

# Provisional Program of Work for the Month of March 2022

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Lesotho assumes the role of chairing the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) in March. The provisional program of work for the month envisages six substantive sessions, out of which one will address a country specific situation while the remaining will revolve around various thematic topics. In addition to its substantive sessions, Council will also undertake other activities including the induction of new PSC member States and the conduct of a reflection forum on unconstitutional changes of government (UCG).

The first session of the month is scheduled to take place on 3 March and will be an open session dedicated to the theme of youth, peace and security in Africa. The session is expected to take place within the framework of Council's 807<sup>th</sup> session convened in November 2018, which decided to institutionalise and regularise the annual open session dedicated to the theme.

On 4 March, the Committee of Experts (CoE) is expected to meet to prepare for the induction and orientation of incoming members of the Council.

The second substantive session is expected to be held on 8 March. The session will be dedicated to the consideration of the joint AU-UN proposal on the reconfigured mission to replace AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Following the development of a framework document for reconfiguring AMISOM through AU-FGS consultations, both the PSC and the UNSC convened sessions on 15 February to discuss the document which

provides the mandate, composition, size and structure of the proposed transition mission – the AU Transitional Mission to Somalia (ATMIS). As the deadline for the expiry of AMISOM's mandate renewed under UNSC Res2614/2021 approaches, the upcoming session is expected to provide an overview on AU's and UN's joint position on the proposed mission (ATMIS).

The third session of the month will be dedicated to consider the draft Conclusions of the first Joint Retreat of the PSC and the APRM (eThekweni Conclusions), which is planned to be held on 10 March. It is to be recalled that the PSC had its inaugural consultative meeting with the APRM in Durban, South Africa, from 19 to 21 December 2021. The draft Conclusions are expected to capture some of the key issues addressed at the retreat including the role of early warning and preventive diplomacy in averting governance related crisis in the continent.

The fourth session of the month, also scheduled to take place on 10 March, will focus on the status of operationalization of Africa Standby Force (ASF). The last time Council received updates on the subject was at its 1007<sup>th</sup> session convened in July 2021. The upcoming session presents the opportunity for the Council to follow up on some of the key decisions adopted at the 1007<sup>th</sup> session including its request for the AU Commission to “set up a multi-agency strategic working group chaired by the AU Commission, to coordinate efforts amongst all the relevant stakeholders on the full operationalization of the ASF”.

On 14 March, the PSC will consider and adopt the draft provisional programme of work for the month of April 2022.

From 15 to 17 March, the PSC will convene a reflection forum on UCG, which will be hosted by the Government of Ghana. Council decided to convene the forum at its 1061<sup>st</sup> session on “Promoting Constitutionalism, Democracy and Inclusive

Governance to Strengthen Peace, Security and Stability in Africa”, as a brainstorming seminar between the PSC and other relevant actors, in response to the resurgence of UCG in Africa observed in 2021 and early 2022.

On 21 and 22 March, induction/orientation of incoming member States of the PSC will be held at the level of CoE, in Maseru, Lesotho. Council will then conduct the induction of new member States in Maseru, at ambassadorial level, from 23 to 25 March.

On 29 March, Council will convene to consider policies on child protection in AU PSOs and mainstreaming child protection in APSA. At its 994<sup>th</sup> session convened in May 2021, Council took note of a study by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), providing areas for the integration and mainstreaming of child protection within the various phases of AU’s peace and security interventions. The initiative to institutionalize a child protection architecture within APSA emanated from the recommendations of this study. The upcoming session is expected to follow up on the level of implementation of Council’s request at its 994<sup>th</sup> session, for the AU Commission to develop a policy aimed at mainstreaming child protection at all phases of intervention within the framework of APSA.

The last substantive session of the month will be convened on 31 March, which will be a briefing by African Commission on Nuclear energy (AFCONE) on the implementation of the Pelindaba Treaty. The Pelindaba Treaty, or the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, was adopted in 1996 and entered into force in July 2009. The treaty has the central purpose of banning the development, acquisition, use or testing of nuclear weapons. In addition to providing updates on the implementation of the Pelindaba Treaty, AFCONE may also brief Council on the level of adoption and implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in Africa, as highlighted by the PSC at its 837<sup>th</sup> session convened in

April 2019.

On 31 March, the Chairperson of the PSC will also be convening a press conference. Increasingly PSC monthly chairs are holding press conference at the end of their chairship, it's a practice observed more regularly particularly after mid 2021.