

Experience Sharing Session Between the PSC and AGA Platform Members

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Members** Date | 11 August 2022

Tomorrow (11 August), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will convene its 1098th session to hold an experience sharing session with the members of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Platform.

The session will start with the opening remarks of the PSC Chairperson for August, Permanent Representative of the Gambia Jainaba Jagne, followed by remarks of the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), Bankole Adeoye. The Chairperson for the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Rémy Ngoy Lumbu will then deliver a statement as the Chairperson of the African Governance Platform (AGP). Other AGP members and representatives of UN Human Rights Council are also expected participate in the session.

This will be the first session between the PSC and the AGP. Hence the deliberations will aim at creating a deeper understanding of the Platform, the AGA and its synergy with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The AGP which consists of about 19 human rights organs, bodies that have mandate of promoting and advancing governance, democratization and constitutionalism as well Regional Economic Communities (RECs), serves a coordination framework of various AGA initiatives. In 2021 the ACHPR was elected as a chairperson and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) as the vice chairperson of the AGP for a two-year term.

The AGA Platform, as an amalgam of various bodies including even the PSC itself, is a vague construct, with no specific legal *raison d'être*. Its value lies in promoting synergy and coordination but as far as delivering substantive mandate is concerned it is a matter that lies in the mandate of each AGA Platform member. In terms of engagement with the PSC, it is worth mentioning that within the framework of Article 19 of the PSC Protocol and taking into account the mandate of the ACHPR in responding to human rights issues in conflict and crisis situations, the PSC and the ACHPR have institutionalized annual consultative meeting. This has been held annually since 2018 culminating in communiques that outlined rich modalities for close working relationship and addressing human rights issues in conflict and crisis situations. Similarly, the PSC has also received briefings from the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC). These engagements have proved particularly useful both in terms of implementing specific provisions of the PSC and advancing implementation of the PSC mandate.

Tomorrow's session is expected to build on, rather than dilute and displace, such existing engagements with individual members with a focus on the AGA Platform as a whole. The statement of the AGA Platform chair may include various elements. First it may provide an overview of the platform and its objectives. Second it is expected that the Chair of the AGP will brief the PSC on progress made on the implementation of joint flagship projects and programs within the AGA including the Youth Engagement Strategy (YES), Women Engagement Strategy (WES) and the annual High-Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance which is convened under the auspices of the AGP.

For members of the PSC of particular significance is how the AGA Platform contributes to strengthening of its engagement with those that the PSC has established institutionalized

working relationship and to facilitate implementation of the outcomes of those engagements for addressing the governance and human rights dimensions of its mandate in conflict prevention, management, resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and in dealing with unconstitutional changes of government.

In this regard the engagement is also very timely to discuss AU norms relating to countering unconstitutional changes of government, their application and their effectiveness in responding to the rising governance challenges. The PSC may recall its recommendations made during the Eight High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa, held in Oran, Algeria in December 2021, particularly with regards to the need to review the AGA and the 2000 Lomé Declaration on unconstitutional changes of government. The high-level seminar also tasked the AUC to undertake in-depth analysis of the 2000 Lomé Declaration on unconstitutional change of government and the AGA, to assess whether these frameworks and instruments respond appropriately to the challenges that Africa is currently confronted with. The AUC is also expected to submit the reviews to the PSC for consideration. This session may thus serve as an occasion for following up on these pending requests.

To enrich the experience sharing exercise, the PSC may recall the consultation it held with the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) subcommittee on human rights, democracy and governance (HRDG) at its 1095th session on 1 August 2022. It can further reiterate the points highlighted during the session around enhancing partnership on election observation missions, the promotion of democracy on the continent and the provision of technical support to countries emerging from violent conflicts. In this regard, it is also expected that the AGP Chairperson will highlight ways of enhancing synergy with the PSC around conflict prevention through the promotion and sustenance of democracy, governance, and human rights in

the continent.

Another key area that is expected to receive attention in tomorrow's meeting is on exploring ways and means on how the PSC can support the implementation of recommendations made by members of the AGP at the national level and how the PSC can support the efforts of ratification and operationalization of AU Shared Values instruments. A number of decisions are formulated by the various members of the AGP. The session can further reflect on ways to further advance the development of a joint mechanism to follow on implementation of recommendations made by members of the AGP. Particularly, in support of the Platform members with human rights mandate, it would be of interest for tomorrow's session to reflect on concrete steps towards strengthening human rights compliance framework to also ensure member states fulfill their responsibilities in implementing decisions of the various human rights treaty bodies.

As indicated in the concept note the experience sharing session will also take place in the presence of the two African vice chairpersons of the UN Human Rights Council. It is expected that their contribution will highlight areas of synergy with AGP including the PSC. Their intervention may afford participants to reflect on ways of engaging institutions and actors beyond the ones in the AU policy space and to have a deeper understanding of the experiences of other institutions that operate in a global policy environment.

The outcome of the session remains unknown. It is however expected that the PSC would welcome the work undertaken by the AGP. It may commend the work of the AGP and its members. It may highlight the importance of using the AGP as a useful forum for engaging in deeper reflections on selected issues, such as the dedicated reflection forum that the PSC held in March 2021 on unconstitutional changes of government. The PSC may express its commitment to support the growth of the partnership through joint programs and initiatives that aim at

advancing democratic values and the respect and promotion of human rights. Council may further reiterate the importance of collective efforts in advancing these values to also strengthen early response and conflict prevention mechanisms. The PSC may underline the important role of AGP in enhancing synergy between AGA and APSA. It may also underscore the importance of the institutionalized engagement it has established with individual members of the AGP and call on the AGP to facilitate follow up of the outcome of those engagements.