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**Keynote Address By Ambassador Saïd Djinnit
Commissioner For Peace and Security,
Commission of the African Union**

**To Africa Partnership Forum,
Berlin, Germany
23 May 2007**

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I would like to thank the organizers of this meeting for inviting me to give a keynote address on peace and security.

Since Africa was first placed on the G8 agenda with the adoption of the Genoa Plan of Action in 2001, and through the follow-up action at the summits of Kananakis, Evian, Sea Island and Gleneagles, G8 states have repeatedly expressed their commitment to support the continent's efforts to address the development and security challenges facing Africa. I would like to express our appreciation to Germany for again putting Africa on the G8's agenda, and for having consulted with the AU at every step of the preparatory process.

Today's meeting is taking place just one week after our Consultation with the G8 and other partners in Addis Ababa, in follow-up to the Africa-G8 Plan of Action that was adopted in Evian in 2003. The meeting afforded us the opportunity to review the progress made by the AU in addressing the peace and security challenges facing the continent, as well as to follow up on the commitments made by our G8 partners. I believe that the outcome of that meeting provides a good starting point for our discussions.

The importance of the partnership between the AU and the G8 cannot be overemphasized. In the few years of its existence, the AU, despite the difficult circumstances in which it finds itself, has been able to demonstrate leadership and to assert its authority, in Africa and internationally, in dealing with the many challenges confronting the continent. This is particularly true in the area of peace and security. It is therefore important that partners continue to acknowledge the pivotal role played by the AU.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Of the many challenges facing our continent, the quest for peace and security is undoubtedly the most pressing. True, over the past years, the number of violent conflicts has been significantly reduced, and important advances, while still fragile, have been made, thanks to the collective determination and efforts of Africa, with the support of its partners. Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, and the DRC, amongst others, all bear testimony to this encouraging trend. However, far too many of our countries remain trapped in a vicious cycle of conflict and its deadly consequences.

After many years of working at the coalface of conflict resolution efforts in the continent, we in the AU have witnessed the untold suffering inflicted on our people as a result of conflict, and how this situation has held back our continent, preventing it from exploiting its full potential as a continent of limitless resources and a dynamic and diverse population. Clearly, while peace is the continent's most valuable public good, it is, regrettably, still in short supply.

I was recently in Mogadishu, to encourage our peacekeepers there, and to also encourage the President of Somalia and his colleagues in the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) to resolutely engage in an all-inclusive peace and reconciliation process in Somalia. As we were driving from the airport to the Presidential compound, I was distressed to see the extent of the destruction brought to that country, and the resultant suffering. That visit, together with a series of missions undertaken to other conflict areas, in particular to Darfur, have renewed our determination to push forward the AU's peace and security agenda, and to build the requisite capacity to effectively address the conflict situations on the continent.

Since the early 1990s, the quest for peace and democracy has been the overriding concern of the African peoples. And since then, African leaders have consistently committed themselves to dealing decisively with the conflict situations on the continent, and to make peace a priority.

However, it was clear that, in order to successfully address the conflict situations on the continent, beyond the expression of political will and determination of the leaders, there was the need to put in place a strong and effective institutional framework to support and sustain that political will. This realization provided the impetus for the elaboration of an African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which recognized the importance of investing in the anticipation and prevention of conflict and of putting in place structures to effectively resolve conflicts once they have broken out. It is gratifying to note that significant progress has been made in the establishment of the structures and mechanisms provided for by this continental architecture. Suffice for me to highlight the following:

1. the establishment of the Peace and Security Council, and the dynamism with which it has embraced its mandate;
2. the adoption of the Framework for the Operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS);
3. the appointment of the members of the Panel of the Wise, for which we are now in the process of finalizing the modalities for its functioning;
4. the elaboration of the key policy documents of the African Standby Force (ASF), and the significant progress made in the establishment of the Regional Standby Brigades;
5. the adoption of the AU Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD).

