

Ministerial session on the nexus between peace, security and development

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Tomorrow (27 September 2019) the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is scheduled to hold a ministerial session devoted to the theme “Nexus between peace, security and development: towards a pact of collective responsibility”. To be chaired and opened with a statement by Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco and Chair of the PSC for the month of September, the session is expected to receive a briefing from the AU Commission Chairperson, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat.

Apart from the members of the PSC and the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui and Commissioners for Social Affairs and Political affairs, it is also envisaged that Egypt, as the Chair of the AU, will participate.

This theme was included in the provisional program of work of the PSC for September on the initiation of Morocco as Chair of the PSC for the month. After the draft concept note was initiated, it was circulated to the Committee of Experts for their inputs and adoption before it was submitted to the PSC to guide the drafting and review of the communique of the session.

The session draws on relevant instruments in which the interface between peace and security and development has been specified. Accordingly, reference is made to the preamble of the AU Constitutive Act acknowledging the need to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the

implementation of our development and integration agenda. More directly, specific reference is made to the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol notably Article 3(a) and Article 4(d) with the latter specifying the interdependence between socio-economic development and the security of peoples and States as one of the principles that guide the work of the PSC.

Beyond examining the nexus between peace and security and development, the session also puts a spotlight on the security-heavy character of AU's peace and security initiatives. It means that inadequate attention is paid to the development dimension. In foregrounding the development dimension of conflicts, the session emphasizes the need for paying attention in AU's peace and security interventions to the socio-economic factors that propel and fuel conflicts and instability. Reference is also made to how the socio-economic dimension intersects with lack of good governance, weakness of state institutions, organized crime and environmental degradation in compounding insecurity.

The session also highlights how the absence of socio-economic development undermines peace processes at times leading to the relapse of post-conflict countries back to conflict. This underscores the critical importance of post-conflict reconstruction and development interventions paying particular attention to social, economic and political inclusion of conflict affected and vulnerable groups and the creation of spaces for socio-economic opportunities.

The concept note states that 'social and economic discontent, combined with general access to media and social network, give rise to higher expectations which governments cannot satisfy, and make a source of tension that cannot be neglected'. Indeed, as the emergence in recent years of protests and riots as the dominant forms of

crisis events in Africa shows, poorly distributed wealth and lack of sufficient jobs, opportunities and freedoms, particularly for a large youth population, can also increase the risk of instability.

It would be of interest for the members of the PSC to further assess how best to pursue this theme of the nexus between peace and security and development within the framework of the mandate of the PSC. At one level, this pertains to the question of how the issues that this theme raises can be integrated into the conflict prevention, management, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction tools and interventions of the AU including with respect to specific country or regional conflict situations. It is expected that some countries notably Kenya may make reference to global initiatives such as most notably the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Additionally, another practical consideration for pursuing this theme relates to developing approaches for both tapping into the role of development actors including businesses and mobilizing the use of development interventions to leverage peace processes. This obviously necessitates not only identifying the role of AU institutions particularly the specialized agencies and partner entities such as the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Community for Africa as well as the UN Peace Building Commission for whom development is their core mandate but also articulating the strategies for activating and strategically deploying their role.

Also of interest for PSC members is the aspect of the theme referring to 'a pact of collective responsibility'. While two of the objectives of the session identified in the concept note involve defining 'an institutional framework with a view to establishing a Pact for Collective Responsibility, based on the principle of interdependence as well as shared responsibility and

establishing 'a roadmap for the implementation of the Collective Responsibility Pact,' it is not immediately apparent what the pact for collective responsibility refers to and entails. The general thrust of the session however suggests the need for processes in which the role of actors with development mandate is fully mobilized and the development dimension is integrated in peace and security analysis and policy interventions. It is possible to anchor such collective pact on the the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction Development (PCRD) Policy Framework by establishing partnerships including based on the example of the 2008 United Nations-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis and Post-Crisis Situations.

Based on the concept note, a draft communique was prepared for review by the PSC ahead of the ministerial session. On 16 September, the PSC reviewed the draft communique and provided inputs for updating the draft. Member states highlighted the need for enriching and tightening the communique. In this regard, attention is drawn to the importance of building on existing engagements and strategies of the AU, particularly those not substantially referenced such as the relevant aspects of the AU Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns by 2020 and Agenda 2063.

If the initial draft of the communique is anything to go by, the specific items expected to feature in the communique have been identified. One such item concerns the systematic integration of the development dimension in AU initiatives and tools as well as in the division of responsibilities at AU and RECs/RMs. The other is the harmonization and coordination with AU specialised agencies particularly those with a mandate on development such as the AU Development Agency/NEPAD. In terms of how to take the theme of the session forward, the PSC is expected to request the Chairperson of the AU Commission to present a document on 'a multidimensional approach

reflecting the nexus between peace, security and development.'

It is envisaged that prior to the ministerial meeting, the PSC, meeting at the level of Ambassadors at the AU Observer Mission to the UN, will undertake further review of the draft communique.

Apart from those identified in the draft communique and further developed in the various review sessions on the communique, the PSC may consider to also look into the additional questions this theme raises in terms of how best to pursue it within the framework of the mandate of the PSC. This notably includes the identification of the mechanisms for integrating the development dimension in all the peace and security tools and interventions of the AU beyond the early warning system as envisaged in Article 12(4). The communique could also envisage the identification of the role of the development institutions of the AU and its partner organizations as well as their systematic and targeted deployment across the conflict continuum. Given its direct relevance for this theme, it is of particular importance for the communique to make reference to and draw on AU PCRD Policy Framework. Reference could also be made to Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as various UN initiatives notably the Peace Building Commission and UN Security Council Resolution 2282(2016).