Agenda for Peace.

The Agenda connects the dots between investing in development, building strong governance structures and justice systems that people can trust, and creating sustainable peace.

The African Union and the United Nations will continue working together to defuse conflicts before they escalate, manage them effectively when they occur, and build sustainable peace when they are resolved.

Mr. President,

Second — we need to embed African participation and leadership across the global peace and security architecture.

Following the Second World War, the mechanisms of global governance — including this Council — were designed by the most powerful countries at that time.

Many African countries were still in the process of throwing off the shackles of colonialism.

Since then, the world has changed — but global institutions have not.

Today, African countries continue to be denied a seat at the negotiating table — including at this very Council.

The impacts of these structural inequalities are plain to see.

African states suffer disproportionately from the effects of conflicts, an unjust global financial system, and the climate crisis.

At the same time, African countries are stepping up and contributing to peaceful solutions beyond the continent.

For example, I commend Kenya for leading the upcoming Multilateral Security Support mission in Haiti — and other African countries for offering to send troops.

Africa deserves a voice in the global peace and security architecture.

But strengthening Africa’s voice can only happen if African countries can participate in global governance structures as equals.

This must include correcting the lack of permanent African representation at this Council.

And it must include reforming the global financial architecture — especially its handling of debt — so African countries have the support they need to climb the development ladder.

September’s Summit of the Future will be an opportunity to push forward on all of these issues.

I have invited all Heads of State to attend.

I count on African Member States to seize the moment and put forward specific proposals aimed at enhancing Africa’s representation within all global governance structures.

Mr. President,

We must be clear-eyed about the deep challenges ahead.

But the people of Africa have always risen to the challenges of the day.

Peace is the key to unlocking Africa’s future — for Africans themselves, and for strengthening the continent’s voice and influence in building peace around the world.

Peace depends on African leadership.

I look forward to working with this Council, and with the governments, institutions and people of Africa, in this important work.

Thank you.