

STATEMENT TO THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COMMISSION ON
HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN AFRICA
DELIVERED BY SRSG TO THE AFRICAN UNION AND HEAD OF UNOAU,
PARFAIT ONANGA-ANYANGA
THURSDAY 18 MAY, 2023

Madame Chairperson,

Distinguished Members of the Peace and Security Council,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for the invitation extended to UNOAU and OCHA to participate in this important Open Session of the Peace and Security Committee (PSC) on humanitarian action in Africa.

As we meet today, millions in Sudan are in the fifth week without access to food, water, healthcare and electricity. Currently approximately 24.7 million people are estimated to be in Need of humanitarian assistance, largely exacerbated by the conflict. This is not unique to Sudan. Across Africa millions are in dire need of immediate lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

Globally there have been significant shifts in the humanitarian landscape in the last few years marked by three key elements: firstly, the increase in humanitarian needs with a corresponding rise in financial requirements; secondly, the more protracted nature of crises, driven mainly by increased displacement and conflict; and thirdly, the impact of extreme climatic factors, and other natural shocks and hazards.

Africa bears the greatest burden of the humanitarian crisis as illustrated by the following:

- In 2023, 78% of people in need of humanitarian assistance are in Africa, out of a total 274 million globally.
- In 2019, out of 144 million children under five years of age affected by chronic malnutrition or stunted growth globally, over 57.6 million lived in Africa. Hunger, as a result of conflict, displacement and climate change is the single deadliest killer for young people in crisis situations in Africa. A joint AU / WFP report highlights the cost of hunger on the GDP of several countries, underscoring that hunger has an overall serious negative impact on child health, primary education, and productivity of the population in the age brackets 18-64.
- The top ten forgotten crisis for the year 2021/22 are all in Africa. These are DRC, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, South Sudan, Chad, Mali, Sudan, Nigeria, Burundi & Ethiopia. These crises in Africa are forgotten in terms of media attention, humanitarian funding and political neglect.

The UN and its humanitarian partners are struggling to respond to needs in a timely and effective manner. This is largely due to shortfalls in funding for Humanitarian Appeals in many contexts in Africa. In 2022, total global humanitarian funding received was USD 24 billion, representing 47% of the total ask. Of this, \$9 billion was given in support of humanitarian response in Africa, representing close to 40% of the global support provided.

There have been some positive trends as well. The UN and partners have been able to act early to avert crisis, including a possible famine in Somalia, reduced humanitarian needs in Ethiopia and South Sudan through creative approaches including flexible and timely funding, working alongside local actors. There is increased visibility to the humanitarian needs on the continent as evidenced by the first ever launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview in Addis Ababa in 2022.

The aspirations of the African Continent are well articulated in several documents including the Malabo Declaration, the African Regional Nutrition Strategy and the Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More recently, the Assembly of the African Union adopted Statutes of the Africa Humanitarian Agency (AHA) in February 2023. In the 2020, Malabo Summit Member States and other critical partners made pledges totaling \$174 million towards the establishment of the Africa Humanitarian Agency. While the pledges are commendable, timely disbursement remains key to translating commitments into action.

Madame Chairperson,

Excellencies,

As I conclude, allow me to highlight the following salient points:

- Humanitarian assistance should be as local as possible and international as may be necessary. The Sudanese people have shown us the way. They have mobilized across the country to help those affected by the fighting while many international partners have been forced to temporarily reduce our footprint. It is therefore important for sufficient resources and support to be channeled to local actors, in line with our commitments under the Grand Bargain.
- It is impossible to undertake development without addressing the recurring or cyclical crises. It is critical to comprehensively address the root causes.
- The humanitarian community should do more to prioritize the humanitarian situation in Africa, by reversing the dwindling commitments as evidenced by the limited funding. More should be done to meet the urgent needs of people in need of basic lifesaving assistance.
- Support a collective approach to solutions to addressing crisis, bringing together countries impacted by conflicts and effects of climate change. In addition, it is critical to strengthen partnerships with development organizations and International Financial Institutions towards sustainable solutions to humanitarian assistance.

- Member States to fulfill their commitments to the Africa Humanitarian Agency in a timely manner.
- Finally, we call upon Member States and Non-State Armed actors to adhere to a norms-based approach, with respect to international humanitarian and human rights law.

Madam Chairperson, Your Excellencies, in conclusion, on Sudan, allow me emphasize the following:

- The fighting must stop immediately and parties to the conflict must respect international humanitarian law and affirm their commitment to the Jeddah Declaration.
- Ensure unaffected humanitarian access
- Protect civilians and civilian assets

I thank you for your kind attention.