

UN envoy stresses urgency of adequate, predictable resources for AU Mission in Somalia

12 September 2017 – A senior United Nations official today called for greater support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and warned that lack of funding could endanger hard-won progress in the country.

“We have continued to hear passionate appeals from the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council and the AU Commission that the issue of predictable, flexible and adequate funding for AMISOM needs to be addressed urgently,” said Haile Menkerios, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the AU, briefing the Security Council on the cooperation between the Organization and regional entities, including the AU.

“It would be tragic, not least for the long-suffering Somali people, if the gains and sacrifices of the last decade were reversed because the international community was unable to provide adequate and predictable funding for [the Mission],” he warned.

The senior UN official also noted the continued commitment of the Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council to consider financial burden-sharing for AU Peace Support Operations authorized by the Security Council.

Further in his briefing, Mr. Menkerios, also the head of the UN Office to the AU ([UNAOU](#)), highlighted the continuous engagement at different levels between the UN Secretariat and the AU Commission, and that UN envoys work with and complement the efforts of AU Special Envoys in a number of critical situations across the continent.

He also spoke on collaborative engagements between the UN and the AU, and the Security Council’s recognition that its deliberations and decisions on peace and security issues in Africa can be enriched by briefings by senior AU officials, alongside their UN counterparts.

“As many Council members stated during the deliberations, there is a wealth of knowledge, experience and understanding which Special Representatives of the AU, as well as those of its Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms, could place at the disposal of this Council,” he said, adding: “The UN Secretariat stands ready to work with the AU Commission [...] in this regard.”

INTERVIEW: UN Assembly President aims to achieve 'results for people'

12 September 2017 – Miroslav Lajčák hopes, that under his presidency, the United Nations General Assembly will overcome narrow national interests and produce tangible benefits for people.

“My hope is that the 72nd session of the General Assembly will be a good one, a productive one that will result in many concrete solutions to the world’s problems,” Mr. Lajčák told *UN News* ahead of the session’s opening today.

The career diplomat from Slovakia, who was elected by the 193-member Assembly as its President, highlighted two of the world’s most pressing issues – conflict and migration – as his priorities.

“I wish to pay attention to what we can do better to prevent conflict. Because by avoiding conflict, we save human lives and we also save money,” he said, while noting that Member States will also be devoting time and energy to the drafting of a global compact on migration, which is expected to be adopted in 2018.

Having been through difficult missions, particularly in the Balkans, Mr. Lajčák said he understands what it takes to succeed in multilateralism.

“If we disagree, this is not the reason to punish each other. It’s the reason to sit down and try to find a consensus or compromise. This is what I understand as the essence of diplomacy,” he said.

VIDEO: Miroslav Lajčák outlines priorities for his tenure as President of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, aiming to bolster the world body’s efforts to promote peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

UN News: How do you view the role of the General Assembly in the 21st century?

Miroslav Lajčák: The General Assembly is a unique organ. It’s the most representative organ of the United Nations, where all 193 Member States are present. Each has one vote regardless of its size, power or wealth. That gives the body a huge authority. Plus, according to the [UN] Charter, the General Assembly can discuss any matter. So, therefore, I wish to see the General Assembly being a body where the most important issues are being discussed and where we are able to generate answers to the questions that our people are expecting from us.

UN News: What are your hopes for the new session? What do you see as the biggest challenges?

I believe in respect. We might be different, we might have different views, different interests, but we have to respect each other.

Miroslav Lajčák: My hope is that the 72nd session of the General Assembly will be a good one, a productive one that will result in many concrete solutions to the world's problems. Most pertinent being probably the two of them. First is the prevention of conflict, because I don't think we can say that we are in control of what's happening around us. There are too many conflicts, and too few solutions. So, I wish to pay attention to what can we do better to prevent conflict. Because by avoiding conflict, we save human lives and we also save money.

And the second hope is linked to the issue of migration. It's a global phenomenon. It's an issue that we are all confronted with, one way or another. We have a task or mandate to prepare the Global Compact on Migration. This will take a lot of time during the 72nd session. But I really hope that we will be able to present a document that is rich in substance, that is credible, and that will be well received by our citizens.

UN News: In your acceptance speech, you spoke about wanting to focus on six priorities [people; peace and prevention; migration; the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) and climate action; human rights; and quality]. Given the situation in international affairs now, do you envisage difficulty in keeping your focus on these six priorities?

Miroslav Lajčák: We have to have priorities. At the same time, we have to be flexible and to be able to deal with the issues that we were not foreseeing at the time when we were preparing priorities. So, my six priorities cover all three pillars of the UN work, namely peace and security, development and human rights, and also the ongoing activities. I mentioned already peace and prevention, I mentioned migration. Of course, there is a sustainable development agenda, and the climate agenda where we have to stay focused. There is an agenda of human rights and human dignity. And there is an agenda of a modern UN, which means to support the reforms and also to adopt a budget that will allow us to work also for the future. But as I said, we must not be rigid in sticking to these priorities. Whenever there is a need to address an issue that has emerged and the UN is expected to deal with, we should be ready to do so.