

Provisional Programme of Work for the Month of December 2022

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Date | December 2022

In December, Nigeria will assume the chairship of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). PSC's Provisional programme of work for the month envisages four substantive sessions addressing country/region specific situations and thematic issues. All meetings are expected to be held virtually except the 16 December session.

On 1 December, PSC will convene its first session of the month to consider two agenda items. The first is update on the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF) and regional forces, which can be considered as a signature event of Nigeria's PSC chairship. The session is also in line with PSC's decision, during its 1007th meeting held on 8 July 2021, for the AU Commission and regional economic communities and regional mechanisms (RECs/RMs) to report on the implementation of the ASF on a quarterly basis. The last time that PSC received an update on the operationalization of the ASF was at its 1069th meeting held on 10 March 2022, which adopted a Summary Record as the outcome document of the meeting. PSC is therefore expected to take stock of progresses made in the operationalization of ASF since its 1069th session in March.

The second agenda item is the consideration of the outcome of the Inaugural Lessons Learned Forum on AU Peace Support Operations and the African Standby Force. The forum was organized by the AU Commission Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) from 1 to 3 November 2022

in Abuja, Nigeria to assess how implementation of AU PSOs have been facilitated, ascertain the various ways in which the ASF have been utilized since its establishment, and identify key lessons that can contribute towards the full operationalization and utilization of the ASF. In this session, PSC is expected to consider and adopt the outcome report of the forum.

On the same day, PSC Committee of Experts (CoE) will meet to prepare for the Annual High-Level Seminar on the Peace and Security in Africa (ORAN Process), which is going to take place from 7 to 9 December 2022.

On 5 December, PSC's Military Staff Committee (MSC) will meet to follow-up on the implementation of the outcome of the Inaugural Lessons Learned Forum on AU Peace Support Operations and the African Standby Force.

From 7 to 9 December, PSC will hold the 9th Annual High-Level Seminar on the Peace and Security in Africa (ORAN Process) at the ministerial level in Oran, Algeria. The ORAN Process is a yearly forum which has been convened since 2013, with the main purpose of enhancing cooperation between the PSC and the African members of the UN Security Council (A3 States) in advancing Africa's voice within the UN Security Council. It is to be recalled that the previous Seminar took place in Oran, Algeria, from 02 to 04 December 2021.

On 9 December, PSC will consider and adopt the monthly provisional programme of work for January 2023 via email exchange.

The second substantive session of the month is scheduled to take place on 12 December with two agenda items. The first agenda item is an update briefing on the situation in Guinea Bissau. The last time that PSC received a briefing on the situation in Guinea Bissau was during its 905th meeting held on 27 January 2020. One of the focuses of the briefing is likely

to be on the Stabilisation Support Mission in Guinea Bissau (MASGB) – an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) mandated PSOs which the regional bloc decided to deploy at its 3 February 2022 extraordinary summit following the 1 February 2022 attempted coup d’Etat in Guinea Bissau. The mission was deployed in June for one year (renewable) comprising troops and police from Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal with the view to ensuring the stability of the country. The financial situation of the mission and AU’s support in that regard could be the focus of the discussion.

The second agenda item will be consideration of the mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the Boko Haram. The session is in accordance with the PSC request of the Commission, in coordination with the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) Secretariat, to report to Council regularly on the activities of the MNJTF, in line with the relevant provisions contained in the Communique PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV) of 29 January 2015, as well as in light of the upcoming mandate expiry of the Task Force early February. The PSC last renewed the mandate of the MNJTF at its 1057th session convened on 14 January 2022 for additional one year effective from 1 February 2022.

On 16 December, PSC will convene the third substantive session of the month, which is expected to happen in-person. Two items are placed on the agenda of the PSC in this session. The first item is a briefing on the activities of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBT0). It is to be recalled that the PSC received AFCONE’s briefing on the implementation of the African Nuclear-Weapon Free-Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba) and on its activities during its 1071st session on 31 March 2022. In that meeting, PSC expressed its ‘deep concern’ over the possible use of nuclear weapons in the world and appealed to ‘those concerned to find amicable means of resolving their

differences and protecting the populations from the impact of nuclear weapons'. PSC's increasing attention to the issue is not only an indication of PSC's concern over the rising risk of use of nuclear weapons and backsliding in commitments towards the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in current geopolitical rivalry but also could show Africa's agency in the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

The second item is an update on the deployment of 3000 troops to the Sahel region. Discussion on this item was postponed two times in August and November this year. The decision to deploy 3000 troops to Sahel was made by the AU Assembly at its 33rd Ordinary Session [Assembly/AU/Dec.792(XXXIII)] in February 2020. While PSC discussed the situation in Sahel several times this year including during its 1087th session in June and 1116th session in October, the last time that PSC dedicated a stand-alone session on the deployment of the 3000 troops was its 950th meeting that took place on 30 September 2020. In that meeting, PSC endorsed the Revised Strategic Concept Note on Planning Guidance for the Deployment of 3000 Troops to the Sahel and requested the AU Commission together with the G5 Sahel and the ECOWAS to develop and submit the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the deployment of the troops. More recently, at its 1087th session of 1 June 2022, PSC also requested the Chairperson of the Commission to 'intensify consultations with the concerned stakeholders, inclusive of ECOWAS, ECCAS, and G5 Sahel Joint Force' on the deployment and 'promptly brief the PSC on the outcomes of the consultations for due consideration'. While the upcoming session presents members of the PSC to follow-up on progress made in that regard, deteriorating security situation in the Sahel as well as the unfolding challenges that bilateral and multilateral security arrangements are facing have added further impetus to the need for the deployment of the troops.

The last substantive session of the PSC will take place on 19

December. It is expected that PSC will receive a briefing on the maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. PSC's last dedicated session on the theme was at its 1090th session in June 2022 where PSC requested the Commission, in close collaboration with RECs/RMs and other relevant regional bodies, for a regular briefing. It is also to be recalled that PSC discussed the state of maritime security in Africa during its 1112th session in July last year under the chairship of Nigeria. While the convening of the upcoming session on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea could be seen within the framework of PSC's request for a regular briefing on the same, it also shows the weight that Nigeria attaches to the issues of maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

On the same day, PSC is also expected to consider the Conclusions of the 14th PSC Retreat on its working methods and Conclusions of the 9th High-Level seminar. The 14th PSC Retreat happened in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 17 to 19 November while the 9th High-Level seminar is expected to take place from 7 to 9 December.

On 20 December, PSC will meet at the level of Committee of Experts to consider the Report on the Activities of the Peace and Security Council and the State of Peace and Security in Africa; and the Report on the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps on Silencing the Guns in Africa.