

Joint Consultative Meeting between the AUPSC and the UNPBC

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Tomorrow (11 November), the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) is expected to hold its regular meeting with the United Nations (UN) Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The Chair of the AUPSC Ambassador Mohammed Gad and the Chair of the UNPBC Ambassador Osama Abdel Khalek are expected to deliver opening remarks. Then, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the AU and Head of the UN Office to the AU (UNOAU), Hanna Tetteh, will brief the meeting. This will be followed by interventions and interactive discussion.

This meeting is taking place during the post-conflict reconstruction and development week launched for the first time by the African Union to allow experts and relevant stakeholders from the peacebuilding and development community “to exchange views on practical ways to support countries in political transition, strengthen their resilience and avoid a relapse into conflict”. Series of events are organized during this week which include the first Annual African Flag Day, a virtual High-Level Seminar on PCRDR in Africa and an AUPSC session to examine the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the AU’s Efforts on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa.

The last meeting between the AUPSC and the PBC was held virtually on 23 October 2020 where the two bodies exchanged views on how to further enhance cooperation in support of peacebuilding in Africa on the basis of the AU’s policy

framework on post-conflict reconstruction and development as well as the UN's sustaining peace agenda. The meeting took place at the backdrop of the 2020 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and it recognized the African common position on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. A discussion was also held on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on peacebuilding in Africa, with particular emphasis on the role of women and youth.

The AU-UN partnership in peacebuilding and sustaining peace has been strengthened in recent year within the context of the AU-UN framework on enhanced partnership for peace and security signed in 2017. The then AU peace and security department and the UN peacebuilding support office also signed a memorandum of understanding the same year. Since its establishment, the UNPBC has been supporting the peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts of African countries emerging from conflict. It has been considering numerous country specific and thematic issues related to Africa on its agenda. The UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has also provided financial support to several of these countries constituting 66% of PBF's investments.

The AUPSC and the UNPBC have been meeting annually since 2018. Tomorrow's meeting is expected to explore UN-AU cooperation in support of political transitions in Africa, including in the Sahel and in the Great Lakes region, according to the concept note prepared to help guide the discussion. This includes how the two organizations can coordinate their efforts across "the full spectrum of preventive action and diplomacy, post-conflict reconstruction and sustainable development" to support political transitions in the continent.

There appears to be keen interest to link the discussion with the Secretary-General's "common agenda" released in September. The PBC held a discussion with him recently to exchange views on the peacebuilding objectives of his common agenda. The document underscores, among other things, the need to support

regional capacities in peacebuilding. It also points out the need to take measures to increase investments in prevention and peacebuilding and dedicate more resources to the Peacebuilding Fund, including through assessed contributions.

The African Union has outlined its priorities on peacebuilding as encapsulated in the common African position on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. One of the priorities is financing for peacebuilding and the CAP supports the proposals by the UN Secretary-General, which among other things, include allocating a certain percentage of assessed contribution to support medium to long-term peacebuilding. The UN General Assembly is expected to hold a high-level meeting next year to consider options for ensuring adequate, predictable and sustainable financing for peacebuilding.

The expected outcome of the consultative meeting is a press statement with solid recommendations for future collaborations between the two organs in the prevention of conflicts, as well as in assisting political transitions and maintaining peace in Africa.