

# 5th Annual Consultative meeting between the PSC and the UN PBC

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Date | 28 November 2022

Tomorrow (28 November), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is expected to convene its 1122<sup>nd</sup> session in which one of the agenda items will focus on the 5<sup>th</sup> annual consultative meeting with the United Nations (UN) Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on climate change and peacebuilding in Africa.

The Consultative meeting is expected to start with opening remarks from Emilia Ndinlao Mkusa, Permanent Representative of Namibia to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for November, and, Muhammad Abdul Muhith, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN and Chair of the UN PBC. The PSC will also receive interventions from Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), Elizabeth Spehar, Assistant Secretary General for Peacebuilding Support Office and Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the AU and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU).

PSC and UN PBC have been able to regularize their engagement in recent years within the context of the joint AU-UN framework for enhanced partnership in peace and security signed in 2017 and the AU-UN framework for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2018), which lay the foundation for continued cooperation between AU and UN on peace and security on the continent. PSC

and UN PBC have convened four annual consultative meetings since 2018. The last consultative meeting was held on 11 November 2021 during the inaugural AU PCRD week on the accompaniment of African countries undergoing political transitions with peacebuilding tools. The fifth annual consultative meeting will focus on climate and peacebuilding in Africa. This timely thematic focus comes at the backdrop of the conclusion of the two-week-long United Nations Climate Conference (COP27) in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Moreover, the issue of climate change and security is high on the agenda of the PSC; the latter has convened around 12 sessions dedicated to climate change and security in Africa since 2016.

According to the concept note prepared for tomorrow's session, the consultative meeting aims to exchange views on the 'impact of climate change on peacebuilding, particularly in support of Agenda 2063 and the "Silencing the Guns" initiative' and presents the two sides the opportunity to explore options that would synergize and coordinate 'strategic and operational responses to the climate crisis in the pursuit of building and sustaining peace in the continent'. The consultative meeting is expected to specifically tackle the following questions:

- How is climate change impacting peacebuilding on the continent?
- What are the differential effects of climate change and conflicts on women, girls, youth, and other vulnerable groups?
- What are the existing local-specific mechanisms, good practices, and opportunities for climate sensitive programming for peacebuilding?

Africa remains the most vulnerable continent to climate change despite its low contribution to greenhouse gas emissions (less than 4 percent). The PSC has recognized the link between climate change and security in Africa in various of its sessions. Its 1051st session of November 2021, for instance, acknowledged the 'wide-ranging risks of climate change, as a

threat multiplier, to the peace and security landscape in the continent including on food and water insecurity, loss of livelihoods, failure of management of natural resources, the scarcity of water resources, climate-induced displacements, and possibly aggravating existing vulnerabilities, tensions and conflicts’.

Amani Africa’s [statement](#) on climate and security nexus that was released ahead of COP27 also noted ‘mounting consensus and evidence that the climate crisis carries adverse consequences for political stability and peace and security’ despite the uncertainty over the causal links between climate and conflict. The statement identified four points in which climate change and security intersects in Africa. The first is where climate induced scarcity of natural resources leads to violent competition over control and access to such ever depleting resources. The second is where climate change induced extreme weather events operate as multipliers of conflict factors, through their interaction with existing national and local political, social, and environmental stresses. The third is where climate related disaster interferes with and undermines peace processes and transitions, while the fourth is when climate change in causing disasters and humanitarian emergencies leads to not only displacements that could undermine social cohesion but also impedes development efforts and resilience of societies for averting and managing political tensions and conflicts.

Negative effects of climate change particularly manifests in fragile contexts where ‘governance systems and institutions are not strong’, ‘coping mechanisms are weak’, ‘the natural resources are a key source of livelihoods’, and ‘there are stark gender inequalities.’ As such, given that climate change, developmental, and peace and security challenges of the continent are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, it is imperative to adopt a comprehensive strategy that are climate-sensitive and addresses underlying causes of

insecurity in a holistic manner. Indeed, during its 1051<sup>st</sup> session, PSC underlined 'the importance of adopting a climate-sensitive planning dimension in peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts to prevent any relapse to armed conflicts in fragile communities'. In this respect, AU-Lake Chad Basin Commission regional strategy for the stabilization, recovery & resilience of the Boko Haram affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin and UN integrated strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and its Support Plan (2018-2030) offer important lessons in terms of developing such a comprehensive strategy that integrates peacebuilding as a major component in addressing multidimensional challenges including climate change. On the part of UN PBC, they are also likely to mention the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund and its various climate informed peacebuilding projects with an active portfolio of over USD 251 million across Africa.

Of particular interest to the participants of the consultative meeting is the recent launch of the Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP)- an initiative of COP27 Presidency in partnership with the AU as well as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Anchored on four pillars (strengthening the climate adaptation and peacebuilding nexus; sustaining peace through climate resilient food systems; advancing durable solutions to the climate-displacement nexus; and accelerating climate finance for sustaining peace), the initiative aims to ensure that integrated climate responses contribute to sustainable peace and development.

In terms of specific conflict contexts, tomorrow's session may also put the limelight on how extreme weather events induced by climate change (floods and drought from repeated failure of rains) is undermining peacebuilding in South Sudan and in Somalia. The experiences in these countries clearly illustrate that unless accompanied by and integrates measures that address the impacts of climate change peacebuilding could not

be pursued successfully.

The expected outcome from the consultative meeting is a press statement. It is expected that the two bodies welcome the progress made in strengthening their relations while reiterating the call made at the previous consultative meeting for an impact-driven collaboration with greater emphasis on coherent planning, operational complementarity, and leveraging on comparative advantages in specific contexts. The two bodies may also recognize some of the positive efforts made by AU in strengthening its PCRD and peacebuilding responses, notably the revision of the AU PCRD Policy and the launch of Cairo PCRD Centre. However, they may also recognize the resource constraint and in this regard, the two sides may emphasize the need for adequate, predictable, and sustainable funding for AU peacebuilding efforts. In relation to the theme of the meeting, while acknowledging the negative impact of climate change on the peace, security, and stability of the continent, they may further underscore the imperative of strengthening the climate adaptation and peacebuilding nexus. They may also welcome the launch of the CRSP initiative and call upon international partners to support the same, in addition to other continental, regional, and national initiatives in pursuit of addressing underlying causes of multidimensional challenges that many African countries are facing. They may also emphasize the need for climate sensitive planning and implementation of peacebuilding interventions and may in this respect call for enhanced climate action in implementing peacebuilding interventions in South Sudan and Somalia. Cognizant of the disproportionate impact of climate change on most vulnerable groups, the two bodies may also stress the importance of paying a particular attention in integrating the needs and priorities of women and youth.