

# Common African Position on the 2020 Review of the UN Peace building Architecture

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Tomorrow (22 September) the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is scheduled to hold its 948th session to consider the report of the AU Commission Chairperson on the 'Common African Position (CAP) on the 2020 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture: Towards an Enhanced Global Peacebuilding System.' The meeting is expected to take place through VTC.

AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui, is expected to brief the PSC and introduce the Chairperson's report. Fatima K Mohammed, Head of the Permanent Observer Mission of the AU to the UN, is also expected to deliver a briefing on the review process and the development of the CAP.

The CAP is prepared in line with the 899th ministerial session of the PSC held in Luanda in December 2019 which requested the AUC '...to evolve a draft common African position ahead of the review conference of the UN Peace building Architecture to take place in 2020, for consideration by the PSC.' The purpose of the CAP is to ensure that African contributions to the 2020 Review of the UN Peace building Architecture are articulated in a comprehensive document that guide African Member States during the inter-governmental negotiation process.

The last review of the UN peace building architecture was undertaken in 2015. This current review is taking place in the context of the twin resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016) of the UN General Assembly that call for a comprehensive review of UN peace building at its 74th session. The resolutions further underlined the importance of improving

partnership and cooperation between the AU and the UN in peace building. To this effect the resolutions urge the Peace building Commission (PBC) to hold regular exchanges of views, joint initiatives, and information-sharing between the Peace building Support Office and the AU Commission.

This cooperation has also materialized through the annual interaction between the PSC and PBC, which was first held in October 2016. This interaction has regularly been held since then in subsequent years. During the most recent interaction held in November 2019, PSC's 893rd session urged the AUC and the PBC to work in close cooperation with the countries concerned, to promote national priorities by enhancing national ownership, leadership and full participation in the peace building activities and development projects, as well as conflict prevention and addressing root causes of conflicts.

The cooperation between the AU and UN on peacebuilding has been strengthened through overarching frameworks including the Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, in 2017, and the AU-UN Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in 2018.

In line with the decision of the twin UNGA resolutions, in October 2019, the UN Secretary-General launched the process for the five-year review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. To this end the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN in partnership with the African Group developed the CAP. The position paper also benefited from inputs from a wide range of stakeholders including the department of Peace and Security, Political Affairs, Gender Women and Development, the Office of the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security as well as the AU Missions in South Sudan and Sudan. The document was also developed based on consultations with the African Caucus on Peacebuilding at the UN in New York, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and African civil society organisations, as well as think tanks including Amani

Africa.

The CAP identifies a number of key priority areas drawing on AU policy frameworks on peacebuilding namely the AU PCRCD Policy of 2006 and the AU Transitional Justice Policy of 2019 as well as based on best practices from previous peacebuilding efforts. Towards informing the review process, the areas that the CAP highlights as priority areas include financing, conflict prevention, governance, transitional justice, combating terrorism as well as partnership. Additionally, it also covers crosscutting thematic issues related to women, peace and security and youth.

In addition to existing policy instruments, the issues captured in the CAP are also linked with the political leadership of the PSC and the technical input of AU Commission structures including the Cairo based PCRCD center. With respect to PSC's role three issues may be of interest for PSC members. The first is the active participation of national stakeholders in the conception, planning and implementation of peace building support. The second is the existence of a political strategy on which peace building support is to be anchored.

Finally, it would also be of interest for PSC members to get details how the CAP envisages both strategic level synergy between the PSC and the PBC in deciding on and regularly following up peace building intervention and the technical level collaboration between the AU and the UN. If the PSC is to play its political leadership role, it is necessary for the PSC to have the countries on the Peace building Commission on its agenda.

The CAP is also expected to include salient features to enhance cooperation among actors that support peacebuilding efforts. In this regard, the three components it highlights to inform and guide inter-institutional cooperation include: 'assistance in the design of national peacebuilding framework; financial support for peacebuilding; and mechanism for

periodic consultation, joint monitoring, review and reporting on progress in implementation of peacebuilding process'. The harmonization of support and partnership in these critical areas and national ownership highly determine the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts.

The AU may also utilize this opportunity to advance strategic matters relating to increasing its ownership of PCRDR efforts in Africa; a more synergized partnership between AU, RECs/RMs and the UN as well as the operationalization of the peacebuilding efforts at the field level.

Between 2007-2020 African countries have received approximately 82.7% of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, which is a demonstration of the PBC's priority and commitment in the continent. Given that Africa, as a region, is the biggest recipient of the funding it is essential that relevant national and continental actors take active part in informing the peacebuilding efforts of the PBC, which will have effect on a number of countries. In this respect, it would be of interest for PSC members to receive clarification on the strategy to be used for ensuring that African member states participate actively in the negotiation process speaking with one voice.

It is also to be recalled that currently there are about four African countries on the agenda of PBC, namely, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia. Hence, tomorrow's session also serves to review the experiences from these countries for enhancing the cooperation between the AU and PBC in particular country contexts.

The expected outcome is a communiqué. The PSC may underline the importance of the global peacebuilding architecture for consolidating peace, particularly working in close coordination with AU's PCRDR. It may endorse the key recommendations towards effective peacebuilding efforts, which are articulated in the CAP with particular emphasis on the

need for peacebuilding to be anchored on a political strategy for ensuring national ownership and full participation of national actors. For the PSC to play a more active role in providing strategic guidance and political support, it may request that the countries on the agenda of the PBC are also included on the agenda of the PSC and that the AU Commission together with the UN provide regular briefing and update on the post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts in those countries. The PSC may also urge the AUC for continued support to member states in ensuring that key recommendations of the CAP are well captured in the UN review process. It may call for a more coordinated and continuous effort between the AU office in New York and the AUC to ensure a coherent messaging on the basis of the CAP and to effectively inform the review process. It may also call on African member states to actively participate in the review process based on the CAP and speak with one voice. The PSC may also make reference to its annual interaction session with UNPBC as a key platform to further deepen the strategic cooperation on peacebuilding.