

Provisional Programme of Work for the Month of October 2022

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Date | October 2022

In October, Kingdom of Morocco will assume the chairship of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). Council's Provisional programme of work for the month envisages five substantive sessions, of which two are set to be held at a Ministerial level. One of the sessions will address country/region specific issues while the remaining four will address thematic topics.

On 3 October, Council will convene its first session of the month dedicated to the commemoration of the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security – a landmark resolution adopted on 31 October 2000 which underscores the importance of women's equal participation and full engagement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. The session is in line with Council's practice of holding an annual commemorative open session on the adoption of the resolution, and this year's convening is expected to take place in a hybrid format where participation will be both in-person and online. The theme of the session is expected to focus on enhancing the protection of women and girls from sexual violence in conflict situations.

The following day, on 4 October, Committee of Experts will meet to prepare for the 9th informal joint seminar and 16th annual joint consultative meeting between the PSC and UN Security Council slated to take place between 13 and 14 October in New York.

On 5 October, the second substantive session is expected to happen to deliberate on 'prevention of recruitment of child soldiers in conflict situations.' The issue of children affected by armed conflicts (CAAC) has been a standing agenda item of the PSC since its 420th session of February 2014. This session is also pursuant to Council's decision to have two sessions per year on CAAC – one open and the other closed session. Council dedicated an open session on 18 August on CAAC where it agreed, among others, that the representatives of children affected by conflict situations shall be regularly invited to attend and share their experiences in all future PSC sessions dedicated to the issue of child protection, and for the AU Commission to urgently develop guidelines for the participation of children in PSC sessions. The upcoming session presents members of the PSC the opportunity to discuss the alarming trend of the recruitment and use of child soldiers, which constitutes grave violation of child rights and international humanitarian law, as well as its status in the continent and ways and means of addressing the situation.

On 7 October, Council is scheduled to hold its third substantive session of the month at a ministerial level to discuss the theme of 'development and deradicalization as levers to counter terrorism and violent extremism'. This session comes in less than a month since Council's ministerial level session on terrorism and violent extremism under the theme of 'strengthening regional organizations for the maintenance of peace and security in Africa: preventing and fighting terrorism and violent extremism in the continent', held on 23 September at its 1107th session. It is expected that Council will receive a report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on counter-terrorism efforts based on the decision of the Assembly (/AU/Dec.311 (XV)) at its 15th ordinary session, held in July 2010, which requested the Commission to submit regular reports on the status of the fight and cooperation against terrorism in Africa. PSC, at its 249th

meeting convened in November 2010, also requested the AU Commission to submit reports and briefings on the state of terrorism in Africa and the efforts made at continental and international level to address the scourge. Accordingly, Council has been receiving such report of the Chairperson regularly, including its last one submitted to the 1040th session in October 2021. The report is expected to facilitate the deliberation on the topic that has become high on the agenda of the Council by highlighting details on the state of terrorism and violent extremism in the continent, emerging trends, and continental counter-terrorism efforts, as well as way forward to address the scourge.

On 10 October, Council will consider and adopt the draft provisional programme of work for the month of November 2022 via email exchange while Council will proceed with the preparation for the AUPSC-UNSC joint meeting at ambassadorial level.

On 13 and 14 October, the 9th informal joint seminar and the 16th annual joint consultative meeting between the AUPSC and UNSC will be held, respectively. Both meetings are set to be held in-person in New York. While the idea of convening an informal joint seminar is relatively new and was first introduced in 2016, the two Councils have been convening a yearly joint consultative meeting since 2007, rotating between Addis Ababa and New York. The informal joint seminar is held ahead of the joint consultative meeting and mainly serves to address issues of partnership between the two Councils. The consultative meeting on the other hand is dedicated to discussing country/region specific peace and security concerns in Africa. Last year's joint informal seminar and annual joint consultative meeting considered some of the perennial issues such as predictable and sustainable financing for AU Peace Support Operations, combating terrorism and violent extremism, the future of AMISOM post-2021, and the situation in Sahel

region, as well as new developments notably the deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission (SAMIM) in Mozambique. This year, standing agenda items including enhancing partnership between the Councils and the promotion of peacebuilding are expected to feature. The 16th annual consultative meeting is also expected to consider a wide range of country and region-specific issues namely the situation in West Africa and the Sahel as well as the Great Lakes region. Moreover, agenda items on peace support operations in Africa and application of sanctions in conflict situations in Africa are expected to be on the agenda of the consultation.

On 18 October, Council will convene its fourth substantive session of the month at the ministerial level to address climate change, peace and security nexus under the theme of 'Building Resilience and Adaptation for Food Security in African Island States – towards COP27'. The specific theme on island states is a follow up to the commitment made during COP22 held in Marrakech in 2016 and Morocco's initiative towards the establishment of Island States Commission. The agenda is also framed in line with AU's theme of the year: strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent. As the 27th UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) is around the corner, slated for 6-18 November in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, this session offers Council a good opportunity to evaluate AU's preparation towards the conference with the view to ensuring that African interests and positions are taken onboard. It is also an opportunity to follow up on some of the previous key decisions, including the appointment of a special envoy (774th session), finalization of a study on climate-security nexus (774th session), establishment of climate fund (984th session), and elevation of climate change unit into a full-fledged division (1079th session).

On 20 October, Council will convene the last substantive session of the month with two agenda items placed on the table for consideration. The first item is a briefing on the situation in the Sahel region. The last time that Council dedicated a stand-alone session on the situation in the Sahel was during its 1087th session on 1 June 2022. However, it also considered the political transitions in the countries of the region, namely Mali, Burkina Faso, and Chad during its 1076th and 1106th sessions in April and September, respectively. The session comes on the heels of the extraordinary summit of ECOWAS on the situation in Guinea and Mali, held on 22 September in New York, on the margins of the 77th UN General Assembly. On the same day, a High-Level Event on the Sahel was held under the auspices of the UN, AU Commission, ECOWAS, and the G5 Sahel, which saw the formal launch of the Independent High-Level Panel led by former President of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou to undertake an Independent Strategic Assessment of the situation in Sahel whose findings envisaged to be presented to the 36th ordinary session of the AU Assembly in February 2023. While the security challenge marked by increasing terrorist attacks is expected to remain focus of the upcoming session on Sahel, recent geopolitical dynamics in the region, particularly tension between Mali vis-à-vis Niger and Côte d'Ivoire is likely to receive attention as well. The status of the deployment of the 3000 troops in the Sahel and mandate renewal of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, which expired on 13 July 2022, could be other critical issues worth of consideration.

The second agenda item of the session is an update on the situation in Central African Republic (CAR) and operations of the AU Military Observer Mission in CAR (MOUACA). It is a follow up session to Council's 1093rd session of 25 July 2022, which requested AU Commission to report back to Council on the outcome of its engagement with the European Union on funding

issues to the Mission before 31 October 2022. MOUACA was deployed based on funds from the European Peace Facility where its current funding envisaged to end on 31 July of this year. As the mandate of the Mission also ends on 31 October pursuant to Council's 936th session of July 2020, the future of the Mission therefore largely depends on whether agreement has been reached on the extension of EU's funding beyond 31 July.

Finally, from 25 to 27 October, a policy conference, convened by the Peace and Security, Political Affairs (PAPS) department jointly with the department of Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining as well as partners, is scheduled to take place in Tangier, Morocco, to deliberate on the nexus between Peace, Security and Development.

The provisional programme of work also envisages in footnote the possibility of Consultations between the AUPSC Chair and the UNSC President on a date to be confirmed.