

**Remarks of the Patron of the TMF,
Thabo Mbeki,
at the Tana Forum on Security in Africa:
Bahir Dar, Ethiopia: April 21, 2013.**

"Security and Organised Crime in Africa".

Chairperson of our Session, President Pierre Buyoya,
Chairperson of the Board of the Tana Forum, President Olusegun
Obasanjo,
Your Excellences, Heads of State and Government,
Distinguished participants,
Friends, ladies and gentlemen:

As others have observed, we meet here just over a month before our
Continent celebrates the important 50th Anniversary of the OAU, and, in
my view, belatedly celebrates the 10th Anniversary of the AU, which
should have been done last year.

It is absolutely correct that as we celebrate these important Anniversaries,
we must continue to reflect on the critical matter of the achievement of
peace, security and stability throughout our Continent.

This is fundamental and inherent to the task to create the necessary
conditions for us to address the historic task to achieve the fundamental
socio-economic transformation of our Continent, in favour of the ordinary
African working masses.

Recent and current examples of instability in various African countries
point exactly to the continuing importance of this matter.

I refer here, among others, to:

- the recent and current events in Mali and the Central African
Republic;

- the continuing conflict in Somalia;
- other violent conflicts such as those taking place within the DRC, the Republic of Sudan, the Republic of South Sudan, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, here in the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, and across a number of African borders, relating to the LRA;
- other conflicts, such as in the Casamance in Senegal;
- instances of electoral violence; and,
- periodic instances as happened when a terrorist group seized a gas production facility in Algeria, and yet another more recently, when many people were killed in Mombasa, Kenya.

Over the years, I have appreciated a slogan formulated by a group that broke away from the ANC, in 1959, the Pan African Congress – the PAC.

The PAC slogan to which I refer says:

“Peace among the Africans: war against the enemy!”

Over the years, especially during the period of the Cold War, and since, it seemed to me that this slogan was absolutely correct and appropriate, and should serve side-by-side with the more popular slogan – “Africa Must Unite”!

As we meet here today at the important Tana Forum, I think we must ask ourselves the question, and answer this question honestly – is it possible now and the near future to achieve the objective of peace among the Africans!

It is logical that, in similar manner, we must pose to ourselves the directly related question – who and what are the opponents or obstacles to the achievement of this peace among the Africans, and therefore the enemy against which, and whom, we must wage war!

I believe that there is no obvious answer to these two symbiotic and important questions.

I would like to believe that it was because of this that the 2009 AU *“Tripoli Declaration on the Elimination of Conflicts in Africa and the Promotion of Sustainable Peace”* stated that the achievement of these objectives posed an *“intellectual challenge...to arrive at African-centred solutions, drawing from our own distinctive and unique experience.”*

Surely, in the first instance, that “intellectual challenge” means that we, the Africans, should understand all the things that make for peace, and those that do not make for peace among ourselves as Africans.

As I worked to prepare my remarks for this Session, I came across an authoritative analytical piece of research on the matter of peace on our Continent written, interestingly, by a US academic, in 2010, Professor Scott Straus.

I would like to confess that the general comments I will now make about the generics of the violent conflicts on our Continent are largely based on this Straus ‘monograph’.

The topic I was asked to address, the specific theme of this Session, suggests that there is a vitally important and direct link between *African Peace and Security on one hand, and Organised Crime on our Continent, on the other.*

I must therefore make at least a preliminary comment in this regard.

I agree, without equivocation, that we must indeed discuss this possible linkage or nexus.

Later, I will address this specific matter in greater detail.

However, I would like to say that it does not seem that organised crime, especially as it also relates to terrorism, is a decisive factor with regard to instability throughout the generality of our Continent.

In this regard some important research has made the important point that – “the available evidence does not, however, conclusively establish a ‘close connection’ between (organised crime and terrorism); even the nature of the link, if any, has yet to be adequately demonstrated.

“Any exploration of the relationship has to recognise that organised crime is multi-faceted, and includes activities that are often not necessarily connected. While some of these activities may be susceptible to exploitation to support terrorism, others will not.

“In addition, there is a noticeable difference (to publicity) in the attitude of crime syndicates on the one hand, and terrorist groups on the other.

“(Crime) Syndicates thrive on concealment of their exploits (to avoid the attention of law enforcement), whereas publicity tends to be the stock-in-trade of terrorism.

"This is not to say that organised crime and terrorism are not connected...We have taken the view that it would be prudent to treat organised crime and terrorism as distinct, but related elements."

(African Commitments to Combat Organised Crime and Terrorism: A review of Eight NEPAD Countries: Charles Goredema & Anneli Botha. Institute for Strategic Studies, Pretoria, South Africa.)

I agree with these comments.

Nevertheless, I will revert back to this matter later, especially with regard to the situation in West Africa and elsewhere, some of whose elements stand contrary to the view I have cited about the disconnect between organised crime, terrorism and instability in Africa.

I would now like to return to the 'monograph' by Prof Straus which I mentioned earlier.

Some of what this 'monograph' says correctly, clearly based on extensive and credible research, which I have not conducted, and have had no possibility to conduct, is that we must take great care to differentiate among different forms and sources of violence on our Continent, located within different historical periods.

In the Abstract summarising the article, Straus says:

"Contrary to common assumption, major forms of large-scale organized political violence in sub-Saharan Africa are declining in frequency and intensity, and the region is not uniquely prone to the onset of warfare. African civil wars in the late 2000s were about half as common compared to the mid-1990s.

