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United Nations Economic and Social Council

**TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES**

**Statement by H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of ECOSOC**

**Africa Dialogue Series 2018: A Stronger AU-UN Partnership for Peace, Security and Development in Africa**

**October 17, 2018**

President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
President of the United Nations Security Council for the month of October  
Secretary-General of the United Nations  
Chairperson of the African Union Commission,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to join you in the newly launched Africa Dialogue Series which – like its predecessor – Africa Week – provides an excellent opportunity for exchanging views on how to better promote peace, security and development on the African continent.

Turning to the topic of this session, “the role of the African Union-United Nations partnership in a globalized world”, the words of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan come to mind when he said that arguing against globalization was like “arguing against the laws of gravity”. Globalization is irreversible and has brought many benefits to the world’s population through integrated world economies, expansion of trade and significant advances in communications and technology, to name just a few.

At the same time, we also know that vast numbers of people have been “left behind” as inequalities between the haves and have-nots continues to grow. In Africa, despite the sustained economic growth in the past two decades, with African countries being among the 10 fastest growing economies in the world, recording an annual growth rate of 5 per cent, poverty, hunger and inequality remain prevalent. In Sub-Saharan Africa, about 42 per cent of the population currently live below the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day, and one in five children, adolescents and youth is out of school. Gender inequality persists in many African countries, with women earning 70 per cent of the income that men do and remaining significantly under-represented in decision making positions in the public and private spheres.

Africa is also one of the world’s continents most impacted by climate change,



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which undermines efforts to build sustainable peace and development. Notably the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions suffer from the various adverse effects of climate change as desertification and worsening floods and droughts place strain on natural resources and on communities that depend on them. Moreover, climate change acts as a threat multiplier, aggravating already fragile situations, leading to forced displacement and migration as well as contributing to social tension and conflict.

This calls for our urgent action.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is grounded in the recognition that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development. It is therefore evident that, to create the conditions for sustainable peace and long-term development in Africa, particularly in countries ravaged by or emerging from conflict, we need to successfully address the many socioeconomic, environment and political drivers of conflict. And to do so, in today's globalized world, now more than ever we need strong partnerships to advance the well-being of all people, starting with those who are furthest behind.

I am pleased to see that the partnership between the United Nations the African Union remains strong as testified by the signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security in April 2017 and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda in January this year.

The Economic and Social Council has an important role to play in sustaining peace and promoting sustainable development in Africa and has consistently considered the situation of African countries emerging from conflict in its meetings. ECOSOC played an “avant-garde” role in developing mechanisms to respond to the problems faced by countries emerging from conflict, including by creating, in the early 2000s, ad-hoc advisory groups on Burundi and Guinea Bissau. Since 2011, the Council regularly discusses the situation in South Sudan.

In order to advance the peace and development nexus, ECOSOC has also forged a close working relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission, including organizing joint meetings, most recently on “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace” in 2016 and on “The situation in the Sahel” last year. This year, on 13 November, the ECOSOC-PBC joint meeting will address the “Linkages between



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climate change and challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel region”, offering the opportunity to discuss how best to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063 through the effective implementation of the 2013 United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS).

Taking the opportunity to be seated here on the podium next to the Presidents of the other Charter Bodies of the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council, I would like to stress that progress in conflict-affected countries requires that we do more together to put in place integrated approaches across the three pillars of the United Nations. The 2030 Agenda recognizes this.

Next year, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) will review Sustainable Development Goals on jobs and growth, inequality, justice and peaceful societies and robust institutions, climate change, education and of course global partnerships(SDGs) – all relevant in efforts aimed at promoting sustainable development and peace. It will be a good opportunity for African Member States, including those presenting their National Voluntary Reviews, to share relevant lessons learned and ideas on how to move the 2030 Agenda forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Economic and Social Council can also further contribute to sustaining peace and promoting sustainable development through its oversight role on development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and coordination of the UN system.

We have a collective responsibility to create a more just, peaceful, prosperous and sustained world. We have 12 more years to realize our common vision of leaving no one behind. I would like to conclude by remembering the words of Nelson Mandela, the remarkable man to whom, together with Kofi Annan, we are paying tribute today, “What counts is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”

Thank you.



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