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Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra

**Under-Secretary-General
Special Adviser on Africa and High Representative
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked
Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

Sponsor:

**Office of the Special Adviser and the Permanent Observer
Mission of the African Union to the United Nations**

18 October 2010, 3.00 PM to 6.00 Pm

Conference Room 7 North Lawn Building

Excellencies, Permanent Representatives to the United Nations

Your Excellency Ambassador Tete Antonio, Permanent Observer of the AU to the United Nations, Distinguished Representatives of African Regional Economic Communities, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues from the UN system, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great Pleasure to preside over this first ever briefing of African Regional Economic Communities to you, the Member States of the United Nations.

This event has been co-organized with the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations here in New York. I would like to thank Ambassador Tete Antonio and his office for their kindness in facilitating and assisting my office in putting this event together. This is yet another example of the steadily growing cooperation between OSAA and the African Union.

Excellencies,

Africa has consistently been at the top of the Secretary-General's agenda of priorities. In no other continent has the UN invested more time and resources. A great deal of UN peace-keeping, peace building and development activities is focused on the African continent.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) plays a key role, through the Regional Coordination Mechanism in support of African development, in partnership with the African Development Bank (ADB).

The United Nations office in West Africa (UNOWA) provides a structure to assist the West Africa region and ECOWAS in tackling cross cutting issues. Similar structures are soon to be established in other regions of the continent.

The progress experienced in the last decade in resolving conflicts, fostering economic development, trying to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and promoting human rights in the continent is, to a great extent, the result of the efforts of a new, stronger and more effective institutional landscape in Africa.

The Abuja Declaration on the establishment of the African Economic Community provides the overarching framework for continental economic integration. The African Union provides the backbone for Africa's progress and integration. Africa's regional economic communities are not only the key building blocks for economic integration in Africa, but also the key actors, in collaboration with the African Union, in ensuring peace and stability in their regions

Excellencies,

Beyond their role in peace and security, RECs have the immense challenge of working with governments, civil society and the AU Commission in raising the standard of living of the people of Africa and contributing towards the progress and development of the continent through economic growth and social development.

It is precisely for this reason that the African Union has identified regional economic communities as essential for accelerated development in Africa. The UN and other international organizations understand the critical role that African Union and its regional groupings have to play in the achieving of the goals of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Excellencies

The mandate given to my office is to enhance international support for Africa's peace and development; assist the Secretary-General in improving coherence and coordination of the UN system support to Africa, and mobilize the support of the international community for Africa.

With this briefing, my office and the Permanent Observer Mission of the AU here at the UN aim to enhance the awareness and understanding of UN Member States, with a view to generate greater support from the UN and the international community at large for the work, goals, aims and priorities of the AU and the RECs.

Such support is critical to strengthen their roles, meet their capacity constraints and foster the effectiveness of Africa's Economic Communities in promoting peace and development in Africa.

Thank you for your kind attention

TEXT FOR CHAIRING THE BRIEFING

It is now my great honour to invite His Excellency Ambassador Tete Antonio, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations to make his statement.

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Thank you Ambassador Antonio. Ladies and Gentlemen I wish to now welcome her Excellency Hon. Beatrice Kiraso, Deputy Secretary General in charge of Political Federation in the East African Community to make her presentation.

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Thank you Hon. Kiraso for that detailed and informative briefing. It is now my pleasure to invite Mr. Mengue Ekomie, Coordinator in the Department of Peace, Security and Stability in Economic Community of Central African States to brief your Excellencies.

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Thank you Mr. Ekomie for your detailed and informative briefing. I now wish to welcome (...) from the Economic Community of West African States to make their presentation.

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Thank you (...) for your very informative briefing. I will now welcome Mr. Yufnalis Okubo, the Director of Peace and Security Affairs in IGAD to brief your Excellencies.

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Thank you Mr Okubo for your detailed and informative briefing. Finally your Excellencies it is my pleasure to invite his Excellency Mr Joao Samuel Caholo, the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Southern African Development Authority to brief you.

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Thank you, your Excellency.

We have had very detailed and informative presentations this afternoon. I am sure you have many questions and comments to make. We will start with four questions and comments then return to the podium for answers. Please state your name and the Permanent Mission or UN agency in which you are serving before posing your question.

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CLOSING REMARKS

I would like to thank the speakers for their presentations this afternoon and thank you all for attending and your active engagement.

It is the sincere hope of my office that this session has widened the scope of your understanding of the great work that is being done in the continent and that this will inspire your greater interest and commitment to enhance support for the African Union and its regional economic communities as they seek to achieve their twin goals of achieving durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

THANK YOU ALL.

by Mary Kimani cleared by Ms. Mieke Ikegame and Mr. Patrick Hayford