

Provisional Program of Work for the Month of August 2023

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Date | August 2023

Burundi will be chairing the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) for the month of August 2023. The PSC's Provisional Program of Work includes eight substantive sessions. Three of these will focus on country specific situations. Three will address thematic issues, with the remaining two dealing with consultative meetings. All of the planned sessions are expected to be held virtually, unless in person meeting is specifically called for. The PSC is also expected to conduct a field mission to the Republic of Guinea from 14 to 16 August.

On 3 August, the PSC will convene its first substantive session to consider the report of its field mission to Burkina Faso. It is to be recalled that the PSC undertook the field mission from 24 to 28 July. The report is expected to present the assessment of the mission on the political, security, economic and humanitarian situation in Burkina Faso with recommendations on how the AU could enhance its support for the transitional process and contribute to the effort to contain the insecurity and accompanying humanitarian crisis in Burkina Faso.

On 11 August, the PSC will convene its second substantive session, which will be committed to the joint engagement between the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) Subcommittee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance (HRDG). This will be the second such joint consultative session. The first was held during the 1095th session of the PSC on 1 August 2022. This upcoming consultative meeting will serve to review

the implementation of the outcome of the previous session and exchange with the Sub-Committee on developments since the last session. In light of the coup in Niger and the launch of the African Peer Review Mechanism's African Governance Report 2023 focusing on unconstitutional changes of government, this consultative meeting offers the PSC and the Sub-Committee to reflect on the recurrence of unconstitutional changes of government on the continent.

The third week of August will commence with the PSC's Field Mission to Guinea, which is expected to take place from 14 to 16 August. It is to be recalled that on 4 December 2022, the transitional military government has agreed to a consolidated 24 months transition time table with elections scheduled for January 2025. The field mission presents the PSC the opportunity to engage with Guinea's transition authorities on the various tracks of the transition. Apart from enabling the PSC to have first-hand engagement with various national stakeholders and communicate its policy position directly with the relevant authorities, the field mission highlights PSC's willingness to show its presence on the ground.

On 17 August, the PSC is scheduled to convene its third substantive session which will assess unfolding development in Niger following the coup that took place on 26-28 July 2023. On 28 July, the PSC met to discuss the situation and demanded that the military shall 'immediately and unconditionally return to their barracks and restore constitutional authority, within a maximum period of fifteen days' from the date of the decision. The coming session is hence being convened in the context of the 15 days' timeline stipulated by the PSC. Following its discussion on 31 July of the proposal to have another meeting on Niger following the ECOWAS summit, the PSC took the right conclusion for considering the outcome of the ECOWAS summit when it convenes the session its 28 July session envisaged after two weeks. This timeline would also give members of the PSC enough time to scrutinize the nature and

implications of the outcome of the ECOWAS summit and the follow up action that ECOWAS may adopt upon the expiry of the one week timeline it gave to the junta in Niger.

On 18 August, the PSC will hold its fourth substantive session of the month, where it will be briefed on the situation in Sudan. This is the fifth time the PSC will be discussing the situation in Sudan since the beginning of the conflict on 15 April. At the 1156th session held on 27 May, it adopted the AU Road Map for the Resolution of the conflict in Sudan, which is meant to serve as a blueprint for the AU to work towards resolving the conflict. The PSC had requested the AU Chairperson to coordinate the implementation of this roadmap in cooperation with the warring parties, IGAD, LAS, UN and partners towards the restoration of peace and stability, as well as to promptly develop and execute the means of implementation of this roadmap. It is therefore envisaged that the PSC will be briefed on both the situation in Sudan and where the diplomatic efforts stand and how best these efforts could be strengthened.

For its fifth meeting taking place on 22 August, the PSC will receive a briefing on the Continental Early Warning and Security Outlook. The Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) are expected to update the PSC on key emerging trends and issues of relevance to the peace and security landscape of the continent. At its 1073rd session held on 6 April 2022, the PSC requested the AU Commission to facilitate quarterly briefings to the PSC by the department of PAPS, Panel of the Wise, AFRIPOL, ACSRT and CISSA to ensure prompt conflict resolution. In line with this decision, the PSC, in its annual indicative program of activities for 2023 had scheduled to receive such briefings in February, June, October and December. However, the briefing session initially planned for June did not take place. The coming session hence

provides the chance to follow-up on the implementation of PSC's decisions adopted at the 1138th session held in February 2023, including its request for the AU Commission to better capacitate and resource the ACSRT, AFRIPOL and the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Centre.

The third Annual Consultative Meeting between the PSC and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) Policy Organs will take place from 24 to 26 August in Bujumbura, Burundi, constituting the sixth meeting of the month. The representatives of the Policy Organs of the RECs and RMs and members of the PSC are expected to reflect on the state of AU-RECs/RMs relationships and engagements. The second Annual Consultative Meeting between the PSC and RECs/RMs Policy Organs took place two years back in 2021, where substantive challenges in the harmonization of decision making between the PSC and RECs/RMs was discussed. In addition to sharing ideas on how to resolve such challenges, specific crises situations and themes of interest to these decision-making organs could be addressed at the coming consultative meeting.

The seventh session of the month is expected to be a briefing on the Development of the Common African Position on Cyber Security in Africa, expected to take place on 29 August. It is to be recalled that in its 1148th session held on 13 April 2023, the PSC had requested the preparation of a draft statement on the application of international law to cyberspace and a questionnaire to be filled by States on such application. The PSC had also requested the AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL) to urgently complete and submit the draft statement of a 'Common African Position on the Application of International Law to Cyberspace'. It is expected that the PSC will be briefed on the developments of the draft statement and draft Common African position in this respect.

On the same day, the PSC is also expected to receive a presentation on a) the draft ToR of the Sanctions Committee; b) the draft ToR for the Ministerial Committee on Counter Terrorism – both to be established in line with the decision of the May 2022 Malabo Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government – and c) the draft Manual on the working methods/modalities for engagement between the PSC and the African three member of the UN Security Council (A3). It is to be recalled that the PSC Committee of Experts (CoE) has been extensively engaged in the development of these documents including through the convening of a retreat in May 2023.

On 31 August, as its eighth and final session of the month, the PSC will receive updates for its annual session on the impact of climate change on peace and security. During its 1079th meeting convened on 21 April 2022, the PSC discussed climate change and peace and security, and requested the AUC to expedite the finalization of the report of the AUC Chairperson on the Study on the Nexus Between Climate Change and Peace and Security and to submit it to the PSC for consideration. Apart from presenting an opportunity to receive update on this and related previous decisions of the PSC, the session on 31 August will particularly focus on developing contribution to the Africa Climate Summit scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya in early September on the climate and security nexus.

In addition to the substantive sessions and activities of the PSC, the programme of work encompasses the meetings of the CoE. The CoE is scheduled to convene on 8 and 21 August to deliberate on the agenda for the third Annual Consultative Meeting between the PSC and RECs/RMs Policy Organs. As envisaged in footnote of the programme, the PSC will also consider via email, the provisional programme of work for the month of September.

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