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AU PSC REAFFIRMS THE VIABILITY OF THE 2013 PEACE, SECURITY AND COOPERATION FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR THE DRC AND THE REGION, AND CALLS FOR ITS URGENT REVITALISATION

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) dedicated its 140th meeting, held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 17 February 2023, to consideration of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) situation. It focused mainly on the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the DRC and the Region (Framework Agreement) and the deployment of the East African Community Regional Force.

The PSC voiced its concern about the prevailing insecurity and deterioration of the humanitarian and socio-economic situation due to violence and human

rights abuses committed by armed groups and negative forces in the eastern DRC. It condemned the human rights abuses committed by the March 23 Movement (M23), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, FDLR) and other armed groups.

The PSC said the Framework Agreement remained a viable instrument to support the DRC and institutions in the region to achieve peace, security and stability, and called for its urgent revitalisation.

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Chaired by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, the meeting brought together President Félix Tshisekedi of the DRC, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, President João Lourenço of Angola as the AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation and Chairperson of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, and United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres.

The meeting emphasised the need for the Framework Agreement signatory countries, individually and collectively, to redouble their efforts to fully implement the national and regional commitments enshrined in the agreement. Furthermore, the meeting requested the AU Commission, working in collaboration with the East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), ICGLR, and UN to urgently work towards revitalising the Framework Agreement and to report back to the PSC.

Among others, the meeting demanded all armed groups, particularly M23, as well as the ADF and FDLR, to immediately cease hostilities and unconditionally withdraw from the eastern DRC. In this respect, the PSC urged the expeditious implementation of the outcomes of the Luanda and EAC-led Nairobi processes, and the communiqué of the Mini-Summit of Luanda of 23 November 2022.

The PSC welcomed the deployment of the EAC Regional Force to the eastern DRC. It paid tribute to the troop contributing countries to the EAC Regional Force for their commitment to promoting regional peace and security, and decided to support its deployment and operations. In this regard, the PSC was authorised to collaborate with the Commission and the AU Peace Fund governance structures to immediately work out modalities for use of the fund, and report back to the PSC within six weeks. It called on the UN and other partners to support peace-making efforts in the DRC through financial and technical expertise.

The meeting applauded President Lourenço of Angola and President Évariste Ndayishimiye of Burundi for facilitating dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda, as well as for their efforts in accompanying the DRC in its pursuit of stabilising the country's eastern parts. They also commended Kenya's former president Uhuru Kenyatta as the EAC facilitator for the DRC for his peace efforts since his appointment.

In implementing PSC and Assembly decisions, the AU Commission convened a technical consultative meeting on 29 March 2023 of all the guarantors of



the Framework Agreement (AU, UN, SADC and ICGLR) and the EAC and ECCAS, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. There the plan of action on the revitalisation of the Framework Agreement was adopted. Significantly, the AU Commission initiated a process for authorising the eventual disbursement of US\$2 million from the Crisis Reserve Facility of the AU Peace Fund.

Subsequently, the AU convened a Quadripartite Summit of the EAC, ECCAS, ICGLR and SADC on the situation in the DRC, in Luanda, Angola, on 27 June 2023. President Azali Assoumani of the Comoros presided over the Quadripartite Summit as the AU Chairperson. The PSC Chairperson for June 2023 and the UN also attended.

The Quadripartite Summit adopted the Joint Framework on Coordination and Harmonisation of Peace Initiatives in Eastern DRC by the EAC, ECCAS, ICGLR, SADC and UN under the auspices of the AU. This framework seeks to promote coherence of the existing peace initiatives of the Quadripartite in line with the relevant instruments and decisions with clear division of responsibilities and agreed timelines.

The summit also endorsed the establishment of a Multilevel Coordination Working Group comprising the representatives of the DRC, Rwanda, AU, Chairs of the EAC, ICGLR, SADC, and ECCAS, as well as the UN. Its focus is on political, diplomatic, military, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions to facilitate the continued exchange of information to foster coherence.

Notably, the Quadripartite Summit was institutionalised as a platform for coordination, harmonisation and high-level consultations on the situation in the eastern DRC, and for the Quadripartite Platform to fully implement the adopted Joint Framework and report to the AU PSC quarterly. The next one will be held in Bujumbura, Burundi, on a date yet to be determined.

PSC WELCOMES GROWING TREND OF PEACEFUL ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN MEMBER STATES

On 20 January 2023, the PSC considered the Report of the AU Commission Chairperson on Elections conducted in Africa from July to December 2022 with an outlook for 2023.

The PSC acknowledged the critical importance of inclusive, peaceful, democratic, transparent and credible elections, and the peaceful transfer of power, as key factors for deepening democracy, peace, security, stability and sustainable development in Member States. These factors are also vital for the AU aspiration of Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030, Agenda 2063 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It reaffirmed the AU's zero tolerance for unconstitutional changes of government in keeping with the 2000 Lomé Declaration, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the Accra Declaration of May 2022, and the Malabo Declaration adopted by the 16th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government on 28 May 2022, in Equatorial Guinea.

The PSC congratulated Member States for successfully organising elections during the last half of 2022 – these included the Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Kenya, Angola, São Tomé and Príncipe, Equatorial Guinea, Tunisia and Lesotho. It welcomed

the growing trend of peaceful electoral processes in Member States, particularly in Lesotho and Kenya, where political actors ensured the peaceful transfer of power.

The PSC also commended the deployment of the joint AU-Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Election Observation Mission to Kenya's 9 August 2022 elections as a model for strategic collaboration between the Commission and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms to be emulated across the continent.

The Council commended the Commission for providing technical assistance to national election management bodies and deploying election observation missions to accompany election processes in Member States. It welcomed the newly introduced integrative approach of deploying preventive diplomacy/mediation missions to support peaceful electoral processes in Member States.

The PSC encouraged Member States to mobilise domestic financial resources to insulate national election processes from external meddling, and promote the meaningful participation of women and youth as voters and as candidates. It did this by, among others, promulgating affirmative legislation through reasonable candidacy fees and quota systems.

PSC CONDUCTS SOLIDARITY VISIT TO SOUTH SUDAN



The PSC, led by Ambassador Edward Xolisa Makaya, the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the AU and PSC Chairperson in February 2023, undertook a field mission to Juba, South Sudan, from 22 to 25 February 2023.

This was to follow up on the implementation of the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS),

and PSC and AU Assembly decisions aimed at supporting the transition process and fostering peace and stability in the country. Hence the PSC sought first-hand information on South Sudan's political, security, economic, and humanitarian situations.

The PSC met with Representatives of the Reconstituted Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGONU) Civil Society Organizations, Partners,

United Nations, Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC) and Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM). In solidarity with the government and people of South Sudan, and as a guarantor of the R-ARCSS, the AU, through the PSC, reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to supporting the people of South Sudan to complete the transition. The field mission coincided with the end of the timelines of the 36-month first transition period, as stipulated in the R-ARCSS, and the commencement

of the 24-month extension of the transition period, on 23 February 2023.

The delegation comprised PSC members Burundi, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Gambia, Ghana, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa (Chair), Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. They were accompanied by support staff from the AU Commission. Before this, the PSC last visited South Sudan in February 2022.

AU PSC MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE CONDUCTS ITS FIRST INDUCTION TRAINING WORKSHOP

The PSC Secretariat organised an inaugural Induction Training Workshop from 16-17 March for PSC Military Staff Committee (MSC) members in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The workshop was officially opened by Lieutenant General Salum Haji Othman on behalf of the government of Tanzania. It was chaired by Brigadier General Suleiman Mohammed Suleiman, defence adviser at the Embassy of Tanzania in Ethiopia, in his capacity as March 2023 MSC Chair.

The workshop sought to enhance the MSC's institutional capacity, to enable it to more effectively discharge its mandate as stipulated in Article 13 (8) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of

the AU PSC. Among others, the workshop afforded MSC members the opportunity to have a better appreciation of the core mandate, functions, powers and working methods of the committee, and the PSC Rules of Procedure.

