Protocols:

I am delighted to be at this summit which is focusing on Building a Peaceful, United and Prosperous Africa. This is about the 4th International Leadership Conference (ILC) that I am attending this year and I must confess that I am always proud to identify with the ideals of these meetings as it pertains to the considerations for the unity and well-being of our people.

I am particularly pleased that the Niamey Summit which is fully supported by the Government of the Republic of Niger has been able to bring together many African leaders to lend their support to the need for peace, reconciliation, interdependence and mutual prosperity on the continent.

I appreciate His Excellency, President Mahamadou Issoufou, the Government and the good people of Niger for the warm reception accorded me and my entourage since my arrival in this beautiful city of Niamey. I also commend Mr. President for his country’s considerable support for the peace initiatives and efforts to fight insecurity in the West African sub-region.

I also commend the Government and people of this country for the comprehensive infrastructural development in the city of Niamey at this period which has prepared the city to host this Summit and other international conferences.
The fact that this summit is holding here today, affirms the commitment and passion of you leaders to be a key factor in the peaceful resolution of the security and developmental challenges faced by the people of our beautiful continent.

I commend Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the Co-Founder of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and the International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP), the leadership as well as the entire team of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) for their continuous advocacy for sustainable peace in the world.

I want to start by saying that peace building is a necessary imperative for development, especially on our continent. The idea of peace sounds easy and desirable because every rational being wants peace in his environment. Yet it remains elusive, because of the dominant nature of conflicts in almost every human situation. Building peace is therefore a task for all of us; in our families, nations and for the entire humanity.

I believe that we have all come to Niamey, the capital city of Niger Republic, to seek new paradigms for peace and declare a new beginning for Africa. The theme of this conference which focuses on "Building a Peaceful, United and Prosperous Africa Centered on Universal Values" is quite instructive.

Since the inauguration of International Summit Council for Peace (ISP-Africa) in South Africa last June, I have been consulting other African leaders towards strengthening our engagements for a more prosperous and peaceful continent.

I have always said that the philosophy of the ISCP–Peace-building, Interdependence and Mutual Prosperity- is in tandem with my personal ideals and that of my Foundation. The Goodluck Jonathan Foundation (GJF) is committed to the principles that strengthen democracy, good governance, peace and stability while promoting prosperity through youth empowerment in Africa.
In our experience as mortals, the search for a lasting peace has eluded humanity over the ages. That is why I believe that the principles of ‘Interdependence and Mutual Prosperity as promoted by the ISCP can provide fresh impetus to the crusade for a just and peaceful society.

Never before in recent memory has the African continent been so bedevilled by widespread security and insurgency as now. As we speak, many of our nations are being ravaged by insecurity with many territories already decimated and innocent people displaced in their thousands.

Indeed, there have been several initiatives from different organisation and agencies targeted at resolving conflicts and promoting peace and prosperity in Africa. While some interventions achieved positive results, others have not succeeded beyond the fact that the hope of the people of the continent for a safer tomorrow is not extinguished. Until the situation generally improves, the search for solution to the problems impeding Africa's development and growth will continue to dominate international discourses.

It is increasingly becoming obvious that no African nation can go it alone, if the fight against insecurity and economic oppression is to yield positive results. For decades African troops have battled forces of evil in hot wars that have only yielded partial results. There is therefore a need for the leaders of the continent to explore other options that could bring about lasting peace on our shores.

Beyond military operations which is no doubt important in securing troubled territories and borders, there is also the need for other tactics including concerted engagements, dialogue and moral suasion.

It is important to point out that the dream of ISCP in this regard is a novel one. The organisation is coming into the discourse with an open-mindedness that is meant to attract frank, sincere and results-oriented consultations.
For the first time, serving and former leaders of our continent are being invited to share a common platform in direct solidarity and dedicated focus in the search for solutions to Africa's peculiar problems. There is no doubt that the continent will be positively impacted by this unique offering which seeks to distil the best of ideas and engagements from Africa's leaders.

The ISCP offers a choice that encourages deep introspection, mutuality, interconnectedness, sincere consultations and shared values in its search for peace.

With all coming together for a united action, the ISCP idea brings to the table the option of harnessing the rich experience of both former and serving African leaders, the opportunity of institutional support and the promise of incumbency backing for peace-oriented policies.

I congratulate all heads of Government here present and urge African leaders to see in ISCP the chance to strategically harness the best of Africa's leadership resources towards negotiating working solutions to the continent's challenges.

I urge our leaders to see in this initiative the need to strengthen the existing relations between past and present leaders of our continent, towards building the kind of bond and synergy that will see our continent out of the woods.

Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, in view of the theme of the conference, as it pertains to mutual prosperity and universal values I want to also emphasise the fact that placing common good over and above personal interests is a path to attaining peaceful growth and sustainable development in Africa.

In order to have peace and development in Africa, I believe we also need to build strong institutions in our nations; institutions that can guarantee justice and safeguard the freedoms of our people at all time.
Democracy thrives with the efficiency of state institutions to carry out their responsibilities without fear of molestation and intimidation.

In concluding, I humbly, as chair of ISCP-Africa, request serving and former Heads of State and Government to endeavor to contribute ideas and offer suggestions that will encourage us to continue to constructively engage and interrogate the processes that will bring about implementable programmes and solutions to our collective challenges.

I believe that this conference has the capacity to throw up new ideas and new approaches that will give birth to fresh impetus in the search for solutions to Africa’s development and security challenges. I am convinced that from your suggestions, we will be able to distil clear templates and plans of action that would guide us in more structured and focused discussions in the coming years.

I have no doubt that with the cooperation of African leaders in offering concrete submissions and the continued support of some committed organisations like UPF, we will be walking into the future with hope, purpose and a sense of direction.

There is no gainsaying the fact that it is our responsibility as leaders to show that Africa has in deed come of age. When we come together as one in sincere fellowship, Africa will no longer be seen and described by the rest of the world as an emblem of poverty and conflicts.

I strongly believe that together, we shall restore Africa to become the ‘shining light of the world’.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations.

I thank you all.