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2ND AFRICA FORUM ON SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

“PROMOTING THE CONTINENTAL AGENDA OF SECURITY, JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT”

22 – 24 OCTOBER 2018
ADDIS ABABA – ETHIOPIA

Conclusions

Conclusions

1. The 2nd Africa Forum on Security Sector Reform (SSR) was hosted by the Commission of the African Union (AU) at its Headquarters in Addis Ababa, from 22 to 24 October 2018. The Forum was convened within the framework of the AU Policy Framework on SSR¹ under the theme *“Promoting the continental agenda of security, justice and development”*. The objective of the Forum was to take stock of SSR developments in Africa and to map a way forward for Member States, regional bodies and international partners. It aimed to offer a platform for inclusive dialogue to consider success stories and the unique opportunities to accelerating action toward the vision of Silencing the Guns in Africa, particularly in light of the contemporary security challenges confronting the continent.

2. The Forum was attended by AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RMs), the United Nations, AU organs, specialized institutions and civil society organizations. The opening session featured statements by Ms. Anna Burylo, Deputy Head of European Union (EU) Delegation to the AU; and H. E. Mr. Alexander Zuev, United Nations Assistant Secretary General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions. The keynote address was delivered by H.E. Ambassador Kwesi Quartey, Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission. The Forum consisted of practitioner panels and plenary discussions on a range of thematic issues that allowed participants to discuss at length and in depth, the experiences of Member States, reflect on political and operational obstacles to complete effective SSR programs, as well as the opportunities and solutions that need to be explored at the national and regional levels.

I. SSR in Peace Building, Political Transitions and Peace Support Operations

3. Strong emphasis was made on the need to fully utilize SSR as a key conflict prevention tool, including through streamlining security sector governance indicators in the continental and regional conflict early warning systems.

4. Gaps persist in streamlining SSR in conflict mediation and resolution efforts, including the absence of mechanisms to ensure that Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and SSR provisions of peace agreements are implemented timely and effectively. This has often resulted in relapse into violence as recognized by the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the year 2020. Addressing these gaps require consistent engagement by regional and continental policy organs, including the Peace and Security Council, as well as support from the international partners to address capacity deficits in this regard. In this context, the Forum referred to the decisions² of the Assembly of the Union regarding the establishment of the AU Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (AUCPCRD) in

¹ Adopted by decision *Assembly/AU/Dec.472(XX)* of the 20th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in January 2013.

² Decisions *Assembly/AU/Dec.351(XVI)* and *Assembly/AU/Dec.710(XXXI)* adopted by the 16th and 31st Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly of the Union, in 2011 and 2018, respectively.

the Arab Republic of Egypt. The AUCPCRD is envisaged to guide and provide support in implementing programmes in line with the AU Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development³.

5. The complex environments in which Peace Support Operations (PSOs) are deployed require that they actively guide, oversee and coordinate SSR programmes in close collaboration with the host nation. This is a key factor in enabling them effectively discharge their mandates and timely handover security responsibilities to the host nation. In this respect, it was acknowledged that SSR capacities and mandates in PSOs should be strengthened and streamlined in the conceptualization and review of PSOs. This is in addition to strengthening coordination at the strategic and field levels between the AU and UN in the areas of SSR and DDR.

II. National Oversight of the Security Sector: Role of the Executive, Parliament and Civil Society

6. The full involvement of the executive, parliament and civil society was stressed as integral to consolidating full ownership of national SSR processes. Commitment at the highest levels of the Executive, including Heads of States as supreme commanders of national security institutions, is also essential in guaranteeing credibility of oversight mechanisms.

7. While the important role of civil society in its engagement with the security sector is recognized by the AU Police Framework on SSR⁴, mutual trust between CSO and security institutions need to be nourished in order to ensure effective and consistent engagement, including beyond advocacy. Member States undertaking SSR are encouraged to develop communication strategies to ensure the flow of information between and among the relevant national institutions, the media, and the wider public. The AU Commission is also encouraged to enhance knowledge and capacities of the media, through the relevant media and journalist networks and platforms.