Participants comprised the defence advisers/ defence attaches of all 15 PSC members: Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Djibouti, Gambia, Ghana, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and staff from the AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department, African facilitators and researchers from the Institute for Security Studies.



CURRENT STATUS OF THE AU-LED AND ETHIOPIAN OWNED PEACE PROCESS

The AU's intervention in Ethiopia commenced with an evolving multilayered approach, taking into account the changing political dynamics of the conflict in the northern Tigray region, as well as the regional context associated with it.

In the early days of the conflict in 2020, the then AU Chairperson, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, initially deployed three Special Envoys. These were former Mozambican president Joaquim Chissano; former Liberian president Ellen Johnson-

Sirleaf; and former South African president Kgalema Motlanthe. They were to engage the parties in order to facilitate de-escalation of the situation and pave the way for a negotiated settlement between the parties to end the conflict peacefully.

Subsequently, in August 2021, the AU Chairperson appointed Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria, as AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa to engage in the diplomatic and political talks with the parties to the Ethiopian conflict. Building



on Obasanjo's progress, in September 2022 the Chairperson then also formed a High-Level Panel. He appointed former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and South Africa's former deputy President Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, a member of the Panel of the Wise, as members to support the High Representative's efforts in Ethiopia.

With the combined efforts of the parties and the AU High-Level Panel, an agreement was reached in Pretoria on 2 November 2022. At the Ethiopian recognition ceremony on 23 April 2023, organised by the Government of Ethiopia to honour key players who contributed to bringing peace to the Tigray region, the Chairperson of the AU Commission said: "The signing of the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) under an AU-led process was a monumental achievement that lends strong credence to the primacy of the principle of African ownership and leadership of our conflict resolution processes.

It brings to the fore some valuable lessons that the Commission will integrate into our ongoing and future peace-making efforts. Experience and lessons from this initiative could lay the foundation for a new AU peace-making doctrine.

Similar recognition was subsequently organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia to honour the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye and his technical team in the Department.

Since the Agreement for Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities between Ethiopia's government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) was signed on 2 November 2022, there have been numerous high-level engagements between the parties. There were two Senior Commanders meetings in Nairobi in November and December 2022, the Joint Committee of the Senior Commanders meeting from November to December 2022 in Shire, Ethiopia, and

the subsequent endorsement of the agreement by the PSC on 9 November 2022.

Consistent with the agreement, a Joint Committee of the Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mechanism (MVCM) was established. It comprises the parties (FDRE and TPLF), the AU, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and strategically coordinates the activities of the African Team of Experts (TAE), also known as the MVCM, as well as resolves issues that arise from the ground that do not fall within the scope of the mandate of the TAE.

Two Joint Committee meetings of the MVCM were held in February and May 2023 at the AU Commission headquarters in Addis Ababa. Both aimed to take stock of developments and reflect on the way forward in the implementation of the COHA, signed on 2 November 2022.

On 29 December 2022, the AU High-Level Panel launched the AU-MVCM (TAE) in Mekelle, Tigray Region. Since the deployment of the AU-MVCM, numerous activities have been facilitated on the ground, including much-needed peace dividends that are bringing relief to the people of Tigray. Some of these include:

- a. The guns have remained silent in the Tigray Region since the agreement was signed.
- b. Heavy and medium weapons have been handed over by the TPLF armed combatants to the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF).
- c. Essential services such as telecommunication facilities, electricity, and health facilities have been restored.
- d. Humanitarian supplies have been distributed unhindered in most parts of the region.
- e. Economic activities in parts of the region, such as banking, have resumed.

- f. Routine long-range patrols are regularly conducted in the region by the TAE, including to Adigrat, Zalambessa (border with Eritrea), Maychew, Alamata, and Shire.
- g. Air and road transport, including seven commercial flights from Addis Ababa to Mekelle, have resumed.
- h. Schools in parts of the region have reopened.

Against the backdrop of these achievements, numerous challenges lie ahead in full implementation of the AU-led Ethiopian peace agreement, including:

- a. The complete withdrawal of non-ENDF forces to their respective sides of the border.
- b. Delay in the implementation of the demobilisation, decentralisation and reintegration process; the pace of implementation of the demobilisation and reintegration aspects for TPLF combatants needs to be fast-tracked.
- c. The relocation of internally displaced persons to their homes is yet to begin.
- d. War remnants such as unexploded ordnances continue to be present in parts of the region, which delay farming and the start of school activities. However, the newly established Tigray Task Force has begun clearing unexploded ordnances and mines in collaboration with the UN Mine Action Service.

Following the recommendation for extension of the AU-MVCM's mandate by the Joint Committee on 24 May 2023, based on the remaining tasks to be accomplished on the ground in Tigray, the AU PSC on 15 June 2023 endorsed the extension from 30 June to 31 December 2023.

It is worth noting that through the AU-led Ethiopian process, the Commission has seen the importance of having flexible, responsive financial and administrative procedures; and, more critically, ensuring adequate resources are available to respond to crisis situations is key to successfully responding to conflicts. Pursuant to this, the Commission acknowledges the support it has received from the African Development Bank, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the UN, and the governments of Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the United States of America, Norway, UK, and EU and some of its Member States. This support remains critical to the success of the AU's peace-making initiative in the Tigray Region.

The ongoing AU-led peace process for the resolution of the conflict in the Northern Tigray Region of Ethiopia vividly demonstrates tremendous success in the organisation's mediation efforts, vis-à-vis its recent history of managing peace processes in Africa. Finally, the AU reiterates its deep commitment to supporting the government and people of Ethiopia in their quest for sustainable peace that fosters social cohesion throughout the country.

AU AND AFRICAN FIRST LADIES PEACE MISSION SIGN MOU TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S ROLE IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING



The AU Commission and the African First Ladies Peace Mission (AFLPM) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) at the State House Conference Centre in Abuja, Nigeria, on 8 May 2023. This marked an important stride in advancing the women, peace and security agenda through advocacy for human rights, sustainable development, social justice, good governance and democracy.

The MoU, signed during the AFLPM's 10th General Assembly, aims to promote women's agency in peacebuilding and complement ongoing efforts for peace, security and stability in Africa.

Commissioner Bankole Adeoye, on behalf of the AU Commission, welcomed this renewed cooperation between the AU Commission and the AFLPM and

reiterated the Commission's commitment to work with the Mission to ensure the active involvement of women in peace processes. AFLPM President Dr Aisha Muhammadu Buhari thanked the AU for its continued support in achieving common goals.

The AU delegation, led by Commissioner Adeoye, representatives from the AU Panel of the Wise, the Southern African Development Community Panel of Elders, Special Envoys and High Representatives, FemWise-Africa, youth networks and think tanks, participated in the official commissioning of the AFLPM Permanent Secretariat in Abuja on 10 May 2023.



ATMIS MARKS FIRST ANNIVERSARY WITH A PLEDGE TO STRENGTHEN SOMALIA'S STABILISATION PROCESS

The AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) marked its first anniversary on 1 April with a commitment to strengthen cooperation with the country's government to speed up Somalia's stabilisation process.

Special Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson for Somalia, Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, and Somalia's Defense Minister Abdulkadir Mohamed Nur, at a joint press conference at ATMIS's headquarters in Mogadishu, committed to helping Somalia achieve long-term peace and security.

The briefing also provided an update on joint activities and achievements. Since its reconfiguration from AMISOM to ATMIS in April 2022, the Mission has achieved some gains in securing territories thanks to the commitment of its military, police and civilian units.

Summit of ATMIS Troop Contributing Countries and Somalia

From 24 to 27 April, the Summit of Heads of State and Government of Troop Contributing Countries to ATMIS and the Federal Republic of Somalia took place in Kampala, Uganda, under the Chairmanship of President Yoweri Museveni.

