

Briefing session on the AU Peace Fund

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Today (17 April) the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will have a briefing session on 'Proposals towards Practical Utilization of the AU Peace Fund (in support of Conflict Prevention and Mediation; Capacity Building and AU Peace Support Operations)'. It is expected that Ciru Marwa, the Deputy Head of the AU Institutional Reforms Unit, who also advises Donald Kaberuka, the AU High Representative on the Financing of the African Union (AU) and the Peace Fund, will brief the PSC.

In the briefing, Mrs. Marwa is expected to present to the PSC the current state of the Peace Fund and the next steps including in terms of the criteria and processes for utilizing the funds that have been mobilized from member states as their assessed contributions to the Fund. The briefing also provides an opportunity for providing update on the progress made in the operationalization of the AU Peace Fund.

In terms of the operationalization of the Fund, when the PSC met last time on the Peace Fund, work was still under way in terms of the establishment and operationalization of the structures that ensure transparent and efficient administration of the fund and the running of the day to day operations of the Peace Fund. The first of these structures is the Board of Trustees. This is the body that plays the key role in terms of the financial and administrative oversight of the Fund required to ensure high fiduciary standards and integrity and the provision of strategic coherence. In this respect, perhaps the most notable development has been the appointment of the Board of Trustees of the Fund in November 2018. The Board consists of five individuals representing the

five regions of the continent and two institutions. The five individuals are Zainadine Ahmed of Nigeria, Kamel Morjane of Tunisia, Ellen Mekonen of Ethiopia, Tito Mboweni of South Africa and Anicent Dologuele of Central African Republic. The two institutions are the major partner organizations of the AU, namely the United Nations and the European Union.

Following the appointment of the Board members and the first meeting of the Board in the same month, a major milestone was registered with the official launching of the Peace Fund on 17 November 2018 on the sidelines of the 11th Extraordinary Assembly on the AU Reform. With the launch of the Fund, the next steps in the operationalization of the Fund are of paramount importance. In this respect, the first issue to be addressed is the progress in the full institutionalization of the various oversight and management structures of the Fund as well as legal instruments including financial rules governing the fund.

Within the framework of the AU, at strategic level, it is envisaged that the AUC Chairperson assisted by an Executive Management Committee oversees the operations of the Fund. At the operational level for the day to day management of the affairs of the Fund, it is envisaged that the Peace Fund would have its own secretariat. The structural proposal for the establishment of the secretariat is envisaged to be considered as part of the ongoing AU reform process. This is indeed one of the items on which this briefing is expected to shed some light in terms of where the process stands and when the secretariat is expected to be operational.

Political oversight lies with the PSC, with the support of the AU Commission Chairperson. While these structures and their roles are generally known in terms of mandating and decision-making authority, one of the issues of interest for PSC members would be how the PSC interacts with the Peace Fund and the parameters of that interaction. Against this background, an important issue that requires clarification is the

decision-making roles of the various structures relating to the Fund.

Another area with respect of which the session is expected to receive update on is the status of contribution to the Fund. In its Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.605(XXVII) on the financing of the Union adopted at its 27th Ordinary Session held in July 2016 in Kigali, the AU Assembly decided to endow the AU Peace Fund with \$400m by 2020. Although the expectation has been for the AU to collect at least \$120 million as at the end of 2018, the contribution that member states have mobilized as at end of January 2019 is about \$90 million. Within this context, one of the issues to be addressed is what the challenges are for making progress to meet the target of endowing the Fund with \$400 million by 2020.

It is to be recalled that the PSC at its 30 May 2017 session decided the Peace Fund to have three (3) thematic windows, namely Mediation and Preventive Diplomacy; Institutional Capacity; and Peace Support Operations, as well as the Crisis Reserve facility provided for in Article 21 (4) of the PSC protocol and envisaged to fund rapid response to emergency crisis. Thus far one can only discern some indications of what initiatives would be covered within the framework of each of the windows.

At the time of the launch of the Peace Fund in November, it was noted that the within Window One of the Peace Fund, some of the initiatives that will be expected to draw from the Peace Fund include the Commission and Panel of the Wise peace-making missions, women in conflict prevention and mediation project anchored on FemWise, the Youth for Peace Africa Initiative, African Union Border initiatives, the Continental Conflict Prevention Framework, as well as post conflict reconstruction and development endeavours. While Window three is expected to cover, peace support operations, this will be guided by the AU Common Costs Document. The Document was developed by the Commission as part of its efforts towards

efficient and effective utilization of the Peace Fund. This is also envisaged to guide the Commission in facilitating planning, rapid deployment and sustenance of AU Peace Support Operations. The Document was approved by the 10th Meeting of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security on 9 January 2018.

This session is accordingly expected to highlight progress made in organizing the Peace Fund around these three Windows in particular in terms of determining the scope and eligibility criteria for the windows.

Given that the Peace Fund is meant to operate alongside the funding from the UN, another issue expected to feature in tomorrow's session is the political engagement with the UN Security Council (UNSC). This in particular concerns the adoption by the UNSC of a substantive resolution that establishes the principle that the AU mandated or authorized PSOs authorized by the UNSC should be financed through UN assessed contributions, with decisions on the financing of specific missions to be taken on a case by case basis'. From the side of the AU, AU Common Costs Document is also envisaged to guide the Commission in discussing options and categories of support that will be required from the UN in the event that the UN Security Council authorizes the use of UN Assessed Contributions for AU led Peace Support Operations.

Finally, this briefing session is expected to clarify the next steps, procedures and timelines for starting using the finances from the Peace Fund for funding AU's peace and security efforts.

There is no expected outcome for this session.