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Statement by

**Ambassador Boštjan Malovrh**

**Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia**

**to the United Nations**

at the

**UN Security Council Open Debate on**

**Peace and Security in Africa: The Impact of Development Policies in the implementation of the Silencing the Guns Initiative**

New York, 30 March 2023

Thank you, Mr. President,

Also, I thank the briefers for their valuable briefings today.

Slovenia aligns itself with the EU statement. I would also like to share some additional remarks in our national capacity.

Sustainable development is essential to achieving long-lasting peace and stability. With its wealth in natural and human resources, in particular the African continent possesses enormous potential for economic growth and development. A comprehensive and integrated approach, focusing on economic development and addressing the root causes of conflict and violence is, therefore, vital.

**First, on building resilient societies**

Development policies can play an important role in addressing poverty, inequality, and marginalization. By promoting economic growth, creating jobs, and improving access to quality education, healthcare, and clean water, development policies help build inclusive and resilient societies. Moreover, investing more in intercultural dialogue, human rights education, and enabling vibrant civil society are the necessary building blocks for a strong community that embraces diversity and provides a sense of belonging for all. Integrating sustainable development in peacebuilding is a basis for reconciling and rebuilding peaceful communities.

**Second, on inclusivity**

Development policies should be tailored to the specific needs of the local communities and must be inclusive and sustainable. Only where all segments of society are given a voice in the development processes a sense of belonging and local ownership can be achieved. It will build trust and social cohesion to achieve sustainable peace and security.

Women and youth play a critical role in promoting sustainable development and peace. It is essential to invest in women and youth empowerment also by supporting initiatives that promote education, economic empowerment, and full, equal and meaningful political participation for women and youth.

**Third, on impacts of climate change**

Climate change has devastating impacts on human security, peace, and development in Africa It aggravates poverty, food insecurity, water scarcity, and displacement and intensifies drivers of conflict. Development policies need to prioritize climate action, promote renewable energy, and sustainable land use and natural resource management to ensure environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities.

**In conclusion**

Slovenia continues to support sustainable development initiatives in post-conflict and fragile settings, in particular in sustainable water and environmental management, food and water security, and importantly on women and youth empowerment. We have prioritised our cooperation in areas that enable more sustainable water and food management, support the transition to a circular economy, and fight against climate change and more generally humanitarian–development nexus.

The African Union's Silencing the Guns Initiative is a vital step towards achieving lasting peace, stability, and sustainable development in Africa. African Union's efforts in this regard are commendable and deserve our full support, in addressing issues, which lead to fiscal deficits and indebtedness in view of increasing African countries’ own capacity to invest in their economic recovery in line with the goals and targets of the Agenda 2063.

We remain committed to cooperating with African countries' in achieving lasting peace and security for all their citizens also through strengthening our cooperation to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030.

Thank you.