It was convened to evaluate the achievements in implementing the ATMIS mandate and the overall security situation in Somalia. It reaffirmed its commitment to continue to assist, in the spirit of Pan-Africanism, the Federal Government of Somalia in its stabilisation efforts, towards ensuring regional stability.

The summit was attended by Burundi President and East African Community Chairperson Évariste Ndayishimiye, President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh of Djibouti, Kenya's President William Ruto, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia, and Ethiopia's

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Demeke Mekonnen. Other high-level dignitaries included AU Commissioner Bankole Adeoye, United Nations Support Office in Somalia Head Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, representatives from the United States and European Union, and members of the diplomatic corps based in Somalia and Nairobi, Kenya.

Joint Military/Police Operations

ATMIS supported the Somali Security Forces' joint military operations against al-Shabaab. It also provided medical evacuations to the Somali National Army and air support during the operations. The police component conducted joint patrols with the Somali Police Force in Mogadishu, Kismayo, Bidoa, and Beledweyne.

Capacity Building

ATMIS continues to build capacity for the Somali Security Forces in preparation for the handover of security responsibilities and eventual exit in December 2024. The Mission has also provided training sessions to the Somali Security Forces in various areas, including international humanitarian law/international human rights law, child protection, mortar operations, intelligence, counter-improvised explosive device operations, maritime security, etc. The police component trains and mentors the Somali Police Force personnel.

Civil-Military Coordination

During March, April and May, ATMIS continued to foster cooperation with civilian communities around the Mission area. The Mission supports the community by providing essential services and maintaining a good working relationship. ATMIS also supported the airlifting of examination papers for this year's Somali primary school exams.

ETHIOPIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION INTERVIEW WITH COMMISSIONER BANKOLE ADEOYE OF THE AU PAPS DEPARTMENT DURING THE 60TH OAU-AU ANNIVERSARY



What is the Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Department's mandate?

The mandate of the department rests on helping conflict prevention, investing in mediation and dialogue and addressing the three cycles of conflict – prevention, management and resolution.

How did the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) shift the path for the Africa we want?

The OAU is the frontrunner for the AU that was able to promote the Pan-African vision of a new continent, and that vision was entrenched [in] political solidarity and freedom. It led the foundation ... from colonialism, apartheid, and brought freedom and independence to the continent.

However, the AU remains politically focused on good governance, addressing and promoting democracy for human security, emphasising African solutions to African problems, Silencing the Guns by 2020 originally and now by 2030.

It remains the focus to bring about seven aspirations of Agenda 2023. That space defines the relevance to a peaceful, [secure] continent; but also a continent that is more democratic and respects human [rights] and fundamental freedom. An intergovernmental body that is founded on constitutionalism, the rise and the voice of the African people including women, youth and children. We contribute to [working towards strengthening] democracy as part of that space.

What are the major causes of conflict and arrests in Africa, and what has been done to address the root causes of these conflicts?

Addressing various conflicts on our continent continues to be a work in progress. In PAPS, under the leadership of Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, we have stepped up a multistakeholder, multidimensional

approach. These conflicts have become protracted and we need to find multilayered solutions.

One of the things we have been doing is to set up direct engagement, strengthening our mediation and conflict-prevention initiatives; [supporting and building] the capacities of Member States of the Commission; the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) working together; [ensuring] that the African Standby Force is operationalised; [moving] towards strengthened democracy, better and effective observation of elections to support Member States; and addressing the need to build smarter partnerships.

We are putting in place structures and mechanisms that work for people to address this conflict. We must engage all stakeholders, as in Sudan. We are mobilising the regional neighbouring states of Sudan, because they have a role and [a] stake in [Sudan's] stability and security. We are reconceptualising FemWise-Africa, which is one of the mediation mechanisms [and] conflict-prevention tools we have at our disposal.

We have also created a WiseYouth. We are also working closer ... with the African First Ladies Peace Mission, and we are promoting think tanks to join the group; and we set up the African Network of Think Tanks for Peace. We are mobilising a new platform for knowledge exchange on early warning and conflict prevention with RECs/Regional Mechanisms. Only a multidimensional approach can lead to better results in terms of conflict management and conflict resolution.

We have to invest more [in] conflict prevention as conflict management is very expensive. In doing so, we have to realise that our continent is facing challenges when it comes to terrorism and violent extremism, unconstitutional changes of government, complex political transitions, and the impact of climate change. So, all these put together, we have to have a multidimensional response. [We continue to engage in] the challenges that relate to how conflicts evolve.

How does the AU work with its Member States to address these issues of different initiatives?

The Member States have recognised the potential performance of the AU PSC. It remains the primary decision-making organ when it comes to issues of

conflict on the continent. We work closely with them on a daily basis. We are ceased of all conflict and crisis situations on the continent; we brief them and they make the decisions. Member States remain at the front and [centre] of all our activities.

We also engage with them through the RECs that they belong to. We also use the platform of the Permanent Representatives Committee. You see constant engagement, regular interaction, interface with all Member States at all levels – national, continental and regional.

We also undertake missions to these countries in terms of shuttle diplomacy, preventive diplomacy, and invest in their capacity. We are ... rolling out many capacity-training programmes, from transitional justice, to peace operations, to police cooperation. We have [a] research centre that deals with terrorism, and the African police mechanism, ... so our Member States remain the beneficiaries and the critical interface for all our [links] on addressing conflict on our continent.

Where are we on Silencing the Guns?

The report is evolving in terms of performance, but definitely in the past two years we have recorded great achievements in ... Silencing the Guns in the Tigray Region. That is a huge outcome for the Sustainable Development Goals since 2 November 2022, when the agreement on lasting peace for the succession of hostilities was signed between FDRE and the Tigray Region. No gunshot has been fired in Tigray. That is a success.

Over the years, many of the conflicts have been settled and resolved. We have to invest more in post-conflict on security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (SSR/DDR). That is why we are supporting the government of Ethiopia's support of the interim administration in Tigray, ... to make sure that conflict does not reappear in [Africa]. Unfortunately, new conflicts are beginning to appear [in all] five regions, particularly the exponential threat and spread of terrorism.

Thus we have to invest more in early warning, sharing intelligence, working with all the tools the AU has set up, including the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services for Africa. We have to build more fusion centres, do more research, bringing all the actors. We as PAPS invest in capacity. Our Member States need to invest more in counter-terrorism. I want to assure you that we will be standing firm and we [will go] ahead.

What has the AU been doing for other regions?

We are building learning platforms, knowledge hubs; we have to do more with sharing information, lessons and experiences. Our peace operations need to be revitalised. That is why we give more emphasis to the African Standby Force (ASF). Since the days of the OAU, now the AU, we have taken it to a higher level. We recently engaged Member States ... at the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security at the ministerial level. Ministers of Defense all agreed that it was necessary to adopt the MoU to boost the operationalisation of the ASF.

Secondly, in Abuja in November 2022, we launched a lessons-learning forum, bringing together all AU-led, AU-mandated, AU-authorized peace operations, from the AU Mission in Somalia to the Multinational Joint Task Force in Lake Chad Basin and the G5 Sahel Joint Force, to address the issue of terrorism [in] Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and the region at large.

We need to invest more in sharing lessons. The very essence of the 60th anniversary of the AU is to look back at what has worked, what did not work, and what should be reworked for the challenges of the 21st century.

The impact of climate change on peace and security is enormous. This is one area [where] the AU is working together with partners, Member States and RECs to better address the issues. We are strengthening our partnership at all levels; regional, national and continental.

Of course, we do not forget our ambition as the AU, which is to have a seat at the United Nations Security Council on a permanent basis. There is also a lot of interest that Africa generates outside the continent. The next 60 years will determine where Africa rules. We have to launch a new multidimensional approach, [including] women, youth, and younger girls' education, and make sure that peace thrives across the continent.

