

Consideration of the Revised/Updated Policy Framework on PCRDDate | 24 January 2023

Consideration of the Revised/Updated Policy Framework on PCRDDate | 24 January 2023

Tomorrow (24 January), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is expected to convene its 1133rd session to consider the revised AU Policy Framework on post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRDD).

Following opening statement by the month's stand-in Chairperson, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the AU, Rebecca Amuge Otengo, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), Bankole Adeoye is expected to make a statement.

At its last briefing on PCRDD efforts in Africa which took place at its 1122nd session, the PSC welcomed the initiation of the review process of the 2006 AU Policy Framework on PCRDD, in line with the decision of the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly [[Assembly/AU/Dec. 815\(XXXV\)](#)] and the Communiqué of the 1047th PSC session [[PSC/PR/COMM.1047\(2021\)](#)], in order to ensure that the policy is adaptable to emerging peace and security challenges in the continent. One of the key outcomes of the 1122nd session was the request made for the PSC 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 Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly scheduled to take place in February 2023. Tomorrow's session is being convened in the context of this previous decision of the PSC.

It is to be recalled that the process of revising the AU Policy Framework on PCRD was initiated through a convening of experts which took place in Accra, Ghana, from 09 to 14 September 2022. Further to enabling the consideration and reflection of new peace and security challenges that confront the continent such as terrorism, pandemics and unconstitutional changes of government within the revised PCRD Policy Framework, the review process allowed to identify best approaches for the implementation of the policy in relevant areas ranging from conflict prevention to stabilisation, early recovery and periods of transition.

In terms of substantive changes introduced in the revised version of the policy, one important aspect is the inclusion of some highlights on PCRD funding as part of the policy's section on rationale. This is a significant addition considering that resource constraint and absence of sufficient financing has been one of the main factors that continues to challenge implementation of PCRD efforts in the continent. Introducing a paragraph on PCRD funding within the policy framework could be considered as an important step towards clarifying the need to channel available means of financing towards PCRD efforts. One such channel is the utilisation of the AU Peace Fund which envisages under its pillar for building institutional capacity (Window 2), the operationalisation and capacity building of the AU PCRD Centre and enhancement of member States' capacity in the areas of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR). In addition to this and other existing means for financing PCRD works in Africa – such as the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) which as noted by the PSC at its 1047th session needs to be urgently revitalised –, it is also important to look into more innovative funding approaches, including, as highlighted by the PSC at its 1122nd session, through smart partnerships between the AU and private sector 'to ensure adequate, predictable, and sustainable

financing for PCRD efforts in the continent’.

Another important substantive addition to the revised policy framework is the inclusion of humanitarian principles as part of the core values that underpin the policy. Humanitarian principles which pertain to humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence are critical not only to carry out humanitarian action during armed conflicts, but also in the post-conflict phase and need to be well integrated in all peacebuilding activities. Further to that, the emphasis drawn to the importance of strengthening the link between PCRD and humanitarian response at the 15th Extraordinary AU Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference plays a significant role in creating some clarity around the contributions of humanitarian action in transition or post-conflict situations, which hasn’t always been well-defined. While the shift in the nature of interventions is expected to change from one of life-saving to that of sustaining and stabilising, the continued engagement of humanitarian action during the post-conflict phase is fundamental to ensure ‘ability of state institutions to protect civilians and deliver adequate social services, supporting the return and reintegration of displaced populations, and helping resuscitate socio-economic activities’ as underscored in the decision of the 15th AU Extraordinary Summit [[Ext/Assembly/AU/Decl.\(XV\)](#)].

In addition to the review of the Policy Framework on PCRD, the AU Commission has also been engaged in efforts aimed at revitalising the overall AU Peacebuilding Architecture. Perhaps the most critical element for the effective operationalization of PCRD is the existence of the requisite level of staff complement able to design innovative PCRD interventions. Linked to this is the on-going efforts to fully operationalise the Cairo based AU PCRD Centre which was officially launched in December 2021 and forms a principal part of these efforts. But lack of resources and slow pace of recruitment of staff for the Centre mean that full

operationalization of the Centre is not yet realised.

Further to seeking updates regarding the full operationalisation of the Centre since the briefing it received at its previous session, tomorrow's session also presents the PSC the opportunity to emphasise the need to strengthen the Centre's capacity to undertake activities aimed at addressing the psychosocial needs of trauma survivors in post-conflict settings, particularly vulnerable parts of society including children, women, elderly and people with disabilities.

The experience in AU's PCRD work such as in the Gambia highlight the need for tailoring and deploying PCRD interventions on the basis of the transitional needs and priorities that countries in transition identified. Efficient PCRD interventions also necessitate the leveraging of the role of various entities including AU liaison offices currently crippled by staffing and other resource constraints and others with the expertise and experience of working on matters relevant to PCRD including humanitarian actors and the African Development Bank. The other lesson from AU's engagement in peace and security including through peace support operations and mediation and peace making is the need for planning and integrating PCRD support into AU peace support operations, the mandate and expertise of AU political offices and liaison offices and its mediation and peace-making works.

In terms of making PCRD efforts more responsive to contemporary challenges to peace, security and development in the continent, the PSC may also reflect on the impacts of climate change on peacebuilding efforts in Africa. An issue which formed the central focus of the discussions between the PSC and the United Nations (UN) Peace Building Commission (UNPBC) at their 5th Annual Consultative Meeting which took place on 28 November 2022, the adverse impacts of climate change have proven to be disruptive to peace, security and

development in multiple ways. In the post-conflict situations where States are only emerging from crisis and have very weak and fragile institutions as well as economic capacity to respond to climate induced disasters, there is a high likelihood for peacebuilding efforts to be easily reversed. Considering climate-sensitive planning and ensuring climate-responsive financing should therefore form part of all peacebuilding efforts implemented in the continent.

The outcome of tomorrow's session is expected to be a Communiqué. The PSC is expected to welcome the finalisation of the Revised Policy Framework on PCRD ahead of its submission to the upcoming AU Summit and commend the CoE for its efforts in this regard. It may call on the AU Commission to diversify its partnerships in order to address the gaps and challenges faced in financing PCRD efforts. It may emphasise the importance of ensuring humanitarian financing to respond to humanitarian concerns that persist during post-conflict phase and contribute to recovery and peacebuilding challenges. It may reiterate its call for the AU Commission to develop a Policy on Psycho-Social Support to survivors of violent conflicts. Echoing the key outcomes of its 5th Annual Consultative Meeting with the UNPBC, the PSC may also emphasise the importance of predictable climate-responsive financing for peacebuilding efforts in Africa and draw attention to the importance of adopting a common African position on the nexus between climate and peace and security. The PSC may also reiterate some of the important decisions of its previous session including its request for the AU Commission to establish a PCRD Working Group, in collaboration with the AU Development Agency (AUDA/NEPAD). It may further follow up on its calls for the urgent reactivation of the PSC Sub-Committee on PCRD and revitalisation of the Interdepartmental Task Force on PCRD. With respect to the full operationalization of the PCRD Centre, the PSC may request for a plan on the finalization of the staffing requirements of the Centre for it to start effectively delivering on its work. The

PSC may also call for the planning and integration of PCRD support tasks into the design and mandates of AU peace support operations, political offices, liaison offices and mediation and peace-making processes.