

## Speech: "It's in all of our interests to forge an even closer relationship as we strive to maintain peace and security in Africa."

Thank you Mr President, and a happy new year to you. And thank you also to Special Representative Menkerios for your briefing.

At the outset let me express my thanks to you, Mr President, and to the Secretariat, for leading a successful visit to the African Union in Addis Ababa. We all saw and heard firsthand just how critical the relationship is between the UN and the AU and I look forward to, and commit to, doing whatever I can to strengthen that relationship.

I do so because our two great organisations share the same objectives, the same priorities, and the same respect for the principle of African leadership. So it's in all of our interests to forge an even closer relationship as we strive to maintain peace and security in Africa. To do so, I see three steps that we should take.

First, and as others have said, we need to do more to learn from each other. A simple first step would be having more joint briefings in this Chamber from AU and UN officials as we do on Somalia. They are a vital means of increasing the awareness and knowledge of all of us around this table. There should also be more joint analysis, joint planning and joint assessments so that we form a common understanding of a situation and together find common solutions.

The recent UN/AU visit to DRC and Nigeria on women, peace and security is an example of the sort of collaborative work we should encourage. We should cultivate our joint reporting on gender based violence in places like South Sudan so that we move beyond reporting to sharing of action plans, and further collaboration. We should agree as the United Nations that we will make available any of our Special Envoys or Special Representatives if the African Union PSC wish to hear from them. And we should invite the African Union to do the same.

We should also look at what more we can do as Member States. The United Kingdom works closely with AU member states to provide military capacity building, delivering training and sharing expertise on improving accountability, human rights compliance and preventing sexual violence in conflict. I know others are doing the same and I encourage all to do so.

Second, Mr President, we need both organisations to play to their comparative strengths so that together we are more than the sum of our parts. We need only look to Somalia to see that it works. The bravery and the heroism of AMISOM troops, to whom I pay genuine and profound tribute, supported by the United Nations, has enabled the political process and progress we see there.

During this year's Presidential elections, it was AU troops who protected the venue, infrastructure and participants, ensuring the safety and security of all those involved. And it was the UN Support Office in Somalia who helped AMISOM in the preparatory work, setting up the venue, ensuring the integrity of the site, as well as providing vital security equipment to AMISOM. Together they, we, helped make history; ensuring that the most democratic presidential elections in Somalia in decades passed off successfully and peacefully. It is a model that we should replicate elsewhere.

My third and final point, Mr President, is that our cooperation will count for little without sustainable financing. As we heard last week during our discussions with the AU PSC in Addis, this is a top objective for all of us. So we must find a solution which shares the responsibility to provide adequate, predictable and sustainable financing to AU-led missions, including the AU's own commitment to fund 25% of costs by 2020.

It was important to the UK, that on our visit in Addis, so many speakers from the two Councils, and the AU Commission, reiterated their commitment to finding and funding that 25%. This financial solution must be combined with the undertaking of agreed standards and mechanisms to ensure oversight and accountability for performance, conduct and discipline, including sexual exploitation and abuse, and financial management. In doing so, not only will the finances of AU missions be secured, but their performance and their accountability will also improve. This will only be to the benefit of peace and security and to the benefit of so many outside this chamber. This seems to me a fruitful area for concrete follow up by the UN Secretariat and the AU PSC.

In conclusion, Mr President, there is still some way to go to bring our organisations even closer together. But through these three steps I believe we can do so. And our collaborative progress to date should encourage us that we can resolve future challenges together. Thank you.