

Speech of the Cabinet Secretary for Defence of the Republic of Kenya, Ambassador Raychelle Omamo.

21st September, 2016

Protocol

Today marks a very important milestone in the world calendar, as well as the history of the Eastern Africa Standby Force. Once again, EASF has chosen to join the rest of the world to commemorate the World International Day of Peace. This is a gesture to underscore the importance of EASF as a key player and contributor to matters of peace and security in the Eastern Africa region and the entire continent of Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are all aware of the security situation around us. In the past few years, we have encountered security challenges of one form or another. Conflict is widespread in various parts of Africa. It ranges from cross-border tension, terrorism, piracy and extremism among others. Looking at the recent conflict trends, no nation can claim to be free of these threats or to have capacity to singly respond to the threats. It is for this reason that EASF was established; a mechanism to put resources together to collectively address the threats.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When EASF was established, more than ten years ago, the Government of the Republic of Kenya made a commitment to join the other member states as an active player in contribution of peace and security of our region. Kenya, like all other member states, signed all the necessary documents that brought life to the Eastern Africa Standby Force, then known as the Eastern Africa Standby Brigade. Kenya demonstrated its commitment further, by accepting to host the Secretariat, where we are today, celebrating the International Day of Peace. This Secretariat serves all the ten member states very effectively.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today also marks three years after we encountered a terrorist attack at the Westgate Mall. We stand in solidarity with the families of those who lost their lives during this attack and we continue to pray for them to get the energy to live on.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Eastern Africa Standby Force marks this occasion with renewed efforts after declaring Full Operational Capability (FOC) in December 2014. This key milestone marked key achievements that arose from very hard work from the EASF family. This includes the Secretariat led by the Director, Amb Chanfi, the Planning Element, the Force Headquarters and under the guidance of the Chiefs of Defence and Security, Ministers and our Heads of State at the highest level. The political commitment and support that EASF has received since inception, is a true demonstration and evidence that we

are ready and willing to take responsibility to ensure our region is safe and secure. Our leaders remain very committed to respond to the ever-evolving security threats.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During this Open Day, today, we are proud to share with you fruits of our collective efforts. During the ten-year development period, EASF has trained personnel from all member states in all the three components: military, civilian and police. This has provided the requisite skills to effectively participate in peace support operations on the continent. During this Day, I encourage all of you to take a moment to interact with EASF staff from various member states to get to learn how EASF functions and how it has developed this far.

Ladies and Gentlemen

EASF is already making tremendous efforts to participate in conflict response efforts. The spilling effect of conflict from one country to another calls for collective response mechanisms. As you are all aware, personnel from EASF member states are engaged in peace missions in Somalia, South Sudan, Darfur, Central African Republic and DR Congo, among others. This too, is a demonstration that we have the potential. As a region, we are determined to fully support the call of our continental leaders under the umbrella of African Standby Force to support all efforts towards peace.

As EASF continues to progress, let us appreciate the political will and leadership that has made it possible for EASF to this far. They have provided the necessary financial and human resources and actively participated in all high level functions to develop policies for the growth of EASF and ensure the policies are implemented.

Finally, I wish to express sincere appreciation to all our Member States, Partners and Friends, the media for standing with and for helping EASF develop this far, as we continue to work towards a stable Africa.

I thank you.