"The character of warfare has also changed. Contemporary wars are typically small-scale, fought on state peripheries and sometimes across multiple states, and involve factionalized insurgents who typically cannot hold significant territory or capture state capitals.

"Episodes of large-scale mass killing of civilians are also on the decline. That said, other forms of political violence that receive less attention in the academic literature are increasing or persistent.

"These include electoral violence and violence over access to livelihood resources, such as land and water.

"While primarily descriptive, the article posits that geo-political shifts since the end of the Cold War are a leading candidate to explain the changing frequency and character of warfare in sub-Saharan Africa."

An additional and important point which Straus makes is that almost all the wars on our Continent during the last 50 years have been civil wars, rather than inter-state conflicts.

I think that perhaps the only exceptions in this regard would be the 1963 short so-called Sand War between Algeria and Morocco, the 1977/1978 Ethiopian/Somali war, the Libyan-generated conflict between Chad and Libya between the years 1978 to 1987, the 1978-1979 Uganda/Tanzania war, the Eritrea/Ethiopia war of May 1998 to June 2000, and the so-called Second Congo War in the DRC, which began in 1998.

However the fact of these inter-state wars does not change the fact that the bulk of the armed conflicts on our Continent during our years of independence have been intra-state in character.

Accordingly, my comments will not address the matter of inter-state conflicts.

In the context of the tasks of the Tana Forum, I would now like to cite what an historic European and world revolutionary, Karl Marx, wrote in an instructive treatise during the 19th Century:

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways: the point (however) is to change it."

("Karl Marx: Theses on Feuerbach.")

I have no doubt that Professor Straus has helped us to understand (and therefore interpret) our Continent, perhaps in his own way.

However, the task remains in our hands to change our Continent and condition.

We must therefore answer the vitally important question, which only we can answer – what is to be done!

The fundamental proposition I would like to make in this regard is that what lies at the base of intra-state conflicts we must address is our African reality that speaks to a matter that is fundamental to Africa's future, including the important and critical striving towards the unity of our Continent.

I speak here of what historically, in progressive discourse and literature, has been categorised as – the national question!

This relates to the important matter on which surely we must reflect, of the formation of the African 'nation state'.

A hundred years ago, in 1913, during a period of fundamental social transformation in Europe, the Russian revolutionary, Vladimir Lenin, published his "*Theses on the National Question*".

Among others, discussing the polity in some European and Asian countries, neighbours and part of the Russian empire, he wrote:

"In countries bordering on Russia - the bourgeois-democratic reform of the State that has everywhere else in the world led, in varying degree, to the creation of independent national States or States with the closest, interrelated national composition, has either not been consummated or has only just begun..."

I would like to propose that we too, the Africans, must make our own assessment about whether "bourgeois-democratic" (or "proletarian"), or other reform of the African State has created the 'States with the closest, interrelated national composition' – the very foundation of the contemporary European States, including Lenin's Russia!

I am certain that all of us will readily agree that, as Lenin suggested, the formation of such States on our Continent has 'not yet been consummated or has only just begun...'

The collapse of the State in Libya, in the aftermath of the deliberate destruction of the Gaddafi regime, demonstrated this reality.

This confirmed the fact of the fractious tribal base on which the Libyan State was based, of which many among the African intelligentsia were aware.

I would therefore like to argue that it is because independent Africa has failed to address the 'national question' in our countries, within the complex and diverse reality of our States, that we have had the intra-state violent conflicts which the Tana Forum correctly seeks to bring to an end.

Accordingly, I believe that the Tana Forum must discuss this 'national question', seriously, as part of the response to the "intellectual challenge" to us as Africans requested of us by the 'Tripoli Declaration'.

In this regard, the Tana Forum must pose and answer the critical question, honestly and frankly, – what constitutes ‘the national question’ in Africa, to which I have referred?

Mahmood Mamdani begins the Chapter “Beyond Settlers and Natives” in his book “Define and Rule...” with this paragraph:

“Decolonisation was the preoccupation of two groups that propelled the nationalist movement: the intelligentsia and the political class. They set out to create the nation, the former to give the independent state a history and the latter to create a common citizenship as the basis of national sovereignty. Both projects unravelled in the thick of civil war. It is time to ask: what have we learned? How far have we gone beyond settler claims to being custodians of cosmopolitan pluralism and nativist preoccupation with origin and authenticity?”

Later he says: “One country, mainland Tanzania, led by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, successfully implemented an alternative form of statecraft...(and) Nyerere’s seminal achievement (was) creating an inclusive citizenship and building a nation-state.”

He concludes this Chapter in these words:

“Whether or not Nyerere’s achievement, the creation of a common political citizenship and law-based order, turns out to be durable will depend on the capacity of subsequent generations to fashion a politics beyond the nation-state, one equal to realising social justice.”

The central proposition I would like to advance relating to the focus of the Tana Forum is that by and large our Continent has not succeeded to create what Prof Mamdani described as “a common political citizenship and a law-based order...a nation-state equal to realising social justice”.

This is what I have characterised as a failure successfully and correctly to address ‘the national question’.

Accordingly, we must, at least, try to answer the question – what does this mean?

I will therefore attempt to respond to this question – perhaps in a way that is crude and primitive - but hopefully in a manner sufficient to engage the Tana Forum in a productive conversation.

Well over 30 years ago, in the context of the liberation of Moçambique, our close sister liberation movement, FRELIMO, propagated what was to us a very attractive slogan – “For the Nation to live, the Tribe must die!”

