

Provisional Program of Work for the Month of May 2022

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Date | May 2022

In May, Cameroon will assume the role of chairing the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). According to the provisional program of work, Council is expected to convene eight substantive sessions at ambassadorial level. Council will also have a training of the Committee of Experts (CoE) and a meeting of the Military Staff Committee (MSC) during the month.

The first session of the month, scheduled to take place on 4 May, is envisaged to have two agenda items. The first agenda will be committed to a briefing on the state of humanitarian actions in Africa. Over the years, Council has convened multiple sessions related to the humanitarian situation in the continent, an issue particularly addressed through the International Committee of the Red Cross's annual briefings to the PSC. This session, coming ahead of the Extraordinary Summit that will take place on 28th May in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea focusing on the humanitarian situation, serves as further opportunity to discuss the humanitarian situation in Africa. During the past few years, the number of people internally displaced and those forced to flee into neighboring countries has continued to significantly increase in various parts of the continent. The challenge is not simply the worsening of the humanitarian situation in Africa. Of equal concern is the declining capacity and increasingly constrained space for delivering humanitarian assistance to people in need. The upcoming session could serve to discuss some of the challenges to humanitarian action in the continent. It may also serve as an opportunity for Council to receive an update

on the status of operationalisation of the AU Humanitarian Agency (AUHA) which is expected to play a significant role in addressing some of the challenges and advance humanitarian action in Africa.

The second item on the agenda for the session on 4 May will be a briefing on the situation in the Horn of Africa. High Representative of AU Chairperson for the Horn of Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo, on whose request the session is convened, will be briefing Council mainly on the situation in Ethiopia, as he did in his earlier briefings to the Council. It is expected that the High Representative will give updated on developments on the situation and his activities since his last briefing to the PSC in February. The update could address the status of the dire humanitarian situation, the humanitarian truce declared by the conflict parties and the efforts for initiating peace process.

The second session of the month, planned to take place on 6 May, will be a briefing on transnational organised crimes and peace and security in Africa. The last time Council addressed the specific theme of transnational organised crimes was at its 845th session convened on 25 April 2019. In subsequent sessions addressing terrorism and violent extremism in the continent, Council has also drawn attention to the growing linkage between transnational organised crimes and terrorism in Africa. The upcoming session could serve to capture latest trends in organised transnational crimes in the continent as well as its continued contribution to financing terrorism.

On 9 May, Council will convene an open session on food security and conflict in Africa. The session is planned to take place in line with AU's theme for 2022 "Building resilience in nutrition on the African continent: Accelerate the human capital and social economic development". Conflict continues to induce and exacerbate food insecurity in many parts of the continent by displacing food producing

populations, destroying agricultural infrastructure and inputs and by pushing food prices up as well as by disrupting humanitarian access. As a result, not only that millions of people in various conflict settings in the Horn of Africa, Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel are facing severe food insecurity. The issues that this session would address could put spotlight on the scale of the crisis, the roles and responsibilities of conflict parties (including their violation of international humanitarian law in using access to food and the destruction of food sources as an instrument of war) and the urgent measures required for addressing this grave situation.

On the same day, the Council will also consider and adopt the draft provisional programme of work for the month of June 2022.

On 11 May, Council will have a preparatory meeting for the 5th Joint Retreat and 13th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting of the PSC and the European Union (EU) Political and Security Commission (EUPSC). It is to be recalled that the 5th Joint Retreat and 13th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting were originally planned to take place in late 2021 but got postponed into 2022.

From 12 to 15 May, training of CoE is planned to be conducted. The training is expected to strengthen the capacity of the CoE in discharging its mandate.

On 17 May, Council will convene an open session on Living Together in Peace, a theme which has formed part of Council's annual agenda since the 891st session which first addressed the theme. The last time Council addressed the theme was at its 995th session of 13 May 2021 where it expressed concern over the persistence of violent conflicts, the resurgence of hate speech and increase of religious intolerance, radicalization

and extremism. At the forthcoming session, Council may reiterate its call for member States to respond to these and other challenges to peace and security in the continent by addressing their underlying root causes.

The next session, scheduled for 18 May, will be committed to a briefing on disarmament and control of illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Africa. The last time Council convened a session on illicit proliferation and trafficking of SALW was at its 860th meeting held on 18 July 2019. The session serves as an opportunity follow up on the status of implementation of the request made at its 1011th session for the Chairperson of the AU Commission to conduct an assessment on illicit flow of arms in the central African region and submit to Council as soon as possible. In addition, it may follow up on the request made at its 1040th session, for the Commission to conduct the second phase of the Mapping Study on SALW, with a particular focus on the link between illicit arms flow and terrorism and transnational crimes in the continent.

Council will also receive a briefing on civil-military relations as a factor for peace and security in Africa, as a second agenda item of the session on 18 May. This would be the first time for Council to convene a session committed to this specific issue. The resurgence of unconstitutional change of governments (UCG) noted in the continent throughout 2021 and into early 2022 is one of the factors that have inspired the planned session on this particular topic. It is to be recalled that at its various sessions addressing UCG in concerned member States, Council has repeatedly stressed the importance of military non-intervention in politics. In terms of addressing military coups in particular and the fracturing of militaries leading to armed conflicts, the focus on civil-military relationship draws attention to the issues of the politicization of the military by politicians for their narrow political ends, thereby inducing the interest of the military

to interfere in politics, the professionalism of the military in terms of, among others, adherence to code of conduct and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and its constitutional obligations.

The PSC MSC will also be meeting on 19 May to conduct an evaluation of the functioning, proposed structure and capacity of the Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon. The operationalization of the African Standby Force and the status of the CLB are among the major issues on which the MSC has been engaged in over the years.

On 28 May, the AU Extraordinary Summit on terrorism and unconstitutional changes of regime in Africa will be held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in line with Assembly/AU/Dec. 828(XXXV).

The last session planned to take place on 31 May will be an update on the situation in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB). The session presents an opportunity for the PSC to consider the various security threats and humanitarian situation in the region. In addition, Council may be updated on the challenges and progresses experienced in the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram affected areas of the LCB, since its 1010th session when it was last briefed on the implementation status of the Regional Strategy.

On 31 May, Council will also brief the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) on its activities conducted during the month.

Council's provisional programme of work for the month also envisages in footnote, consultations between the PSC Chair and the President of the UN Security Council for the month, on a date to be determined.