

**Speech by H.E Mr Bruno VAN DER PLUIJM,
Chairman of the Management Committee of the FPS Foreign
Affairs at the United Nations Security Council**

**Briefing "Peace and Security in Africa: Partnership to
Strengthen Regional Peace and Security"**

New York, 26 September 2019

Mr President,
Distinguished Heads of Delegation, Ladies and
Gentlemen,

By 2050, the African continent will have 2.5 billion inhabitants. One in four human beings will be African. The cradle of civilisation will have also become its future: a young continent, with extraordinary dynamism and an energetic civil society.

But this future is very much hampered by violent conflict, some of which are amongst the bloodiest in the world, and some the longest.

Overcoming these challenges will inevitably mean having strong partnership between all forces for peace.

My country - as well as the European Union - has long advocated a renewed, more comprehensive, dynamic and ambitious partnership with the African continent. This kind of partnership is based on bolstering the values we share. Let us move beyond the differences we had in the past and see what unites us: respect for the rule of law, democracy, human rights. These are the same values that underpin the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union. Let us strengthen them and work even more closely with the African Union in the area of peace and security, with the aim of "Silencing the Guns" in Africa.

But let us also work more together on development, human rights and good governance: indeed, these are powerful drivers of stability.

Chairperson Moussa FAKI reminded us today that the African Union has embarked on a determined and ambitious pathway towards peace and security. I welcome the progress we have seen in the replenishment of the Peace Fund but also in establishing a continental framework for compliance with human rights and international humanitarian law.

As a member of this Council, Belgium is committed to working closely with our partners to support them in their efforts. The African Union's operations, complementary to United Nations operations, must be provided with sustainable and predictable funding.

But we also need to do more. This Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union must go further in coordination and collaboration. Risk and conflict analysis needs to be better aligned. This can start with simple actions: better coordination of agendas, more joint visits, making our joint meetings more operational, taking joint decisions to which we commit ourselves.

This renewed partnership will only be relevant if it takes into account African diversity, which is both geographical and institutional. The principle of subsidiarity, very well known in Europe, states that public action should be carried out as a matter of priority at the most appropriate level. Some crises are well managed at a subregional level. ECOWAS, for example, has demonstrated this to us with their effective and rapid management of the Gambian crisis in 2017 and through their involvement in Guinea Bissau.

Nonetheless - and I would like to underscore this point - the principle of subsidiarity should in no way be used as a pretext for inaction or as a barrier to progress. The peace and prosperity of all Africans should be our lodestar. In

our view, the African Union and the United Nations retain a leading role, in line with their founding charters, and they must stand ready to play their role.

Mr President,

I cannot conclude without paying tribute to African women. The way Africa mobilises women's skills, prospects and leadership in the coming years will be essential. Every day, women leaders and entrepreneurs prove to us that they stand ready to transform the continent. Women mediators and women's organisations have already shown on many occasions that their involvement in peace and transition processes is essential to achieving lasting peace. Finally, African women, like women throughout the world, demand that their rights be respected. Belgium stands with these women, and we support them in numerous ways.

Thank you.