

Review of Partnerships between the AU Commission, non-African States and Organisations

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Tomorrow (13 August) the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is expected to review the institutional relationships and partnerships between the AU Commission, non-African states and/or organizations and their impact on the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA).

The Departments of Peace and Security and Political affairs are expected to brief the PSC on partnerships on the APSA and the AGA respectively.

The AU PSC, being the principal decision-making body with respect to both APSA and AGA, plays a key role in reviewing and providing guidance on the modalities of partnership. Critical to the role of the PSC is the review of how partnerships on the APSA and AGA are initiated, negotiated, designed and implemented.

The session is expected to offer an opportunity for PSC member states to be informed of the nature and diversity of partnerships established on the APSA and the AGA currently in place. Indications are that PSC members do not have full information on the various partnerships established on the APSA and the AGA. Apart from the information gap, PSC member states are also keen about accountability around the planning and implementation of partnership programs.

Other issues expected to feature during the session include

the focus areas of the various partnerships, how the partnerships inform or shape the focus and orientation of the APSA and the AGA including their alignment with Agenda 2063, the extent to which partnerships may impact on the ownership and leadership of the AU in the planning and implementation of APSA and AGA projects and challenges of coordination and the burden of multiple reporting formats. Also, of interest would be the availability of mechanisms for engaging the PSC and reporting to it on the establishment and implementation of APSA and AGA partnerships programs.

Within the context of multilateralism, the session may identify and categorize the various forms of partnerships including with non-African member states, inter-governmental and international organizations as well international non-governmental organizations towards the operationalization of AGA and APSA. It may also look into the establishment of standardized partnership framework that can also streamline a harmonized support to the two complementary and mutually reinforcing architectures, APSA and AGA.

Moreover, given the existence of numerous state and non-state partners that engage the AUC the review may provide a clearer direction on coordination among partners and more organized AU engagement to prevent duplication of efforts and resources. Also given the overlap between the two architectures, the review of partnerships may explore the possibility of having a comprehensive common strategy for both the APSA and the AGA.

In terms of the multilateral partnerships on APSA and AGA, the most notable ones include those with the UN and the EU. APSA is anchored on the recognition of its complementarity to the multilateralist global collective security system articulated in the Charter of the United Nations (UN). Hence AU's primary and well-established partner in the area of promoting peace and security has been the UN. The partnership in this specific area was strengthened when the AUC and the Secretary-General of the UN signed the Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced

Partnership in Peace and Security in April 2017 at the first UN–AU Annual Conference. The Framework outlines priority areas for cooperation including early warning, prevention, mediation, conflict management, and working together to sustain peace and address climate change. The Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.644(XXIX) adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its 29th Ordinary Session held in July 2017 which welcomed the signing of the framework, it also requested the Chair of the AU Commission to accelerate the process of accessing the UN assessed contributions to finance AU peace support operations.

The implementation of the key areas of the framework have also been spearheaded through the UN Office to the African Union (UNOAU), established in July 2010 to support the UN Secretariat's presence in Addis Ababa on peace and security matters.

The EU has been AU's longstanding partner on peace and security dating back to 2003, the early years of the APSA. The EU APSA-support program of the African Peace Facility was established in 2004 at the request of African leaders at the 2003 AU summit in Maputo, Mozambique. Tomorrow's session is also taking place as two major multi-year and strategic engagements are being developed between the AUC and the European Union (EU), which directly target APSA and AGA: the support program for APSA IV (2020 – 2024) and support to (AGA) 2020-2023. These engagements build on the key common priorities on strengthening resilience, peace, security and governance identified at the most recent AU-EU Summit held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire in November 2017.

The second category of partnership is the AUC engagement with non-African member states. In this context, engagement with members of the UNSC may be particularly relevant for the promotion of the continental peace and security agenda including the preventive mechanisms identified in the AGA. Tomorrow's session is timely particularly in light of recent

developments where a number of cooperative platforms have been launched in 2019 with various non-African states. For example, the first China-Africa peace and security forum was launched in July 2019. The first session of the strategic dialogue between France and the AUC was held following the meeting between President Macron and the Chairperson of the Commission on 13 March 2019. A MoU was signed between the UK government and AUC in early 2019.

The PSC may need to identify a coherent policy direction in managing these multiple engagements, which over the years have deepened. It will also be essential for the Council to strategize ways in which the Commission can leverage from longstanding and emerging partnerships and advance the set objective in its normative and policy frameworks. This may require the close cooperation between the Council and Commission to jointly strategize in addressing partnership issues.

The third form of partnerships that the PSC may also review is with international non-governmental organizations and their role in the implementation of APSA and AGA. The review may look into the contribution of partners such as most notably the GiZ, which has provided long term support to both APSA and AGA.

The other key issue that may feature in tomorrow's session is also the reform process and its effects on AGA and APSA operationalization. The proposed restructuring of the AUC in 2021 and the merger of the Departments of Political Affairs and Peace and Security will have direct implication on the harmonization between AGA and APSA. The main area that may require attention in this regard is on how establishing common objectives between the two architectures in order to generate coherent partnership policy. The changes associated with the reform will also affect the implementation of the activities of the two architectures and the long-term partnership built around them.

One of the ways in which the merger of the two departments and its implications on synergy between the two architecture can be accommodated is through the development of a common APSA-AGA roadmap. The opportunity for elaborating such common roadmap is present with the end of the current APSA roadmap in 2020.

The expected outcome of the session is a communiqué. The PSC may call for an enhanced coordination and a standardized partnership framework that governs AUC engagement with various actors on the implementation of APSA and AGA. It may urge the Commission to strengthen its efforts in providing regular update and analysis on partnership. It may particularly highlight the need for harmonization between the two architectures to also enhance coordinated partners engagement.