



JOINT COMMUNIQUE

INAUGURAL ANNUAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE MEETING BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE MEDIATION AND SECURITY COUNCIL (AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL) OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES ABUJA, NIGERIA, 24 APRIL 2024

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) and the Mediation and Security Council of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS MSC – Ambassadorial Level) held their Inaugural Annual Joint Consultative Meeting at the ECOWAS Headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, on 24 April 2024. The meeting was convened to deliberate on peace and security issues within the framework of the ongoing implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), as well as the African Governance Architecture (AGA);

The Joint Consultative Meeting was Co-Chaired by H.E. Ambassador Musa NUHU, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to ECOWAS, Chair, ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council and H.E. Ambassador Jainaba Jagne, Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the AU and Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council. H.E. Ambassador Abdel-Fatau Musah, ECOWAS Commissioner Political Affairs Peace and Security and H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner, Political Affairs Peace and Security participated and made statements at the meeting;

The AUPSC and the ECOWAS MSC **reaffirmed** the mandate of the AU PSC concerning its primary responsibility in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, as per the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (2002); and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the mandate of the ECOWAS MSC as per the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace Keeping and Security (1999) and the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001); **recognized** the contribution made by the AU, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms in promoting peace in Africa;

The AUPSC and the ECOWAS MSC **recalled** the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding signed between the AU Commission and the RECs/RMs and the 2020 Revised Protocol on Relations between the AU and RECs;

The Joint Consultative Meeting provided the first historical opportunity for the AU PSC and ECOWAS MSC (Ambassadorial Level) to reflect on issues relating to the harmonization of their decision-making processes, enhancement of coordination, and strengthening of synergy in implementing the APSA and AGA at both the regional and continental levels, based on comparative advantage and complementarity;

The Joint Consultative Meeting focused on the following agenda items: **Contextualizing AU and ECOWAS Cooperation in the Peace, Governance and Security domain; Concerted strategy to sustain Zero-Tolerance for Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCGs) and Effective Counter Terrorism; Mobilizing Resources for Regional and Continental Peace Operations - Experience and Lessons Sharing; and Building Synergy, Coherence, Coordination and Complementarity.**

In this regard, the AU PSC and the ECOWAS MSC:

1. ***Welcomed*** the Declaration on the High – Level African Counter – Terrorism Meeting on the Theme: “Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Institution Building to Address the Evolving Threat of Terrorism in Africa” held on 22 to 23 April 2024, in Abuja, Nigeria;
2. ***Expressed deep concern*** over the worsening insecurity due to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism in West Africa, in particular in the Sahel region and the Lake Chad Basin, as well as the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government, which adversely impact peace and development in the region;
3. ***Underscored*** that preventive measures, including inclusive development, elimination of marginalization and youth employment, in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism remain central; and ***urged*** a synergy of international and regional efforts towards effectively combatting the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism, premised by the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, 1999; the Declaration on the Framework for the OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government, adopted by the 36th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Lomé, Togo, from 10 to 12 July 2000 (referred to as “the Lomé Declaration”); and related AU and ECOWAS normative frameworks; they ***called*** on the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination between the United Nations, African Union and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), on countering terrorism and insurgency in the region;
4. ***Reiterated*** the AU and ECOWAS principle of zero-tolerance for unconstitutional changes of government;
5. ***Called*** for implementing the Declaration [Ext/Assembly/AU/Decl.(XVI)] on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government adopted by the 16th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Malabo in Equatorial Guinea, as well as the Accra Declaration I and Conclusions of Accra II; and ***urged*** for an immediate operationalization and revitalization of existing regional security mechanisms, specifically the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes, the ECOWAS Plans of Action Against Terrorism, the Accra Initiative, and the Multinational Joint Task Force of the Lake Chad basin, towards fostering an inclusive and comprehensive response to emerging peace and security challenges on the Continent;
6. ***Urged*** the effective integration of findings of the Centers of Excellence of the African Union and RECs/RMs on the formulation of counter-terrorism responses;
7. ***Emphasized*** the importance of addressing governance deficits at national levels, including through joint mediation processes, as preventive measures for UCGs and other security issues; in this regard, ***reiterated*** commitments to fully adhere to and implement the relevant AU and ECOWAS instruments on democratic governance, in particular those aimed at deterring and preventing unconstitutional changes of government in line with the implementation of the principle of zero-tolerance for UCGs;
8. ***Took note*** of the notifications by the three Member States of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger to withdraw from ECOWAS and ***reiterated*** the Final Communiqué of the Extraordinary Summit of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government on the Political, Peace and Security Situation in

the Region adopted on 24 February 2024; and **requested** the AU Commission and ECOWAS Commission to continue engaging the three Member States to remain in the Community;

9. **Underlined** the need to support countries in political transition in order to ensure the resilience of state institutions and to prevent their weakening;

10. **Highlighted** the imperative of addressing holistically the root causes and structural drivers of terrorism and violent extremism in a holistic manner and the need to develop mechanisms for mitigating exogenous factors exacerbating conflicts on the Continent, including the influx of mercenaries and foreign fighters, as well as the increasing use of self-defense militias;

11. **Emphasized** the need for Member States and International Partners to ensure zero tolerance for terrorism and violent extremism regardless of the motives and to take appropriate practical measures to ensure that their respective territories are not used by terrorists for the organization and/or financing of terrorist acts to be committed against other States or their citizens; and in this regard, **requested** the AU Commission to finalize the conduct of the comprehensive study on the financing of terrorism in Africa, as requested by the Malabo Declaration;

12. **Stressed** the importance of community dialogue, sharing and promoting best practices in the protection of communities, particularly the youth and women, against radicalisation that leads to terrorism and violent extremism;

13. **Welcomed** the tangible progress being made in the democratic consolidation in a number of member states, as demonstrated recently in Liberia and Senegal; **noted**, however, with concern, the creeping canker of unconstitutional changes of government elsewhere;

14. **Also welcomed** the establishment of the PSC Sub-Committee on Sanctions to follow up on the implementation of the PSC decisions on UCG; and **guaranteed** ECOWAS MSC cooperation in the work of the Sub-Committee in devising common approaches, and to ensure the decisions of the two institutions are coordinated and complementary, including in the establishment of similar ECOWAS Structures;

15. **Raised concern** about the lack of adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for peace processes in the region; and **commended** the AU for its efforts for the mobilization of resources, including the use of the Crisis Reserve Facility, and **welcomed** the UN Security Council Resolution 2719 (2013) as an important step in ensuring predictable and sustainable funding of peace processes in Africa; and in this regard, **emphasized** the need for joint mobilization of resources to support peace operations in the region, in particular addressing the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism;

16. **Agreed** to urgently explore innovative means of internal resource mobilization including special levies and engagement with the private sector and continental financial entities;

17. **Agreed** to institutionalize their cooperation, in particular through the following:

- i. holding of annual joint consultative meetings, between the AU PSC and the ECOWAS MSC at all levels, alternately at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa and at the ECOWAS headquarters in Abuja, in rotation;

- ii. regular interaction between the AU PSC and the ECOWAS MSC Chairpersons on issues of common concern, including through the use of video-teleconferencing (VTC);
 - iii. swiftly communicate decisions on peace and security issues to each Council for enhancing subsidiarity and complementarity while ensuring coherence in the decision-making process;
 - iv. joint field missions to assess situations of common concern and identify further joint action as may be needed;
 - v. holding of joint retreats/brainstorming sessions to reflect on priorities on peace and security issues of the AU PSC and the ECOWAS MSC and develop appropriate common response strategies;
 - vi. establish a team of focal points from both Secretariats to facilitate a well-coordinated network for regular meetings/consultations, particularly on issues in the agenda of the PSC and also in the agenda of the ECOWAS MSC; and
 - vii. organizing staff exchange visits.
18. **Committed** to developing stronger and more structured cooperation on conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding, including Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development; and
19. **Agreed** to convene their Second Annual Joint Consultative meeting in 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at a date to be mutually agreed.