

Consideration of the revised AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy

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Tomorrow (31 January), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is set to convene its 1198th session to consider the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy as one of its agenda items.

The session will commence with the opening remarks by the chairperson of the PSC for the month, Amma A. Twum-Amoah, Permanent Representative of Ghana to the AU. Bankole Adeoye, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), is expected to brief the PSC on the revised AU PCRD Policy, highlighting key elements of the revision. The representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, as the AU Champion for PCRD and Representative of the Republic of Angola, as the Champion of Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation may also deliver statements.

The last time the PSC addressed the issue of PCRD was during its 1188th session, on 29 November 2023. In that session, the PSC urged the Commission to expedite the review process of the AU PCRD Policy and promptly submit the draft for consideration by the PSC. Subsequent consideration by the Permanent Representatives of the Committee, the Executive Council, and ultimately, the AU Assembly is expected during its upcoming ordinary session scheduled for 17-18 February 2024. Tomorrow's session is therefore convened in line with this direction from the PSC and will focus on the revised AU PCRD Policy, which is

a culmination of two review processes conducted in Accra and Cairo in September 2022 and May/June 2023, respectively. It is recalled that the AU Assembly (at its 35th Ordinary Session [[Assembly/AU/Dec. 815\(XXXV\)](#)]) and PSC (at its [1047th session](#)) called for the urgent review of the 2006 PCRD Policy with the view to re-aligning and adapting to the evolving continental security dynamics.

The revised Policy highlights several reasons behind the revision of the 2006 PCRD Policy Framework. The first is the evolving nature of conflicts and other threats to peace, security and development in Africa including the rise to dominance of conflicts involving terrorism and the growing impact of climate change. The Policy originally operated on the premise of a 'linear conception of conflicts progressing from pre-conflict to post-conflict states'. As a result, PCRD interventions were initially conceived to occur towards the end of the process, following the cessation of hostilities and the conclusion of peace agreements. However, the revised Policy notes, that contemporary conflicts in Africa exhibit a non-linear nature, requiring engagements and interventions throughout a peace continuum for 'dynamic, sufficient and timely responses at the various stages of conflict'. This shift is seen as an opportunity to enhance the AU's focus on conflict prevention, aiming to address not just the symptoms but also the underlying causes of conflicts. Indeed, the 1047th session emphasized the imperative of broadening the scope of AU PCRD activities, which involves incorporating a peacebuilding dimension, thus covering the entire conflict cycle phase—pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict.

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The other reason highlighted in the revised policy is the need to align the Policy Framework with the normative, policy and institutional evolutions around the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the African Governance Architecture (AGA), as well as other AU frameworks and instruments that have been established since the adoption of the Policy in 2006. The third factor driving the need for revision is the evolving conceptual landscape, both at the international and regional levels, shifting from post-conflict peacebuilding to a broader perspective of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, which is understood as 'a goal and a process that encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict'.

This conceptual underpinning also informed the definition of 'post-conflict reconstruction and development/ peacebuilding' provided under paragraph 16 of the draft revised Policy, adopting a more holistic working definition that draws upon peacemaking, conflict prevention, stabilization and peacebuilding practices. 'Post-conflict reconstruction and development/ peacebuilding' is thus described as 'a comprehensive set Against this background, the other proposed change 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'.

" 'Post-conflict reconstruction and development/ peacebuilding' is thus described as 'a comprehensive set of measures that seek to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflicts through assessing and addressing the needs of countries

and regions affected by conflicts, violence and instability, including the needs of affected populations.’ “

Alongside the shift in the conceptual framework and the expansion of the scope of PCRD activities, another significant revision in the Policy concerns the indicative pillars. The revised Policy incorporates two additional pillars, namely youth and environmental security. It recognizes the significant role that youth play in PCRD and peacebuilding, highlighting the importance of tapping into their demographic dividend. Accordingly, the Policy not only views them as peacebuilding actors but also strives to actively engage and involve young women and men, as well as youth organized groups, in the promotion of peace. Concerning environmental security, the revised Policy highlights the imperative of effectively integrating an environmentally security-sensitive and gender-responsive approach into peacebuilding strategies for multi-actor engagement, aligning with the other indicative elements of PCRD. Within this pillar, the revised Policy addresses Africa’s mineral wealth and its critical role in the energy transition agenda amid the challenges of climate change. Despite Africa’s involvement in global value chains for green minerals, the Policy notes that its role is predominantly concentrated in the first phase of the value chain—exploration and extraction. Consequently, the Policy, under this pillar, underscores the need for Member States to develop value chains and strategies for green minerals to leverage the opportunities arising from the ongoing energy transition.

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The practical impact of revising the Policy will however largely depend on establishing a robust peacebuilding infrastructure and allocating adequate resources. This is particularly important as the scope of the Policy expands to

cover interventions and initiatives across all stages of conflict. In recent years, the AU has taken steps to strengthen its peacebuilding and PCRD architecture with the establishment of the AU PCRD Centre in Cairo and the launch of a Working Group on AU PCRD. Yet, there are still outstanding initiatives awaiting implementation, including revitalizing the interdepartmental Task Force on PCRD, reactivating the PSC Sub-Committee on PCRD, and fully operationalizing the PCRD Centre. Meanwhile, resources earmarked for AU's PCRD and peacebuilding initiatives are diminishing, even as the continent grapples with ever-more intricate security threats. Securing adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for PCRD and peacebuilding efforts is imperative, especially as their scope is envisaged to expand in line with the revised Policy. In addressing the funding challenge, the revised Policy highlights that 'the AU's strategic policy direction will be underpinned by ownership of its PCRD and peacebuilding mechanisms and processes which are largely financed by external partners.'

Furthermore, recognizing the limitations faced by initiatives such as the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) and the African Peace Fund in terms of implementation, the revised Policy outlines a broad spectrum of actions that should be pursued for mobilizing resources. These include: seeking unconventional sources of financial and other support for PCRD mechanisms and processes such as south-south and triangular cooperation; attracting investment and encouraging the private sector to participate in PCRD activities; encouraging the involvement of regional financial mechanisms such as development banks in PCRD processes; advocating debt cancellation for post-conflict countries that do not traditionally qualify under HIPC and other debt-relief initiatives; providing 'seed money' to kick-start PCRD activities; cooperating with the UN Peacebuilding Fund; and providing support to cater the special needs of countries and regions emerging from conflict, such as the lack of resources

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It may be of interest to members of the PSC to seek clarity on some aspects of the revised policy. The first of these is 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 the roles of PCRD actors vis-à-vis other AU entities with related responsibilities in peace and security to avoid duplication.

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The expected outcome of tomorrow's session is a communiqué. The key outcome of the session is expected to be the adoption of the revised PCRD Policy with the view to facilitating its consideration by the AU Assembly in the upcoming ordinary session slated for 17-18 February 2024. Echoing the revised Policy, the PSC may underscore the imperative of establishing a robust peacebuilding and PCRD architecture aligned with the expanded scope envisaged in the Policy. In this regard, it may reiterate the urgency of expediting the full operationalization of the AU PCRD Centre in Cairo, reactivation of the PSC Sub-Committee on PCRD and revitalization of the interdepartmental Task Force on PCRD, among other measures. The PSC may also affirm the importance of the strategic leadership of the PSC in the implementation and deployment of PCRD interventions. It may also reaffirm the importance of securing adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for AU's PCRD and peacebuilding initiatives to fully realize the objectives outlined in the revised Policy.

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