8. The modalities of interaction between security institutions and CSO also require further development, building on the notable experiences of some Member States. In this respect, the role of the AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) must be leveraged to facilitate capacity building and engagement of CSO in SSR.

9. Capacity building is a prerequisite to enable parliamentarians discharge their mandate in oversight and governance of security institutions. Concrete steps should also be taken at the level of the AU to fully explore the role of the Pan-African Parliament as an important entry point to engage parliamentarians and establish good practices in this area.

³ Adopted by the 9th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council, held in June 2006, pursuant to decision EX.CL/Dec.302 (IX).

⁴ Section H, paragraphs 74-76 of the AU Policy Framework on SSR.

10. Transparency in the security sector needs to be improved without compromising confidentiality. In this respect, it was emphasized that legislation and codes governing disclosure of information by security institutions should be reviewed, as required, to improve transparency and accountability to oversight bodies and the wider public.

III. Development of National Security Policies, Strategies and Related Normative Frameworks

11. It has been observed that while several Member States have developed security policies, strategies and normative frameworks, as well as SSR processes, their implementation lags behind due to various reasons, including lack of high-level commitment and resource constraints. As such, there is a need for context-sensitive national frameworks that are inclusive of all national state actors, including centres of excellence and universities, research institutes as well as of national non-state actors contributing to security. The growing recognition of the concept of hybridity in the security sector was also highlighted. Importantly, the development of national security policies/strategies should be followed by budgeted action plans.

12. The challenge of SSR in post-conflict situations was highlighted with particular focus on addressing the existence of national non-state security providers at the community level. It was emphasized that there is a need for dialogue towards sustainable means to disarm or reintegrate such actors into the formal security structures, including through community awareness raising, community violence reduction interventions, and building public confidence in the state security providers. The AU, RECs/RMs and partners are called upon to provide the necessary technical support in developing and articulating context-specific SSR and DDR interventions.

IV. Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Best Practices in the Security Sector

13. Gender mainstreaming in security institutions will contribute to building national architectures that enshrine gender equality, and that are responsive to the needs of all segments of society. However, social and cultural attitudes remain barriers to enhanced women participation in the security sector, as well as to their role as a key constituency in informing and guiding reforms. As such, advocacy, education and training to dispel misperceptions and negative attitudes is required at all social and political levels, including in higher education. Gender mainstreaming should further be enhanced based on an analysis of the local contexts, and with the aim of implementing incremental and consistent approaches towards achieving gender equality in line with the AU instruments⁵.

V. Public Expenditure Reviews for the Security Sector

14. Public Expenditure Reviews (PER) are an important tool to systematically analyse the affordability of reform strategies and programme planning. They are a key component of SSR

⁵ Including, but not limited to the Solemn Declaration On Gender Equality in Africa, adopted by the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in July 2004 [Assembly/AU/Decl.12 (III) Rev.1]

efforts, contributing towards policy development and providing options for operational decisions in the security institutions. The question of resourcing is essential when developing strategies and plans since affordability and sustainability of SSR is crucial to the viability of the process.

15. PERs also contribute to enhance transparency and accountability in the security sector, offering an opportunity to engage CSOs, parliaments and other oversight bodies through process consultations.

VI. Multilateral and Bilateral Partnerships and Coordination of SSR Support

16. Bilateral and multilateral partnerships on SSR remain essential, and have contributed substantially to the progress made across the continent. Nonetheless, there remains misalignment between national priorities and support extended. Challenges in this respect include poor coordination among assistance providers, weak national coordination structures and capacities, and externally determined priorities. Addressing such gaps will require, *inter alia*, closer consultations and joint analysis at all stages of the design and implementation of SSR.

17. The UN Group of Friends of SSR should further sensitize international partners towards embracing true partnerships that are anchored on the principles of national ownership and leadership. International partners must recognize that the success of SSR programmes require their long-term commitment and a greater focus on actions that will ensure sustainable gains, including capacity development of legitimate institutional structures. The Group is also called upon to facilitate dialogue towards greater transparency of bilateral and multilateral security sector assistance, including in SSR financing through Overseas Development Assistance.

