

Briefing on the post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) activities in Africa

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Tomorrow (30 November), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will convene its 1188th session to receive a briefing on the post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) activities in Africa.

Following opening remarks by Abdi Mahamoud Eybe, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for the month of November 2023, Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), is expected to deliver a statement. A representative of the AU Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD); representative of the African Development Bank (AfDB); representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt; and representative of the United Nations (UN) Office to the African Union (UNOAU) are also expected to make statements during the session

This session comes within the context of the commemoration of the third edition of PCRD awareness week, which is taking place from 22-30 November 2023 under the theme 'fostering Africa's future through sustained peacebuilding'. PCRD awareness week was first launched in November 2021 with the aim to raise awareness on and promote collective action of AU Member States and partners, on the recovery and development needs of post-conflict societies. Subsequently, the Assembly ([Assembly/AU/Dec. 815\(XXXV\)](#)), as well as the PSC (during its

1047th session) endorsed the institutionalization and regularization of the awareness week as an annual event.

The last time PSC received briefing on PCRD was at its 1122nd session, which was held on 28 November 2022. While welcoming the launch of the AU PCRD Policy Framework review process, PSC, in that session, requested its Committee of Experts (CoE) to conduct an urgent review of the draft revised policy and submit to the PSC for its consideration ahead of the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly that took place in February 2023. As part of the effort to enhance its peacebuilding architecture, PSC also directed the Commission and the AU Development Agency (NEPAD) to establish a PCRD Working Group. Furthermore, it called for the establishment of a Continental Network of National Development and Cooperation Agencies that would support the envisaged Working Group in implementing PCRD activities and programmes on the continent. In tomorrow's briefing, Bankole is expected to highlight progress made in the implementation of these and other decisions.

The Policy Framework was launched in 2006 with the intention to address the recovery and reconstruction needs of countries and communities emerging from conflict thereby consolidate peace and prevent relapse of violence. Since then, AU's PCRD interventions has taken different forms, including the implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and Peace Strengthening Projects (PSPs) (as in the case of Somalia); the development of Regional Stabilization Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin and the Stabilization Strategy for the Sahel; support in the areas of reconciliation and healing (as in the case of South Sudan), supporting in the reform and establishment of state institutions (as in the case of Gambia); and implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), and security sector reform (SSR) (as in the case of Central African Republic).

Yet, as PSC's 670th session of March 2017 recognized, PCRD dimension remains the 'weakest link' in the implementation of both the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA). Other challenges added the impetus for a revision of both the PCRD Policy Framework and its implementation. The first challenge stems from the evolving security landscape of the continent, now characterized by the prevalence of terrorism, violent extremism, worsening humanitarian situation and the impact of climate change. Secondly, the persistent recurrence of conflicts in the continent including the relapse of countries back to conflict, despite AU's PCRD efforts, raises the question of gaps in the Policy Framework and significantly its implementations. The third challenge pertains to financing; with some of AU's initiatives aimed at addressing this issue either falling short of securing commitments from Member States or remaining unimplemented. Lastly, there is a lack of effective coordination among diverse stakeholders within and outside the AU, coupled with a need for harmonization among the various AU policy frameworks

It is against the above context that both the AU Assembly (at its 35th Ordinary Session [[Assembly/AU/Dec. 815\(XXXV\)](#)]) and PSC (at its 1047th session) reached a conclusion that the 2006 PCRD Policy requires a revision with the view to aligning the policy with the evolving continental security dynamics and ensure its effectiveness in achieving its intended purpose. Accordingly, the AU Commission initiated the revision process, convening a high-level expert engagement in September 2022 in Accra, Ghana. Since Egypt as Champion of PCRD and host of the AU PCRD Centre sought further engagement of the policy review process, the revised policy was not presented to the 36th AU Assembly as envisaged in the decision of the 1122nd session of the PSC. As a follow-up to the first engagement, the second AU workshop on the review of the PCRD Policy was convened in

Cairo, Egypt from 30 May to 1 June, 2023. In his tomorrow briefing, Bankole may highlight the key outcomes of the Cairo workshop and outline next steps for the final adoption of the revised Policy Framework.

