

Provisional Programme of Work of the PSC for the Month of August 2021

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In August, Cameroon will be chairing the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). While two of the total sessions will be focusing on country specific issues, the remaining sessions will address various thematic topics. In addition to its substantive sessions, Council will also meet within the month to discuss the 2022 draft budget of the PSC and the department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS).

The first session of the month, scheduled to take place on 3 August, will be a consideration of report on the progress of implementation of the political transition in Chad by the African Union Support Mechanism (AUSM). The report is based on the Council's request at its last session on Chad for the Chairperson of the Commission to report to it by the end of June on the work of the Support Mechanism and the progress in the implementation of the decisions taken by the Council during its 996th session, as well as developments in the country.

On 5 August, the second session for the month is planned to take place focusing on AU support to countries in transition and post-conflict, an agenda postponed from the previous month. At its 958th session dedicated to PCRD in Africa, Council emphasised the need to consistently identify, initiate and promote PCRD initiatives in order to allow rebuilding of resilience and to consolidate peace in countries emerging from conflict situations. This session will present an opportunity, among others, to follow up on this.

The third session scheduled for 6 August is on the PSC and Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security 2022 final draft budget. This signifies the increasing active role that the PSC has come to assume in the peace and security budget of the AU.

On 9 August PSC Committee of Experts is scheduled to meet to consider the priorities on utilisation of the AU Peace Fund. The last time Council convened a meeting on the AU Peace Fund was in 2018 at its 770th meeting, where it underscored some of the concrete steps that need to be taken in order to fully operationalise the fund. Since then, there was extensive deliberation on the issue of the AU Peace Fund at the 13th PSC retreat held in Mombasa in May 2021, within the context of its utilization for the priority activities of the Council. The main focus of this session is thus likely to follow up on the outcomes of the Conclusions of the Mombasa retreat, particularly the identification of priority activities by the Committee of Experts together with the PAPS Department. It is expected that the Committee of Experts would consider the specific types of peace and security initiatives that are planned to benefit from financing availed through the three thematic windows of the Peace Fund.

The next session of the PSC, planned to take place on 10 August, will be on the annual consultative meeting between the PSC and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). This will be the third consultative meeting between Council and the ACHPR since their inaugural meeting convened in 2019.

PSC's next session planned to be held on 12 August will be dedicated to consideration of the mid-year report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on elections in Africa. The report will likely summarise the outcomes of elections in Africa conducted during or scheduled for the first and second quarters of 2021. This session also presents the Council the opportunity to discuss upcoming elections and what the AU can

do to help member states stave off violence in context where there are already looming signs.

On 13 August, Council is scheduled to consider and adopt via email exchanges, the draft program of work for September 2021.

On 17 August, the PSC will receive a briefing from the International Red Cross Committee (ICRC) on its activities in Africa. The session is to be convened within the context of Council's regular engagement with the ICRC, in line with Art.17 of the PSC Protocol. Such briefing has been taking place almost every year since 2007, the last being at the 904th session of the Council convened on 16 January 2020. The President of ICRC is expected to brief members of the Council on ICRC's activities in Africa highlighting works undertaken towards humanitarian assistance and the respect and promotion of international humanitarian law, as well as the challenges encountered by ICRC while discharging its tasks.

On 19 August, Council may convene a ministerial level meeting, to consider the activities of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP). This meeting comes at the backdrop of the statutory commemoration of the 11th edition of the African Border Day by the Council on 7 June 2021, which was convened in the context of the implementation of the AUBP. It is expected that the AU Commission will present a progress report on the Implementation of the AUBP since March 2020, highlighting the major developments in the implementation of the Program at the national, regional and continental levels and its contribution towards promoting peace and security on the continent, as well as its role in facilitating regional and continental integration. One of the major breakthrough likely to be highlighted in this regard is the launch of a Continental Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance.

On 24 August, PSC's session will focus on proposed finalization and operationalization of the AU Humanitarian Agency. It is to be recalled that the Assembly of the AU in

its Decision 604 of 30 January 2016 decided to establish an African Humanitarian Agency (AfHA) to 'streamline humanitarian action on the continent'. With the aim to address the ever-growing humanitarian crisis in the continent, the agency is designed to serve as part and parcel of the new humanitarian architecture adopted by the AU as enshrined in the Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness in January 2016. In addition to the discussion on the finalization of the instruments relating to the Agency and its operationalization, the session is expected to deliberate on ways to ensure complementarity and strong coordination with other mechanisms such as the Africa Risk Capacity, Africa CDC, and Special Emergency Assistance Fund (SEAF). The Council may also reflect on the different options that can be explored to realize the commitment taken by the AU to primarily fund the agency through Africa's own resources in the spirit of Pan-Africanism.

The second annual consultative meeting between the PSC and the Peace and Security Organs of the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) is planned to take place on 26 August. It is to be recalled that at the inaugural meeting which took place in 2019, Council and Policy Organs of the various RECs/RMs reflected on issues relating to the division of labour on their decision-making processes as well as the need to have strengthened coordination between the regional and continental level in the implementation of the frameworks of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and African Governance Architecture (AGA). In addition to following up on the implementation of the various decisions taken at the inaugural consultative meeting, members of the Council may also deliberate on some of the critical issues facing the PSC-RECs relations. The recent decision by Southern African heads of state to deploy a Southern African Development Community (SADC) mission to support Mozambique's fight against violent extremists in its northern province could be among various developments that may be addressed at

the upcoming consultative meeting.

On 31 August, Council may convene a ministerial session to celebrate and commemorate African amnesty month. The session is to be an open session convened in a hybrid format – partially virtual and partially physical. The commemoration of amnesty month has been regularised within Council's thematic agenda items since 2017. While 2020 was the last year for the commemoration of the amnesty month in line with Assembly/AU/Dec.645(XXIX), the AU Assembly, at its 14th Extra Ordinary Session on Silencing the Guns, extended its commemoration for 10 years, from 2021 to 2030, in line with PSC's recommendation at its 943rd session that the Assembly extends amnesty month for a further period aligned with the First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) of Agenda 2063. The upcoming session hence offers the chance to reflect on how the coming ten years could be best utilised in order to address remaining challenges around surrender and collection of illicit weapons and in curbing the flow of illegal arms.

Although the date for the session is yet to be fixed, the PSC is expected to hold a session on the situation in Mali as well. Apart from the security situation in the country, it is expected to receive update on the transitional process since the PSC's last session and on steps taken towards the restoration of constitutional order within the 18 months transitional period.

Council's indicative programme of work for the month also indicates in footnote that a session could be convened to continue consideration of the report on the AMISOM Independent Assessment on the Future of AMISOM, at a date and time to be determined.