

# Provisional Programme of Work for the Month of September 2022

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Date | 1 September 2022

During September, Ghana will take over chairship of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). The provisional programme of work for the month envisages five substantive sessions addressing six agenda items. Three of these are expected to address country/region specific situations whereas the remaining three will focus on various thematic topics. One of the sessions to be convened during the month will also be taking place at Ministerial level while the remaining will be convened at Ambassadorial level. In addition to the various sessions, the provisional programme of work also envisages field missions among the activities planned for the month of September 2022.

On 1 September, the PSC will start the month with a preparatory meeting for the field mission it will undertake in Togo and Niger. The Chair is also expected to provide an overview of the sessions and activities that will be conducted in September.

The first mission of the month will be to Togo and is planned to take place from 5 to 6 September. This field mission has two purposes. The first one is to celebrate Africa Amnesty Month which has been commemorated by the PSC every September since 2017, in line with the decision of the AU Assembly adopted at its 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session [[Assembly/AU/Dec. 645 \(XXIX\)](#)]. It is to be recalled that Assembly/AU/Dec. 645 (XXIX) declared the month of September each year, starting from 2017

till 2020, as “Africa Amnesty Month” for the surrender and collection of illegally owned weapons and arms. In December 2020, the AU Assembly, at its 14<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session, extended the commemoration and conduct of the Africa Amnesty Month for ten years until 2030 [[Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1\(XIV\)](#)]. The Council is expected to commemorate this year’s Amnesty Month through various symbolic activities including collection and burning of weapons and arms. During this commemorative event it is important to also reflect beyond the destruction of weapons, particularly on aspects related to security sector reform, boosting security of arms depots, enhancing the professionalization of security forces and addressing the gaps in states’ security institutions. This approach that focuses on the demand side rather than the supply side is critical in addressing the root causes of illegal circulation of arms.

The second purpose of the field mission to Togo is for the PSC to join the Mali Transition Support Group (GST-Mali) meeting taking place in Lomé on 6 September. The GST-Mali was established in 2020 with the basic purpose of supporting Mali’s political transition after the coup of 18 August 2020. The GST-Mali held its inaugural meeting on 30 November 2020 in Bamako, Mali and its second meeting on 08 March 2021 in Lomé, Togo, under the auspices of the co-chairs of the group – AU, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and United Nations (UN). The upcoming meeting of the GST-Mali will be essential in outlining the areas of support for Mali’s current transition authorities, taking into account changes that have been introduced following the second coup of 24 May 2022.

From 8 to 9 September, the PSC is scheduled to conduct its second field mission of the month which will be a visit to Niger. This field mission will serve as an opportunity to reflect on the increasing expansion of the threat of terrorism in the region.

On 12 September, Council will consider and adopt the draft

provisional programme of work for the month of October 2022. On the same day, the PSC Committee of Experts (CoE) is expected to meet in preparation for the 7<sup>th</sup> Informal Joint Meeting and the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Consultative Meeting of the PSC and UN Security Council (UNSC), which is expected to take place during October. Preparation for the 14<sup>th</sup> PSC retreat and consideration of the draft communiqué of the Ministerial session planned during the month, also form part of the agenda items of the CoE meeting.

On 14 September Council will convene the first substantive session of the month which will be an inaugural annual consultative meeting between the PSC and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Although this will be the first time for the PSC to convene a consultative meeting with CSOs, Art.20 of the PSC Protocol sets the framework for the Council's engagement with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and CSOs. Moreover, at various occasions, the PSC has been briefed by CSOs and it has increasingly recognised the importance of their engagement in advancing the Council's mandate and in promoting peace and security in the continent. The upcoming inaugural consultative meeting is expected to have a specific focus on engagement between the PSC and CSOs in the implementation of the Accra Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCG) and the Malabo Decisions on terrorism, UCG and humanitarian situation in Africa. The session aims at bringing umbrella organizations and regional focal points focusing on peace and security and governance.

The second substantive session of the month will be taking place on 15 September. The first agenda item of this session is expected to be consideration of the status report on the implementation of the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework (CSCPF) with a focus on Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA). The CSCPF was developed by the AU as a strategy aimed at

addressing structural issues which evolve overtime with the potential to cause violent conflicts. 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. It assesses a member State's performance in areas which are of relevance to the prevention of violent conflicts including socio-economic development, good governance, rule of law, democracy and human rights. It is to be recalled that Ghana volunteered to be the first country to conduct CSVRA and underwent the process in 2017 at national and regional levels. More recently, in November 2021, Zambia also conducted CSVRA. The status report to be considered at the upcoming session could highlight lessons and best practices from the experiences of these and other countries that have undergone the CSVRA.

The second agenda item expected to feature at the session taking place on 15 September is consideration of PSC's field mission reports to Togo and Niger.

On 19 September Council will convene the third substantive session of the month to receive updates on some countries in political transition. As envisaged in the provisional programme of work for the month, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea and Mali will be the four countries that will be discussed at this session. In addition to dedicating separate sessions to address the transitions in these countries, it is to be recalled that updates regarding transitions in each were presented at Council's 1076<sup>th</sup> session convened on 14 April 2022. Key developments since then which could feature at the upcoming session include the lifting of economic and financial sanctions imposed against Burkina Faso and Mali by ECOWAS at its 61<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Summit which took place on 3 July 2022. This was in response to the adoption of 24 months' transition timetables by the transition authorities of both member

States. Guinea's transition authorities on the other hand continue to uphold the 36 months transition period which ECOWAS declares unacceptable. The authorities are also growingly facing opposition from within as the demonstrations conducted during August indicate. After much delay, Chad's national dialogue has commenced on 20 August. The dialogue which is expected to last for three weeks will be essential in determining key issues such as reforms of State institutions and drafting of a new constitution. While reportedly over 1,400 representatives from various sectors including rebel groups are taking part in the dialogue, some key oppositions have boycotted the talks.

The fourth substantive session of the month is scheduled to take place on 23 September and will be a Ministerial session on prevention and combating terrorism and violent extremism in the continent. The session will be the third Ministerial level meeting of the year. In 2021, it is to be recalled that of the ten Ministerial sessions convened during the year, three were committed to terrorism and violent extremism, demonstrating the increasing concern and corresponding Council's attention over the expansion of terrorism and violent extremism in the continent. The upcoming session which will be taking place in the margin of the 77<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly is expected to have a focus on strengthening regional organisations in the maintenance of peace and security in the continent. The session will also afford the PSC the opportunity to reflect on a new approach in responding to the threat of terrorism that continues to spread in the continent.

From 26 September to 01 October, the PSC CoE is expected to convene a workshop to discuss the operationalisation of the PSC Sub-Committee on Sanctions and on protection of children in conflict situations.

On 29 September, Council will convene its last session of the month to consider the political and security situations in

Abyei region. Since early 2022, intercommunal tensions have been on the rise in Abyei. Clashes between communities in the region were particularly high during February and March, claiming the lives of multiple people and displacing many more. The latest news coming from the region indicates that relative calm has returned to the region following talks among representatives of the disputing community members, mediated by the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). In addition to discussing these and other recent developments in the region, the coming session will be an opportunity for the Council to reflect on broader AU efforts to resolve the status of Abyei since its last briefing delivered at the 966<sup>th</sup> session of 24 November 2020.

The provisional programme of work for September also envisages in footnotes, a joint briefing on the AU Peace Fund and consultations between the PSC Chair and UNSC President for the month France, on dates to be determined.