What is your message on the occasion of the 60th anniversary?

Peace [requires] multistakeholder participation, political inclusion, the strengthening of democracy, investment in capacity, building countries that have been at war, regional cooperation that promotes the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and ensuring the continent speaks with one voice. We will continue to promote the ideals of [a] conflict-free continent so we can prosper.

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION AND UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME LAUNCH AFRICA FACILITY TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS



The African Union (AU) Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on 15 July 2023, launched the Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT), on the side-lines of the 5th African Union Mid-Year Coordination Meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya.

The AFSIT, an innovative initiative, aimed at providing support to countries undergoing complex political transitions and countries at risk, with the primary objective to assist in the development of credible, inclusive and legitimate transition roadmaps, mechanisms and institutions, ultimately leading to the restoration of constitutional rule, democracy and stability in relevant countries. The AFSIT also complements existing AU, RECs/RMs and UN instruments, as well as initiatives by development partners, to ensure inclusive transitions. The Facility will proactively anticipate, respond to and address complex political crises within the AU Member States.

In his welcoming remarks the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, on behalf of the AUC Chairperson, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, said: “AFSIT is a practical and pragmatic mechanism that is geared towards boosting the capacity of all actors in the democratic governance space. It is a Facility to capacitate those who will stand as watchdogs for democracy”.

On her part, the UN Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa representing UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, Mr. Achim Steiner, stated: “The Facility calls for a re-focus on development, including good governance, human rights and access to basic services such as education and healthcare, as a critical means to not only prevent coups, but also sustain peace. This is particularly crucial in regions like the Sahel, which face a heightened risk of coups.”



On behalf of President Azali Assoumani of the Union of the Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union for 2023, the formal launch was performed by Hon. Dhoahir Dhoulkamal, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in charge of Diaspora and Francophony, Comoros; Dr. Korir Sing'Oei, Principal Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Kenya - representing President William Ruto of the Republic of Kenya, and Ambassador Mohamed Thiaw, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Senegal and Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council in July 2023.

The AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa, former President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, also addressed the session

It is recalled that, in May 2023, the AU Heads of State and Government reiterated a zero-tolerance stance against unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) and called for collective action in developing a robust mechanism for deepening democracy and collective security on the Continent.

In a separate event organised by UNDP, the report of a research project on Unconstitutional Changes of Government was also launched.

THE RECENTLY APPOINTED HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR SILENCING THE GUNS ASSUMES DUTY



AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat appointed Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas as his new High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa on 17 January 2023, replacing Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra.

Dr Chambas is tasked with galvanising continental and global efforts to promote African peace and development. He will, among others, be involved in advocacy, mediation, preventive and shuttle diplomacy. Dr Chambas officially started his mandate on 1 March, engaging in in-house consultations with senior officials and core team members at the AU Commission. He also met with representatives of the Federal Government of Ethiopia and some of the AU's international partners.

Since assuming office, he has participated in various mediation and conflict resolution activities. These include building synergies with the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) on ways to domesticate the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa. They also include optimising the information-sharing platform I-RECKE in facilitating a more structured interaction between the AU Commission and the sub-regional organisations. He's also been involved in improving cross-regional learning on conflict prevention and resilience building, especially on triggers of conflict, which are fundamental to effectively implementing the Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns.

AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns addresses UN Security Council

Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, newly appointed AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, addressed the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) Open Debate on "Peace and Security in Africa: the Impact of Development Policies in the Implementation of the Silencing the Guns Initiative" on 30 March.

This was at the invitation of the Government of Mozambique and Chair of the UNSC in March 2023. This important discussion comes at a time when the continent faces multiple challenges putting at risk the attainment of the objectives of Silencing the Guns in Africa.

Dr Chambas underscored the importance of people-centred solutions and investment in human capital in Silencing the Guns by 2030. He lauded the partnership between the AU and the UN, noting that the two institutions emphasise the nexus between peace, security, development, governance and respect for human rights. These objectives are cardinal for both Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

He noted that Silencing the Guns would require ownership by sub-regional bodies, national governments, African citizens and civil society organisations to succeed.

CAPACITY-BUILDING COURSE AND TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM



The African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and Switzerland's Federal Department of Foreign Affairs' Peace and Human Rights Division organised a capacity-building workshop and national course for senior-level first responders on preventing violent extremism (PVE).

This took place from 27 March to 1 April in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It was part of their Joint Framework Programme for the Prevention of Violent Extremism in Africa (2020-2023) and was supported by the DRC National Committee for the Coordination of Counter Terrorism.

Chasper Sarott, Swiss Ambassador to the DRC and Republic of the Congo, highlighted the crucial role of PVE instruments, particularly "dialogue". Colonel Christian Emmanuel Mouaya Pouyi, ACSRT acting head of training and equipment, highlighted the progress made by the AU and its specialised institutions in advancing PVE in Africa.

Roger Kibelisa, senior assistant of the adviser to the DRC president on security issues, opened the workshop on behalf of the DRC government and thanked the organisers for responding to the country's PVE needs.

The workshop had an objective to provide key stakeholders with a framework to take ownership of the preventive approach and tools that put human security and dialogue at the centre of PVE programme implementation.

Sixty experts selected from across the various provinces of the DRC, including Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu, were trained. They were decision makers and policymakers, and practitioners from the defence, intelligence, justice, welfare, diplomacy, parliamentary, civil society and research communities. They contributed to the design and will be implementing the PVE responses.

ACSRT STRENGTHENS COORDINATION BETWEEN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COUNTER-TERRORISM MECHANISMS IN AFRICA

ACSRT and the Africa Center for Strategic Studies convened a roundtable on strengthening national and regional counter-terrorism coordination mechanisms in Africa in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, from 14-16 February.

The programme sought to facilitate alignment and harmonisation of efforts between African security officials, policymakers and practitioners at local, national and regional levels in preventing and



countering violent extremism and terrorism (P/CVET), and help AU Member States develop national and regional fusion and counter-terrorism centres.

Participating were forty officials from key national and regional counter-terrorism and fusion centres, regional police chiefs' cooperation organisations, regional groupings of African states, and others from Eastern and Southern Africa, Coastal West Africa and the Sahel. They examined the existing counter-terrorism structures in these regions, and shared experiences, best practices and lessons learnt in

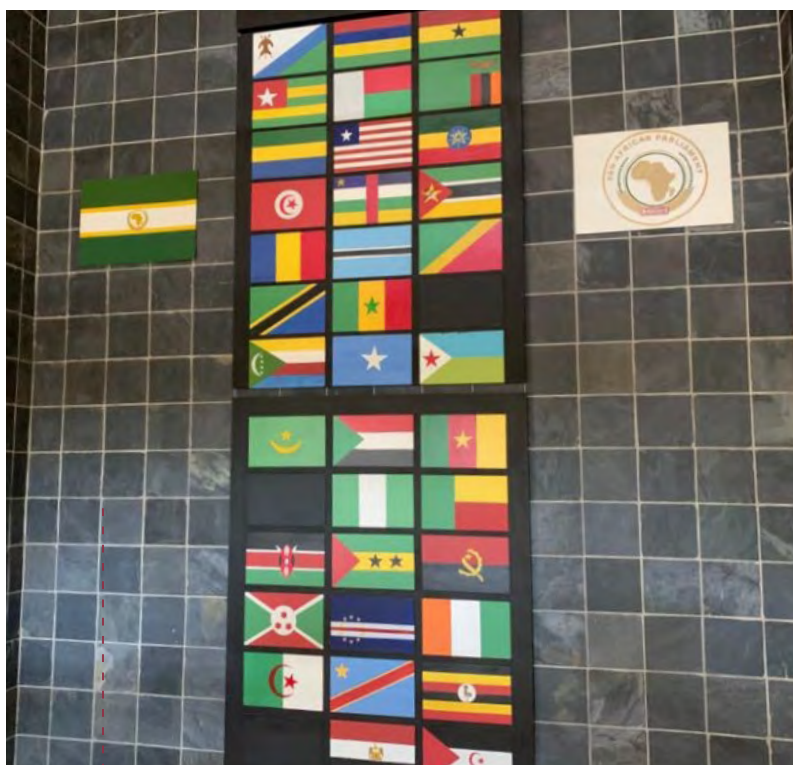
developing and operationalising fusion and regional counter-terrorism centres. They identified areas for joint action and cooperation to further prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism in the region.