You will of course understand why this slogan was appealing to us. This was because we were members of the liberation movement, the ANC, which stated at its very foundation, in 1912, that one of its central objectives was “to bury the demon of tribalism”!

I would like to imagine that the sentiment that the tribe must die served to convey the aspiration of nation-building for which Mwalimu Julius Nyerere worked, exactly to bury the demon of tribalism, or otherwise address what I have described as the national question.

But indeed, as Professor Mamdani shows in the book I have cited, it is not enough merely to express the wish for the success of the nation-building project. It has to be worked for.

I would like to suggest that it is fundamentally the incompleteness of the nation-building project which lays the basis for the intra-state conflicts, sometimes escalating into civil wars, of which I have spoken.

(Needless to say, of course here I exclude the national liberation wars for independence from colonialism and white minority rule.)

The failure to create a ‘common political citizenship and a law-based order’ results or manifests itself in the creation of tribally (‘ethnically’) based political factions.

Once any of these factions accedes to power, even through ‘democratic elections’, having based itself on so-called ethnic mobilisation, it then proceeds to implement measures to advantage its base and disadvantage the rest.

Inevitably, this results, among others, in corrupt practice.

Inter alia, this will lead to the abuse of political power for the rapacious enrichment of a small group, the severe compromise of the integrity of the state machinery, and failure to address the fundamental socio-economic interests of the population as a whole, including the ‘dominant ethnic’ group.

Necessarily this helps to mobilise the population, defined as opposed ‘ethnic groups’, into bitter struggles for access to resources, including

land, and what has been described as 'electoral violence', as we saw in Kenya in 2007.

It also points to the emergence of class divisions, built on the basis of the failure to solve the national question. Out of this emerges the so-called bureaucratic bourgeoisie, which will happily enrich itself at the expense of the people as a whole, with no regard for any 'ethnic identity'.

This parasitic 'bourgeoisie' will also happily cooperate with international capital to conduct rapine, in its selfish interest, obviously in a manner which undermines national sovereignty.

The reality I have sought to describe is that 'ethnic mobilisation' is used in many of our countries by our national elites to gain access to political power, and to use such power both to perpetuate their hold on this power and to use it for self-enrichment, against the interests of the majority of the population.

This self-enrichment takes many forms and benefits a fairly significant section of the population. This segment of the population earns its income from Government employment and access to the benefits of the economic activities of the State.

In this regard we must keep in mind that at our stage of development, the State is the single most important actor in our national economies.

Access to political power, in the context of the paradigm I have described, becomes the only available route to access the resources to achieve the objective of a better life for the citizen.

This lays exactly the basis for the disadvantaged to resort to non-peaceful means to redress this fundamental wrong which defines large sections of the population as practically falling outside the compass of "the common political citizen".

Accordingly, I would like to repeat that to address the vitally important matter of peace and security on our Continent, we must take on board the hard reality is that we have to confront the fact of the failure successfully to address the national question in the greater part of Africa.

Again to resort to Professor Mamdani's suggestion, I am proposing that for our Continent fundamentally to address the matter of peace and security, it must pay especial attention to the challenge to create "a common political citizenship and a law-based order...a nation-state equal to realising social justice".

In this regard, the Tana Forum has correctly accepted the proposition about the "*intellectual challenge*" to ourselves as Africans, as contained in the "Tripoli Declaration".

I would therefore like to suggest that this Forum, whose mission is peace and security on our Continent – 'peace among the Africans' - must undertake a systematic "intellectual" study of African experience, as suggested in the "Tripoli Declaration", based, in the first instance, on the thesis advanced by Professor Mamdani – what I have summarised as 'the solution of the national question' in Africa.

I would like to believe that among others, as an example, this study would also reflect on the relevant and instructive experience of the sister country of Sierra Leone, which was ultimately condemned to live through a very destructive civil war.

I mention this in part because a good part of the account relating to the intra-state conflict in Sierra Leone is contained in documents published by that country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SL TRC), which are available on the Internet. (www.sierraleonetrc.org).

To give an example about what I am talking about, I will cite only one comment made by Mr John Benjamin to the Commission.

He described himself in these terms: "I was appointed to serve my country in various capacities during the National Provisional Ruling Council military regime, 1992 – 1996. I served that regime as Chief Secretary of State, Secretary of State Chairman's Office and Secretary General at various times."

In other words he served in the top echelon of the administration which served the then military administration, and was therefore an important player within the Sierra Leone State.

In his submission to the TRC he reflected on many of the antecedents which led the formation of the military regime in which he served, and the subsequent civil war.

Specifically, in this regard, I would like to cite an instructive paragraph in his submission, in which he refers to two historic Sierra Leone political parties, or factions, these being the All Peoples Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP).

Before I quote this paragraph, I must mention that Mr Benjamin, because he was talking to other Sierra Leones, did not mention that these parties

were largely based on distinct and major 'tribal/ethnic groups', located in specific regions of the country, with the APC being the political Party of the Temnes, and the SLPP the Party of the Mendes.

In his submission to the SL TRC he said:

"It is necessary to note that in 1967 the APC swept the polls in the North and the Western Area, the latter region providing most of the qualified personnel of the Judiciary. The APC found it less difficult to get the judiciary on its side in its bid to punish SLPP staunch supporters and party members.

"Ever since there has been this vicious circle, using the Judiciary to vilify political opponents. Treason trials in this country since then have been in most cases a matter of using the courts to get rid of political opponents.