In addition to these steps, and despite the fact that we have not yet been able to finalize the MoU between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as provided for in the Peace and Security Protocol, I am pleased to inform this meeting that we have nevertheless been able to significantly enhance our working relations with the RECs. These developments are so encouraging that I am now planning to convene a retreat with the Chief Executives of the RECs, at which

we would be able to share experiences and identify lessons learnt, and also to finalize the MoU.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation to our partners, including the European Union through the capacity-building component of the African Peace Facility (APF), for their continued support to our efforts towards finalizing the African Peace and Security Architecture.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As significant as these developments have been, nevertheless I must acknowledge that we could have done much more had our energies and resources not been distracted by the need to address the conflict and other crisis situations on the continent. Indeed the AU, though not yet fully equipped to deal with the conflicts arising on the continent, has had no choice but to do everything in its power to end these conflicts, to ameliorate the suffering of ordinary civilians, and to assist those member states emerging from conflict in rebuilding their shattered economies and restore their social fabric. It is in this context that the AU's efforts in Darfur, Somalia, Burundi, DRC, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and others, must be understood.

This situation was further compounded by the fact that the AU found itself in a situation where it had to deploy peacekeeping operations to the field. This is not to imply that peacekeeping operations alone can solve the problems on the continent. To the contrary, the AU has always recognized that peacekeeping can only provide the political environment that would enable the parties to the conflict to reach a lasting political settlement. As a consequence, the AU has expended a great deal of energy trying to facilitate comprehensive political settlements, as it has done in Burundi (with the Arusha and subsequent agreements), in Darfur, where it spent almost two years facilitating the negotiations that led to the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), and its current efforts in Somalia where it is trying to push the peace and reconciliation process.

The AU's first peacekeeping mission was AMIB, which it deployed to Burundi in 2004. This mission, thanks to the leadership provided by South Africa, which was supported by Ethiopia and Mozambique, and thanks also to the support of our partners who provided significant amounts of financial and logistical support, was a clear success, and enabled the UN to step in to take over the mission once the country had been sufficiently pacified. AMIB provides us with a clear example of what can be achieved through concerted international action. I would like to note that, even once the United Nations had taken over the peacekeeping mission in Burundi, the AU continued to remain engaged in the peace process, including in the facilitation of the agreement between the Burundian government and the Palipehutu/FNL. This engagement continues till this day.

The AU decision of 25 May 2004 to intervene in Darfur, in the face of mounting concern over the humanitarian crisis in this region of Sudan, reflected its determination to put into practice its principle of non-indifference that derives from its Constitutive Act and the launching, on that very day, of the Peace and Security Council. As you are aware, the mission's mandate evolved from an initial peace observation mission to the current peace keeping operation, which has proved to be the most challenging undertaken by the AU to date, and which, the AU has had to acknowledge, it lacks the capacity to manage.

The decision of the PSC to deploy a peace support mission to Somalia was based on the conviction that, in the wake of the Ethiopian intervention, there existed a unique opportunity to restore lasting peace to that country, the first such opportunity after more than a decade and a half of violence and instability. In taking the decision to deploy in Somalia, the AU took into account the lessons learnt in Darfur. Thus, the concept of operation was based on the principle of self-sustenance by the troop contributing countries, and on a clear exit strategy, with the UN being called on to take over the mission at the end of its six-month mandate.

When the PSC took the decision to authorize missions in these countries, it was fully aware that the AU had neither the resources nor the technical capacity to sustain them over time. It did so with the conviction that the AU, regardless of how unprepared and ill-equipped it was, had a duty to act and to do whatever it could to end the violence and bring hope to communities in crisis. It is our conviction, in the AU, that the suffering of our people should primarily be the concern of Africa, of its peoples, its leaders and its institutions.

In doing so, the AU also acted, it believed, on behalf of the wider international community. Hence it expected that support commensurate with the challenges at hand would be forthcoming. And, while I must acknowledge the valuable support we received from our partners, I would also like to say that the resources made available to us were far from being sufficient.

The Somalia experience shows us the consequences of not acting on time in order to stabilize the situation. We in the AU regret the fact that, for more than two years after the conclusion of the Mbagathi Conference that established the Transitional Federal Government and its institutions, our repeated requests for support from the international community, including calls to support the deployment of an African peace mission, were ignored. Even after the most recent developments in Somalia which, we all recognized, provided us with a new opportunity to forge peace and reconciliation, we still are unable to marshal the necessary political, financial and logistical support to fully deploy AMISOM as an effective peace mission. To date, only two battalions of the 9 that were originally authorized by the PSC, have been deployed, and even those have inadequate resources and equipment. A number of other African countries have pledged troops to the mission, but have found it difficult to honour their pledges in the face of the uncertainty surrounding the funding of the mission, among other factors.

