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Report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the statement by the President of the Security Council of 16 December 2014 ([S/PRST/2014/27](#)), by means of which the Security Council requested me to submit to it an annual report on ways to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU). Outlined herein are the collaborative efforts of the United Nations and the African Union to address threats to peace and security in Africa, and the key role played by UNOAU, established in 2010, in strengthening relations between the two organizations.

2. The Security Council, the General Assembly and various organs of the African Union have repeatedly called for stronger strategic engagement between the United Nations, the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In my report entitled “The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations” ([A/70/357-S/2015/682](#)), I noted the significant progress made in institutionalizing United Nations cooperation with regional organizations, including the African Union. I also recognized that the peace and security responsibilities shouldered by the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms in Africa had increased in recent years. I am committed to strengthening arrangements to facilitate coordinated action and effective delivery by the African Union for our collective benefit.

II. Challenges to peace and security in Africa

3. Since 2001, there has been a reduction in protracted intra-State conflicts on the continent. Collaboration between the United Nations, the African Union, the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms and other partners has contributed to



efforts to address issues of peace and constitutional order in politically polarized situations, such as in Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau. Countries emerging from crises or violent conflict, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, are developing more inclusive political institutions. Peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts have yielded results in Sierra Leone, paving the way for progress towards sustainable development. In addition, the African Union has adopted a normative framework on unconstitutional changes of government and has suspended the participation at its meetings of Governments established through military coups.

4. Nevertheless, numerous challenges to the prevention, management and resolution of conflict in Africa remain. Transnational networks continue to smuggle weapons, people and illicit drugs across the continent and beyond. Addressing the immediate causes of conflict through preventive diplomacy and mediation will not yield sustainable peace in the absence of long-term sustained measures to tackle structural issues, such as weak governance and political, social and economic marginalization and exclusion. In some instances, the existence of borders which are not fully delineated and demarcated can be sources of conflict, especially when such zones are, or simply are thought to be, rich in resources. Moreover, modern conflicts involve a nebulous array of non-State actors, rapid means of communication, ease of access to weapons and finance, and the spread of violent extremism, which together challenge conventional approaches to conflict management.

5. The spread of violent extremism and terrorism in Africa, and the humanitarian and human rights crises that they provoke, pose a serious threat to the continent. The emergence and spread of such groups as Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin countries, and the Lord's Resistance Army, first in Uganda and later in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, present new threats to peace and security in Africa that require timely and decisive responses from the African Union and the wider international community. In 2007, the African Union deployed the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to restore stability in the country; it also established the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army; and more recently, it has supported the Lake Chad Basin Commission in the establishment of a multinational joint task force to combat Boko Haram. UNOAU has played and continues to play an instrumental role in supporting those and other African Union initiatives to address those threats.

6. Piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Guinea also poses challenges to the maintenance of peace and security. While concerted international efforts with regard to maritime security have significantly degraded the capability of transnational criminal groups to interrupt maritime traffic, take hostages for ransom and loot cargo in the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean off the coast of Somalia, incidents of piracy and violent criminal activities in the Gulf of Guinea remain a concern, and the root causes of piracy are yet to be fully addressed.

7. Election-related disputes also continue to pose a threat, potentially reversing gains made towards democratization. The erosion of public confidence in electoral management bodies, delays in holding elections, unconstitutional attempts at extending term limits and sophisticated manipulation of electoral processes create resentment and sow the seeds of discord as well as violence and other forms of human rights violations. Recent developments in Burkina Faso, Burundi and the Congo are illustrations of such threats to peace and security.

III. From growing cooperation to a strategic partnership

8. During the past decade, a number of frameworks and mechanisms have been established to strengthen United Nations-African Union cooperation. In 2006, the Addis Ababa Declaration entitled “Enhancing United Nations-African Union cooperation: framework for the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union” (A/61/630, annex) was issued. Through the programme, the United Nations pledged its support to strengthen the African Union Commission, focusing on conflict prevention, mediation, good offices, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The programme comes to an end in 2016. To build upon the achievements of the programme and taking into account the challenges encountered, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, at its twenty-seventh ordinary session, in June 2015, endorsed a successor programme, the “Framework for a Renewed United Nations-African Union Partnership on Africa’s Integration and Development Agenda 2017-2027”.

9. In 2007, the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union began holding annual joint consultative meetings. In their first joint communiqué (S/2007/421, annex II), the two bodies committed themselves to developing a stronger and more structured relationship and underlined the importance of support for the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture and its pillars. In 2007 also, the General Assembly adopted resolution 61/296, in which it requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to meet the special needs of Africa. The commitment to strengthen cooperation and establish a more effective relationship at the strategic level was repeatedly expressed throughout the rest of the decade in a series of resolutions and statements by the Security Council¹ and the General Assembly.²

10. The establishment of UNOAU in 2010 was a significant step forward in advancing that partnership. For the initial three to four years, the Office supported capacity-building of the African Union Commission for the planning and management of peace support operations, having recognized the need to support rapid and coordinated deployment to the Sudan, Somalia and, subsequently, Mali and the Central African Republic. The planning and deployment of African Union peace support operations were typically coordinated with the United Nations through UNOAU; some of those operations later became United Nations peacekeeping operations. UNOAU provided technical support to enhance the capacity of the African Union to deploy election observation missions and promote gender awareness.

