



**DECLARATION OF THE FIRST EDITION OF LOMÉ
PEACE AND SECURITY FORUM**

Held in Lomé on, 21st& 22nd of October 2023

Republic of Togo

We, participants and stakeholders, gathered on the occasion of the first edition of the Lomé Peace and Security Forum, held on 21 and 22 October 2023 in Lomé, Republic of Togo, on the theme “**How to strengthen political transitions towards democratic governance in Africa?**”;

Guided by the principles and ideals of democracy and the relevant UN Resolutions, in particular General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/55/96 of 4 December 2000 and A/RES/62/7 of 13 December 2007 and Human Rights Council Resolutions, in particular Resolutions A/HRC/RES/19/36 of 23 March 2012 and A/HRC/RES/34/41 of 24 March 2017;

Considering the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 1966 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted on 18 December 1979;

Considering the United Nations Secretary-General’s Guidance Note on Democracy of 08 September 2009 and the April 2008 Guidance Note on Strengthening the Rule of Law;

Considering the Constitutive Act of the African Union adopted in Lomé on 11 July 2000, in particular its Articles 3 and 4 on the promotion of democratic principles and institutions, human and peoples’ rights, good governance, popular participation and the rule of law;

Considering also the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance adopted in Addis Ababa on 30 January 2007, the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights adopted in Nairobi on 1 June 1981, Aspiration 3 of 2063 Agenda adopted in Addis-Ababa on 31 January 2015, the Lomé Declaration on unconstitutional changes of government adopted on July 12, 2000 and the Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government adopted on 28 May 2022 in Malabo;

Bearing in mind the Protocol on the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union, the various communiqués of the meetings of this Council on transitions in Africa, in particular Communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.1152 (2023) of 23 May 2023 on the transition in Chad, Communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.1162 (2023) of 20 July 2023 on the updated situation in the Sahel and Communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.1172 (2023) of 31 August 2023 on the situation in Gabon following the regime change;

Considering the Final Communiqué of the First Ministerial Conference of the African Political Alliance (APA) held on 03 May 2023 in Lomé, particularly its paragraphs 29 and 30 which stress the need for African Nations to strengthen their bonds of solidarity, their cooperative relations

and to explore endogenous ways of financing the fight against terrorism which constitutes a real danger for democracy on the continent;

Concerned about the state of democracy and good governance in Africa despite the progress made over the last three decades on the continent in improving governance and in the conduct of public affairs;

Concerned also by the threats facing democracies both under construction and the more established;

Noting with concern that the disconnect between the promises of democracy and the reality of governance in Africa creates and reinforces the scepticism of the people towards democracy that must be perceived as a process, an unfinished and perfectible project and not as an achievement;

Recognizing the need to work towards strengthening the rule of law, justice, democratic institutions, participatory and inclusive governance on the continent, including accountability;

Convinced of the important role of the rule of law in the lasting pacification of social relations and in the maintenance of regular and peaceful relations between nations;

Aware that the fight against violent extremism and terrorism is not incompatible with democracy, human rights, the rule of law;

Firmly convinced that democracy remains the means par excellence for ensuring peace, human progress and sustainable development in Africa;

Reaffirming that the first of human and peoples' rights is the right to development;

Bearing in mind the hazards, uncertainties and unpredictable situations of political transitions, while being convinced that these could also constitute an opportunity for profound structural transformation for the countries concerned and their populations;

Considering the dual challenge of breaking with unconstitutional changes of government, on the one hand, and making political transitions opportunities for strengthening democracy, building state resilience and strengthening the rule of law, on the other hand;

Aware of the need to pursue political transitions and adapt it to the nature of the challenges and thus taking into account the deep and endogenous spirit of our societies in order to better adapt the instruments and tools of governance, at all organizational levels, sub-regional, regional and international;

Convinced that the strengthening of transitions towards democratic governance depends strongly on the adherence of transitional governments to the principles and ideals of democracy, the adoption and implementation of essential and indispensable reforms;

