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OPENING STATEMENT BY H.E. JAINABA JAGNE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA
TO THE AFRICAN UNION

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT ON THE LAUNCH OF THE COMMEMORATION
OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY
COUNCIL

Mwalimu Nyerere Political Affairs, Peace, and Security Building, Addis
Ababa

3rd April 2024

**Excellencies Members of the Peace and Security Council,
Excellency Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security,
Our distinguished members of the media fraternity,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Good morning to you all.

I am Jainaba Jagne, Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the African Union. It is indeed a great honour for me to welcome you all here this morning in my capacity as the Stand-in-Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) for the month of April 2024, and also representing all Members of the PSC today. I am happy to be here to brief the media on the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Peace and Security Council, and also on the Peace and Security Council Flag Day when

the newly elected and re-elected Members of the PSC will take their seats in the Council.

We have here Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, who will provide details on the progress made by our important Organ, the PSC, since its establishment in 2004.

Ladies and gentlemen, Members of the Media,

First and foremost, let me thank the Members of the Media for their time to come and cover this important event of the PSC. The PSC appreciates the valuable contribution of the media in promoting peace and security in our Continent; this is why, before proceeding to other events, we are here to brief the media first.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a known fact that following the adoption of the Protocol Relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) in 2002, the PSC was established and started its operation in March 2003, but the official launch of the PSC was on 25th May 2004. This is the reason that this year, 2024, the Peace and Security Council, with the support of the African Union Commission, is going to undertake a series of events until December 2024, to mark the 20th Anniversary of the PSC. Twenty years of existence in the life of PSC organ is indeed a milestone. From the founding of our organization in 1963 to this day, the search for peace, security and development continues to define our continental agenda. We cannot, therefore, relent in our collective quest to Silence the Guns on the continent for the actualization of a prosperous, peaceful and stable Africa. As we commemorate 20 years since the launching of the PSC let us remind ourselves that the mandate of the Council remains ever relevant in our pursuit of “The Africa We Want” as encapsulated in Agenda 2063.

However, there are some security and developmental challenges impeding the attainment of Agenda 2063, but there will be challenges in everything we do, and this should not make us shy away about speaking on the positive

progress we have achieved. Without a doubt, the launching of the PSC has firmly put our organization in the driver's seat on matters concerning peace and security on the continent. For the Peace and Security Council, there are major developments that we need to let Africans and those outside the continent know about. We do not want to miss this opportunity to boldly speak out on the achievements made by our Council striding towards a conflict-free Africa, and this is where we need to work with you, the media fraternity.

Members of the Media,

One important issue is the fact that in all conflict situations in the Continent, the PSC has been actively engaged, issuing decisions, and providing political guidance on how to resolve them. We know implementation of some decisions has been a challenge but a lot of decisions have been implemented.

In addition to that, in 2017, the PSC, underscoring the need to accelerate Africa's efforts to stop conflict, developed the 'AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa', which was later endorsed by the AU Assembly and became a guiding tool for all Member States and our partners in silencing the guns in Africa. Since then, the PSC has been reporting yearly to the AU Assembly on the progress made in silencing the guns in Africa and what steps need to be undertaken to address the challenges. The PSC proposed for the Assembly to endorse the month of September of each year to be an 'African Amnesty Month' to mobilize civilians to voluntarily surrender arms without prosecution, and this programme has been a success.

As I mentioned earlier, I will not say much here because we have the Commissioner, who is the custodian, and institutional memory, of the growth of the PSC who will give us a bigger picture, but let me conclude by saying that, in recent years, the continent has been battling the escalation of terrorism, violent extremism, illicit arms trafficking, transnational organized crimes, political tensions, and unconstitutional changes of government. The PSC has been very firm and consistent in adhering to the AU's zero-tolerance policy on unconstitutional changes of government, and it will continue to do so while providing guidance on building democracy, the rule of law, and good governance as preventive measures.

Members of the media,

Let's take a moment to remember the hard work of our founding fathers. They have been our guides and mentors, helping us navigate the path to the Africa we want. Their dedication and commitment have played a significant role in shaping our futures. In pursuit of our journey to the "Africa We Want", The Gambia like other Member States remains resolute and committed to the aspiration of our founding fathers and founding mothers, and the PSC in promoting good governance and democratic consolidation for a peaceful and prosperous Africa. It is our turn to build the future of the coming generation. Our 20th anniversary is a time to reflect on what we have accomplished and to look ahead to build a developed peaceful Africa.

Thank you for being a part of this journey. Thank you for making our Peace and Security Council what it is today. Thank you for your kind attention.