11. UNOAU supported the engagement of my special representatives, envoys and mediators with their African Union counterparts, including at African Union summits and meetings of the Peace and Security Council. The Office has worked closely with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel on the Sudan and South Sudan. It has also facilitated coordination between the African Union and my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, as well as my Special Representatives on Sexual Violence in Conflict, on Children and Armed Conflict and for Libya. Over time, further efforts were made to strengthen coordination, including annual “desk-

¹ S/PRST/2007/7, resolution 1809 (2008), S/PRST/2009/3 and S/PRST/2009/26.

² Resolution 63/310, adopted in 2009.

to-desk” meetings between the United Nations and the African Union, bringing together working-level staff. At the strategic level, the Joint Task Force on Peace and Security, which brings together every six months the Under-Secretaries-General for Political Affairs, Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support with the African Union Commissioners for Peace and Security and for Political Affairs, was established in 2010 to provide guidance and coherence to the partnership at the highest levels and to identify areas for concerted joint action. UNOAU plays a coordinating role in those United Nations-African Union engagements.

12. The increase in the number of African Union peace support operations generated requests from Member States to enhance the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. In its resolution 2033 (2012), the Security Council called upon the Secretary-General to maintain close consultations with the African Union and regional economic communities on peace and security challenges in Africa, and pledged support for further interaction between the Secretariat and the African Union Commission to exchange information and, as appropriate, coordinate in the preparation of recommendations, including through joint assessments. In resolution 2167 (2014), the Council expressed its determination to take effective steps to further enhance the relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union. The General Assembly, in 2013, in its resolution 67/302, requested the United Nations system to intensify its assistance to the African Union, as appropriate, in strengthening the African Peace and Security Architecture, and emphasized the need to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of cooperation between the two organizations.

13. My special representatives and envoys, including my Special Representative to the African Union, Haile Menkerios, have regularly addressed the Peace and Security Council on issues on the agenda of the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council. In 2015 alone, the United Nations provided 40 such briefings and participated in a further 30 open sessions. Similarly, African Union commissioners and envoys have briefed the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies on a range of issues and the two bodies have increasingly exchanged views and engaged in discussions, including on the occasion of the tenth annual joint consultative meeting of the two bodies, in May 2016, when Somalia and Burundi were on the agenda.

14. The African Union is also strengthening its voice in the decision-making process of the Security Council and continues to work towards greater cohesion and harmonization of the positions of African member States. In December 2013, the African Union Commission convened a high-level meeting in an effort to improve coordination between the three African members of the Security Council, the Peace and Security Council and other African Union policy organs. The participants in the meeting, which has subsequently become an annual event, recommended the establishment of an African “A3” caucus within the Security Council to develop common positions and advocate African Union positions, measures to enhance the relationship between the Peace and Security Council and A3, greater alignment of the Peace and Security Council and Security Council agendas, and steps to strengthen the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations in New York.

15. After joint responses to certain crisis situations delivered positive results, both organizations expressed the need to move beyond ad hoc and reactive cooperation to a more strategic partnership built on an intensive, continuing and comprehensive

engagement to generate common approaches to shared challenges. In that context, in 2014, UNOAU developed, jointly with the Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission, a joint framework for an enhanced partnership in peace and security. The framework called for joint or well-coordinated initiatives in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacekeeping to leverage the political capital and capabilities of each organization across the conflict cycle, and recognized the need for continuous exchange of information on the structural and proximate causes of conflict and early warning signs, to facilitate aligned responses in conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping/peace support operations and post-conflict development. Discussions are under way to develop a more overarching framework, to be signed by the African Union Commission and the Secretariat.

16. Guided by its fiftieth anniversary solemn declaration in 2013, the African Union adopted, in 2015, Agenda 2063, its flagship framework for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. The Agenda sets eight aspirational goals to be attained in the coming five decades. Agenda 2063 and the Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda constitute a solid platform for continued United Nations-African Union cooperation and recognize that a prosperous Africa will be possible only when Africa is peaceful and stable. The African Union has also unveiled a road map for the period 2016-2020 for the African Peace and Security Architecture, which outlines measures for the achievement of the goal of silencing the guns to end all wars in Africa by 2020.

17. To mobilize international support for Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan, to raise global awareness about the challenges and opportunities for fostering peace and security in Africa and to galvanize political, technical and financial support for the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture road map for 2016-2020, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa has regularly organized, in partnership with the African Union, high-level panels and expert group meetings. The events have addressed emerging and critical peace and security issues in Africa and have sought to develop specific and actionable policy responses and recommendations. The Office has also supported the African Union in the formulation of common African positions and has worked towards ensuring complementarity and coherence between those positions and global policies and priorities.