Noting the need to maintain a constructive dialogue with countries in political transition and to accompany them in order to support the consolidation of democracy and, beyond that, the democratization movement in Africa oriented towards the building of open societies, pluralistic, tolerant, free and based on law and strong institutions;

Welcoming the relevance and timeliness of the theme of the first edition of the Lomé Peace and Security Forum, which reflects Togo's interest in issues of strengthening democratic governance, peace and security in Africa and its ability to think outside the box and put on the continental agenda major issues that determine Africa's present and future in a changing international context;

We declare the following:

Political transitions must be guided by the main objectives of strengthening democratic governance, strengthening the resilience of the State, institutions and the rule of law in an environment characterized by the emergence of new security challenges and the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government where it is essential to promote African expertise in the search for solutions to African problems.

For this purpose,

AS REGARDS TO STRENGTHENING OF TRANSITIONS TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

1. ***We invite*** governments of countries in transition to resolutely direct their actions and the conduct of processes towards the consolidation of democratic governance.
2. ***We call*** for political transitions, which must serve as opportunities to effect change, bold reforms and profound socio-political transformations, more inclusive and participatory.
3. ***We further call*** on countries in transition to work towards a constitutional framework that ensures the balance of powers and fundamental freedoms, respects human rights and promotes a more equitable society and the well-being of citizens.

4. **We invite** us to go beyond the purely formal approaches of political transitions to make them real opportunities for rebuilding and consolidation of democratic gains by taking into account local specificities and requirements for the restoration of constitutional order through free, fair, equitable and transparent elections.
5. **We uphold** that economic development, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.
6. **We call** for the promotion of socio-economic and cultural rights of citizens to strengthen the social dimension of democratic governance.

AS REGARDS TO STRENGTHENING OF STATES RESILIENCE, INSTITUTIONS AND THE RULE OF LAW IN THE CONTEXT OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

7. **We urge** for the building of solid and strong state and institutional architectures in Africa capable of withstanding interior and external shocks.
8. **We call** for the reinforcement of the role of States through the strengthening of their presence in all localities of their territories, the confidence of the population in democratic institutions and the strengthening of the rule of law.
9. **We also call** for addressing fragility and vulnerability factors that undermine the resilience of states and institutions, including internal conflict, ethnic tensions, transnational organized crime, violent extremism and terrorism, conflicts between states, cybersecurity and climate insecurity.
10. **We call** for poverty reduction, economic inequality, internal disputes, armed conflict, corruption, injustice, poor governance, democratic deficit, weak institutions, the absence of the rule of law and exogenous shocks that are factors of fragility and instability that can hinder the management of political transitions towards the consolidation of democratic governance.
11. **We reaffirm** the need to include young people and women in the development and implementation of any policy affecting the socio-economic development of our societies, a guarantee of inclusiveness and social peace.

12. **We reiterate** African Union's zero tolerance for unconstitutional changes of government, as explicitly stated in the Lome Declaration of July 2000; **we emphasize** that undemocratic means to power accentuate fragility of the State, weakens national institutions and the rule of law, and undermines social cohesion.
13. **We reaffirm** the absolute necessity for states to address the structural causes and conditions that favor unconstitutional changes of government.
14. **We emphasize** that foreign interference and the geopolitical interests of the great powers are likely to aggravate the fragility of our countries and the threats to peace, stability, democratic consolidation and development.
15. **We invite** States in transition to use peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms and channels and to strengthen the empowerment and resilience of populations to reduce their vulnerability.
16. **We call** on countries in transition to implement reconciliation policies and strengthen national unity adapted to each context.

AS REGARDS TO SUPPORTING POLITICAL TRANSITIONS AT SUB-REGIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

17. **We call** on the African Union and regional bodies, as well as partners, to support inclusive political transitions in affected African countries, in form of robust response and commitment to deepen democracy and ensure collective security.
18. **We emphasize** that subregional, regional and international organizations must strengthen their mediation role and facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding between stakeholders as well as seek the necessary compromises to achieve peaceful and constructive transitions.
19. **We call** on sub-regional, regional and international organizations to avoid conflict and overlapping agendas in monitoring and supporting political transitions.
20. **We request** from sub-regional, regional and international organizations to further support national efforts to strengthen the role and presence of States in transition throughout their territories and to support them in the implementation of development policies and the fight against poverty, especially in the most disadvantaged areas.

