

Provisional Programme of Work for the month of March 2023

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Date | March 2023

In March, Tanzania takes over the role of chairing the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). As envisaged in the provisional programme of work, the PSC will convene six substantive sessions. Of these one will have two agenda items. All sessions except one will take place at ambassadorial level. Of the total agenda items, three will address country specific situations. The remaining four will be focusing on various thematic issues. Additionally, the PSC is also set to conduct of a field mission. The PSC Committee of Experts (CoE) and the Military Staff Committee (MSC) will also be meeting during the month.

The first session of the month is scheduled to take place on 01 March. The PSC will consider the status report on the implementation of the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework (CSCPF): Country Structural Vulnerability Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies (CSVMS) at this session. The CSCPF was developed by the AU as a strategy aimed at addressing structural issues. It aims to deploy preventive measures through operational and direct interventions before structural weaknesses turn into large-scale violence. Within the framework of the CSCPF, the CSVRA is designed to facilitate identification of a member State's vulnerabilities to conflict at an early stage while the CSVMS explores the best avenues to enable appropriate actions by the AU and concerned regional economic communities and regional mechanisms (RECs/RMs) to address structural root causes of violent conflicts in member States.

The second session of the month which will contribute considerably to the PSC's preventive role will be a briefing by the Panel of the Wise, planned to take place on 03 March. This will be the first briefing of the panel to be delivered since 2017 which was the last time it updated the PSC on its activities. The coming session serves the PSC to welcome the new members of the fifth Panel of the Wise appointed for a three-year term by the AU Assembly at its 35th Ordinary Session [[Assembly/AU/Dec. 815\(XXXV\)](#)] and to receive updates on the engagements of the Panel in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation, reconciliation and dialogue since its previous briefing.

An updated briefing on the situation in Somalia and operations of the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) forms the third session of the month. Scheduled to be held on 07 March, the session is expected to assess key developments since PSC's 1121st session when it considered and approved the request of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) to extend Phase 1 of ATMIS operational timelines, from 31 December 2022 to 30 June 2023. In addition to reviewing the security situation including the operations against Al Shabaab, the session is expected to assess the status of force generation and integration process and efforts underway to ensure the extended deadline of 30 June 2023 will be met for ATMIS Phase 1 drawdown.

The fourth session is planned to take place on 09 March and will be committed to a briefing on the conduct of a Continental Maritime Command Post Exercise. It is to be recalled that at its 1128th session, the PSC called on the AU Commission to conduct the 'First Regional Maritime Command Post Exercise in order to increase preparedness and synergy of the Navies of the region to respond to the threats in the Gulf of Guinea, within the framework of the ASF'. In its other previous decisions, particularly the 1012th session, the PSC

has also emphasised the importance of capacitating the African Standby Force (ASF) with the required naval capacity. The briefing during this session could provide important highlights on efforts being deployed to enhance the ASF's naval capacity both at regional and continental levels.

On 10 March, the PSC will consider and adopt the provisional programme of work for the month of April 2023.

From 10 to 13 March, the CoE will convene to consider key highlights of the 2023 Africa Governance Report (AGR) which assesses the state of governance in Africa, with the aim to provide relevant and accurate information on governance issues in all AU member States.

The fifth session of the month expected to be held on 14 March will be an open session dedicated to the annual meeting on the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. The session will be convened in line with PSC's 223rd Communiqué of 30 March 2010, in which the PSC agreed to devote an annual open session to the WPS theme. Following up on the decisions of its previous session on the theme – the 1109th meeting – the PSC may seek updates regarding efforts being made to 'establish a forum for knowledge sharing amongst the AU Member States and partners to leverage experience, lessons learnt and good practices in addressing sexual violence against women in conflicts and crises'.

From 15 to 18 March, there will be a training of the MSC to be conducted in Tanzania.

From 20 to 23 March, the PSC will undertake a field mission to the DRC. It is to be recalled that the PSC's field mission to Burundi which took place from 20 to 22 June 2022 was conducted in the context of the PSC's engagement on the Great Lakes Region and was supposed to extend to DRC. However, increasing tensions due to the situation in eastern DRC limited the PSC's visit to Bujumbura, Burundi. Although the situation in eastern

DRC largely remains the same and has even shown signs of deterioration, the planned PSC visit highlights the importance of PSC's engagement through undertaking field visits to the conflict settings that it addresses.

The sixth and final session of the month planned to take place on 31 March will have two agenda items. The first one of these will be an updated briefing on the situation in Mozambique and operations of the South African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM). In addition to reflecting on on-going insecurity experienced in Cabo Delgado Province of northern Mozambique due to continued terrorist activities, the session could serve the PSC to follow-up on the decision of its 1119th session which drew specific attention to the logistical and financial challenges that face SAMIM and directed the AU Commission to 'explore all options to facilitate additional support to SAMIM'.

The second agenda item will be consideration and adoption of the report on the outcomes of PSC's field mission to the DRC.