18. Cooperation has also increased in the context of tackling new types of threats to international peace and security, such as the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in West Africa. UNOAU supported the planning, deployment and management of the African Union response to the outbreak in West Africa, including the mobilization of medical personnel and the liquidation of the African Union Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa mission, and also contributed, through the deployment of technical personnel, to the broader effort provided by the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response.

19. In 2015, in its report ([A/70/95-S/2015/446](#)) the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations called for deepening United Nations-African Union partnership and proposed that the United Nations should take the decisive step of investing in and committing itself to the success of the African Union as a partner in addressing shared concerns. It also espoused the principles of early engagement, ongoing consultation, common understanding of conflicts, joint planning and an integrated approach throughout the conflict cycle. The Panel recognized that there was a need

for predictable financing for African Union peace support operations, but also highlighted the centrality of politics in preventing, managing and resolving conflict. It further emphasized the need for a partnership to be grounded on a clear division of labour based on respective comparative advantage, transparency, accountability and respect for international norms and standards.

IV. Strengthened partnership in conflict prevention and peacemaking

20. In line with the growing institutional collaboration, UNOAU, since 2014, has strengthened its capacity to facilitate regular horizon-scanning activities with the African Union Commission, the sharing of analysis, the development of common messages and, where possible, the harmonization of preventive diplomatic action and mediation efforts. UNOAU has also facilitated regular communication between Headquarters and field missions in Africa, and the African Union Commission on strategic questions, in order to advance common positions.

21. In my report on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations on mediation (A/70/328), I detailed various models of cooperation and stressed the importance of coherence, coordination and complementarity in mediation engagements and the importance of genuine partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union. By sharing experience and technical advice, UNOAU and the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat have supported the African Union in planning and developing the mediation support capability and structures of the Commission. In addition, senior African Union mediators participated in March and May 2015 in the United Nations high-level seminars on gender and inclusive mediation processes and, in August 2015, the Department coordinated the organization of a training course on conflict analysis for staff of UNOAU, the African Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the executive secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

22. There have also been some notable successes in collaboration on country-specific situations. For example, following the attempt in October 2014 by the President, Blaise Compaoré, to amend the Constitution in Burkina Faso to allow him to run for another term, the United Nations, through my Special Representative for West Africa, and the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) cooperated closely to resolve the ensuing crisis. They worked jointly to support the political transition in the country, including through the establishment of the International Follow-up and Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso. On 16 September 2015, the transition process was disrupted by a coup d'état led by the elite military presidential guard. Following the popular mobilization of activists across the country, supported by the regular armed forces, coupled with intense pressure from the international community, in particular from the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS, the leaders of the coup d'état were compelled to relinquish power and the country's transitional institutions were reinstated. The joint approach adopted by the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS, facilitated by UNOAU and the then United Nations Office for West Africa, contributed to the successful completion of the transition in

Burkina Faso, vividly illustrating the advantages of having a shared understanding, close collaboration and partnership in prevention.

23. The United Nations continues to work closely with the African Union, the East African Community and other partners to resolve the crisis in Burundi peacefully. In addition to the efforts led by my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the United Nations Electoral Observer Mission in Burundi, my Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, my Special Representative to the African Union engaged with the leaders of Burundi and with other leaders in the region, in coordination with the African Union Commission Chairperson's Special Representative to the Great Lakes Region and Head of the African Union Liaison Office in Burundi to help to de-escalate rising tensions and mounting violence in Burundi. Following the deterioration of the situation in the country in late 2015, the international community intensified diplomatic efforts in search of a negotiated political process. UNOAU, supported by specialized technical expertise from Headquarters, provided operational support to the African Union for the development of contingency plans to address political and security concerns, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2248 (2015). At the request of the Security Council, I also deployed a team to Burundi to support the efforts of my Special Adviser, Jamal Benomar. Meanwhile, the Peace and Security Council authorized the deployment of the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi, which was rejected by the Government. At its twenty-sixth ordinary session, held in January 2016, the Assembly of the African Union decided to hold off the deployment of the Mission and to dispatch a high-level delegation to engage with the authorities. In January 2016, a Security Council delegation visited the country to call upon all relevant stakeholders to pursue an inclusive and transparent dialogue and prevent an escalation of violence. In February, I visited the country and reiterated the strong commitment of the United Nations to peace, stability and development in Burundi and the broader region. Regional efforts to support an inclusive political dialogue are continuing, pursuant to Council resolutions 2279 (2016) and 2303 (2016).

24. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region work closely with the African Union Commission and the African Union facilitator to support efforts to resolve the political and electoral impasse in the country and to encourage all Congolese stakeholders to join in a political dialogue process and pave the way to peaceful and credible presidential and legislative elections. The Secretariat and the Mission are also providing dedicated political, electoral and communications expertise to the facilitator's team.

