

Briefing by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

Automatic Heading TextDate | 05 November, 2020

Tomorrow (5 November), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is expected to receive a virtual briefing by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The Chairperson of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, Fatma Zohra Karadja is expected to deliver the briefing. The briefing is expected to focus on the country review report of Mozambique. The representative of Mozambique may also make a statement.

The APRM has briefed the PSC for the first time on 19 December 2018 at the 819th PSC session. The second briefing by APRM was conducted on 5 March 2020 during PSC's 914th session. Tomorrow's briefing is taking place in line with PSC's 914th session that decided to institutionalize the Council's engagement with APRM by receiving briefings from the latter twice a year. It further requested the Commission, to organise a joint retreat to thoroughly review the various country reports undertaken in the past two years including the report of Mozambique. Hence tomorrow's briefing will present the key findings of the country review of Mozambique. The country review report was peer reviewed by the APR Forum of Heads of State in February 2019 and the government of Mozambique has launched the Report in May 2020.

The country report which is anchored in the National Program of Action (NPOA) will shed light on the progress made on all the four pillars including: Democracy and Political Governance; Economic Governance and Management; Corporate Governance; and Socioeconomic Development. It would be of particular interest for PSC members to examine the developments under the first pillar on democracy and political governance. In this regard the report is expected to present

the developments around normative frameworks that are aimed at expanding the political space.

On the other hand, despite such progress it may also touch upon the growing dissatisfaction in the Northern part of the country as well as the concerning trend of terrorism in the coastal province of Capo Delgado. It is to be recalled that the 929th session of the PSC, which welcomed 'the outcomes of the Troika Summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation held situation in Mozambique, which are aimed at finding a in 19 May, 2020 in Harare, Zimbabwe, on the security lasting solution to the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism', affirmed the readiness of the PSC to support SADC in its efforts to combat terrorism in the region'. Tomorrow's session also presents an opportunity for the PSC to follow up on this and explore how best the AU can contribute to address the situation in Cabo Delgado, which has led to loss of lives, displacement and destruction.

Another key issues that is expected to be included in the briefing is the political development that transpired in the previous year and the work undertaken around national dialogue and the peace agreement between the Mozambican government and former rebel group RENAMO for which the AUC Chair was one of the guarantors of the agreement. This process was shortly followed by the national election. These developments and their implications in sustaining peace in Mozambique are key elements, which may be of interest for PSC members.

The policy measures and efforts under the other pillars including alleviation of poverty and reduction of inequality are also essential components to further consolidate the political cohesion in the country. In this respect, one area of policy interest for the PSC, which is linked to instability and conflict, is natural resource governance. Due to issues relating to weak financial management of revenues from extraction of resources, here are concerns that Mozambique

faces the risk of the phenomenon of resource curse. It is also worth noting that there is vast proven gas reserves in the Rovuma basin off shore the Cabo Delgado province, the region affected by the operation of terrorist groups.

Policies and measures designed for social protection of certain groups including children, women and internally displaced persons are also expected to feature in the briefing. In addition to the four thematic areas, the country review further identifies crosscutting issues, which require particular attention including corruption, youth employment, environment and climate change. It is to be recalled that when cyclone Idie hit the east and south eastern coast of Africa, Mozambique was one of the countries that was hit hard by the destruction that the cyclone caused.

The report is also expected to provide insights on the process of the review including the consultations that were held during the visit of APRM's Country Review Mission in the country 10 to 26 November 2018. A range of consultations was held with various groups including government representatives, CSOs, the President and the leaders of the two major political parties FRELIMO and RENAMO.

The second aspect of tomorrow's briefing is expected to focus on the APRM's ongoing initiatives being undertaken to respond to the global pandemic of Covid-19, in partnership with the AUC including the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). In this regard the briefing may discuss the recently launched Preliminary Report on Africa's Governance Response to COVID-19. The report captures the continent's early response and policies that have been adopted to fight the pandemic. The report also includes an assessment of the legal and institutional capacities of member states in disease prevention and containment measures including in relation to vaccine research and development as well as the ability to prepare and manage disasters. The report further presents recommendations targeted at member states and the AU.

Particularly for member states it underlines the need for the protection of human rights while responding to the pandemic.

Indeed, since the last APRM briefing, the continent has witnessed significant governance issues connected with measures adopted in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. Tomorrow's briefing may therefore shade some light on the COVID-19 related socio-economic and political crisis encountered by member states, particularly in relation with elections and protection of human rights, and elaborate opportunities within the framework of APSA-APRM collaboration, for resolving such challenges before they escalate into conflict or crisis situations.

In light of the compounded impact of political instability, economic crises, natural disasters and pandemics experienced in some parts of the continent region, tomorrow's briefing may also set the stage for further reflection on the proper utilisation of AU institutions like the APRM and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) as well as appropriate pillars of APSA, in collaboration with modalities set up by relevant RECs/RMs to carry out early response to avert the impending crisis.

The expected outcome of tomorrow's deliberation is a communiqué. The PSC may commend Mozambique for preparing the country progress report and for the efforts it has demonstrated in the various thematic areas. The PSC may call on building on the gains made in enhancing peace in the Mozambique and may in this respect underscore the imperative for collective action of Mozambique, SADC and the AU to address the threat of and actual presence of terrorist groups in Cabo Delgado. The PSC may also underscore the importance of strengthening the legal, financial and regulatory framework for natural resource governance in Mozambique to avoid risk of the [phenomenon of resource curse] in the country. It may also commend the APRM for its work and support to Mozambique as well as its work around COVID19 including the recently

launched report. It may take note of the preliminary actions being taken by the APRM in order to support the efforts of the AU to strengthen the various governance systems to effectively respond to Covid-19 pandemic and promote experience sharing. The PSC may call on member states that have joined the APRM and encourage them to enhance the quality and regularity of their reviews. Council may also encourage member states that have not yet acceded the APRM, to do so. The PSC may further express its wish to receive similar country review reports in the future.