"The laws are there to ensure this. Legal reform has been a thing to which we only pay lip service.

"Today, if anything, we must be able to learn from the fate of Brigadier Lansana, Brigadier John Bangura, Sorie Fornah, Francis Minah and those who lost their lives in other coups.

"These flaws in our laws must be arrested now if our democracy should work. The Honourable Judges must not allow themselves to be submissive to the whims and caprices of the Executive."

This submission makes an unequivocal statement, based on practical and painful African experience, about the fact of the African polity being based on tribalism/ethnicity, thus resulting in the failure to achieve the objective of "a common political citizenship and a law-based order...a nation-state equal to realising social justice".

As I have promised, I must now address the other element of my subject – organised crime as an important element with regard to the basic challenge of security on our Continent.

It is absolutely correct that organised crime, as I have earlier described it, plays a significant role in terms of destabilising some of our countries, thus negatively to contribute to the more universal phenomenon of the absence of peace and stability in Africa.

However, evidence suggests that this phenomenon is largely confined to some of the countries of the Sahel, Nigeria and Somalia.

With regard to the Sahel, it would seem that this organised crime did not emerge as an autonomous phenomenon.

Rather, it grew out of the failure successfully to address the national question in various countries of the Sahel, relating to the diverse Tuareg/Berber population which straddles the entirety of the Sahara Desert, north and south.

It would seem to me that despite this, these rebellions, until more recently in Mali, and perhaps in Chad, much earlier, were not intimately involved in attempts to bring about 'regime change' in our various countries.

Rather, they were about establishing inclusive societies – the 'common political citizenship' which Mahmoud Mamdani wrote about.

Thus, I would like to believe that these rebellions, whatever their consequences and evolution, were born out of the failure successfully to address the national question in the African countries concerned.

However, it also seems to be true that when organised crime becomes entrenched, as reflected in the trade in narcotics in Guinea Bissau and northern Mali, the criminals can themselves be the driving force in terms of creating instability in particular States.

This is well illustrated in a very informative September 2012 article by Wolfram Lacher of the Carnegie Endowment, entitled "Organised Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region".

For instance he writes:

"The link between organized crime and conflict is obvious in the kidnapping-for-ransom business operated by AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) and MUJAO (Movement for Tawhid and Jihad in West Africa.) However, tensions related to the growing drug traffic, and the erosion of state institutions through complicity with organized crime, played even more important a role in the dynamics that led to the outbreak of conflict in northern Mali in January 2012. Officials' collusion with organized crime of all sorts has been present to varying degrees across the region....

"Organized crime truly began to take hold in northern Mali at the time of a rebellion led by several Tuareg officers from Kidal, a northern region bordering both Niger and Algeria, that began in May 2006. While the outbreak of the rebellion was due to wider political grievances, rivalries over the control of smuggling gradually became more prominent in the

dynamics of the conflict. The rising profits to be made from drug smuggling spawned a drive by different networks to control smuggling routes or to impose transit fees on smugglers from other groups. The Malian leadership deliberately exploited these tensions to exert its influence by playing leaders from certain communities against others and relying on select tribes to keep the north under control...

“Rivalries over the control of smuggling and state officials’ tolerance of criminal activity by political allies allowed extremist groups to flourish. The complicity and involvement of Malian officials, and the willingness of Western governments to pay ransoms, also caused the kidnapping industry to thrive. Moreover, these factors were key to the dynamics that caused the eruption of renewed conflict in northern Mali in 2012.”

I believe that it would also be correct to say that much of the instability in the Niger Delta in Nigeria can be attributed to organised crime which is focused on the theft of crude oil, the so-called bunkering.

Of additional concern to all of us must be the danger that organised crime related to oil bunkering could spread throughout the oil-producing region of the Gulf of Guinea.

The collapse of the State and the protracted violent conflict in Somalia also led to the prevalence of the criminal phenomenon of piracy on the high seas. However, I am not able to indicate whether any of the money accrued from this activity helped in any way to finance the continuing conflict.

Of concern also must be the emergence of jihadist organisations which we have to factor in among the players in the instability on our Continent. In this regard, of course all of us will recall the costly conflict in Algeria which started in 1991 and lasted an entire decade.

Today we would pay particular focus to Al-Shabaab in Somalia, AQIM and its offshoots and allies in the Sahel, and Boko Haram in Nigeria, as well as their international connections.

When NATO decided to intervene in Libya to overthrow the Libyan Government, many of us who were opposed to this intervention, warned about the negative consequences this would have not only on Libya, but also in her neighbourhood, including the Sahel as a whole.

Today no honest person can dispute the correctness of this prediction, part of whose result has been the current crisis in Mali, rooted among others, in the flow of armed combatants and weapons into Mali.

Accordingly, we must also factor this among the actors of instability we must confront.

Of broader significance is a development that I believe must be of grave concern to all of us. I am speaking here about Africa's relations with the rest of the world, especially the West.

In this regard, in an article published in September last year by the South African periodical, *The Thinker*, to mark the 10th anniversary of the AU, I said:

"It is inevitable that the West will do its best to exploit its historical relations with Africa, using its so-called 'soft power', further to tie Africa to itself as its dependency.

"As it has demonstrated with regard to the Libyan conflict, where this fails or does not work, the West will intervene in Africa as it wishes, taking advantage of our weakness, wilfully to remove any African government it does not like, and thus position itself as the real determinant of the destiny of Africa!

"Thus do we come full circle back to the issue of vital strategic importance to ourselves as Africans of the fearless defence of our right to self-determination, so firmly represented by the establishment of the African Union."