One aspect of the changes introduced in the revised version of the Policy, as indicated in the outcome of the Cairo workshop, is the broadening of the scope of AU PCRD activities to incorporate peacebuilding dimension and cover the entire conflict cycle– pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict. This is indeed pursuant to the policy guidance provided by the PSC at its 1047th, held on 12 November 2021. The other aspect is that the revised policy underpins an integrated approach to peacebuilding that addresses the interlinked Humanitarian, Peace and Security, Development, and Governance (HDPG quadruple nexus) needs of countries affected by conflict. The inclusion of humanitarian principles as part of the core values that underpin the Policy, and some highlights on PCRD funding as part of the Policy's section on rationale, as well as the inclusion of youth and environment security as additional pillars of the Policy are also among the important areas of the revision. The other aspect worth highlighting is the proposal to rename the PCRD Policy and related AU Commission organs and mechanisms, including the AU Center for PCRD, to be the AU Policy on 'Peace Building, Reconstruction and Development (PBRD). The representative of Egypt put forth this proposal during the Cairo Workshop, arguing that replacing 'Post-Conflict' with 'Peace Building' could address the challenge of the stigma that persists around some countries being labeled as 'conflict situation' or 'post-conflict situation'.

In addition to the revision process, the other major development in terms of strengthening AU's peacebuilding architecture is the launch of a Working Group on AU PCRD on 15 May in line with PCS's 1122nd session. Co-chaired by PAPS Commissioner Bankole and AUDA-NEPAD Chief Executive Officer

Nardos Bekele, the working Group is aimed at developing and operationalizing mechanisms and processes based on the AU PCRD Policy, at the technical and strategic levels. While welcoming the launch of the Working Group, PSC members may wish to follow-up on the status of the implementation of its previous decisions, including the revitalization of the interdepartmental Task Force on PCRD, the reactivation of PSC Sub-Committee on PCRD, and preparation of the terms of reference (ToR) and time frames for the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee on PCRD is the third awaiting reactivation, alongside the Sub-Committees on sanctions and counter-terrorism. Additionally, PSC members may be interested in receiving updates on the progress made towards achieving full operationalization of the AU Centre for PCRD in Cairo, which was officially inaugurated in December 2021. One significant progress in the operationalization of the Centre is the appointment of substantive head of the Centre. The Centre is expected to have 30 staff members when it becomes fully operational.

It may be of interest for members of the PSC to seek clarity on some aspects of the revised policy. One such aspect is clarity around the core focus of this policy. While welcoming the interlinkages of PCRD to the entire peace continuum established under the revised policy, the identification of its core focus areas is key in distinguishing PCRD from measures initiated by conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms of the APSA. Related to this is also the demarcation of roles of PCRD vis-à-vis other AU entities with related responsibilities in order to avoid duplication.

The expected outcome of tomorrow's session is a communiqué. PSC is expected to welcome the convening of the Cairo Workshop and its outcomes, including the finalization of the review of PCRD Policy Framework. The PSC may decide that the revised Policy Framework is submitted to the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly for its consideration and adoption including the

change to the nomenclature of the policy and associated bodies. While commending the Commission and AUDA-NEPAD for the launch of AU PCRDR Working Group, PSC may once again urge the Commission and its Committee of Experts to expedite the implementation of agreed-upon decisions, particularly the reactivation of the PSC Sub-Committee on PCRDR. The PSC may also affirm the importance of the strategic leadership of the PSC in the implementation and deployment of PCRDR interventions. In relation to the AU PCRDR Centre, PSC may echo the call of AU Champion on PCRDR and urge the Commission to expedite the full activation of the Centre. PSC is also expected to emphasize the imperative of ensuring sustainable and predictable resources for its PCRDR activities. In that regard, in addition to the revitalization of African Solidarity Initiative, it may once again stress the importance of engaging the African Development Bank, the African private sector, international financial institutions, and other international partners such as the UN Peacebuilding Commission to mobilize the necessary resources. It may also call upon the Commission to allocate finance for PCRDR interventions from the Peace Fund in line with the identified priority activities.