



TANA HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON SECURITY IN AFRICA

Welcome Address by Dr. Hespina Rukato, Coordinator of the Tana High Level Forum on Security in Africa

Introduction

Excellencies, ladies and gentleman,

I am welcoming you, and speaking to you as the coordinator of the team at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies - IPSS - at Addis Ababa University, which has been working on the Tana High-Level Conference for more than a year.

Today marks the realisation of a dream shared not just by the organising team, but also by many Africans who have, and continue to work for the maintenance of peace and security on the continent.

What was the dream?

The dream was to create a forum for Africans who work in peace and security to come together, to share their experiences, and to discuss what works and what does not work in peace and security.

It was to bring together current and former Heads of State and Government, ministers, representatives from African and global institutions, and eminent persons from civil society and the private sector.

It was also to open the way for an open discussion, carried by a spirit of communality. It was to establish a new way of contributing to new, forward-looking and profoundly African approaches and solutions to addressing the challenges of peace and security on the continent.

In summary, we wanted to create a different type of gathering, more a retreat than a conference, and with the wide participation of people who are concerned and open to sharing their experience and concerns. I am so glad to now see this dream coming true, and I am thankful for this opportunity to contribute to the establishment of the Tana High- Level Forum on Security in Africa.

Our CEO of the Forum, Professor Andreas Eshete and the Forum's Chairperson His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, will introduce you to the themes that have been selected for this year's discussion.

I will introduce you to your neighbours and fellow participants for these two days.



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I hope that you will take this opportunity to go beyond the introduction, and network and engage with them - during the panel discussions, as well as during the tea, lunch and dinner breaks. After all, networking is one of the objectives of the Tana Forum.

So, who do we have here? We have:

- 4 Heads of State and Government
- 3 Former Heads of State and Government
- 7 Ministers
- 1 State Governor
- 6 Representatives of African Multilateral Organisations
- 10 Global Security Actors
- 30 Experts
- 6 Civil Society Organisations Representatives
- 13 Partners
- 4 Others

All five African regions are represented

Some partner countries are also represented.

We are also delighted that the team that organised the conference was a true reflection of Africa in its diversity: culture, region, language, age. A photo of the IPSS Forum team is included at the back of the booklet- please create time to network with them over the course of the Forum.

They are also here to support you.

Also important to highlight is the “Acknowledgements” and “Thank You” message by the Director of the IPSS, Mr. Mulugeta, to all those who have worked and contributed to making this Forum a reality, especially the Government of Ethiopia, the Amhara Regional Government as



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well as Mr. Sheikh Mohammed Al Amoudi, who has contributed significantly to make this Forum a reality.

The booklet

To make it easy for us to get to know each other, and also have something to remind us of this maiden Tana High-Level Forum, we have put together a booklet, with photos and names of all participants. For those whose confirmations we received late, we apologise that we were not able to include your photos, but promise to do so in the next Forum. We have created space for you at the back of the booklet for you to take notes.

Conclusion

Since the intention of the Forum is also to set the agenda for discussion beyond the Forum duration, and not to find solutions or answers to all the questions being raised in the Forum, if you can leave Bahir Dar with more questions than answers, it means that we would have succeeded in creating sustained debates on the themes, which will live on beyond this gathering, hopefully until the next Forum when we pick themes on burning issues of the day.

It is now up to you to generate the energy and dynamism required to sustain the Forum.

Thank you.