

Climate Change and Peace and Security in Africa

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Tomorrow (26 November), African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is set to convene its 1051st session to discuss climate change and security under the theme: 'Climate Change and Security: the Need for an Informed Climate-Security-Development Nexus for Africa'.

Tomorrow's session is expected to proceed in open and closed segments. In the open session, following the opening remark by Mohamad Omar Gad, Permanent Representative of Egypt and the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of November, Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), is expected to make statement. Ambassador Josepha Sacko, AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment is also scheduled to deliver presentation. Statements by Hannah Tetteh, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office to the AU, and Tanguy Gahoum, Chairperson of the Africa Group of Negotiators on Climate Change, are to follow the presentation. Wael Aboul Maged, Board Member of the Green Climate Fund, and Alastair McPhail, Ambassador of the United Kingdom in Addis Ababa may also deliver statements.

The PSC has increasingly addressed the issue of climate change and security in Africa and has become one of its standing agenda item with the decision of the Council to dedicate an annual session on the theme during its 585th session held on 30 March 2016. The Council has thus far convened about nine sessions including the latest one, 984th session on 9 March 2021 held at summit level. The Council also convened its 1043rd session on 29 October 2021 at the level of Heads of

State and Governments specifically on natural disaster and human security. In several of these meetings, the Council not only expressed its concern over the adverse effects of climate change on socio-economic developments and security but also recognized the 'inextricable link between climate change, peace and security in Africa'. A number of decisions have also been made by the PSC over the past years on climate change and security. Hence tomorrow's sessions presents an opportunity to take stock of previous commitments including the study on the nexus between climate and security and the appointment of the Special Envoy on climate and security.

An important aspect of tomorrow's session is to also reflect on how the PSC approaches the issue of climate and security. While the relationship between climate change and conflict is not direct, climate change may exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and tensions with an impact on the human and state security. In this sense, climate change is a 'threat multiplier' in conflict affected and fragile settings and a 'potential triggers of inter-communal violence' as highlighted in the 585th session of the Council.

The framing of the theme captures the mutually reinforcing linkages between climate change, security and development. Climate change threatens to reverse the economic gains made by the continent over the last decade and hinders progress towards realizing the Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As noted in the concept note prepared for the session, climate change affects the delivery of sustainable development plans of African countries, which in turn 'feed and exacerbate some of the active conflicts, and can contribute to the outbreak of new conflicts and/or the relapse of others'. In this context, PSC's 585th session, for instance, underscored the need for member states to mainstream climate change in their national development agendas. Furthermore, the Council, in several of its meetings dedicated to the theme including the 984th session, highlighted on the

need to mainstream the same in all AU's activities particularly in early warning and conflict prevention efforts.

The presentations may shed light on the different policy and institutional frameworks as well as initiatives launched with the aim to address climate change and its impact on security and socio-economic developments in Africa. These include: Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI), the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel, Africa Blue Economy Strategy, the Bamako Declaration on the Management of Natural Resources, and the three African Climate Commissions (the Island Climate Commission, the Congo Basin Commission, and the Sahel Climate Commission), in addition to Agenda 2063 and Silencing the Guns 2030 initiative. This year also witnessed further steps with the launch of Green Recovery Action Plan in July and Africa Climate Week in September while Libya, the last African country to do so, ratified the Paris Agreement in August.

Also of interest to the Council is the issue of providing predictable and sustainable source of climate financing. Africa bears the brunt of climate change despite producing less than 4% of the emissions responsible for climate change. Yet, the aspiration to build climate resilient and low-carbon development by African countries as outlined in their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement requires a considerable as well as predictable funding. Despite some progress in terms of mobilizing and scaling up climate finance, the amount of funding flowing to the continent remains limited. Sources indicate that only few countries have been able to access the Green Climate Fund (GCF)—the single largest source of global climate finance—mainly because of the limited institutional and technical capacity to access and manage the available funds. In this connection, Sacko may brief the Council about the support that the Commission provides to member states particularly in relation to developing bankable projects. The other point the Council may need to follow up is its decision,

at its 984th session, to establish an AU Special Fund for Climate Change. Most recent positive development Sacko is likely to mention is the launch of the Comprehensive Africa Climate Change Initiative (CACCI), a new partnership between the AU Commission and USAID to 'reach the Paris Agreement goals of reducing carbon emissions and building long-term adaptation plans'.

Globally, climate and security is increasingly gaining traction. The the UN Security Council, through its Presidential Statement [SC 13189] adopted on 30 January 2018, acknowledged the link between climate change and violent conflicts in the context of West Africa and the Sahel region. Most recently, the UN Security Council convened a high-level open debate on the 'Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Climate and Security' in 23 September 2021.

As tomorrow's session comes at the backdrop of the conclusion of UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, UK, it affords the Council the opportunity to take stock of major outcomes of COP26 and discuss on main priorities for COP27, which Egypt is going to host in 2022. The briefing by Tanguy Gahouma, AGN Chair, is likely to highlight Africa's position and assessment of the conference. One of the issues high on the agenda for Africa at Glasgow was climate finance and adaptation. The pledge by developed countries decades ago to contribute \$100 billion per year by 2020 to help developing countries to support adaptation and mitigation in developing countries was missed (in 2019, the total climate finance was estimated to be \$79.6 billion, falling short of the \$100 billion target). During the COP26, African negotiators sought to scale up this financing up to \$1.3 trillion per year by 2030. Tanguy Gahouma may also highlight on other aspects of the negotiation including climate responsibility as well as transfer of technologies and capacity building.

The expected outcome of tomorrow's session is a communiqué. Among others, the Council is likely to follow up on four

important decisions it previously made. The first is the study on the nexus between climate change and peace and security in the continent pursuant to the decision at its 774th session. The second is on the progress in respect of the appointment of an AU Special Envoy for Climate Change and Security in line with the decision of the Council during its 774th session. The third is on AU Special Fund for Climate Change which the Council agreed to establish at its 984th session held this year in March at the Summit level, while the fourth is on the need to develop a 'continental framework for proactively responding to the potential and real security threats posed by climate change to the continent' as agreed during its 774th session. Given the interlinkage between climate change, security and development, the Council may reiterate its call for mainstreaming climate change in AU's early warning, conflict prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development undertakings. In this regard, the Council may further stress the need for coordination between the department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security as well as Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment. The Council is also expected to take note of the outcomes of COP26 and may further stress on the need to identify Africa's priorities for the upcoming COP27 and support the work of the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change to better amplify African voices in climate negotiations.