I want at this point to make a few remarks about our relations with the United Nations (UN). The UN, of course, has primary responsibility for the maintenance of

international peace and security, and the AU's efforts must be seen in this context. However, given past experience, it is very difficult to envisage the UN's intervention in African conflicts, unless certain very specific requirements have been met. In the first place, the UN is reluctant to get involved in peace operations unless a prior peace agreement has already been signed and an effective ceasefire has been concluded. And yet, as experience in Africa has shown, it is often the case that external intervention of a peace mission is necessary to create the conditions that would lead to a peace agreement, as was the case in Burundi, and as remains the case in Darfur.

There are also other cases which might not warrant the deployment of a UN peace mission, because of its limited magnitude, yet which would still require some international presence, in order to promote confidence between the parties, as has been illustrated by the Comoros. Even such a limited deployment is often outside the current capacity of the AU. And there are cases where, even once the UN has withdrawn, an international presence is still required as a follow-up mission. This is the case at present in Burundi, where the AU has deployed a new follow-up mission since the signing of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement signed between the Burundian Government and the Palipehutu/FNL and the subsequent withdrawal of the UN Peacekeeping mission there.

The recognition that the AU will continue to have to shoulder responsibility for peace and security on the continent, together with the realization that, for years to come, it will not have sufficient resources to do so on its own, has led the African Union to propose the establishment of a Global or Complementary Peace Facility, which would be extended beyond the current African Peace Facility established in 2003, at our request, by the EU. This issue was discussed extensively during our recent Consultation with the G8 and other partners, which stressed the importance of establishing a working group that would submit recommendations to a meeting of high level officials, which is planned for October. It is my fervent hope that this

Forum will extend support to our proposal for the establishment of the Global or Complementary Peace Facility.

While this is an important objective of the AU in its engagement with the G8, our long-term objective is the possibility of AU-led missions, undertaken with the consent of the Security Council, being funded out of assessed contributions by UN Member States, within the framework of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. This was the decision that was taken by AU Heads of State and Government at its last Assembly in January 2007 and, I am pleased to note, was the subject of discussions at the UN Security Council this past March, under the presidency of South Africa. This would represent a long-term solution to the resource constraints faced by Africa, and the AU looks forward to the report of the Secretary General on this matter.

In addition, I personally believe that such an arrangement would add substance to the relationship between the AU and the UN, and would contribute to enhancing the authority and credibility of the UN Security Council as the body primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, under which continental and regional arrangements should fall.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges, it is clear, are enormous. We need to bring the conflicts to a swift end, and to invest in post-conflict reconstruction as a means to ensure that they do not recur. We need to put more energies into structural conflict prevention, and I am glad that our partnership with the G8 has already identified a number of collaborative projects in this regard, relating to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and to natural resource exploitation and conflict. For us to successfully build lasting peace, we need to go to the heart of the matter, to the root. Peace will continue to remain elusive if the issues of governance, poverty and integration are

not dealt with decisively. These are Africa's ultimate challenges, and they also form the heart of our partnership with the G8.

The AU's role in fostering governance, integration and economic development, as well as in mobilizing resources from within the continent, is crucial. In this we take a large part of our inspiration from the experience of the European Union. The experience of the EU shows that institutions can contribute to security through the promotion of integration, economic development and the growth of mutual interests - between states, but also between communities and peoples. Central to this is the promotion of standards of governance. The AU has made important strides in this area too: it has adopted numerous declarations relating to elections and human rights, it has adopted the Peer Review Mechanism, it has put in place programmes to enhance the capacity of the public service, and it has put in place the Court of Justice and the Pan African Parliament.

Of course, the AU faces many problems in their implementation, but we have made a start, and the political will of African leaders is not in doubt. In this undertaking, the role of the AU is critical, as it is expected to take the lead in ensuring that the commitment of African leaders remains steadfast and that the continent's efforts remain focused. In these endeavours, Africa and the AU would like to count on the continued and concrete support of its Partners. This, I believe, is precisely the objective of this Forum, which aims at forging a solid partnership between Africa and the G8, based on mutual interest and mutual accountability.

Thank you.