



MEDIA ADVISORY:

African Union Ministerial Conference on “Access to Natural Resources and Conflict between Communities”

Representatives of the media in Bamako, Mali, are invited to cover the opening and closing ceremonies of the African Union Ministerial Conference on “Access to Natural Resources and Conflict between Communities”, to be held in Bamako, Mali.

What: The African Union (AU) and the Government of Mali are co-organising the Ministerial Conference on, “Access to Natural Resources and Conflict between Communities”, to support Member States, “to develop a credible framework for the effective prevention and management, as well as resolution of local conflicts, including inter-communal violence, transhumance and land disputes with other relevant organisations and mechanisms”, as requested by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) in its 838th held in April 2019.

Today, it is clear that competition over scarce natural resources continues to exacerbate inter-communal conflicts, which are becoming more widespread across Africa; a situation perpetuated by poor governance of natural resources, disagreements between stakeholders, different and competing users, irreconcilable interests among the resource users, and the exclusion of certain groups from the use of said resources etc.

In addition to expanding into local politics, inter-communal conflicts linked to natural resources may also metamorphose into identity and affinity issues including inter-ethnic and inter-faith conflicts. This can lead to larger and more complex issues especially when non-state armed groups, terrorists or criminals, rely on access, control, and exploitation of natural resources as a means of financing their violent activities.

That is why the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), concerned that most of Africa’s long-standing conflicts are due to issues related to the access, control, and distribution of natural resources, “stressed the imperative need for effective and transparent management, as well as for the equitable distribution of a country’s natural resources that ensures the interest and wellbeing of the local population, communities and the country at large”, in its 575th meeting held in 2016, thus recognizing “that fairness, transparency and accountability in the management of natural resources is critical to preventing conflict and promoting sustainable development in Africa”.

When: 10:00 am GMT, 28 November 2019 – opening ceremony;
12:30 pm GMT, 29 November 2019 – closing ceremony;

Where: Bamako, Mali;

Who: The Ministerial Conference, which is co-organized by the African Union Commission and the Republic of Mali, with the support of the United Nations, will be attended by representatives from the African Union, the United Nations and Member States.

Representatives of Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) will also participate. These include the; Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC); G5 Sahel; and Authority Liptako-Gourma (ALG).

In addition, representatives of peacekeeping operations on the continent as well as UN agencies will also be invited to present their perspectives on this type of conflict.

Why: This High-Level meeting aims to enable African Ministers in charge to lay the foundations for a continental framework for the prevention, management and resolution of local conflicts related to natural resources. More specifically, the ministerial meeting aims to:

- i. Highlight and analyze successes, challenges and lessons in conflict management between communities related to natural resources;
- ii. Foster a common and shared understanding of the link between conflicts between communities and access to natural resources;
- iii. Identify the strategic pillars of a global policy framework for the prevention and resolution of this type of conflict;
- iv. Secure a political commitment; the Bamako Declaration on conflicts between communities and access to natural resources.

For more information please contact:

Mr. Paschal Chem-Langhee

Communication Officer

African Union Commission

Email : Chem-LangheeP@africa-union.org

African Union (AU)

Peace and Security Department

Conflict Management Division

Tel. No.: +251-115-513 822

Fax: +251-115-519 321

E-mail: situationroom@africa-union.org or
situationroom@ausitroom-psd.org

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