Participants expressed the need for African governments to enhance the integration of capabilities between intelligence and law enforcement authorities in counter-terrorism. They called on international partners to expand assistance to joint training programmes with military and civilian law enforcement in the fight against terrorism in Africa.

ACSRT BRIEFS PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT ON VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM IN AFRICA

ACSRT's acting director Idriss Mounir Lallali briefed the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) Permanent Committee on Cooperation, International Relations and Conflict Resolution on the trends and increasing spread of violent extremism and terrorism in Africa. He explained the prevention role that parliamentarians can play. The briefing took place from 16-17 March 2023 at the PAP precincts in Midrand, South Africa.

Among others, ACSRT underscored the need to institute bi-annual ACSRT-PAP terrorism briefings and recommended creating a PAP High-Level Advisory Group on Counter Terrorism and Violent Extremism. This could serve as the continental focal point for parliamentary activities related to counter-terrorism efforts and raise awareness and solicit support on issues related to the growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.



AFRIPOL STRENGTHENS AFRICAN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES' EFFORTS IN COMBATTING DOCUMENT FRAUD

The AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) conducted the fourth Training of Trainers on Document Fraud from 13-17 March 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

It was organised to increase the number of African experts and trainers in document verification and enhance their capacities in investigating and prosecuting such sophisticated and rapidly evolving crimes. Participants familiarised themselves with the processes of polycarbonate production for documents, emission technologies, typical and

recent modus operandi in document fraud, and the verification of fraudulent papers and documents obtained fraudulently.

Representatives of 13 AU Member States attended the training: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sudan, and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. Due to high demand by the AU Member States, previous sessions were conducted in Algiers, Addis Ababa, and Accra in 2022.



AU SUPPORTS SIERRA LEONEANS IN MAINTAINING DEMOCRATIC STABILITY AT THE POLLS

The AU Commission deployed an election observation mission (AUEOM) to Sierra Leone's 24 June 2023 general elections. It was led by Ethiopia's former prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn and comprised 50 short-term observers (STOs) deployed from 17-28 June.

The STOs, from 26 African countries, were drawn from African ambassadors accredited to the AU; the Pan-African Parliament; electoral management bodies; independent electoral, academic



and governance experts; and civil society organisations. They were deployed in 22 teams to six electoral regions in Sierra Leone, where they successfully visited 219 polling stations in all the six regions across the country. They observed the opening, voting, closing and counting process.

The mission was supported by the technical team from the AU Commission and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa.

The mission issued its preliminary statement, presenting a summary of its key findings, conclusions and recommendations on the electoral process up to the closing and counting of the polls. The statement was issued while the collation of election results was ongoing. The mission will continue to closely follow the electoral process and provide a detailed final report within a month from the date of announcement of final results.



AU SUPPORTS PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA



The AU Commission deployed an election observation mission (AUEOM) led by Kenya's former president Uhuru Kenyatta to Nigeria's 25 February 2023 general elections.

The short-term election observation mission comprised close to 90 members drawn from various AU Member States. It included representatives of election management bodies, civil society organisations, experts, women and youth, as well as representatives of AU organs, notably the Pan-African Parliament and Permanent Representatives Committee. The observers were grouped into 32 teams and deployed in 17 states covering all six geopolitical zones. They visited a total of 438 polling units to observe the opening, voting, closing and counting procedures in urban and rural areas.

Kenyatta met with the Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, Hon Olukayode Ariwoola, presidential candidates Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Peter Obi, and Nigeria's former head of state and chairman of the National Peace Committee General Abdulsalami Abubakar before the election. They discussed preparedness and commitment of all stakeholders to conducting a peaceful, free, fair, credible, and all-inclusive electoral process. The meeting was also to demonstrate the AU's solidarity and support towards consolidation of democracy, peace, stability and development in Nigeria.

The leadership of the delegation also attended the briefing session organised by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the signing of the Peace Accord by the presidential



Further to the preliminary statement, the AU and ECOWAS jointly issued a post-electoral statement expressing concerns after noting signs of increasing tensions in the country following the elections. They called on all political parties and their candidates to appeal to their supporters to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from using provocative language and the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation. They said this would exacerbate political tensions, divisiveness, and violence at this critical stage, with the potential to undermine the progressive democratic progress Nigeria had made over the years.

To keep the peace during Nigeria's general elections, the AU used preventive diplomacy. This strategy was informed by previous experiences and involved collaboration with ECOWAS and other prominent regional and international figures. Former presidents from Sierra Leone, South Africa, Ghana, Malawi, and Nigeria were among those present, each leading separate election observation missions and mediation teams.

candidates on 22 February 2023 in Abuja. He held consultative meetings with heads of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Commonwealth election observation missions and African ambassadors.

After the election, he issued a preliminary statement on 27 February stating that in 95% of polling units that the mission visited, the atmosphere was generally calm and peaceful, except for isolated incidents of violence in Kano, Lagos, Delta, Abuja, and Cross River. The mission noted the positive measures undertaken by INEC to reschedule polls to 26 February in specific areas where voting could not take place due to insecurity or logistical reasons.

The AU-ECOWAS approach was primarily based on direct peer engagement and good offices, which were mostly carried out in closed sessions to build relationships with stakeholders and relay important messages in sensitive situations. The West African Elders Forum's role in facilitating key engagements, particularly that of former president Goodluck Jonathan, was central to these sessions.



AU AND COMESA JOINED EFFORTS IN OBSERVING THE ZIMBABWE 2023 HARMONIZED ELECTIONS

Following the invitation by the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe to observe the 23 August 2023 Harmonised elections, the African Union (AU) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) deployed a Short-Term Election Observation Mission from 16 to 29 August 2023. The Mission comprises of 82 short-term observers (STOs) from 29 countries across Africa. It was led by former President H.E. Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, with Uganda's former Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, a member of the COMESA Committee of Elders as deputy leader. Former President of Burundi Domitien Ndayizeye, a member of the AU Panel of the Wise, was also there to support post-election mediation efforts.

Observers were deployed to all 10 Provinces and 16 electoral districts in Zimbabwe. The Mission visited a total of 566 polling stations of which 75% (424) were in urban and 25% (142) in rural areas; and observed opening, voting, closing, and counting procedures on 23 August 2023.



On the 25th of August 2023, the leader H.E. Goodluck Jonathan presented the EOM's preliminary statement. The preliminary statement observed that the election was conducted in a generally peaceful and transparent manner despite logistical challenges with the availability and distribution of local authority ballot papers in some areas. The Mission will issue a comprehensive report within two months.



AU REVIEWS POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The second AU workshop on the review of the AU policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (AU-PCRD) was held from 30 May to 1 June 2023 in Cairo, Egypt. It was hosted by the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding in cooperation with the AU Commission and the AU Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Participants took stock of progress achieved, and identified and addressed the existing gaps, particularly in aligning the policy with the African Governance Architecture, the African Peace and Security Architecture, and the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) and other AU instruments. The revised policy has widened the scope of AU-PCRD activities to incorporate peacebuilding and cover the entire conflict cycle from pre-conflict to post-conflict.

The meeting brought together relevant stakeholders and partners involved in the design, planning,



implementation, and financing of PCRD and peacebuilding activities in Africa. This included the AU Commission, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms, the United Nations, African and international financial institutions, as well as think tanks and civil society organisations.

