



STATEMENT BY

H.E DR. STERGOMENA LAWRENCE TAX

SADC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

AT

**THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CONSULTATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND
SECURITY COUNCIL**

GABORONE, 14 MAY 2014

Your Excellency Ambassador Welile Nhlapo,

**Former Chairperson of the Kimberly Process and
Former national Security Special Advisor to President Zuma,**

**Your Excellency, Mr. Aziz Pahad, Senior Political Advisor to ACCORD,
Representative of the Executive Director of ACCORD,**

**Your Excellency Mdu Lembede, Ambassador of South Africa to
Botswana,**

Esteemed Members of the Academic Fraternity and Civil Society,

Distinguished Member of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my singular honour and privilege to be given this opportunity to welcome you all to this very important consultation in the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the African Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC). This consultation is particularly important in that it will provide participants and stakeholders a cross-cutting assessment of the successes and challenges experienced during the last 10 years.

This is an opportune time and platform to engage in the debates and formulate recommendations with for the future of the PSC in general and SADC's peace and security agenda in particular. Our region has a responsibility and an obligation to contribute to the evaluation of the achievements and challenges; to the projection of the directions we would like to see the AU PSC moving into; and suggest the possible actions to address both structural and operational constraints that have so far posed challenges to the work of the PSC. As we rejoice in the successes of the PSC, we must roll our sleeves and redouble our efforts to face the remaining challenges.

As we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the PSC, it is time to pose and take stock of what contributed to the successes and to the challenges of this

great initiative. Indeed, ten years is not much for an institution operating in a massive continent like Africa with rampant poverty; in which the statehood is under construction in the midst of fast growing populations; and where the mass communication technologies continue to bombard the youth with expectations beyond the capacities of our governments.

It is therefore important that we reflect, re-organise and re-energise our determination to rid the continent from conflicts. In doing so, these consultations should address, among other things, two main issues, namely: (i) what has been the contribution of the civil society in shaping the work of the PSC?; and (ii) What should be done in the next decade to strengthen the PSC-Civil Society partnership in conflict prevention and resolution?

Chairperson

You will recall that the PSC was established and officially launched in 2004 and its functions are defined by Article 9(1) and 9(2) of the Protocol to the Constitutive Act of the African Union. It is mandated to promote and advance the objectives and principles enshrined in the AU Constitutive Act, namely to promote peace, security, and stability on the continent. At its establishment, Africa and the world at large were still celebrating the end of Apartheid. Africa was still jubilant about the end of the protracted liberation struggles and the introduction of political pluralism on the continent. The celebration mood however, soon faded as conflicts increasingly became overwhelming, and democratic processes become the new platform for conflicts.

The complex political spectrum that the PSC is working under has to be understood against the backdrop of the successes of its predecessors, such as the OAU Liberation Committee and the Central Organ of Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The Liberation Committee under the leadership of the legendary Brigadier-General Hashim Mbita of the United Republic of Tanzania had a clear target – the political liberation of the continent from external occupation and oppression. By 1994 it fully accomplished its mission with the final demise of Apartheid in South Africa.

The single minded and outward oriented anti-colonial paradigm ceded the space to pluralist and inward oriented and human-centered security paradigm.

The main mandate of the OAU's Central Organ established in 1993 was to promote conflict management and prevention and build the capacity for conflict resolution. It was for this reason that the first peace and security structure in the OAU was the Conflict Management Division (CMD).

From the late 1990s into early 2000s, African countries refocused their attentions on economic recovery, eager to reap the post-cold war dividends. The scarcity of financial resources however, drew in the Breton Hood institutions and with them the neoliberal economic development paradigm. The principles of the Washington consensus became the mantra of our development orientation with the consequences already known.

This paradigmatic shift ushered in new challenges related to state building, citizenship and economic development. Intra-state contradictions surged as former prox-wars rebels joined the masses of dissatisfied citizens. The expected peaceful political pluralism turned into violent political competition. A new phenomenon also emerged. For the first time, Africa was awash with the international NGOs (INGOs) some of which transformed from solidarity movements into this new dressing. The rise of the partnership concept resulted in the birth of many national NGOs (NNGOs) linked to the INGOs. The western inspired discourse called this new phenomenon - *the pathology of emerging vibrant civil society in developing countries*. In worse situations, it was called the *syndrome of the failing states*.

The colonial mentality of the military-based power, coupled with the prolonged armed struggles that created securocratic mindset in some African countries, constructed an appropriate environment for unconstitutional changes of governments through military coup d'états. From Niger to Conakry, Mauritania to Mali, Bissau to Madagascar, Africa witnessed an upsurge in coup d'états. The resilience of the former liberation movements, which became ruling political parties, invited heated

debates as to whether political pluralism in these societies could ever accept alternation of power. The resentment from defeat drew new battle lines between the former colonial powers vis-à-vis former colonized countries. The glaring poverty levels where the main employer is the government that is also under pressure from the multilateral lending institutions to cut down public spending, and the weak private sector that could be the alternative source to generate income, has made Africa a fertile ground for instability. The imbalances between the population growth, the increase in education output, and the weak employment creation, have compounded the already volatile situation.

Of late, we are witnessing a new phenomenon, called *the new intra-African Diaspora* driven by the search for better conditions of livelihood. With this unparalleled demographic movement comes the transnational organized crime translated into trafficking of women and children. This new situation results in the transformation of the demographic structure of the countries of origin and of destination with the attendant socio-economic consequences. The AU's PSC cannot, alone, address these challenges.

Chairperson,

The African leadership recognized the magnitude of these sources of instability and conflict in the continent and, hence the establishment the PSC as a standing decision-making body on the issues of peace and security. The Protocol Relating to the Establishment of this body contains an institutional framework to address the malaise alluded to earlier. While the overall African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) that includes, the PSC, the Panel of the Wise (PANWISE), the Continental Early Warning (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Peace Fund (PF), has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa, the protocol recognizes the role for the regional mechanisms.

In spite of the institutional dissonances between the RECs/Regional Mechanisms and the PSC, significant strides have been made to address the conflicts and political crisis on the continent. In the SADC region, the PSC worked closely with the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation to resolve the unconstitutional change of government

in Madagascar, and in the current efforts to restore peace and security in the Eastern DRC.

As envisaged under Article 12 (2.b) of the Protocol, the SADC Early Warning System is in the process of establishing the link with the Continental Early Warning (CEWS). SADC participates at quarterly meetings of the CEWS. On the Standby Force, SADC is hosting the **AMANI AFRICA Cycle II** Field Training Exercise (FTX) this year in the Kingdom of Lesotho.

The SADC Standby Force Planning Element has full multidimensional outfit, whereby the military, police and civilian components are fully operational. The readiness pledged by member states pledged is regularly verified by the Planning Element. The various training courses conducted by the SADC Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RPTC) based in Harare, have also been multidimensional.

Chairperson,

The capacity for resource mobilization and competence in the eyes of the foreign donors also undermine the expansion and skills development of CSOs working in the area of peace and security. To date, the SADC based CSOs working closely with the PSC are very few. We only see the ACCORD and the ISS and seldom CCR and EISA in the case of capacity building for elections observers. One of the key targets of the SADC regional integration efforts is the strengthening of the private sector and CSO participation in forging regional relations towards a demand driven integration. We at SADC are committed to make this a reality.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, **Chairperson**, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the AU for the timely initiative to hold these regional consultations. I wish to express my profound appreciation to ACCORD for accepting the challenge to facilitate the holding of these consultations.

I wish you a resounding success in your deliberations and hope that your recommendations shall make all of us proud as we present them to the AU.

I thank you!!