

Joint Engagement Between the PSC and the PRC Subcommittee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance (HRDG)

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Tomorrow (1 August) the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) will convene its 1095th session to hold a joint engagement session with the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) subcommittee on human rights, democracy and governance (HRDG).

During the opening segment of the session Jainaba Jagne, Permanent Representative of The Gambia and PSC Chair for the month of August, the PRC subcommittee on HRDG and Bankole Adeoye Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security are expected to deliver statements. Following the opening remarks, three presentations are expected to be delivered. The first is by the PRC subcommittee on HRDG which will introduce the mandate and work of the subcommittee. The second presentation will be delivered by the PSC Chair and will provide an overview of the monthly program of the PSC. The third presentation will look into the possible areas of cooperation and engagement between the PSC and the subcommittee.

The session is proposed by the chair of the PRC Sub-committee on HRDG, Taonga Mushayavanhu Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe. The relevant background information of the session was prepared by the secretariat of the subcommittee.

The joint engagement and interaction session between the two bodies will be taking place for the first time. Tomorrow's session will present the PSC the opportunity to interact with the subcommittee that engages the wider organs working on human rights, governance and democracy. The PRC subcommittee, which was operationalized in October 2019 has been mandated to promote AU shared values on human rights, democracy and governance. The subcommittee has a wide range of functions including receiving briefings from the AGA Platform members comprising the PSC itself, AU Commission, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), African Court on Human and Peoples Rights, Pan African Parliament, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), AU Advisory Board Against Corruption, Economic, Social and Cultural Council, African Committee of Experts on the Right and Welfare of the Child, AU Commission on International Law, AU Development Agency- New Partnership for Africa's Development and all the Regional Economic Communities. The sub-committee also engages in the formulation of policies, drafting of decisions on all matters related to human rights, democracy and good governance.

An important aspect of tomorrow's deliberation may also be on the synergy between APSA and AGA. The complementarity between the two structures may also be enhanced in relation to preventing conflicts through the promotion and consolidation of democracy, governance, and human rights in the continent. Through information sharing and joint analysis the organs can further strengthen not only early warning but also mobilizing political consensus around early action. The PSC as a key pillar of the African Peace and Security Architecture and as a member of the African Governance Platform has a strategic role in strengthening this complementarity. The aim of synergy is to also avoid duplication of efforts while ensuring complementarity among the various actors.

One of the main objectives of the session, as highlighted in the concept note, is to identify joint programs and

initiatives that can be conducted by the two bodies. This may take the form of strengthening joint areas of intervention through promotional visits to popularize the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) as a tool to advance good governance and prevent conflict. Indeed, there is a wide convergence between the PSC protocol and the ACDEG particularly around deterrence of unconstitutional changes of government. The concerted effort and collaboration between the two bodies is also important given the recent spike in military coups and erosion of democratic rule in the continent. The session is timely given the momentum generated towards strengthening response mechanism and application of norms vis a vis unconstitutional change of government. It is also important to note that military coups are increasingly occurring in certain security situations or in countries and regions that are already experiencing insecurities. Hence this reality and developments on the ground make the policy coherence and synergy between the two bodies particularly strategic and fundamental.

Another area of engagement that can further consolidate the close coordination between the two is in election processes. PSC has as its standing agenda the monitoring of elections in Africa through periodic reports. This converges with the mandate of the subcommittee in promoting the ACDEG. There is a great role that can be played in accompanying conflict affected countries and countries that are experiencing complex transitions which the PSC is currently seized with and are integrated in its agenda. Supporting electoral processes in such sensitive conditions would require the joint engagement of these bodies to ensure that conditions for the holding of credible elections are created and electoral violence and instability are prevented, managed and resolved.

The outcome of the session remains unknown. Yet, it is expected that the PSC would welcome the operationalization of the PRC subcommittee and may commend the work it has done over

the years. It may highlight the importance of the engagement to consolidate efforts around early warning, preventive diplomacy, deepening democratic values and the respect and promotion of human rights. To this end the outcome document may also stipulate arrangements for sharing of information and for establishing a more robust and institutionalized engagement. The PSC may emphasize that democracy, human rights and governance constitute the foundation and are prerequisites for a peaceful continent. In this context, the PSC may call on the AUC to support the coordination between the two organs as well as their secretariats.