To conclude, I would like to make a few remarks.

The first of these is that the matter of peace and stability in any country and everywhere on our Continent must indeed be a matter of Continental concern, and must therefore serve as a central point of focus of the African Union.

Accordingly, the AU must further develop its capacity for 'early warning', 'preventive diplomacy', and conflict resolution.

Related to this, the second remark I would like to make is that we must move away from the wrong thinking I believe has entrenched itself in our thinking, that our strategic task with regard to the challenge of peace and stability on our Continent is peace-keeping – making peace after conflict has broken out!

My third remark is that we must take this fully on board that the fundamental cause of the absence of peace and stability on our Continent

is internal to our Continent, even as this might be exploited by foreign powers to serve their interests.

This concerns the central matter of creating what Professor Mamdani characterised as “a common political citizenship and a law-based order...a nation-state equal to realising social justice”.

The great advantage we have in this regard is that, through the OAU and the AU, our Continent has approved as policies binding on all our States, a whole plethora of relevant Agreements.

These address exactly the matters to which Mahmood Mamdani referred, as well as what needs to be done directly to confront the matters of peace and stability, including terrorism and organised crime.

The fourth remark I would like to make is that we must continue to insist on the correct proposition about “African solutions for African problems”.

Fundamentally this has to do with our right to self-determination as Africans, the right and duty to determine our destiny which we dare not surrender to anybody, under any circumstances.

This imposes the obligation on us practically to take our destiny into our own hands, bearing in mind the hard fact that Africa is part of, and effectively and shamefully, currently, a junior part of a globalised and globalising world from which she cannot extricate herself.

I believe that I can say this with no fear of contradiction, that the one billion African masses expect of their leadership, in all its formations and echelons, sustained action to achieve what generations of African thinkers have characterised as the renaissance of Africa, in all its complexity.

Indeed, as Karl Marx advised, we must both interpret our world and act to change it!

Thank you.

Annexure to President Thabo Mbeki's Keynote Address at the 2nd Session of the Tana High-Level Forum, on "Security and Organised Crime in Africa".

Prepared by ACCORD: Durban, South Africa.

Next month, we will gather in Addis Ababa to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). This year of Pan Africanism and the African Renaissance will be a momentous occasion for us to reaffirm our shared commitment to a united and integrated Continent as well reflect and prepare for the next fifty years. Our shared histories and values must inform Africa's renaissance towards a more secure, prosperous, and empowered Continent.

Building from the 2009 African Union (AU) Tripoli Declaration, *On The Elimination of Conflicts in Africa and the Promotion of Sustainable Peace*, it is right that this Forum should underscore the necessity for us as Africans collectively to apply and utilise our intellectual and moral capacities towards resolving the challenges that confront us in terms of peace and security. Moreover, this session of the Forum will allow us to continue working towards the late Prime Minister Zenawi's vision of a developed, uplifted, and renewed Africa.

Since last year's inaugural session of the Tana High-Level Forum, our Continent has witnessed a host of developments that sharply bring into focus us the issues of security and organised crime. From the on-going military intervention in Mali, to the sustained security challenges faced in such countries as Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we as Africans remain acutely aware of how such developments shape and influence the peace and security agenda not simply within our countries, but more broadly, in terms of our Continent and the world at large.

To begin exploring the nexus between security and organised crime, we could first reflect upon the words of our late African visionary, Professor Chinua Achebe. He was not only a profound writer whose words touched the lives of millions, but was also among the Continent's foremost thinkers and critics, a man who held steadfast to his vision of a liberated and prosperous Africa, led by Africans:

"Oh, the most important thing about myself is that my life has been full of changes. Therefore, when I observe the world, I don't expect to see it just like I was seeing the fellow who lives in the next room. There is this complexity which seems to me to be part of the meaning of existence and everything we value." (Chinua Achebe)

Within our attempts to address some of the Continent's most pressing security challenges, we must continuously interrogate the inherent complexities in the world around us. It will be impossible for us to forge a more secure Africa without first examining the diverse and converging forces that will impact on what we do today.

Reflecting upon such objective realities, we can identify a number of broad and complex forces that determine the conditions we face today:

* The world population, currently just above 7 billion people, is growing exponentially. It took 100 years for our world to expand from 1 billion to 2 billion people; only 30 years to expand from 2 billion to 3 billion people, and so on. It is projected that within 13 years, around the year 2025, the planet's population will exceed 8 billion people. As a result, humanity must balance the increasing competition over the planet's finite natural resources with their sustainable and equitable management.

* Rapid transformations in information and communication technologies, as well as the proliferation of affordable mobile devices, now connect billions of individuals in an instantaneous and unprecedented manner.

* The processes of globalisation are increasingly interconnecting all societies throughout the world, creating enormous potential for mutual benefits, even as they also entrench inequality between and within countries. Actions no longer occur in isolation. The literal and analytical boundaries that once confined our understandings of peace, security, and development are quickly dissipating.

*Africa continues to find herself in a geopolitical power imbalance vis-a-vis the Western world. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which is mandated by international law to be the principle guarantor of peace and security, is currently dominated by the forces of what has been called *post-modern imperialism*. I have previously interrogated this paradigm as a movement by which Western countries, namely the P3 of the United States, the UK, and France, actively intervene to determine the trajectory of the African continent so as to uphold their own vision of a properly functioning global system, without adherence to the aspirations of Africans as expressed through the AU. (Mbeki, *Between Internal Reform and External Intervention: Makerere University*, 2012).

