

Briefing on the African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development

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Tomorrow (12 November), African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will convene its 1047th session on AU's efforts on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) in Africa.

Following the opening remarks of Permanent Representative of Egypt and PSC Chairperson of the month, Mohamed Omar Gad, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), Bankole Adeoye, is expected to make a statement. Representatives of selected Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) as well as countries in political transition and post-conflict situations may also make statements.

This session is convened as part of the maiden PCRD awareness week on 7-13 November 2021, which is launched with the aim to increase awareness about AU projects, policies, mechanisms and achievements on post-conflict recovery and reconstruction efforts. The session also comes on the heels of other events of the awareness week such as the African Defence Attachés Forum to celebrate the first Annual African Flag Day and a virtual High-Level Seminar on PCRD in Africa to review the AU PCRD Policy framework and its implementation over the last 15 years.

As the session coincides with the 15th anniversary of the PCRD Policy Framework, it provides the Council a unique opportunity to take stock of progress in the implementation of the Policy since its adoption in 2006 and reflect on the challenges and implementation gaps.

Despite AU PCRDR forms part of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA), PSC's 670th session noted that the PCRDR aspect remains the 'weakest link' within the implementation of these frameworks. Since recently, there has been a deliberate effort by the Council in mainstreaming the PCRDR in the context of its consideration of countries in political transition and post-conflict situations.

The PCRDR Policy Framework was adopted in Banjul, The Gambia, in 2006 to serve as a guide for the development of comprehensive policies and strategies that seek to consolidate peace, promote sustainable development and prevent relapse of violence. The Policy Framework is anchored on six pillars upon which all PCRDR efforts should be developed and sustained. These are: security; humanitarian/emergency assistance; political governance and transition; socio-economic reconstruction and development; human rights, justice and reconciliation; and women, gender and youth.

While the Policy Framework has proved to be an authoritative document in providing strategic guidance to address the needs of communities emerging from conflicts, there is a question of its adaptability to the new security dynamics in Africa as marked by the emergence of new threats notably climate change, environmental degradation and public health emergencies. This issue was particularly highlighted during the Council's 1017th meeting where the Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission to review the policy framework in a manner that 'it is adaptable to the contemporary dynamics in Member States in political transition and post-conflict situations'.

One of the issues likely to be highlighted in tomorrow's session is progress made towards the operationalization of the policy framework over the last 15 years. In this respect, the establishment of an inter-departmental Task Force on PCRDR in May 2016 is worth noting given its role as a platform for coordination and synergies in the work of the AU and the

RECs/RMs in the implementation of the PCRD Policy. Though the Council agreed to establish PSC sub-committee on PCRD at its 230th session with the envisaged role of providing political leadership and oversight on the implementation of the Policy, this has not materialized as of yet. However, the establishment of the PCRD Centre, headquartered in Cairo, Egypt, pursuant to the decision of the Assembly (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.351 (XVI)) is expected to be a breakthrough in the operationalization of the Policy Framework. It is to be recalled that the PAPS Department of the Commission held an assessment mission to Cairo in August this year with the objective of preparing for the official launch of the Centre as well as to enhance its operational tasks and capacities.

The briefing is also likely to provide a review of AU's PCRD interventions and mechanisms deployed in support of countries that are in political transition and post-conflict situations. While political missions, peace support operations (PSOs), and AU Liaison Offices (AULOS) remain main modalities of AU's engagement in such countries, the practice of establishing support mechanisms has also emerged over the years. Notable in this regard is AU Technical Support Team to The Gambia (AUTSTG) and most recently, the AU-led Support Mechanism (AUSM) for Chad to support the reform process in these countries through the deployment of multidisciplinary technical experts. In relation to AULOS, there is a clear trend of increasing emphasis by the Council on the need to enhance institutional capacity of the Liaison Offices in recognition of the critical role they could play in the areas of PCRD. Implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and Peace Strengthening Projects (PSPs) in Somalia; the development of Regional Stabilization Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin and the Stabilization Strategy for the Sahel; and AU's support in the areas of reconciliation and healing (e.g. South Sudan), Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), as well as Security Sector Reform (SSR) as in the case of CAR can be cited as some of the best practices in terms of

AU's PCRD interventions.

The AU has made significant strides in its PCRD undertakings, but the persistence of some conflicts and conflict relapse in other cases still highlight the remaining challenges. Resource constraint remains one of the most critical challenges in this regard. In a number of its meetings (e.g. 958th, 670th, and 593rd sessions), the PSC not only flagged up the resource challenge but also underscored the importance of ensuring sustainable and predictable funding for an effective PCRD response. Range of options have been explored to address the resource challenge that include the launch of African Solidarity Initiative (ASI); the establishment of an African PCRD Fund (this was considered by the Council during its 528th meeting); and dedicating a percentage of the AU Peace Fund for PCRD activities as suggested by the Council at its 593rd and 958th sessions. Despite the initiatives, the aspiration for creating self-reliant mechanism to mobilize adequate, sustainable and predictable funding for AU's PCRD activities remains a long way off.

As noted in Amani Africa's [previous](#) 'insights on the PSC', the other challenge relates to the prevalence of political fluidity in countries that are in political transition and conflict situations, as well as absence of nationally owned or led coherent strategy that limit effective delivery of PCRD related support. The third challenge is ensuring coordination and complementarity among the diverse actors involved in the field of PCRD, notably the AU, RECs/RMs, the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC).

The expected outcome of tomorrow's session is a communiqué. Among others, the Council may commend the progress made in the operationalization of the PCRD Policy Framework since its adoption in 2006. While taking note of the establishment of the PCRD Centre and its significant contribution in reinforcing the implementation of the PCRD Policy, the Council may reiterate the call for the activation of the sub-committee

on PCRDR. In relation to mobilization of resources, the Council may once again urge for the revitalization of the African Solidarity Initiative further underscoring the need for tapping into and enhancing the engagement of actors such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), international financial institutions, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Peacebuilding Commission, and the private sector. In addition, the Council may consider providing capacity building in terms of PCRDR within the framework of window 2 of the Peace Fund as agreed during the latest PSC Retreat held in Mombasa in May 2021. Furthermore, the Council may highlight the imperative of strong coordination and policy coherence between the AU and RECs/RMs as well as other stakeholders to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of efforts. Given the central role of national stakeholders including women and youth for PCRDR efforts to succeed, the Council may also stress the importance of inclusivity and national ownership.