25. In Mali, the High Representative of the African Union and my Special Representative are working closely together towards advancing the implementation of the peace agreement and encouraging its signatory parties to commit themselves to undertaking key political and security reform, respecting the ceasefire and enhancing the inclusiveness of the peace process. In addition, the United Nations is cooperating with the African Union towards adjusting the underlying factors of insecurity and instability in the Sahel region through the coordinated implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. Furthermore, the United Nations is participating in the action taken within the framework of the Nouakchott Process on the enhancement of security cooperation and the

operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region. In July 2016, the United Nations participated, along with other multilateral and bilateral partners, in an African Union-led technical assessment mission to Mali to help to develop regional options for tackling terrorism and transnational organized crime in the Sahelo-Saharan region.

26. Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the Libyan crisis has grown following the events that led to the overthrow of the former Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, in 2011. The relationship gained new momentum with the appointment on 31 January 2016 of the African Union High Representative for Libya, Jakaya Kikwete, a former President of the United Republic of Tanzania. My Special Representative for Libya is working and coordinating closely with him, including through the International Contact Group for Libya. There is recognition by international partners of a need for greater cooperation on the political process and on security, and for greater coordination of support to Libya in efforts to combat Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

27. In Madagascar, the United Nations and the African Union have closely followed developments over the past two years. Progress towards national reconciliation has been limited. Tensions between the President and the National Assembly culminated in an attempt by some members of the Assembly to impeach the President in June 2015. In January 2016, Lakhdar Brahimi, a member of the African Union Panel of the Wise, visited the country to encourage dialogue in the wake of the impeachment crisis and to mobilize the support of the international community. I also visited the country, in May 2016. UNOAU engagement resulted in sharing of information on the situation, coordination of visits and alignment of messaging between the two organizations. UNOAU also participated in the needs assessment and design of African Union assistance in the area of security sector reform, complementing the assistance provided by the Peacebuilding Fund aimed at supporting security sector reform, good governance and assistance to the development of southern Madagascar.

28. UNOAU also supported joint United Nations and African Union engagement in the Comoros, where tension rose in late 2015 over the eligibility of a former President, Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi, to run in the presidential elections in 2016. In a joint statement, the United Nations and the African Union called for respect for the principle of alternation of the presidency among candidates from the islands of the Comoros, in line with the Constitution. A message from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission was conveyed to Mr. Sambi by the Envoy of the Chairperson, who was dispatched to the Comoros in November 2015. When tensions arose following both the first and second rounds of the elections, in February and April 2016, the African Union and the United Nations issued aligned statements in which they called for calm, the resolution of grievances through appropriate legal channels and respect for the decisions of the Constitutional Court. In April 2016, I dispatched my Special Representative to the African Union to the Comoros to consult stakeholders and support the continuing work of the United Nations country team. He called for the exercise of restraint and for the electoral institutions to function free from political influence. Following the visit, UNOAU engaged with the African Union on the deployment of an electoral observer mission for the partial rerun of elections called for by the Constitutional Court. The presence of the observers and of United Nations experts contributed to a smooth rerun and built up the confidence of the population in the electoral process.

29. UNOAU also supported the work of the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan. Pursuant to the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in that context, the Office, in coordination with the United Nations-African Union Joint Special Representative for Darfur, worked closely with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2046 (2012). The partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and the Panel is premised on the comparative advantage brought by a panel comprising, initially, three former African Heads of State with considerable influence on key stakeholders in both countries, supported by decisions of the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council.

30. In the Sudan, the 2012 framework for African Union and United Nations facilitation of the Darfur peace process continues to provide the basis for joint efforts to revitalize the peace process and to increase its inclusiveness in a broad national process. In accordance with that guiding principle, since the beginning of 2016, the United Nations-African Union Joint Special Representative for Darfur, UNOAU and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan have supported the African Union High-level Implementation Panel through renewed consultations with the Sudanese parties, urging them to enter into negotiations and take measures to build confidence among themselves, including by ceasing hostilities in Darfur and the Two Areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan States. Those efforts culminated in the signing, in March 2016 by the Government of the Sudan and in August 2016 by opposition groups, of the Roadmap Agreement proposed by the Panel, representing a valuable step towards ending the war and addressing the multifaceted challenges facing the Sudan. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission and I welcomed the signing of the Agreement and urged all Sudanese parties to continue to work towards an agreement on cessation of hostilities, humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas and an inclusive national dialogue. The parties have as yet failed to reach agreement on a cessation of hostilities in Darfur and the Two Areas. I have strongly urged them to resume negotiations, abide by the Roadmap Agreement and refrain from any attempt to escalate the conflict in Darfur and the Two Areas.

31. In the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan, for example, violent conflict and insecurity have forcibly displaced populations, both within and across borders, with dire consequences for women and children. To help to develop strategies to prevent and address the root causes of forced migration within the context of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNOAU has been engaging with the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms. Furthermore, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and others partnered with the African Union Commission to convene a high-level expert group meeting in Durban, South Africa, on 23 and 24 November 2015 on the theme “Conflict-induced migration in Africa: maximizing new opportunities to address its peace, security and inclusive development dimensions”. The participants called for greater cooperation and a more integrated approach to tackling the root causes of forced displacement.

