Statement by

H.E. Mr. Sameh Shoukry,
Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt,
President of the Security Council for the month of May

delivered at the

High-Level meeting on

“Sustaining Peace: Mechanisms Partnerships and the Future of Peacebuilding in Africa”

May 12, 2016

Undersecretary General Maged AbdelFatah Abdelaziz,
Special Adviser on Africa,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,

I would like to start by commending the Special Adviser on Africa and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), for the initiative to convene this High-Level Expert Group Meeting on "Sustaining Peace: Mechanisms, Partnerships and the Future of Peacebuilding in Africa".

I trust that this meeting, which comes on the heels of the adoption identical resolutions by the General Assembly and the Security Council on the review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, will inject further political momentum for peacebuilding in Africa, and provide a valuable opportunity discuss ways to advance the effective operationalization of the recommendations contained in the resolutions.

We were pleased to see that the resolutions reflected the long process of negotiation and regional consultations that took place in the context of the review process. Egypt had shouldered its responsibility in this regard, and advanced the discussion on peacebuilding in Africa, when the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and its affiliated Cairo Center for
Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa, in cooperation with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), organized a two day workshop in Cairo on 24-25 November 2014 on "Regional Perspectives of Peacebuilding: Identifying Gaps, Challenges and Opportunities".

The workshop was the first substantial input into the review of the UN peacebuilding architecture, providing an African perspective on the regional aspects of peacebuilding, drawing upon the experience of the African Union, sub-regional organizations and individual African countries.

Moreover, Egypt has actively engaged in peacebuilding activities undertaken by the United Nations, and strongly supported the United Nations peacebuilding architecture since the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 60/180 establishing, the Peacebuilding Commission. We have always pointed to the importance of having all relevant United Nations organs play their respective roles in formulating a comprehensive vision for sustaining peace. In doing so, Egypt has continuously stressed the importance of moving from a paradigm of conflict management to one of conflict resolution, through the full utilization of all relevant political and financial tools with a view to resolving the underlying causes of conflicts including advancing the use preventive diplomacy.

Egypt established in 2014 the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development, translating its principled commitment to achieving development, thus consolidating peace and anchoring stability in the continent. The Agency launched a number of major initiatives on the African continent in conflict affected countries in support of peacebuilding efforts and with the view of sustaining peace, with a special focus on health, education, and women's empowerment. These initiatives have included long-term assistance in improving the health systems in a number of countries, as well as helping to deal with the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. They have also included assisting African countries meet the 'previous Millennium development goals, and capacity building measure in areas such as: diplomacy, agriculture, health, education, communication and information technology, as well as security.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,

Together, national 'ownership and leadership', are the cornerstone of any peacebuilding effort, revolving around achieving the objectives and priorities of the countries in question, taking into consideration the cultural, historical and social specificities. National ownership ensures credible and sustainable peacebuilding processes beyond peacebuilding templates and "one size fits all" approaches, keeping in line with the spirit of the people-centred, inclusive and transformative vision of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

In this respect, we cannot overestimate the importance of predictable, sustained, rapid and flexible financing for sustaining peace, including enhancing the effectiveness of the Peacebuilding Fund in meeting the demands of nations arising from conflict. Attention to the
affected countries should not wane after the guns have gone silent; on the country the voice of peacebuilding tools and activities should become louder.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,

Africa has demonstrated ten years ago its readiness and commitment to engage in post-conflict peacebuilding activities, when it launched, in 2006, the African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and development Policy (AU-PCRD); laying the foundations for achieving durable peace in related situations.

After more than a decade of both establishing the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, and launching the (AU-PCRD), there is still need to highlight how the United Nations and African actors can better cooperate to address peacebuilding related challenges, given the fact that regional aspects of peacebuilding in Africa are associated with a number of cross border threats and dynamics, including illicit arms trafficking, movement of armed groups and terrorists, influx of refugees, environmental challenges affecting several countries in the sub-region, and the spread of epidemics.

Thus, to address the wide range of challenges that Africa faces today, it is vital to develop new strategies to deal with the root causes of conflict and to promote an inclusive African Peacebuilding Architecture that minimizes the risk of relapsing into conflict. By focusing our efforts on advancing the interconnected pillars of peace, security and development, we will be able to translate our efforts into concrete actions.

Egypt supports the operationalization of African peacebuilding capabilities through the activation of the AU-PCRD and the implementation of the African Solidarity initiative (ASI), as two vital instruments to empower African capacity for development in post conflict situations.

In order to further advance African peacebuilding capabilities, Egypt proposed the establishment of an African Union Center for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development. At its 16th Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, the Assembly of the Union adopted a decision for the establishment of the center. This center is forecasted to act as the policy-oriented research arm of the African Union Commission in all matters related to post-conflict situations. This includes support on the normative, conceptual, and institutional levels including upgrading/updating policies, guidelines, proposing sustainable institutional mechanisms for post-conflict reconstruction on the regional, sub-regional and national levels, and on the operational issues, as well documenting best practices and lessons learnt from PCRD experiences in Africa and beyond. We believe that it is time to push forward with the creation of the center and build on the current momentum that has accompanied the review of peacebuilding.
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude by thanking once again The United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (0SAA), for convening this Meeting, and I look forward to its outcome document that will play an important part in advancing the effective operationalization of the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture.