**STATEMENT BY HON. GEN. ODONGO JEJE ABUBAKAHAR,**

**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

**DURING THE**

**1159TH VIRTUAL MEETING (MINISTERIAL LEVEL) OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON AFRICAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICY WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE**

Your Excellency, Frederick Shava, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Zimbabwe;

Your Excellencies Colleague Ministers,

Your Excellency Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner, Political Affairs, Peace and Security,

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and members of the Peace and Security Council,

Distinguished delegates,

1. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you Chair on assuming the Chairship for the month of June. We pledge our support to you and to your delegation. We also wish to thank you for convening this meeting and for the excellent manner in which you are chairing it.
2. **According to the report by** Júlia Palik et.al, on Conflict Trends in Africa, for the period 1989-2021.In 2020, there were 30 state-based conflicts recorded, compared to 27 in 2019. Although the number of state-based conflicts declined slightly in 2021, to 25, the numbers were still much greater than a decade ago. In 2021, 12 African countries, saw external involvement in their domestic conflicts. During the same year, Nine countries experienced conflicts with Islamic State within their territories.
3. It is upon this background that it was agreed in 2004 to have a Common African Defense and Security Policy; predicated on the understanding that the security of one African country is inseparably linked to the security of other African countries, and the continent as a whole. Accordingly, any threat or aggression on one African country is deemed to be a threat or aggression on the others, and the continent as a whole.
4. In this regard, I wish to highlight two areas that are of great concern to our delegation, one is the issue of terrorism and violent extremism; and the Illicit Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons
5. According to the 2023 Report on the Activities of the Peace and Security Council and the State of Peace and Security in Africa; between January to November 2022, the continent registered over 1,385 terrorist incidents that resulted in over 9,564 deaths. Out of these, 5344 were innocent civilians.
6. The ADF, a terrorist group, launched an attack in Uganda on 17 June 2023 killing 42 people including 37 children. It is activities of terrorist groups, such as these, that necessitated Uganda to engage in joint operations with the DRC against the ADF. It is likely that the attack on innocent children is aimed at the false hope of dissuading our forces from further pursuing them in the DRC. We are more determined to hold them to account. We agree that negative forces can easily be defeated if all Partners in the region cooperate and work together to locate; and deny them sanctuary.
7. This is the same approach that informs the Nairobi and Luanda processes. We wish to recommend that International Partners take appropriate measures to ensure that their respective territories are not used by terrorists for the preparation, financing, or organization of terrorist acts intended to be committed against other States or their citizens
8. In 2019 the Commission conducted a mapping study on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and noted that out of the 40 million civilian-held firearms in Africa, only 5.8m are officially registered, 16m are unregistered; while the status of the reminder is unclear. These weapons are the fuel that stokes the fire in Africa. There is need to enhance cooperation at all levels on controlling the flow of these Weapons, including developing a regional disarmament instrument; and cross-border information and intelligence sharing.

Mr. Chairman,

1. This meeting is taking place on the backdrop of a devastating conflict in Sudan. The African Standby Force (ASF) was intended as a quick reaction capacity that would enable the continent respond swiftly to a crisis situation of this nature, unhampered by any heavy political and instrumental burdens.
2. The Peace and Security Council at the Level of Heads of State, agreed on a number of measures to resolve this crisis. Perhaps what is missing for now, is a mechanism to enforce, not only this but other decisions that have been made in the past by the Council.
3. We are concerned about the slow progress made towards the full operationalisation of the ASF and some of the challenges regarding the relationship between the RECs/RMS and the AU in view of the original conceptualisation of the ASF. We welcome the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding on this matter by the 15th meeting of the STC on Defence, Safety and Security; which clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the two Parties. We urge all RECs/RMs to provide updates on their capability generation and any challenges related thereto. This would be useful in assessing their readiness for rapid deployment.
4. We support the call for predictable, adequate and sustainable funding of peace support operations in Africa including through the use of UN Assessed contributions.
5. We are concerned about the challenges associated with the effective functioning of the Continental Logistics Base. We support the call for the prompt implementation of the new structure of the Base through the allocation of adequate funding and staffing.
6. We also support the call for the Commission and the RECs/RMs to intensify collaborative measures towards the take-off of the various Regional Logistic Depots and urge the Commission to fast track the assessments of strategic airlift aircrafts in order to allow for the timely delivery of equipment to missions that need them.

I thank you

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