

Discussion on Financing AU Peace Support Operations in Africa

Discussion on Financing AU Peace Support Operations in Africa | 12 May 2023

Tomorrow (12 May), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will convene its 1153rd session at a ministerial level to discuss the issue of financing AU Peace Support Operations (PSOs) in Africa.

Uganda's minister of Foreign Affairs, Odongo Jeje Abubakhar, Chairperson of the PSC for the month of May, is expected to open the session followed by remarks from Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), as well as remarks from Mohammed El-Amine Souef, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Somalia and Head of AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of UN Office to the AU (UNOAU) is expected to address the PSC and provide overview of the Secretary-General's report released early this month. The representative of the European Union (EU) could be also among the speakers.

The session on financing AU PSOs comes in the context of a new momentum for the resumption of negotiation on a framework UNSC resolution on financing of AU-led PSOs that has stalled since 2019. In February of this year, the 36th ordinary session of the AU Assembly adopted what the AU referred to as 'African consensus paper on predictable, adequate, and sustainable financing for African Union peace and security activities.' On 1 May, the UN Secretary-General officially released the report on the Implementation of UNSC resolutions 2320(2016) and

2378(2017), which is scheduled to be considered by the UNSC on 25 May. These two documents set the stage for starting the negotiation on a UNSC framework resolution that secures concrete commitment from the Council on the use of UN assessed contributions for AU-led PSOs.

Happening at the ministerial level, tomorrow's session presents the PSC the opportunity to provide strategic guidance on how to take forward the agenda of financing within the UNSC and the respective roles and responsibilities of the various AU actors in that regard. It could also serve as a platform for the PSC to create awareness and shared understanding on some of the key issues highlighted in the two documents and those areas that may require further engagement and negotiated compromise.

There are around four issues, which all received attention in the two documents and are expected to require further engagement. The first of these has to do with burden sharing. This relates to the percentage of the budget of AU-led PSOs supported by UN funding that the AU contributes to. One of the issues in this regard was the clarification needed on contribution of 25 % of PSOs budget. The Consensus Paper stated that the 25% of AU's budget would be dedicated to supporting 'priority initiatives of the AU in support of **peace and security** efforts on the continent.' From the 25% of the Union's annual budget that is committed to the overall peace and security work of the AU, the budget for PSOs is expected to cover the **preparation stage** of AU led PSOs.

During the session, member states may also raise the question of various unaccounted costs that they absorb when deploying for PSOs. As highlighted in Amani Africa's [latest report](#), there may also be a need for the AU to commit to a percentage of the financial burden of the PSOs that will be supported by UN assessed contributions. The PSC may thus need to consider how to provide further clarification that specifies the percentage of the cost of the peace operations that AU's

contribution constitutes even if this would be a percentage that is symbolic of AU's willingness for burden sharing.

On the financing model, the Consensus Paper proposed three financing options. The first model is the establishment of AU-UN Hybrid mission based on the UNAMID experience. The second model is what the Consensus Paper described as an 'Enhanced UN Logistics Support Package (LSP)' – a financing option that has been tested in Somalia since 2009 to support AMISOM/ATMIS but with the support additionally covering monthly stipends to the police and military components as well as death and disability compensation (AMISOM/ATMIS plus model). While these two converge with the two financing options supported by the Secretary-General's report, the Consensus Paper additionally envisaged that sub-regional peace support operations also benefit from UN assessed contributions. The Secretary-General's report does not close the door for such operations but requires that such operations are brought under AU decision-making and financial management frameworks.

The other area is the question of decision-making, oversight and command and control, which does not seem to be sufficiently reflected in the consensus paper. Previous negotiations on the matter highlighted the disagreement between AU and UN over who provides the strategic and political guidance to the AU-led PSOs that are primarily funded through UN assessed contributions. The view on the part of the AU is that its deployment of PSOs using UN assessed contributions should not be seen as just a sub-contracting by the UN of its peace operations responsibility to the AU. As such it expects to exercise a level of control over the PSOs it deploys under UNSC authorization and UN assessed contributions support. The Secretary-General's paper provides a diagram of the decision-making process and acknowledges the authority of the AU. What the scope of this control by AU would be clear when negotiating the language in the draft resolution.

The other issue related to the strengthening of human rights compliance and financial transparency and accountability mechanisms. Both the Consensus Paper and the Secretary-General's report provide updates on the progress made in this respect by the AU meeting the expectations set in the two UNSC 2016 and 2017 resolutions. It is expected that the PSC will welcome the Secretary-General's report and call on the UNSC to heed the call of the Secretary-General and adopt the resolution on financing of AU-led PSOs through UN assessed contributions.

In terms of next steps, it would also be of interest for PSC on the process and arrangements that should be put in place for sustained consultation and close coordination. The various consultations would understandably need to be organized in a way that addresses the specific areas of concern of various role players. The PSC may in this respect welcome the roadmap that the A3 have prepared. It may also call for creating a dedicated standing coordination arrangement to ensure close coordination of the AU Commission, the PSC, the A3, the AU Permanent Observer Mission to UN and the wider Africa Group in New York throughout the negotiation process for having a UNSC resolution that adequately reflects AU's position.

The expected outcome of tomorrow's session is a communique. The PSC is expected to reiterate the key aspects of the consensus paper, including AU's understanding of the 25% commitment, the different financing options outlined; progress made in addressing some of the concerns raised in previous negotiation on the matter. PSC may welcome the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of UNSC resolutions 2320 and 2378 and may endorse the strong call of the Secretary-General for the UNSC to adopt a resolution on use of assessed contributions for AU-led peace support operations authorized by the UNSC. The PSC may also authorize the A3 to resuscitate the negotiations on the resolution on the basis of the Consensus Paper and the Secretary-General's report, which

was developed in close coordination with the AU Commission. For ensuring close & sustained consultation and ensure that the various AU actors speak with one voice, the PSC may call for the establishment of a standing consultation and coordination arrangement dedicated to this file and for the duration of the negotiations. At the level of the PSC, it may decide to have this agenda to be a regular item of the monthly program of work of the PSC every month until the conclusion of the negotiations on the draft resolution and establish a committee made up of three to five members involving Ghana as a state with membership in both the PSC and the UNSC. Considering that the negotiation over the resolution is also political as the Secretary-General's report underscored and the strategic significance of this file, the PSC may call for the AU Commission and member states to be seized of, provide leadership and take active part throughout the negotiation process at the highest levels.