AU AND NHRIS TO HELP ACCELERATE AfCFTA'S IMPLEMENTATION IN LINE WITH BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The AU Commission and the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) organised the Sixth Policy Dialogue on the State of National Human Rights Institutions in Africa, from 15-17 May 2023, at the AU headquarters.

This year's theme, "Championing a Human Rights-Based Approach in the Implementation of the AfCFTA", was in line with the AU's theme of the year 2023, "Acceleration of AfCFTA Implementation".

The forum provided a sensitisation platform on African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) processes in line with business and human rights normative frameworks, and human rights-based approach standards for African NHRIs, relevant AU policy organs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), civil society organisations (CSOs), and other

key stakeholders. This was to centre vulnerable and minority groups who are likely to be disproportionately impacted by the liberalisation of trade.

Furthermore, it discussed how to build capacity of African NHRIs, relevant AU policy organs, RECs, CSOs, and other stakeholders to specifically advocate for a human rights-based approach towards the six intersecting trade, social and environmental impacts arising from the implementation of the AfCFTA. It then developed an action plan for the role of African NHRIs and the AU in mainstreaming a human rights-based approach in accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA.

The forum also served to interrogate the human rights implications on the relationship between free movement of goods and free movement of persons in

Africa. It launched the NANHRI Baseline Assessment and Stakeholder Mapping of National Human Rights Institutions' and Other Actors' Involvement in AfCFTA Processes and the Guiding Framework on Mainstreaming Human Rights in the AfCFTA Processes.

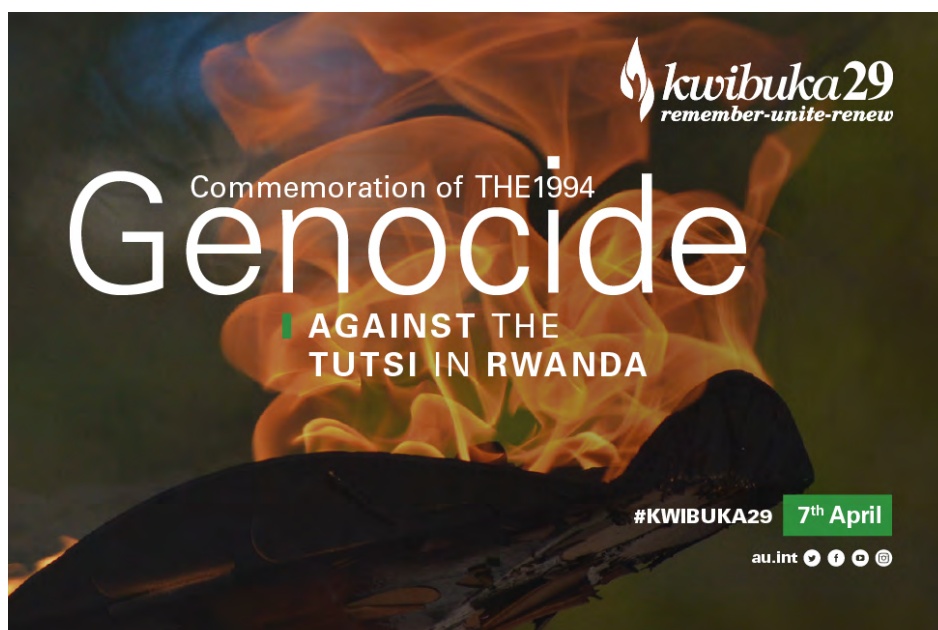
The forum was attended by 30 NHRIs from around the continent, representatives from Member States, the AU Commission, AU organs including the AfCFTA Secretariat, human rights defenders, African CSO networks, some UN bodies, and academia.



AU COMMEMORATES KWIBUKA 29 – SAYING ‘NEVER AGAIN’ TO GENOCIDE IN AFRICA

The AU and the Embassy of Rwanda in Ethiopia and Permanent Mission to the AU commemorated the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda under the theme “Remember-Unite-Renew”. This was held on 7 April at the AU headquarters, with the aim of preventing its reoccurrence in Africa, and showing solidarity with survivors.

The commemoration included A Walk to Remember, prayers, lighting the Flame of Remembrance, and a minute of silence for victims.



On 6 April 2023, the AU Peace and Security Council held an open session on “Prevention of ideology of hate, genocide and hate crimes in Africa”. Here members highlighted their countries’ contributions in the fight against genocide, and exchanged views on diverse means to collectively prevent the ideology of hate, genocide and hate crimes in Africa.

It brought together representatives of Member States, the AU, UN, diplomatic community, religious bodies, academic and research institutes, CSOs, development partners and members of the Rwandan community in Addis Ababa.



AU-REGIONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON SALW AND DDR ADDRESSES EMERGING CHALLENGES

The AU Commission convened virtually the Fourth AU-Regions Standing Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) on 23 May 2023. The Standing Committee is an institutional platform for information sharing and inter-regional learning, fostering common understanding of SALW/DDR issues, and addressing emerging related challenges.

Participants provided an update on the domestication of the Arms Trade Treaty in Africa and discussed the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Conventional Ammunition, among others. They exchanged views on the latest findings of a study on illicit small arms and terrorism. The meeting also served as an

opportunity for the Standing Committee and its members to prepare the Common African Position for the UN Programme of Action 4th Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons held in New York that month.

The Standing Committee includes representatives of the RECs and RMs, regional bodies with a small arms mandate, the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies, the UN Office to the AU, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs in their position as Secretariat for the OEWG, the UN Institute for Disarmament Research, and the World Bank.

SECOND POLICY SESSION OF THE AU I-RECKE

The AU and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) held the second policy session on their joint initiative, the AU Inter-Regional Knowledge Exchange (I-RECKE) on Early Warning and Conflict Prevention, in Nairobi, Kenya, on 15 July 2023.

This was on the sidelines of the AU Fifth Mid-Year Coordination Meeting (MYCM). They focused on the

theme “Cross-Regional Strategies in Preventing Terrorism and Violent Extremism”.

All the AU-recognised RECs/RMs were represented in the policy session, which provided an opportunity to discuss lessons learnt and share experiences aimed at enhancing cross-regional cooperation between the AU Commission, the RECs and RMs in preventing and combatting terrorism and violent extremism.



The I-RECKE engagement recorded critical lessons of what worked and what didn't at the country, regional and continental levels (premised on multi-country approaches). It charted a way forward towards coordinated action to support efforts of Member States in preventing and combatting terrorism and violent extremism.

It supported the implementation of the Declaration and Decisions of the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa held on 28 May 2022, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

The platform also reviewed the implementation of counter-terrorism strategies for North Africa, West Africa pertaining to the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel, the Horn of Africa and East Africa focusing on Somalia, and Southern Africa with Mozambique as the point of attention.

On 16 July 2023, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, presented a report on the outcomes of the second I-RECKE policy session at the fifth AU MYCM.

THE 9TH CONTINENTAL AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE DAY (APSD) HELD IN VICTORIA FALLS

The AU Commission through the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), in collaboration with the Zimbabwe government, organised the 9th Continental Africa Public Service Day (APSD) celebration in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 21-23 June. "The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will require a fit-for-purpose African public administration to succeed" was the theme.

The APSD opening ceremony was graced by Honourable Prof Paul Mavima, Zimbabwe's Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare Minister, on behalf of President Emmerson Mnangagwa and Ambassador Fathallah Sijilmassi, the AU Commission's Director General, on behalf of Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the PAPS Commissioner.



The three-day celebrations included knowledge sharing and discussions, and showcased innovative initiatives on the promotion of professionalism, accountability, responsiveness, and ethics in public service delivery.

Ministers from Algeria, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Tanzania, and delegation heads from Ethiopia, Burundi, South Africa, Kenya, Namibia, Eswatini and Uganda participated in the festivities. Five-hundred participants from across Africa attended the event. These included civil/public service personnel and practitioners; experts from all over Africa; members of the diplomatic corps, African Association of Public Administration and Management, UN Economic

Commission for Africa, academia, the private sector, civil society organisations, and the media.