18. The AU was called upon to extend greater assistance to Member States in improving national capacities for the design, implementation, coordination and evaluation of SSR processes. This is in addition to advocating for the needs of Member States at the international levels in close collaboration with RECs/RMs. In this regard, the proposal for the establishment of an AU Steering Committee on SSR was highly welcome as an important measure to enhance dialogue, information sharing and coordination between the AU, RECs/RMs, the UN and international partners. The Commission was requested to circulate the draft concept of the Steering Committee for additional inputs towards improving its membership, inclusivity and modalities of work. The Commission was further requested to operationalize this important platform as early as possible.

19. The Forum also welcomed the draft AU three-year SSR strategic plan presented by the AU Commission, highlighting that it provides a comprehensive and integrated framework to support Member States in implementing the AU Policy Framework on SSR. The Commission was requested to integrate the action points and recommendations made at the Forum to the plan. International partners were also encouraged to contribute to its implementation.

VII. Defense, Police and Criminal Justice Reforms⁶ in Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Situations

20. The current SSR discourse is still more military focused and does not sufficiently provide for timeous criminal justice and police reform. The policing, on its part, should remain dynamic to adapt to new paradigms and vulnerabilities produced by regional and global security developments and emerging threats. The reform of the police and justice system is a prerequisite for sustainable peace, which is a demand from local populations. Policing should therefore evolve towards a paradigm of human security⁷ and respect for human rights, including the establishment of mechanisms and channels of communication to inflect the image of the police.

21. However, effective and efficient justice systems are influenced by problems such as corruption, capacity gaps and the blurring role between military and policing. This further widens the rift between the police and citizens and contributes to the proliferation of non-state security providers. This necessitates clear delineation of roles between the tasks of the military and police. It was generally recognized that internal security should be handled primarily by the police. However, and where the internal threat is of a military nature, internal military deployment will have to take place at the decision of the Executive, and in consultation with the relevant national legislative bodies, in line with related legal frameworks.

VIII. Intelligence Reform in Light of a Changing Security Environment

22. Reform of intelligence institutions is necessary to enable them to cope with the paradigm shift which is evolving from the state-centric focus of intelligence services to trans-boundary people-centric services and human security. This takes place in light of the increasing threat of terrorism and transnational crimes. Intelligence cooperation between African intelligence services has aided in this paradigm shift as Member States developed shared understanding and common approaches in response to emerging threats.

23. In this respect, the positive role of regional bodies and platforms was recognized, such as the Committee of Security and Intelligence Services of Africa (CISSA), AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), African Centre for the Study and research on Terrorism (CAERT), as well as the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes for the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahel Region and the Horn of Africa. These bodies and mechanisms were further encouraged to focus on building

⁶ Paragraph 4 of the AU Policy Framework on SSR provides a comprehensive definition of the Security Sector as comprising “individuals, groups and institutions that are responsible for the provision, management and oversight of security for people and the state”. These include primary security institutions, specialized intelligence and security institutions, public oversight and management bodies, justice and rule of law institutions, civil emergency units, and non-state security bodies.

⁷ The notion of human security is articulated in paragraph 6 of the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, adopted by the 2nd Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in 2004. This notion is further quoted in paragraph 3 of the AU Policy Framework on SSR.

institutional capacities of Member States in contribution to their effectiveness and reform in line with the principles of the AU Policy Framework on SSR.

IX. Oversight of Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs)

24. Note was taken of the instruments and processes at the global level, including at the level of the UN Human Rights Council, aimed at addressing human rights concerns raised by the expansion of the private military and security industry. Member States were called upon to exercise effective control over PMSCs operating in their territories. The need for coordinated action among Member States to address PMSCs operating in the high seas was also highlighted. Other concerns were raised regarding the armament of PMSCs and related foreign control and influence. Urgent calls were made to the relevant bodies and policy organs of the AU to take the lead in the development of continental frameworks and guidance for the regulation and oversight of PMSCs.

25. Concern was also expressed at the continued use of armed non-state actors in subversive action against Member States and the need for the AU policy organs to address such actions, including within the framework of the 1977 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa. In this respect, it was strongly recommended that steps be taken to review the Convention and adapt it to the current security environment, as well as strengthen mechanisms to monitor its implementation.