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China to establish a peacekeeping standby force in Africa

A constructive debate on strengthening peacekeeping in Africa took place on the 20th of November at the United Nations Security Council on the initiative of China's permanent representative to the UN, Ma Zhaoxu, Council President for November.

China is working with patient determination to assume its own role and responsibility in contributing to the security of the continent. Contrarily to other countries that either have still post-colonial arrangements or create strategic commands or set up information fusion centres, Beijing works explicitly within multilateral established fora, strengthening their operational capacities.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, described peacekeeping as “*a remarkable exercise in global solidarity*”. Paying tribute to all Blue Helmets, he requested that the meeting observe a moment of silence in honour of eight peacekeepers from African countries recently killed in the performance of their duties. The Secretary General thanked China for convening the open debate and for China's contributions to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa and around the world. He acknowledged that “*some 2,500 uniformed Chinese personnel, including well-trained and equipped individual and formed police units, are making an important contribution to multilateral efforts for peace*”.

“*I welcome President Xi's pledge to establish a peacekeeping standby force and hope to build on the 13 units that have already been registered*” he added, noting also that the African continent hosts seven of the 14 UN peacekeeping missions and more than 80% of the peacekeepers. African countries provide nearly half of the Blue Helmets deployed around the world, including almost two-thirds of all women peacekeepers and the majority of UN police officers.

On behalf of China, Ma Zhaoxu observed that the his government supports consistently Africa in the pursuit of a policy of peace, development and prosperity. In September, the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation identified Sino-Africa cooperation in peace and security as one of the major cooperation priorities. “*The declaration clearly states that China will support Africa in silencing the guns in Africa by 2020*”, Ma Zhaoxu pointed out.

He also said that China decided to establish the China-Africa peace and security fund to support cooperation between China and Africa in peace and security, stability focused on peacekeeping cooperation, and continue to provide practice military assistance to AU for its peace operations.

His final remark was that China *“will continue to support Africa in strengthening its peacekeeping capacity-building, settle regional hot-spot issues at an early date, achieve peace, stability and development on the African continent and join hands in shaping a closer community of shared future for China and Africa.”*

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