At the closing ceremony of the APSD 2023, participating Member States issued a declaration and announced that Ethiopia would host the 10th Edition of APSD in Addis Ababa in June 2025. As part of the closing of the event, winners of the Innovation Awards for showcasing best practices in service delivery were announced. They were: Coast Development Authority, Kenya, for Best Managed Organisation; Zimbabwe Public Service Commission for Most Accountable Transparent Organisation; and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya, for Best Innovation in Citizen Centred Service Delivery.



10TH AFRICA SECURITY SYMPOSIUM

In order to strategise solutions to Africa's most challenging issues, such as terrorism and violent extremism, the AU Commission participated in the 10th Africa Security Symposium (ASEC) from 21-22 June 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Hosted by the Government of Kenya and chaired by Ambassador William A Awinador-Kanyirige, Senior Adviser to the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), ASEC created a platform to exchange views on the comparative advantages of promoting durable peace in the framework of private and public partnerships.

Hosting over 300 delegates and exhibitors in pre-event procurement workshops featuring the United Nations (UN) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the event was aimed at maximising networking opportunities and creating long-term partnerships. It created a unique

platform facilitating one-on-one matchmaking meetings – a powerful networking tool that allows attendees to communicate and schedule meetings with one another, and a first-ever post-event security simulation exercise workshop.

At the event, as the Keynote Speaker, AU PAPS Commissioner, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, emphasised the need for global solidarity with intercontinental and bilateral partnerships in order to build stable societies on the continent. He called on delegates to make the paradigm shift from peacekeeping to peace enforcement. "It's through peace enforcement that we will be able to effectively counter terrorism and violent extremism, and radicalisation," he said.

ASEC tackled some of the most pressing issues in the region, with thematic panel discussions encouraging audience participation to progress ideas of change –

a departure from traditional talkshop events. Positive feedback showed that this is the preferred deal-making platform for discovering new opportunities, products and services in Africa.

The event was exclusively attended by government ministers, investors, industry suppliers, senior police, military, and NGO stakeholders – all with the common goal of improving the security and stability of the continent.

ASEC is a Pan-African event that has grown in prominence over the years and has enjoyed the continued support of the AU Commission, UN, regional governments including interior, defence and police departments, leading NGOs, INTERPOL, US entities, and more. Each year the event has grown and become a staple feature on the security calendar. ASEC has facilitated many partnerships and highlighted the opportunities for both the public and private sectors, to the benefit of the continent.

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION IN SUDAN

- **15 April 2023:** A violent conflict erupted in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. On the same day, the AU Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, issued a statement calling the Parties to end the conflict immediately. The Peace and Security Council (PSC), under the Chairmanship of Tunisia, convened an emergency meeting within twenty-four hours of the conflict erupting, and adopted the Communiqué of the 1149th, Session, which, among others, requested “the Chairperson of the Commission to continue using his good offices to engage with the parties to the conflict to facilitate dialogue and peaceful resolution of the conflict in Sudan; and [commended] his commitment to immediately travel to Sudan to engage the parties towards a ceasefire”. Unfortunately, the situation on the ground has made it impossible so far. Non the less, the AU Commission Chairperson continued to engage the leaders of the two belligerent parties to seek an end to the conflict. And on 20 April 2023, the AUC Chairperson convened a high-level Ministerial meeting of interested states and institutions, to discuss the situation in Sudan. Participants at this meeting were the: AU, UN, IGAD, LAS, EU; China, France, Russia, UK, USA, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Norway, Gabon, Ghana, Mozambique, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, Kenya, Djibouti, Comoros, and Qatar. The high-level meeting adopted a communiqué calling for an immediate ceasefire. The AU was requested to develop a de-escalation plan. It was agreed that the international community should promote coordination and collaboration of their actions under the auspices of this AU-facilitated Expanded Mechanism, to avoid proliferation of initiatives and duplication of efforts. On 24 April 2023, the AU interdepartmental task team on Sudan was established, under the leadership of the Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS)

Department, including the Health, Humanitarian and Social Development Department (HHSD), the African Centre for Disease Control (Africa CDC), and the Office of the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, to ensure a Commission-wide coordinated response.

- **2 May 2023,** the AU Commission convened an in-person technical coordination meeting of the Expanded Mechanism and shared the draft AU De-escalation plan with the participants. The Mechanism identified the priorities for de-escalation, namely ceasefire, humanitarian intervention, protection of civilians and respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL), an inclusive political process, coordinated action, and enhanced role for regional states.
- **3 May 2023,** the Trilateral Mechanism (AU, UN, IGAD) met at the AU Headquarters. It examined the implementation of the conclusions of the technical meeting of the Expanded Mechanism, with particular reference to a monitoring mechanism and protection force to monitor the ceasefire, explored ways of strengthening the Trilateral Mechanism as the pre-eminent Mechanism to coordinate international and regional engagement on Sudan and possibilities for constituting a Core Group out of the Expanded Mechanism. On 4 May 2023, the Africa CDC convened a meeting of the Ministries of Health of Sudan and its neighbours to consider the needs assessment and unfolding impact of the crisis. The Africa CDC and Sudanese and neighbouring states’ Ministries of Health discussed the type of support to render to Sudan. The Africa CDC set aside three million US Dollars (US \$ 3 million) to procure medicines and medical supplies for Sudan, based on a list provided by the Sudanese Ministry of Health and discussed modalities for procuring medicines and delivering supplies to Port Sudan.

SILENCING the GUNS In AFRICA

"Not an Outcome but a Prerequisite"



- **4 May 2023**, the AU Member States considered the plight of displaced persons at a meeting of the PRC Subcommittee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs. On 10 May 2023, the second meeting of the Trilateral Mechanism was held in Addis Ababa. The meeting discussed the Jeddah negotiations and the constitution of the Core Group and started discussions on the political process. On 11 May 2023, the AUC convened a meeting of Humanitarian organizations based in Addis Ababa to discuss collaboration. The parties agreed that the AUC should coordinate their activities and that all humanitarian agencies would provide a set of messages on humanitarian imperatives in Sudan that would be channeled to the AU decision-making organs, including the PSC.
- **12 May 2023**, at the 15th Ministerial Session of the 15th Ordinary Meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS), Amb Bankole Adeoye, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, shared the AU's commitment to continue to work under the Trilateral Mechanism and other relevant stakeholders on the de-escalation plan to silence the guns in Sudan. On 12 and 13 May 2023, the members of the Panel of the Wise, at their 25th Statutory Meeting held at the AU Headquarters, reiterated the call of the AUC Chairperson, the ministerial special session and the international community for the establishment of humanitarian corridors, unhindered humanitarian access, and the evacuation of injured civilians. They further underscored the important role of civil society, including women and youth, in any subsequent negotiations to be undertaken towards the political process. They stressed the critical need to return to civilian rule and expressed readiness to accompany Sudan towards democratic order.
- **13 May 2023**, the Office of the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Mme Bineta Diop, organized a virtual solidarity meeting with the women of Sudan, calling for an end to conflict and encouraging the belligerent parties to engage in dialogue. A call was made for African women leaders to stand with Sudanese women and girls. On 16 May 2023, the PSC convened a briefing on Sudan, under the chairship of Uganda, in preparation for the PSC meeting at the Heads of State and Government level. On 27 May 2023, the PSC convened its 1156th meeting at the summit level, chaired by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, to consider the situation in Sudan. The meeting endorsed the AU Roadmap for the resolution of the crisis in the Republic of Sudan and adopted a communique outlining the next steps. On 30 May 2023, the AU announced that "the AU Commission Chairperson, using his good offices, will dispatch emissaries to the states neighbouring Sudan as part of his efforts to strengthen the search for a common approach to finding a sustainable solution to the multi-layered crisis in Sudan."
- **31 May 2023**, the AU convened the third meeting of the Expanded Mechanism on Sudan, at the technical level. The Expanded Mechanism expressed concern at the continued fighting and stressed that there was no military solution to the conflict. The importance of a coordinated approach to resolving the crisis and the need for an African-led Sudanese-owned process was underlined. The participants cautioned against the proliferation of uncoordinated initiatives that would undermine

the collective effort and the sovereignty of Sudan. The Expanded Mechanism urged the parties to fully commit to undertaking their obligations to protect civilians and civil infrastructure and ensure the delivery of unhindered humanitarian assistance. The role of the neighbouring countries was stressed, not only with regard to receiving large numbers of refugees but also with respect to the potential spill-over effect of the conflict on the broader region.