V. Enhanced cooperation in peacekeeping

32. Significant progress is also evident in the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on peace operations. This includes strengthened cooperation on current operations and the development of long-term institutional capacity of the African Union to plan, deploy and manage its operations. Collaboration is continuing to assess options for ensuring more predictable and sustainable financing for African Union peace support operations undertaken with the consent of the Security Council. Efforts are also under way to establish an effective framework and mechanisms to integrate human rights and protection concerns into the conduct of African Union peace support operations and to prevent and address international violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in such contexts.

33. UNOAU continued to work closely with the African Union to support AMISOM efforts to create the security conditions necessary for the political process in Somalia, in particular the 2016 elections. In March 2016, the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security established a joint working group to provide recommendations on enhancing the effectiveness of AMISOM operations and address the issue of short-term and long-term funding shortfalls. The joint working group, comprising representatives of Headquarters, UNOAU, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, the African Union Commission and AMISOM, met in April 2016 and agreed on recommendations to enhance AMISOM effectiveness. Those recommendations were further discussed by the Military Coordination Committee at its meeting held on 9 May 2016, at which a decision was made to review the AMISOM concept of operations.

34. In resolution 2167 (2014), the Security Council welcomed developments regarding cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union, including the contribution of the European Union to the enhancement of African Union capacities, and encouraged regional and subregional organizations to strengthen and increase cooperation among them, including efforts to enhance their respective capacities in the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations, the African Union and the European Union are continuing to cooperate, with the support of UNOAU, on the development of a policy and guidelines on United Nations police in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Continuing efforts between the United Nations and the African Union in that regard will maximize unity of effort.

35. United Nations-African Union cooperation on human rights is evolving. Support is increasingly being provided by UNOAU and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to strengthen the operational capacity of military, police and civilian peacekeepers, emphasizing the centrality of human rights in peacekeeping operations. UNOAU continues to work with OHCHR to strengthen human rights mechanisms in African Union peace and security operations generally, and in Somalia specifically, with enhanced training, planning, selection and screening measures, and is monitoring the establishment of the Civilian Casualty Tracking Analysis and Response Cell in AMISOM. Support has also been provided by UNOAU and OHCHR for the roll-out of the African Union aide-memoire on the protection of civilians. In October 2014, a workshop took stock of the integration of human rights in African Union peace support

operations and, in June 2015, OHCHR and UNOAU organized a joint workshop for UNOAU and African Union civilian staff and military planners on the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces.

36. The United Nations, through UNOAU, works closely with the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms towards the operationalization of the African Standby Force to enhance the capacity of the African Union to respond to violent conflicts on the continent, in line with the five-year workplan and the African Peace and Security Architecture road map for 2016-2020. UNOAU has provided extensive support to the Amani Africa II Field Training Exercise, one of the main instruments for evaluating the operational readiness of the Force, including its ability to respond rapidly to grave circumstances, such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Four of the five regional standby forces have declared their full operational capability.

37. United Nations-African Union cooperation in countering terrorism and violent extremism is growing, underpinned by joint assessment missions and the development of subregional counter-terrorism strategies, and by joint pursuit of the harmonization and application of international and regional legal frameworks on counter-terrorism, especially with the support of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Office and its United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre within the Department of Political Affairs. The United Nations has also improved coordination with other regional security efforts, including support to the Nouakchott Process and to the African Police Cooperation Organization, which coordinates peace support operations aspects of African policing, including preventing and addressing serious organized crime, corruption and terrorism. At the United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit, held on 2 and 3 June 2016 at Headquarters, chiefs of police from 30 African Member States discussed, among other things, the complementarity between international (United Nations) policing and national efforts in addressing the impact of transnational threats; and reinforced strategic partnerships.

38. The United Nations-African Union partnership in Darfur is unprecedented. This model provides opportunities in terms of optimizing the respective political leverages of the United Nations and the African Union in support of the mediation led by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel in accordance with the Peace and Security Council communiqué of 12 September 2014, and of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur in the implementation of its mandate in a highly challenging operating environment. The experience has provided both organizations with important lessons for the future of peace operations.

39. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2167 (2014), the United Nations conducted a lessons learned exercise with the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms on the transitions from African Union to United Nations peace operations in Mali and the Central African Republic, to identify challenges and good practices and provide recommendations for future transitions. The exercise was conducted by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, in cooperation with UNOAU and in consultation with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the Economic Community of Central African States, ECOWAS

and other relevant parties. The exercise underscored the importance of developing effective partnerships between the African Union and the United Nations in peacekeeping. I presented the results of the exercise in a letter to the Security Council in 2015 (S/2015/3), recommending the development of a joint benchmarking paper identifying the conditions that African Union missions need to meet before a transition takes place, a transition toolbox providing timelines that guide future transitional processes, and a lessons learned exercise on strengthening African Union peace support operations. While the African Union and the United Nations continue work to implement the first two recommendations, the lessons learned exercise has taken the form of a United Nations-African Union joint review of support and financing options for African Union peace operations and is expected to complement efforts to strengthen the African Union Peace Fund.