Comprehensively to address Africa's security challenges, we must therefore frame our conceptual understanding of security, our assessments of the threats to security, and our solutions to address such threats within these complex objective realities.

We must first ask ourselves what we mean when we invoke the notion of security: Does it exclusively entail the maintenance of law and order? Does our understanding of security change within different geographical and cultural contexts? These are among the fundamental questions that we must all continuously examine.

The best way to achieve the goals of a peaceful and prosperous continent, with these goals set by ourselves as Africans, we must expand our understanding of security to incorporate the broader conceptual frameworks of human security.

We, as Africans, are already aware that the concept of security extends beyond the dimensions of rule of law and military or violent engagements. The 1991 Kampala Document, convened under the auspices of the African Leadership Forum, the OAU, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, asserted that:

The security of a nation must be construed in terms of the security of the individual citizen to live in peace with access to the basic necessities of life while fully participating in the affairs of his/her society in freedom and enjoying all fundamental human rights. (The Kampala Document, 1991, p.12)

Human security, as formally defined by the United Nations Development Programme, is a re-conceptualisation of security that is people centred, multi-dimensional, inter-connected, and universal. (UNDP, *The Human Security Framework and National Human Development Reports 2006*).

Upon the concept's first appearance within the 1994 Human Development Report, UNDP noted the following crucial insights that guided its decision to expand the basic definition of security, in order to account for the increasing complexities in our world. It explained:

"Human security is relevant to people everywhere, in rich nations and in poor. The threats to their security may differ ... but these threats are real and growing...

When the security of people is attacked in any corner of the world, all nations are likely to get involved. Famines, ethnic conflicts, social disintegration, terrorism, pollution, and drug trafficking are no longer isolated events, confined within national borders. Their consequences travel the globe.

It is less costly and more humane to meet these threats upstream rather than downstream, early rather than late. Short-term humanitarian assistance can never replace long term development support."

Almost twenty years later, these same insights reverberate with even greater force and relevance. The inherent complexities of an increasingly growing, globalised, and imbalanced 21st century necessitate an inclusive perspective on, as well as a more comprehensive engagement with the notion of security. No longer can security be conceptualised or addressed in isolation from broader processes and commitments to human and social development.

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen similarly echoes the inextricable link between security and development. In discussions around his seminal work, *Freedom as Development*, Sen explains:

"A broader understanding of human security is extremely important precisely because it affects human lives. The idea of what is called "national security" is somewhat more remote from human lives, in the sense that it is often defined in terms of military preparedness and other features of national policy..."

The idea of freedom is very broad and deals with freedom from insecurity as well as freedom to enhance general living conditions and people's ability to do what they value doing and have reason to pursue."(Amartya Sen, Interview with SG Quarterly, July 2003)

Surely, such security is an invaluable public good. It has been codified within international law through the creation of the UN with its Security Council, and is enshrined within both the UN Charter and the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

Despite our diverse identities, we as Africans must uphold our obligation of maintaining security as a public good to both our fellow African brothers and sisters as well as to the Continent itself. We must undertake this responsibility not merely on account of our common histories, but also in the hope of positively influencing the development trajectories we all seek to navigate.

We must therefore articulate our shared peace and security challenges in terms of the overarching development perspective of human security. As peace and security are inextricably intertwined with political stability, economic security and institutional and socio-economic development across the Continent, it becomes necessary to view these concerns, first and foremost, as issues of development.

It goes without question that the countries of Africa continue to face considerable challenges towards guaranteeing human security. It is precisely for this reason that the Tana Forum was established, to develop new and innovative solutions to a series of inherently complex and dangerous security threats.

But we must also ask ourselves why Africa continues to face such great obstacles in achieving peace, security, and development throughout our Continent?

We are all aware that Africa's conflicts manifest themselves in the terrible loss of life, widespread human displacement, the deterioration of state capacity and infrastructure, and environmental destruction, among other challenges. When societies are structured so that that access to wealth, income, and opportunities are determined according to identities and not merit, those marginalised communities will naturally use any and every means necessary to combat unjust systems. And unless fundamental shifts towards inclusive institutions and societies are implemented in earnest, these conflicts will remain entrenched and recur in vicious cycles.

It is within these environments, defined by vicious cycles of conflict, that organised crime flourishes. As explored within this Forum's concept note, we can understand a broad definition of what constitutes organised crime, such that: *transnational, national, or local groups functioning within a formal structure for the purpose of engaging in politically or economically motivated unlawful activity.*

Therefore, to interrogate the causes of and develop effective solutions to widespread organised criminal activities we must not only examine these challenges through the top-down approach of ensuring physical security, but also through the bottom-up perspectives of promoting inclusive development and human security.

In this light, we should articulate five crucial arguments in order to examine the nexus of organised crime and security on the African continent.

***The challenges of organised crime are not exclusively African problems and are driven by broader geo-political and socio-economic dynamics beyond African shores,**

*** These challenges distinctly impact Africa and her people,**

*** Africans have successfully identified the existence and persistence of such problems,**

*** Africans have developed solutions to address these challenges,**

*** And, Africans must be the drivers of the solutions to these challenges, but cannot be expected to successfully resolve them alone.**

Through these arguments, we can evaluate incidences of organised crime as part and parcel of larger global dynamics that are exacerbated on the African continent. Crucially, organised crime is both a symptom and a cause of the challenges in constructing inclusive, dynamic, and prosperous African countries.