- **2 June 2023**, the inaugural meeting of the Core Group convened. It agreed to establish a Secretariat comprised of the AU, UN, IGAD (Trilateral), plus the LAS. The first meeting of the Secretariat of the Core Group followed this.
- **9 June 2023**, the Second meeting of the Secretariat convened, and on 12 June 2023, the AUC Chairperson and PAPS Commissioner participated in the IGAD Summit in Djibouti.
- **12 June 2023**, the first leg of the tour of regional countries began with Dr Ibn Chambas traveling to Ndjamen, Chad, to deliver a personal message

from the Chairperson of the AUC to H.E. Mahamat Deby, Chairman of the Transitional Military Council of Chad.

- **15 June 2023**, the second meeting of the Core Group convened. It was agreed to complete the stakeholder mapping as a matter of urgency to commence the political process. It must be noted that the AU remains a critical player in the common search for peace, stability and a return to normalcy and a civilian-led inclusive democracy towards development and prosperity in Sudan. The AUC Chairperson traveled to Nairobi, Kenya, on 29 June and met with President William Ruto of Kenya. They agreed on the need for the AU and IGAD to work together to spearhead an African-led peace process in the highest interest of the Sudanese civilians and towards sustainable peace in Sudan. Chairperson Moussa Faki also received the IGAD Executive Secretary, Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, on 6 July 2023 to discuss practical modalities for joint action. The AU, therefore, remains committed to the principles of complementarity and comparative advantage in supporting peace efforts in Sudan.

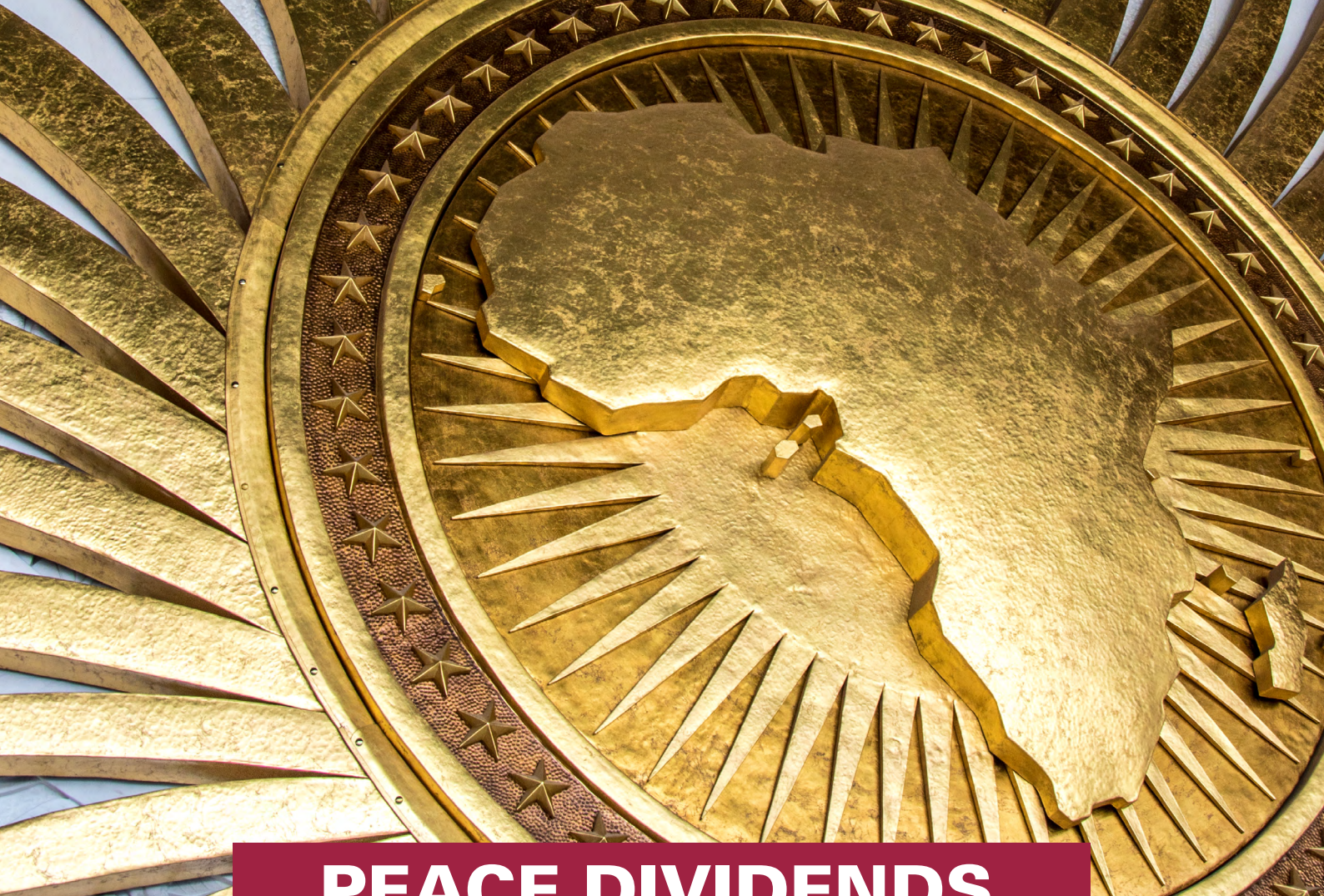
AU COMMISSION ADOPTS KEY POLICY DOCUMENTS TO ENHANCE ITS PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS AT ITS 15TH MEETING OF THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE, SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS) convened its 15th ordinary meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 12th May 2023, to review the progress made in the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF). The STCDSS meeting was preceded by the 18th ordinary meeting of the African Chiefs of Defense Staff and Heads of Safety and Security (ACDSS/HSS), and the meeting of Experts from 9 to 11 May 2023.

The STCDSS deliberated on the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission, which outlined the Commission's continued efforts in the enhancement of the ASF and deployment of Peace Support Operations (PSOs) to address conflicts, terrorism, violent extremism as well as broader peace and security challenges on the continent. This also included the consideration and adoption of key strategic policy and guidance documents, namely the draft memorandum of understanding between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities/ Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) on the ASF, as

well as three (3) documents under the AU Compliance and Accountability Framework (AU CF), including the draft AU Strategic Framework for Compliance and Accountability in PSOs, and the draft AU Policies on Selection and Screening, and the Protection of Civilians. The adoption of these key policy documents would allow for further implementation of the AU CF, and for the AU and the RECs/RMs in collaboration with the AU Member States to enhance utilization and employment of the ASF. It is anticipated that the strategic documents adopted by the 15th meeting of the STCDSS will be submitted to the 37th Ordinary session of the AU Assembly to be held in February 2024 for further endorsement.

The STCDSS also received an update on the conduct of the AMANI Africa III Continental Maritime Exercise, which is designed to test the respective regional maritime taskforces as well as their cross-regional coordination and interoperability in addressing maritime security threats in the continent by the end of 2023.



PEACE DIVIDENDS

Newsletter of the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security

Editor-in-Chief

Ambassador Bankole Adeoye
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