

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

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In December, Ethiopia will be the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). The PSC's provisional programme of work for the month envisages two country specific sessions, one thematic session and the 15th annual joint consultative meeting between the PSC and United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which is expected to be preceded by the informal joint seminar. A joint retreat of the PSC and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is also scheduled to take place in Durban during the course of the month.

The first session of the month is expected to take place on 7 December and will assess the situation in Somalia and the status of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) post-2021. At its 1037th and 1042nd sessions convened in October, Council endorsed option one of the Report of the AU Independent Assessment Team on AU's Engagement in and with Somalia Post-2021. Option one of the report envisages the transitioning of AMISOM into AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Somalia. While AMISOM's transitioning into such mission is favoured for providing predictability in terms of financing, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has voiced complete rejection of this option, stressing that it does not conform to the original plan envisaged under the Somalia Transitional Plan (STP). Following that, a delegation of the PSC visited Somalia on 9 November to consult with the FGS, representatives of AMISOM and other relevant stakeholders and determine ways for Council's next steps in its support to Somalia. The upcoming session is hence expected to provide

updates on the progress obtained in reaching an agreement between the AU and FGS on the nature and mandates of AMISOM post-2021, among other issues.

On 9 and 10 December, the PSC will consider the annual indicative programme for 2022, through email exchanges. The PSC Committee of Experts (CoE) will also be convening on 9 December to review the implementation of PSC decisions for the second half of 2021.

On 13 December, the PSC CoE will meet to consider the report on activities of the PSC and the state of peace and security in Africa, which is to be submitted to the AU Assembly at the upcoming AU Summit on January/February 2022.

The second substantive session of the month is scheduled to take place on 14 December. The session will be convened at the ministerial level and will address the interdependence between peace and security and development. In 2019, PSC had its first meeting on the same theme, at its 883rd ministerial session. It is to be recalled that at that session Council emphasised the intrinsic link between peace and security and development and called for the coordinated implementation of relevant AU frameworks, particularly the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and African Governance Architecture (AGA). In light of that, Council requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to submit annually a report on measures taken to enhance the collaboration and coordination between different departments of the AU Commission and AU Specialized Agencies to support the PSC. Council may follow up on this request at the upcoming session. It may also reiterate the concerns expressed at its 975th session over the growing peace and security threats to development in Africa, including the diversion of development financing to address security threats.

On 16 December, the PSC and UNSC will have their 6th informal joint seminar, ahead of the 15th annual consultative meeting

scheduled to take place on 17 December. It is to be recalled that the 5th informal joint seminar took place on 29 September 2020, during which the two Councils discussed strengthening cooperation with a focus on improving working methods as well as Silencing the Guns in Africa. At the 14th annual consultative meeting convened on 30 September 2020 the two Councils considered country/region specific issues including Mali, the Sahel region and Somalia. In addition to following up on developments in these country and region specific situations, the upcoming joint consultative meeting may also consider other emerging peace and security situations.

Between 19 and 21 December the PSC will have a joint retreat with the APRM in Durban. This is in line with previous PSC decision of its 914th and 962nd sessions, which requested the AUC in close collaboration with the APRM secretariat to organize a joint retreat for the two organs.

The last session of the month is scheduled to take place on 28 December. The session will be a briefing on the relationship between South Sudan and Sudan, including the status of Abyei. Since Council's last meeting on the status of Abyei, which took place on 24 November 2020, some positive developments have been observed in the relationship between the two Sudans. Regarding the contested status of the oil-rich region of Abyei, a significant progress has been the establishment of high-level committees on both sides to review past agreements and pave the way for negotiations aimed at settling the final status of Abyei. Council may take note of this progress at the upcoming session and encourage both sides to continue working towards negotiations. It may also follow up on the decisions of its previous (966th) session, including its request for the AU Commission to develop modalities for releasing the report on the killing of Chief Koul Deng Koul of the Ngok Dinka and to dispatch a sensitisation mission to Abyei to engage the local community on the report, with the aim of facilitating reconciliation.

Council's provisional program of work for the month also indicates in footnotes the possibility of convening sessions on Chad, Guinea, Mali, and/or Sudan depending on the development of situations in one or more of these States.