A 2010 UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) brief entitled *Crime and Instability: Case Studies of Transnational Threats* summarises the deleterious impact on transnational organised crime, which remain especially relevant:

"Transnational organised crime can present a major challenge even where the state is strong, but when, for a variety of reasons, the rule of law is already weakened, it can pose a genuine threat to stability. As this crime further undermines governance and stability, countries can become locked in a vicious circle where social trust is lost and economic growth undermined.."

But conflict zones are not the only places where transnational organized crime can pose a threat to the state. There are a number of areas around the world where criminals have become so powerful that, rather than seeking to evade the government, they begin to directly confront it. In these cases, a pattern of symptoms is typically manifest. Investigators, prosecutors, and judges who pursue organized criminals are threatened and killed. Journalists and activists may also be targeted. Corruption is detected at the highest levels of government, and law enforcement can become paralysed by mistrust. Portions of the country may effectively drift beyond state control."

To begin to address the specific nature of organised crime in Africa, we must first acknowledge the unequivocal reality that such illicit activities are driven and reinforced by larger dynamics and interests throughout the world. It is important that we not only seek measurement of its impact on the African Continent, but also an understanding of its relationship to and intersection with interests outside of the Continent.

Africa loses over \$50 billion USD each year from illicit financial outflows, an important part of which is driven by factions of organised crime. The importance of stemming these losses cannot be understated. These

outflows undermine the development of our governance institutions, weaken our ability to combat poverty, reduce our investment and resource bases, and force us continuously to rely upon international financial support to advance our own basic development and security. We can no longer rely on others to determine our own fates. We must take charge of our own destinies, as Africans, if we want to achieve a liberated and prosperous Continent.

Now place these losses within the greater global context. In the year 2009, \$870 billion USD - one and a half percent of global GDP, more than six times the amount of all official development assistance issued in that year - was generated by transnational organised crime throughout the world (UNODC Transnational Organised Crime - Fact Sheet).

This is a crucial, yet unsurprising statistic, given that strands of organised crime within Africa are inherently interwoven into broader global dynamics - specifically, through economic forces of global supply and demand for illicit goods and services.

For instance, human trafficking is readily described as one of the most pernicious activities on Earth. Often described as *modern-day slavery*, Africa and the entire world have a stark moral obligation to take all actions necessary towards the elimination of this illicit trade.

Even to begin combating human trafficking in Africa, we must accept that it is a globalised phenomenon, of which Africa only plays one part. According to the International Labour Organisation, an estimated 20.9 million people around the world are victims of forced or sexual labour. What is even more horrific is that these statistics only capture the known number of trafficked individuals, with millions more likely to remain undocumented throughout the duration of their captivity.

Further, the 2012 UN Global Trafficking Report, authored by UNODC, charts all of the known illicit trafficking routes, determining that between 2007 and 2010, victims from 136 different nationalities were identified in 118 countries worldwide. The report also identified approximately 460 distinct human trafficking flows.

Similarly, it was estimated in 2010 that somewhere between 153-300 million individuals aged 15-64 (approximately 3.4 - 6.6 percent of the world's population) used an illicit drug at least once in the previous year, with the largest markets for importing such drugs existing in North America, South America, and Europe. (World Drug Report 2012, UN Office on Drug and Crime).

In this manner, we must accept that the extent of organised crime is not just a phenomena found in Africa, but one that is prevalent throughout the world. This complexity must continuously inform our perceptions of the nature and scope of the problems we face, but also the solutions we devise to address these challenges.

While remaining cognisant of the global reach and prevalence of organised crime, however, it remains undeniable that these challenges impact disproportionately on Africa and her people.

Organised crime breeds many of the challenges we see across the Continent, such as the presence of cross-border rebel movements, the growth and proliferation of extremism, the institutionalisation of violence through illicit economic or politically-motivated activities, the trafficking of illegal narcotics, arms and human beings, and the illegal depletion of natural resources through poaching and illegal mining activities.

And thus the widespread prevalence of organised crime within Africa is inextricably interlinked with the challenges our countries face in strengthening functioning political institutions, promoting widespread human security, and redressing systematic inequalities. Threats of organised crime are intrinsically connected to broader considerations of development and must ultimately be confronted in a collective and comprehensive manner. Due to our shared histories, characterised by the struggle for liberation in the face of imperialist and colonial forces, some of African states remain mired in political, economic and civil institutional underdevelopment.

There is also much to be celebrated in terms of our collective endeavours to strengthen Africa's responses to these challenges. Africa's peace and security architecture, coordinated through the AU and its building blocks, the regional economic communities (RECs), are indeed a robust foundation from which to build solutions.

The African Peace and Security Architecture, as constituted through the AU Commission, the Peace and Security Council, the African Standby Force, the Panel of the Wise, and the Continental Early Warning System, mark a continental consensus and institutionalised response to managing conflict, including organised criminal activities. As the AU is essentially the sum total of our collective strengths and weaknesses, we must endeavour to constantly innovate comprehensive solutions that draw upon the strength of our vision of a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

We would therefore do well to combat the scourge of organised crime not solely through directed interventions, but rather, in conjunction with

collaborative efforts which build upon and reinforce the overarching peace and security architecture of the continent, through a holistic understanding of what needs to be done to stamp out the root causes of these dangers across our continent.

Specifically, the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), through some of its specific focuses on Regional Integration and Infrastructure, Human Development, and Economic and Corporate Governance, clearly articulates African frameworks for the coordinated development of the continent. NEPAD's partner entity, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), whose ten-year anniversary we also commemorate in 2013, is precisely designed to assist African governments in both evaluating and improving their performance with regards to their political, economic, and corporate governance.