VI. Enhanced partnership in peacebuilding and the rule of law

40. The adoption on 27 April 2016 of General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture supported United Nations-African Union cooperation to work towards sustaining peace. On 28 July 2016, through a presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/12), the Security Council further stressed the importance of partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and encouraged the Secretary-General, through UNOAU and the Peacebuilding Support Office, to begin holding regular exchanges, joint initiatives and information-sharing with the African Union Commission. On 12 May 2016, the United Nations partnered with the African Union in organizing a high-level meeting in New York on the theme “Sustaining peace: mechanisms, partnerships and the future of peacebuilding in Africa” to sustain the political momentum for peacebuilding in Africa and discuss ways to implement the outcome of the 2015 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The outcome document of the meeting contained recommendations for strengthening peacebuilding partnerships between the United Nations and the African Union, the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution and the African Development Bank, and a call was made for adequate and predictable financing for peacebuilding, including for African tools and instruments to sustain peace. In addition, the African Solidarity Initiative is also a mechanism through which the African Union and the United Nations can more closely cooperate to mobilize support from within the continent for activities related to the African Union post-conflict reconstruction and development policy.

41. Six African countries are on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. In April 2016, UNOAU worked closely with the Commission for the allocation of an initial Peacebuilding Fund grant of more than \$2.2 million to the African Union to finance the activities of 32 human rights observers in Burundi for seven months. This first direct Fund grant to a regional organization illustrates the growing collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union, and provides the possibility of replication as the partnership with regional organizations on peace and security takes on added significance and grows in scale. UNOAU continues to work with the African Union towards the full deployment of its authorized 100 human rights observers and 100 military experts in Burundi, as part of international efforts to support the restoration of stability in the country. The Fund is also providing

OHCHR with \$300,000 for training the observers and military experts and for joint monitoring with the African Union of human rights violations in the country.

42. Following initial capacity-building programmes with the African Union, four of the five rule of law and security institutions programmes (security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, mine action and police) have made the transition from the capacity-building phase to full partnership, whereby the African Union now has the capacity and knowledge to contribute on those cross-cutting issues in a manner that complements the contributions of United Nations and other actors. The added value of the African Union in these processes is its ability to develop consensus on continental policies, such as the 2013 policy framework on security sector reform; to foster regional and national ownership, as well as cooperation between the subregional organizations; and to utilize its support in transitional situations to build political support on these cross-cutting issues.

43. As at 2016, African Union programmes relating to the rule of law and security institutions have been broadly harmonized with regard to both structure and timelines. Four of the programmes now have three-year programme documents (2016-2018).

44. The United Nations and the African Union are planning an exchange of letters to provide strategic policy direction for collaboration with regard to cooperation concerning rule of law and security institutions. The United Nations is also exploring the option of signing a memorandum of understanding with the African Union on mine action services. The exchange of letters and programmatic agreements are aimed at solidifying inter-organizational cooperation and facilitate collaboration at the policy and programmatic levels. To ensure a coordinated approach and promote synergy, UNOAU is actively engaging with the African Union to strengthen the rule of law capacities of the African Union. Direct collaboration is also under way through United Nations cooperation programmes on counter-terrorism, small arms and light weapons, and child protection.

45. Achievements to be highlighted in the joint programmes include the deployment, for the first time, of security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration officers to African Union peace support operations and political missions, the establishment of standing bodies to coordinate the work of the African Union with regional economic communities/regional mechanisms and the validation of numerous operational guidance notes and policy documents. In addition, a joint United Nations-African Union-European Union-Southern African Development Community mission to Madagascar in October 2014 initiated the first comprehensive national security sector reform process, which continues to be supported by the four organizations. With regard to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, joint activities contributed to building a common approach in situations relating to the Lord's Resistance Army, the Central African Republic, Somalia, the Sudan and South Sudan. With regard to mine action, the African Union has facilitated cooperation between the Mine Action Service of the United Nations and national border commissions to demine border areas through the African Union Border Programme. The Service provided technical guidance and support to facilitate the implementation of the African Union Mine Action and Explosive Remnants of War Strategic Framework for 2014-2017. The Service also supported the African Union in the development of its safety handbook on landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices.

VII. Financing of African Union peace support operations

46. The African Union Chairperson and I have long advocated sustained, predictable and flexible funding mechanisms to support African Union peace support operations authorized by the Security Council. With the exception of AMISOM, which is partly supported by United Nations assessed contributions through the United Nations Support Office in Somalia, African Union peace operations have to date been funded almost exclusively by voluntary bilateral support and the African Peace Facility established by the European Union at the request of the African Union. The challenges faced by the African Union in funding its own peace support operations have made it difficult for it to ensure the successful implementation of mandates. In the cases of Mali and the Central African Republic, the timing of the transition from the African Union to the United Nations was partially a result of this lack of sustainable and predictable funding.

