



Presentation by the East African Community on
"Silencing the Guns in Africa: Nexus between Peace,
Security, Governance and Development"

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His Excellency Mahamat Zene Cherif, Permanent Rep of Chad to the UN

His Excellency Maged Abdelaziz, Under Secretary General and Special Adviser
on Africa

Leadership of the Africa Union present

Leadership of the various RECs present

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greetings from the East African Community. It is once again a pleasure to join you all to share perspectives on Security and development. This conversation could not have come at a better time, considering recent landmark decisions that have been made by African Heads of State on various issues critical to development of Africa. These include adoption of the AU Agenda 2063 and its implementation plan; and the Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy among others. Implementation of these within the context of the global agenda 2030 requires a stable and predictable security environment underpinned by the desire of the continent to silence guns as a developmental pre-requisite.

Allow me to share the EAC perspective:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2014, the EAC conducted a security threat assessment of the EAC Region. Our focus was on the conflict dynamics; the emerging threats; and the need to adopt commensurate measures. The outcome of the assessment informed the updating of the EAC Regional Strategy on Peace and Security which was adopted by the Council of Ministers in November 2014. The study also provided the bedrock upon which the EAC Protocol on Peace and Security was built.

The EAC Regional Peace and Security Architecture addresses itself to Security threats in two broad categories:

- crime management; and
- Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

The approach takes cognizance of the multiple memberships to RECs within the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa Region and the density of Regional Organizations with Peace and Security Mandate which provide a strong basis for complementarity, both vertically and horizontally.

Excellencies,

Silencing the Guns 2020, within the EAC context, is premised on addressing root causes and sources of grievances that have allowed conflict to thrive and take violent dimensions; and promoting trade through free movement of people.

Arising out of the security assessment I have talked about, it was evident that **governance challenges remain the key source of grievances and conflict, with the resultant effects of underdevelopment, manifested in high levels of youth unemployment.** The focus now is on adopting and implementing appropriate

measures. For example, we are in the final stages of adopting the EAC Good Governance Protocol. Its pillars include:

- Promoting Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law;
- Promoting Human Rights and Access to Justice;
- Promoting Democracy and Electoral practices;
- Fighting Corruption and promoting Economic governance.

Our multidimensional strategy on youth empowerment and the action plan on social development are being implemented.

Secondly, the EAC Early Warning Mechanism is operational and generates potential pre-emptive information requiring action. Accompanying it, in January 2015, the EAC Summit of Heads of State established a Panel of Eminent Persons to promote preventive diplomacy. The fruits of such avenues came into play just recently, when the EAC at the highest political level was handling the Burundi crisis.

Thirdly, we acknowledge the defence sector as a key pillar to protecting democratic gains and cascade good practices developed at regional level to national levels. We therefore have deliberate programs for continued strengthening of Cooperation in the Defence sector through joint exercises and training serves to reduce tensions and enhance confidence among the Partner States. The collective approach to operationalization of the East African Standby Force as a tool for stability and security stands out among the gains. The region's collective will towards stabilization of Somalia reaffirms the depth of this partnership, in the face of difficult and at times tragic events.

We are adopting Security sector reforms through development, harmonization and adoption of Regional best practices. These are aimed at addressing historical skepticism and restoring confidence of the population towards the security agencies; and enhancing accountability and oversight over these organs. We are also sharing security sector centers of excellences among the member States. Further, harmonisation of laws which embody international best experiences and practices is being resolutely implemented.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

The challenges African States face today defy traditional geographical boundaries. As the negative forces against stability cooperate and coordinate their efforts, defeating them requires a high level of cooperation, information

sharing and joint pre-emptive and reactive actions. Inter-REC and Intra-REC cooperation is necessary, so is strengthened cooperation within the continental security architecture.

For the RECs, enhanced vertical and horizontal cooperation and Inter-REC as well as Intra-REC cooperation is crucial. At the wider level, we already have the Africa Peace and Security architecture and Instruments on which to anchor the cooperation. We have Instruments such as:

- the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the AU Peace and Security Council,
- the Protocol on the Relations between the AU and the RECs; and
- the MoU between the AU and the RECs on Peace and Security.

How do we make them deliver?

One: **Resolute implementation** of provisions in the Instruments, guided by the principle of variable geometry.

Two: **Promotion of exchange of good practices and collective capacity building** measures among the RECs. This is because confronting such transnational threats as terrorism requires a multi- dimensional approach that ensures cross regional cooperation.

Three: **Establishment of reciprocal organs on matters of Peace and Security** that can work closely within the AU Peace and Security Council on Regional Security issues;

Four: **Empower the RECs to take a greater role and responsibility** in addressing security challenges within their membership; and

Five, and most important, **address good governance fundamentals.**

Excellences,

As we move forward, addressing **the role of non- state actors; suppliers of illicit arms; financiers; etc...** becomes more and more paramount. Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is the single most important facilitator to violence and an accessory to undermining legitimate governments, the rule of law and human rights; the implementation of the UN Program of Action on SALW which is anchored on the various regional SALW Protocols and Conventions and the UN Arms Tracing Instrument. We need to resolutely adopt and implement collective

measures that render them inactive. At the EAC, we are focusing on addressing the causal factors, like governance failures, where they draw their allegiances and legitimacy. Our implementation of the EAC Customs Union and Common Market is bound to promote youth employment opportunities and inclusiveness in the economic sectors and, as we implement a number of policing measures, the strength of these negative forces will be reduced. The EAC also continues to promote issue based politics with the objective of marginalizing ethnicity which has continued to be exploited by divisive forces that thrive on such cleavages to promote narrow sectarian interests.

We acknowledge the concerns that still inhibit signing and ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Efforts should be invested in creating greater understanding and political buy in of this instrument, given that it remains so far the most comprehensive and counter proliferation tool that addresses Small Arms proliferation and their manifestations in all dimensions.

There is concern on the loss of interest in Small and Light Weapons issues in recent times. We are therefore launching an appeal: can we reverse this trend and upscale implementation of regional instruments on matters of Small arms. Can we collectively mobilise the communities and civil society to play a key role in raising levels of awareness and buy-in.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We acknowledge the need for increased regional and continental level taking **greater responsibility towards funding security initiatives** in Africa through increased qualitative investment in security. Similarly, we need to upscale the cooperation and collaborative efforts aimed at ensuring that financial pledges made by partners are timely paid. Indeed, may be the next session could look into the outcomes of the ongoing OSAA-led evaluation of the realization of commitments, and the practical proposals on the way forward.

Further, greater cooperation must lie in **devolution and empowerment of communities**. They are an essential ingredient critical to ownership and sustainability of development interventions. Cooperation in this area is critical and the coordination of the efforts by the UN, AU and RECs need to be strengthened. UN agencies have big experiences to share. As EAC we remain committed to supporting UN efforts, including greater advocacy by OSAA.