The AU has spearheaded a number of targeted policy frameworks that have been developed and ratified to combat the challenges of transnational organised crime across the continent, specifically focusing on human and illicit drug trafficking. Accordingly, in 2009, the AU Commission launched the AU Commission Initiative against Trafficking (AU COMMIT). Guided by the 2006 *Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children*, the AU COMMIT Initiative aims at consolidating the achievement of AU Commission activities and other global, regional and national initiatives.

These efforts to empower African governments through the coordination and enhancement of their capacities to address such crosscutting challenges are imperative to addressing the illicit flows of organised crime.

Further, Africa's RECs are also building off their comparative advantages, through regional integration, in order to combat organised criminal activities and uphold peace and security.

For example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with the support of UNODC, has successfully developed its *Regional Action Plan To Address The Growing Problem Of Illicit Drug Trafficking, Organised Crimes And Drug Abuse In West Africa*. Similarly, the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) *Protocol on Gender and Development* establishes six specific targets that aim to eliminate gender-based violence at all levels, of which human trafficking features prominently.

In addition, the countries of Africa are encouraged by increased multilateral engagements and agreements through UN mechanisms and platforms. A few weeks ago, the UN General Assembly ratified the Arms Trade Treaty, a historic agreement designed to regulate the number of

conventional arms traded in an industry that has been recently valued at over \$70 billion USD. This achievement should be celebrated as an important collaborative effort towards the reduction of armed conflict both on our Continent and throughout the world.

The overarching concern of organised crime is the ultimate threat it poses to the legitimacy, stability, and agency of the African state.

This argument is made in recognition that organised crime flourishes in environments defined by weak governance institutions, relatively porous borders, difficulties in establishing and maintaining central authority over peripheral regions, weak or absent institutional avenues for local actors to express their grievances through legitimate and nonviolent means, and the influence of illicit economic activities, stemming from global forces of supply and demand.

Through direct or indirect means, organised crime undermines legitimate economic activity, has a potential to liquidate genuine state authority and social cohesion, incentivises corruption within governments and businesses, and institutionalises the use of violence as a medium of economic transaction. Organised crime thus undermines the legitimacy, stability, and agency of the African state.

Subsequently, if these conditions are not addressed through actions that both stem the prevalence of illicit activity and address the root causes of societal imbalances, organised criminal activity may result in the proliferation of extremist ideologies and violent non-state actors.

The recent experiences in Mali epitomise these dangers. The neglect of combating organised criminal activity both within its borders and throughout the broader Sahel region, combined with failures to promote human security and development in the country, facilitated the rapid destabilisation of the Malian state.

Although the broader conditions of the conflict are rooted in the specific developments and histories of the Malian people and state, the immediate spark of the crisis we see today was directly caused by the NATO military intervention in Libya in the year 2011.

The 2012 UNSC *Report of the assessment mission on the impact of the Libyan crisis on the Sahel region*, exposes that the uncontrolled outflow of unaccounted arms and weapons from Libya have further emboldened organised criminal cells throughout the Sahel and within Mali. Specifically, this report raises alarm over the ways in which criminal entities such as terrorist cells and drug traffickers have procured Libyan weapons.

African leaders were well aware that military actions taken in Mali could destabilise the entire Sahel Region. The AU's peacemaking initiative, which was roundly ignored by the P3 and the Arab League despite its affirmation in UNSC Resolution 1973, was intended to not only secure a negotiated settlement between then President Qaddafi and the Libyan rebels, but also specifically to contain the extensive network of transnational organised criminals and stockpiles of arms and weaponry under the control of the Libyan government.

Professor Alex de Waal has recently published an article in which he explores African roles in the Libyan conflict. He writes on the initial deliberations of the AU PSC:

At this very early stage, many African leaders privately recognized that the Arab Spring meant that Gaddafi could not remain in power. But, in the words of President Déby, they should also 'beware of opening the Libyan Pandora's box'. Libya's Saharan neighbours were aware that if Gaddafi's grip on the sundry transnational armed groups present in Libya were to be relaxed, at just the same time as the vast arsenals in his many military bases were opened, instability could rapidly spread across the region.

Consequently, the legitimacy, authority, and stability of the Malian state are now in jeopardy. Opportunistic and violent non-state actors, couched in ideologies of extremism and terrorism, openly combat African and French forces throughout Mali's northern territories. Regardless of the speed and efficiency with which the present military intervention succeeds, it will be many years before the Malian state is able to create the fundamental conditions necessary to promote human security.

The late Chinua Achebe once remarked:

"People say that if you find water rising up to your ankle, that's the time to do something about it, not when it's around your neck."

We must find urgent solutions towards eliminating organised crime across our Continent. We must not only stop the leaks that flood our homes with water, but also strengthen our foundations so that these leaks do not recur.

We must uphold our responsibilities to not only stamp out all illicit organised crime but also to protect and promote the inalienable right to human security throughout the Continent.

The solutions we develop today must not only be African solutions to African problems, but also African solutions to global problems. We are in

the midst of Africa's renaissance, one driven by the flourishing of our human capital as well as the improvement of independent and strengthened political governance.

We must protect the people of Mother Africa, our Continent's most valuable resource, by finding answers that not only protect them from the scourge of those who seek to do harm unto others, but by also empowering them to achieve their destinies as enlightened, prosperous, and free human beings.