47. Recognizing the need to mobilize more resources from within the continent, in 2015, at its 24th ordinary session, the Assembly of the African Union agreed that the African Union should contribute up to 25 per cent of the cost of its peace and security efforts, including peace support operations, by 2020. This commitment is expected to enhance African ownership and agenda-setting of peace initiatives taken by the African Union.

48. In September 2015, the Peace and Security Council reiterated its commitment to raising up to 25 per cent of the continent's contribution to the cost of African Union peace and security interventions, and welcomed arrangements proposed by the Chairperson of the Commission for cases involving United Nations assessed contributions. Those proposed modalities include African Union commitment to strengthen funding and support capabilities, financial oversight, human rights and accountability mechanisms and capabilities, and capacities to plan, deploy and manage peace operations. In my report entitled "The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations" (A/70/357-S/2015/682), I welcomed the commitment of the African Union to self-reliance and urged Member States to consider how to respond to the initiative.

49. On 21 January 2016, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission appointed a former President of the African Development Bank, Donald Kaberuka, as High Representative for the African Union Peace Fund, tasked with exploring options to better operationalize the Fund and encourage sustainable funding, including from Africa.

50. Mr. Kaberuka's recommendations on financing the African Union were unanimously adopted at the twenty-seventh ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Kigali in July 2016. Significantly, African leaders agreed to implement the recommendations beginning in 2017, including instituting a 0.2 per cent levy on eligible imports into the continent to finance the African Union. The African Union expects to allocate \$325 million to the Peace Fund in 2017, rising to \$400 million in 2020, from the total amount raised from the import levy. The contributions will constitute the 25 per cent contribution to peace support operations deployed by African leaders.

51. Concurrently, the African Union and the United Nations initiated, early in 2016, a joint review of available mechanisms to finance and support African Union

peace operations authorized by the Security Council. The findings of the review are expected to assist stakeholders in determining how African Union peace operations can be most effectively supported in the future.

VIII. Role of the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms

52. The regional economic communities/regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa are an integral part of the African Peace and Security Architecture. They have a good understanding of regional conflicts by virtue of their proximity and are often the first responders when conflict erupts. Given this crucial role, UNOAU continues to advocate and work with the African Union to improve coordination with the communities/mechanisms, as well as consultation and common messaging and action, where feasible, to address threats and challenges to peace and security. In an effort to further coordinate United Nations interaction with the African Union and promote coherence with the communities/mechanisms through United Nations presences in the regions, UNOAU convened a meeting of all United Nations regional presences in Africa in November 2015 to promote coordination and collaboration, the exchange of information, a common understanding of threats to peace and security, and joint action. Enhanced tripartite understanding and coordination between the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS were evident in the common approach to the crisis in Burkina Faso in 2014 and 2015.

53. The international contact group model provides a platform for further sustained efforts to achieve more unified international intervention on issues of peace and security. In the Central African Republic and Burkina Faso, international contact groups facilitated improved tripartite leadership, collaboration and coordination on some of the most difficult challenges to peace. The model, which comprises a broad range of stakeholders and partners, has the additional advantage of limiting opportunities for spoilers to manipulate the varied interests at play in conflict situations, providing a platform for the harmonization of positions through engagement and discussions around common goals.

54. In the Central African Republic, the decision by the African Union to maintain a political presence, the African Union Mission for the Central African Republic and Central Africa, following the transfer of authority from the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, with the Economic Community of Central African States also setting up a political presence in the country, required enhanced cooperation in support of the political process and the transition. Following the election of Faustin Archange Touadera as President and the end of the transition, new mechanisms are being considered to strengthen cooperation with the host authorities, including through a framework of mutual accountability. Regular United Nations briefings to the Peace and Security Council on the political process were informed by, among other things, coordinated initiatives of the three organizations at the local level. In Burundi, my Special Adviser, the East African Community-led facilitation and the African Union, through its Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, continue to closely coordinate the efforts of the international community to resolve the political crisis

through an inclusive and credible political dialogue. In South Sudan, my Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan provided extensive support to the mediation process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. This resulted in the signing of the peace agreement in August 2015 and the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity in April 2016. In Burkina Faso in 2014, ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and UNOAU worked together to prevent a complete breakdown of stability following the popular uprising. Through an international contact group and, subsequently, the International Follow-Up and Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso, the international community supported Burkina Faso through a successful transition and the peaceful transfer of power.

IX. Strengthening the United Nations Office to the African Union

55. Since the establishment of UNOAU in 2010, the United Nations-African Union partnership on peace and security has grown in scale and complexity, as outlined herein. The relationship has evolved from a series of ad hoc interactions and capacity-building initiatives to a more structured and sustained political and strategic partnership, which recognizes that no one organization alone can tackle the challenges presented by emerging and continuing conflicts in Africa. The Office has assumed a critical role in nurturing and promoting this strategic partnership to facilitate effective, timely and synchronized United Nations-African Union approaches to conflict prevention and management. UNOAU has also streamlined engagement between the two organizations on peace and security, leading to coordinated and consistent United Nations support to the African Union with regard to both short-term operational requirements and long-term institutional capacity-building.

