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**MEETING OF THE 17<sup>TH</sup> AFRICAN CHIEFS OF DEFENCE STAFF  
AND HEADS OF SAFETY AND SECURITY, IN PREPARATION  
OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALISED  
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**11 MAY 2022**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**OPENING STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR BANKOLE ADEOYE,  
COMMISSIONER OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY**

**Major General Mamadou Gaye, Chief of Defence Staff of the Republic of Senegal and Chair of the meeting of African Chiefs of Defence and Heads of Safety and Security (ACDSS),**

**Members of the Bureau of the ACDSS,**

**Chiefs of Defence Forces and Representatives of Member States,**

**Representatives of Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Chairperson of the Commission, I would like to warmly welcome you all to this 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of African Chiefs of Defence and Heads of Safety and Security.

Let me also take this opportunity to pay tribute to all AU PSO personnel contributing to peace and security efforts across the continent, especially those that have paid the ultimate price.

As you would have already been briefed, we have had very constructive two days of deliberations at the meeting of the Experts, which has laid a good and solid foundation for your meeting. The Commission appreciates the recognition by the Experts of the milestones achieved in the implementation of your directives since your last meeting. In this context, we reiterate our

commitment to continue facilitating all efforts aimed at achieving the noble and ambitious vision of silencing all guns in Africa.

**Mr Chair, Members of the Bureau of the ACDSS,**

**Chiefs of Defence Staff and Representatives of Member States and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to highlight the following five key points that came out clearly during the Experts meeting which reiterates that:

1. When the ASF was envisioned in the early 2000s, we were not faced with the kinds of conflicts that we currently grapple with in the continent, ranging from trans-national and trans-regional threats, that includes acts of terrorism and violent extremism that are also linked with transnational organized crimes as well as drugs and human trafficking.
2. The ASF needs to be recalibrated to take into account current conflict contexts and trajectories, to be better able to address the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism.
3. The role of RECs/RMs should be central to all the efforts of the AU to ensure better coordination of our collective efforts to comprehensively and sustainably address current and future peace and security challenges in the continent.

4. We require effective training, required equipment and adequate capabilities as well as predictable and sustainable funding and resources to enable robust and timely responses to conflict situations in the continent.
5. African solidarity and a continental approach is required to effectively and comprehensively prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism in the Continent.

These five key points are a demonstration of the current realities that we have been experiencing, and that are also a reflection of the types of peace support operations we have on the continent. It is in this regard that this 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the STCDSS is critical in providing clear directions to the Commission, RECs/RMs and Member States on how best we should continue coordinating our collective efforts to address the current multiple peace and security challenges in the continent.

This includes the modalities for the utilisation of the ASF to prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism, taking note also of the increase of foreign fighters and mercenaries in the continent as well as the need for governments control of current ungoverned spaces within their territories, as well as addressing issues of unconstitutional changes of government.

In this regard, the Commission looks forward to the deliberations of this 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ACDSS in taking forward the recommendations proposed by the meeting of Experts.

Let me end by reiterating that the Commission will continue to rely on the guidance and commitment of Member States, including the recommendations of this ACDSS meetings to the meeting of Ministers on the key directives that should be implemented going forward.

I thank you for your kind attention, and wish you fruitful deliberations.