21. **We underline** the need to define transition periods in a consensual and inclusive manner, taking into account the imperatives of strengthening institutions and addressing the root causes of the crisis.
22. **We invite** for vigilance in supporting the political transitions in order to avoid transition periods becoming fertile grounds for the breakdown of peace, the development of subversive, separatists and terrorist activities.
23. **We also invite** sub-regional, regional and international organizations to be creative and to establish a contextualized diagnosis of cases and situations of transition in order to go beyond the usual normative frameworks to propose reforms of the State and institutions that will respond to the aspirations of all.
24. **We call** for constructive dialogue with countries in transition and provide them with efficient support by adapting solutions and support initiatives to the specific situation of each country.
25. **We underline** the need to consider regional security context in supporting political transitions in the Sahel and West Africa.
26. **We request** sub-regional, regional and international organizations to update their monitoring and supporting actions of political transitions, to strengthen situation monitoring systems and create intelligence, strategic and geostrategic thinking centres to support their decision-making processes.
27. **It should be stressed**, however, that the effectiveness of the intervention of sub regional, regional and international organizations in political transitions depends on other factors, including the political will and readiness of transitional governments to cooperate with them.

AS REGARDS TO THE PROMOTION OF PEACE, DIALOGUE, MEDIATION, FACILITATION AND PREFERMENT OF AFRICAN SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS

28. **We welcome** the creation of the Lomé Peace and Security Forum, which aims to be a permanent platform for dialogue, mediation, facilitation, negotiation, peace and security in Africa.
29. **We call** for an immediate ceasefire in Sudan, an end to the activities of armed groups in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, dialogue among Libyans for the rapid organization of elections and

support for the fight against terrorism in the Sahel, Somalia and northern Mozambique.

30. **We urge** armed groups in the north of the Republic of Mali, the Central African Republic and Chad to join or reintegrate into peace processes in the three countries.
31. **We underscore** the need for sub-regional, regional and international organizations to further strengthen their commitment to preventive diplomacy in order to prevent conflicts and crises, facilitate peace talks, support the peaceful and diplomatic resolution of disputes on the continent.
32. **We encourage** African elites to develop solutions adapted to the specific needs of Africa, both in the economic, infrastructure, research, innovation, training and political fields, conflict prevention, management and resolution.
33. **We remain convinced** that the current renewed interest in Pan-Africanism in Africa and among African diasporas and the effectiveness of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will enable Africa to improve its representativeness in global governance and its share in global trade.
34. **We welcome** the launch by Togo, on 03 May 2023, of the African Political Alliance whose first edition of Lomé Peace and Security Forum is the first flagship activity and the projected plan to organize the 9th Pan-African Congress, that will take place in Lomé in 2024, co-organized by Togo and the African Union on the theme «*Renewal of Pan-Africanism and the role of Africa in the reform of multilateral institutions: mobilizing resources and reinventing oneself to act*».

AS REGARDS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THIS DECLARATION

35. **We request** from Togo, in accordance with the spirit and letter of this Declaration, to work with other States, sub-regional, regional and international actors to implement the relevant recommendations of the Forum.
36. **We invite** the African Political Alliance, the Initiator of the Lomé Peace and Security Forum, to set up an advocacy and facilitation framework to capitalize on the achievements of the first edition with a view to a coordinated support of political transitions towards democratic governance as well as to take

mediation and dialogue initiatives in favor of peace and security on the continent.

37. We congratulate H.E. Faure Essozimna GNASSINGBÉ, President of the Republic of Togo, for his leadership on issues of peace and mediation in Africa and thank the Togolese government and people for their warm welcome and the effective holding of the first edition of the Lomé Peace and Security Forum.

38. We add our voice to that of Togo to thank all the actors and partners who supported, in various ways, the organization of the first edition of Lomé Peace and Security Forum.

Done in Lomé, 22 October 2023