56. UNOAU underwent a strategic review in 2013 and a civilian staffing review in 2015, both conducted jointly by the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support of the Secretariat, in consultation with the African Union Commission and Member States. The strategic review recommended that both the management and the political components of the Office be strengthened to enable UNOAU to more effectively engage, support and backstop efforts, both at United Nations Headquarters and more broadly, to enhance conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacemaking capacities. Both reviews recommended a restructuring of UNOAU. The restructuring would respond to the evolving and increasingly complex peace and security threats in Africa, which are placing greater demands on the African Union and the United Nations, as well as on the partnership between the two organizations. It recognizes the importance of continuous engagement, in particular at the senior, decision-making levels, with the African Union Commission, members of the Peace and Security Council, and partners. UNOAU therefore requires both a sufficient complement of staff and staff of appropriate seniority to meet effectively the growing demands of its mandate.

57. The General Assembly considered the proposed restructuring of UNOAU in June 2016 and requested me to resubmit proposals following a review of UNOAU, for consideration during the main part of its seventy-first session. Given the continuing and rapid evolution of the United Nations partnership with the African Union from an ad hoc partnership to a strategic partnership, I plan to conduct an assessment of United Nations-African Union cooperation, including the structure and resource capacity of UNOAU to meet the growing demands of the partnership.

X. Observations and recommendations

58. As I observed in my report on the implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations ([A/70/357-S/2015/682](#)), I approach the end of my tenure as Secretary-General with profound concern over the many challenges facing the United Nations. The scale and complexity of conflict today, and the suffering that such conflict creates, threaten the international order. There is an urgent need for new and stronger ways to address international peace and security challenges. Stronger partnerships with regional organizations, in particular with the African Union, can enable us to respond early, swiftly, coherently and decisively to prevent and manage conflict.

59. I welcome the progress made in improving consultation and coordination between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The annual consultations between the two bodies, the most recent of which was held in New York in May, are opportune and need to be continued. I believe, however, there is scope for further progress, in particular with regard to better coordinating the decisions of both bodies. In this respect, effective follow-up to the relevant provisions of the joint communiqués issued at the end of the annual meeting will go a long way towards enhancing the effectiveness of the two bodies' combined efforts. This includes joint field visits and consultations between the President of the Security Council and the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council.

60. Security Council decisions on transitions from African Union to United Nations peacekeeping operations will continue to be addressed on a case-by-case basis, guided by clearly defined goals and comparative advantages between the two organizations. There is, however, a need to more clearly articulate and define a common set of guiding benchmarks for the transition to United Nations peacekeeping operations. This is particularly pertinent in the context of discussions about sustainability of funding for African Union peace support operations, and the work of the High Representative for the African Union Peace Fund.

61. The commitment of African leaders to financing the African Union, including its peace support operations, is commendable. It is imperative that Member States seize the momentum and agree on how best to respond to the efforts of self-reliance. My forthcoming joint review with the African Union on the available mechanisms to finance and support African Union peace operations authorized by the Security Council should provide a basis for determining how African Union peace operations can be most effectively supported in the future.

62. In the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations ([A/70/95-S/2015/446](#)) and my report on the implementation of its recommendations, emphasis is laid on the primacy of political solutions to conflict situations. In that regard, there is recognition that joint early analysis, information-sharing and common understanding between the United Nations and the African Union have led to early action that averted or prevented conflicts from escalating, as exemplified in Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Comoros and Madagascar. It is imperative that such efforts be better supported and provided with the necessary resources, in order to enable special envoys and facilitators to perform their good offices functions with greater effectiveness. In addition, if the objectives of the African Union initiative on

silencing the guns by 2020 are to be achieved, greater United Nations support and coordination with the African Union is needed.

63. The role of UNOAU in strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union is crucial. Strengthening our partnership with the African Union and with the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms will remain a priority for the United Nations in the foreseeable future. Strengthening the partnership requires intensifying day-to-day engagement to share views and analysis, seek common understanding of the issues and develop proposals for joint or coordinated action to address them. It involves reaching out to the whole of the United Nations and the African Union, to ensure that both organizations draw on all relevant contributions and, as much as possible, ensure coherence.

64. The capacity of UNOAU to perform its responsibilities and engage effectively with the African Union, regional economic communities/regional mechanisms and bilateral partners is critical as the demands on the partnership have grown exponentially over the past few years. Strengthening its capacity would help to ensure enhanced ability for effective partnership with the African Union and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms, at the appropriate level of seniority, to address the continent's peace and security challenges.

65. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the African Union and its member States and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms for their continued cooperation with the United Nations in efforts to address challenges to peace and security in Africa. I also wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative to the African Union, as well as the staff of UNOAU and all United Nations entities working with the African Union for their efforts to advance peace and security in the region.
