



TANA HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON SECURITY IN AFRICA

Welcome Address by Professor Andreas Eshete, CEO of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, friends,

First, my warm welcome and my deep thanks to all of you, for taking the trouble to join this novel gathering on rather short notice.

The Tana Forum is a departure from familiar meetings on Africa. First, the deliberations are unfettered by national and institutional mandates or commitments and the formal trappings of agenda, addresses and expected outcomes such as resolutions or declarations.

Second, the range of interlocutors here is much wider than those usually taking part in formal meetings. Together with African heads of state and government, leaders of continental and regional organisations, present today are scholars, prominent representatives of the private sector and civil society as well as African youth preparing themselves for the responsibilities of citizenship and leadership.

Invitations to all were personal to ensure both that participants will, by and large, speak for themselves and also that there will be sufficient representation of differing or even clashing views on the subject under discussion.

The hope is that the freedom from formal constraints and the wide ranging array of participants will enable free, vigorous and rigorous examination of the problems.

The Forum is an opportunity to interrogate, or even stretch, the limits of legitimate public deliberation on African public policy on matters of peace and security. In the light of Africa's intractable and swiftly changing problems of peace and security, the reflective search for unexplored options and fresh perspectives is a matter of urgency. This Forum may help to advance this quest and thereby contribute to the vital work of institutions such as the African Union. Moreover, global and regional norms of justice and peace appeal and apply to individuals and groups who are not members of a single state. So it is entirely fitting that citizens are concerned about the norms and practices of global and regional institutions. Finally, to advance the cause of peace in Africa, we must look beyond the norms and practices of states and intergovernmental institutions. The existence of an ethos upholding a culture of peace among ordinary citizens is essential if intercommunal violence and the all too common unspeakable abuses of children and women in Africa's wars is to be checked. For this, too, fora such as this engaging leaders and ordinary citizens in reflective conversation on peace are vital.



TANA HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON SECURITY IN AFRICA

A distinctive, inclusive African voice on peace could also, over time, shape global policy and action. A forceful non-western voice in the world affairs is not without precedent. In the mid-twentieth century, many in Latin America had enshrined social democracy in their constitutions. Moreover, they pressed the 1945 meeting to found the UN, in San Francisco to condemn colonial racism and to affirm human rights. Panama and Chile supplied draft charters on which the universal declaration was based. Representatives from Chile urged economic and social rights. The Dominican Republic and Mexico pressed for rights of sexual equality. Thus, progressive voices for peace and other abiding causes of humanity can once again issue from people outside the west.

Thank you