

Following first mission to Africa as UN chief, Guterres highlights strengthened cooperation

1 February 2017 – Speaking to the media on his return from Africa and his participation at the African Union Summit, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted enhanced synergies and avenues of cooperation with the regional bloc.

“We have agreed that Agenda 2063 [the development agenda of the African Union] and the 2030 Agenda [for sustainable development] will be aligned,” said Mr. Guterres at a press encounter at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York, today.

“There will be only one line of reporting, which means that there will be a total cooperation between the UN and the African Union in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the Paris Agreement [on climate change] in the years to come,” he added, noting the establishment of regular, high-level interaction between the two organizations.

The Secretary-General further informed the media on the establishment of a mechanism of cooperation between Intergovernmental Authority for Development – a subregional organization in Africa that includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda as members – the African Union and the UN to “do everything possible” to avoid deterioration of the situation in South Sudan and to bring it back on a better track for peace.

“We will be clearly working together with the same voice, in order to make sure that the national dialogue that will be launched in South Sudan is truly inclusive, including all the key elements of the opposition,” noted Mr. Guterres.

He also said that a full agreement was reached with Kenya in order for it to participate in the Regional Protection Force in South Sudan.

The UN chief also spoke of his meeting with the Heads of State of Mali, Chad, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Niger on moving the political process forward and addressing complex security and terrorism challenges.

He also expressed hope for progress regarding the situation in Burundi.

Further, underscoring the importance of subregional and regional unity, as evidenced in the resolution of the political crisis in the Gambia, the Secretary-General said: “When the neighbours of a country are together, when [ECOWAS] is united and the African Union is united, then it is possible for the Security Council to decide; it is possible for action to be taken, and it is possible for democracy, human rights, and the freedom of peoples to be

defended.”

Recalling the potential that African continent presents, he said that the momentum of recent successes to make sure that the continent is able to achieve sustainable and inclusive developments, knowing that that is also the best way to prevent the conflicts that, unfortunately, have created so much suffering there.