

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
21 February 2019
English
Original: Spanish

Letter dated 13 February 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, during its presidency of the Security Council in February 2019, Equatorial Guinea plans to hold an open debate on 27 February 2019 on the topic "Silencing the guns in Africa: cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations".

In order to guide the debate, Equatorial Guinea has prepared a concept note which is attached hereto (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Job Obiang **Esono Mbengono**

Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea
to the United Nations
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



Annex to the letter dated 13 February 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

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Concept note for the Security Council high-level debate on the theme “Silencing the Guns in Africa: cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations”, to be held on 27 February 2019

I. Context

1. As part of the Fiftieth Anniversary Solemn Declaration of the African Union, African Heads of State and Government committed themselves “to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality for all our people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts, and to prevent genocide”. They further pledged “not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans and undertake to end all wars by 2020”.

2. The African Union member States established the African Peace and Security Architecture in 2002 as a long-term structural response to the challenges of peace and security on the African continent. Through the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Union and subregional organizations have access to instruments that help them in the prevention, mediation and resolution of conflicts.

3. This is the overarching objective guiding the efforts of the African Union in ensuring a peaceful and secure Africa and laying a solid foundation for the implementation of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, the strategic framework of the African Union for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Agenda 2063 is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the sustaining peace agenda of the United Nations.

II. Framing the topic for discussion

4. It is true that progress has been made in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. Many of the long-term conflicts that devastated the continent have been resolved. The African Union and its regional mechanisms have also improved their capacity to deal with situations of conflict and crisis on the continent. This certainly has helped to improve peace and stability and create favourable conditions for the growth and development of Africa in the past decade.

5. However, some parts of Africa are still mired in conflict and new challenges to peace and security have emerged. It is necessary to examine the social, economic and political factors that lead groups and communities to resort to arms. It is undeniable that any meaningful collective effort towards disarmament must take into consideration the security and development concerns of the communities involved and must provide them with viable alternatives to crime and other illegal activities. The spread of violent extremism and terrorism in Africa and the humanitarian and human rights crises that they cause present a serious threat to the continent.

6. State fragility and weak State institutions have increased the risk of those countries that have emerged from conflict relapsing into yet another cycle of conflict and violence. “Silencing the Guns” represents an ambitious political objective to

ensure peace, security and development throughout the continent. The existence of poorly demarcated border areas can be a source of conflict, especially when these areas are rich in natural resources.

7. Accordingly, the African Union Master Road Map of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020 was adopted at the 648th meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council and subsequently endorsed at the 28th African Union Summit.

8. Nevertheless, in order for meaningful progress to be achieved, ownership of the Road Map by member States and their active participation is of the essence. In this regard, addressing the root causes of conflict by ensuring good governance, respect for human rights, popular participation and inclusivity, with a particular focus on women and youth, is indispensable and this has been duly recognized by the Peace and Security Council as reflected in the outcome of its 430th meeting, on the theme “Silencing the Guns: pre-requisites for realizing a conflict-free Africa by the year 2020”.

9. At the level of the African Union, the need to further strengthen all existing preventive diplomacy tools, including the Panel of the Wise and the Continental Early Warning System, and to ensure quick response when the need arises, has already been acknowledged. While there has been progress in this area, work still needs to be done to fully operationalize the African Peace and Security Architecture, particularly the African Standby Force and its rapid deployment capability.

10. “Silencing the Guns in Africa” was one of the items on the agenda of the informal meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Security Council of the United Nations during their 12th annual consultation, held in New York in July 2018. The Arria formula meeting organized by Equatorial Guinea, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, South Africa and the African Union Observer Mission and co-sponsored by Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland and Sweden, held in October, also afforded an opportunity to explore the challenges in and prospects of creating a conflict-free continent and examined what can be done to leverage the African Union and United Nations partnership to help Africa to make tangible progress in this regard. This high-level open debate seeks to build on these discussions and explore further the possibility of specific actions that can be taken to enhance cooperation in this area.

11. The constant and incessant illicit flow of weapons, especially small and light weapons to non-State actors, contributes significantly to exacerbating insecurity and violence in various parts of the continent, undermining social cohesion, socioeconomic development and the effective functioning of institutions.

III. Specific issues for discussion

12. The high-level debate will address the following key questions:

(a) What are the major threats to peace and security on the African continent? What can be done to preserve the gains achieved in recent years in addressing those threats and to assimilate emerging threats to peace and security on the African continent?

(b) How can effective governance and development on the African continent be achieved, including ensuring inclusive participation, not least of women and youth, the rule of law, promoting better management of diversity and resources, fostering inclusive growth and reducing inequality, in addressing the root causes of conflicts?

(c) What can be done to further strengthen the range of tools used by the African Union and its regional mechanisms in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts?

(d) How can the African Union and United Nations strategic partnership be leveraged to help Africa achieve the ambitious goal of “Silencing the Guns”?

(e) As we steadily approach the 2020 date set by the African Union to “silence the guns in Africa” with so much work that still needs to be done, how can the progress made be evaluated and how can the African Union re-strategize its goals and priorities for “Silencing the Guns in Africa” beyond 2020?

IV. Briefers

13. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea, Simeon Oyono Esono Angue, will chair the high-level debate. The following briefers will be invited to make presentation on the theme of the discussion.

(a) The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs;

(b) The African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, Ramtane Lamamra;

(c) The Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Vasu Gounden.

V. Outcome

14. The Presidency intends to propose a draft resolution on “Silencing the Guns in Africa” to be adopted at the opening of the high-level debate.
