

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

Automatic Heading TextDate | July 2021

In July, Nigeria 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 eight substantive sessions. As has been the case since April 2020, all the sessions are scheduled to take place virtually. Five of these sessions will be focusing on thematic issues. From the remaining sessions, two relate to peace operations and one relate to region specific situation.

The first session of the month, on 6 July, is scheduled to focus on the renewal of the mandate of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. It is to be recalled that the PSC renewed the mandate of the G5 Sahel Joint Force at its 939th session for one year period starting from 13 July 2020. It is expected that the Council will also review the current situation in Mali and the Sahel. In this session, the Council may also receive update on the status of the 3000 troops deployment, which was decided by the AU Assembly during its 33rd Ordinary Session held in February 2020 in order to degrade the terrorist groups in the Sahel.

On 8 July, the PSC will hold its session on a status report on the full operationalisation of the Africa Standby Force (ASF) and the AU Continental Logistics Base (CLB). It is to be recalled that the AU Assembly, during its 14th Extra Ordinary Session held in December 2020, declared that the ASF is 'fully operational' and directed the Council to 'utilize its framework in mandating and authorizing AU peace support operations'. In addition to following up on the implementation

of these decisions, the PSC may reflect on the key challenges and the steps that should be taken towards the full operationalization of the ASF that serves as the 'framework for the planning and rapid deployment of PSOs to conflicts and crises in Africa'. The Council is further expected to discuss on means of supporting the operational capacity of the AU Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, and regional bases.

On 13 July, the PSC is scheduled to have a briefing session on the implementation of the 'Regional Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region.' It is to be recalled that this was adopted in August 2018, at a Ministerial conference of the member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) with support of the AU, including the PSC. On the same date, Council will consider and adopt the provisional programme of work for August 2021. Apart from reviewing the progress and challenges in the implementation of the strategy, the Council may also emphasise the heightened importance of addressing emerging humanitarian and stabilisation needs in the region and mobilizing the requisite AU support for the implementation of the strategy.

During its session on 15 July, the PSC is set to consider the report on the AU Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) independent assessment on the future of the mission. As indicated at its 994th session, AU's engagement in and with Somalia post-2021 is to be guided by the report of the independent assessment team. Although relative stability has been restored in the country following agreement on the resolution of the recent political stalemate over the elections, the intensity of the insecurity exacerbated by the impasses and the immediate clan-based division observed within the Somalia army are reasons to consider an appropriately calibrated AU engagement post-2021.

On 19 July, the PSC is expected to address the state of maritime security in Africa. When the PSC met last time on

this theme at its 858th meeting, the session had a central focus on the finalisation, signature and ratification of the draft Annexes to the African Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter). In the session on 19 July, the Council is likely to pay attention to the continued rise of maritime security incidents in Gulf of Guinea (accounting for 43% of all reported piracy incidents in the first three months of 2021) and the looming threats in the Mozambique Channel due to Cabo Delgado crisis.

On 22 July, Council's sixth session is envisaged to focus on the common African position on financing AU-led PSOs through UN assessed contributions. At its 986th session, Council emphasised the importance of burden sharing between the AU and UN including by ensuring UN's predictable, sustainable and flexible financing of AU-led or authorised PSOs through the UN assessed contributions, and requested the Commission to develop a paper presenting common African position for funding of the AU PSOs and accessing UN assessed contributions. It is also to be recalled that at the celebration of its 1000th session, Council reiterated its request for the Commission to finalise development of the common African position on access and use of UN assessed contributions to AU PSOs, and submit for Council's consideration. As emphasised by the AU Assembly at its 14th Extraordinary session, the articulation of a common position by the PSC will be important to guide the African Members of the UN Security Council (A3) in promoting support within the UNSC for resuscitating the consideration of a resolution which would endorse AU's access to UN assessed contribution for AU peace support operations authorized by the UNSC.

On 27 July, Council is set to receive a briefing on "early warning and security outlook". One of the steps identified by the PSC (during its 360th meeting held in March 2013) to enhance the objectives of conflict prevention on the continent is a periodic review at least biannually of the state of peace

and security using horizon-scanning approaches. This session, therefore, offers the Council the opportunity to practically apply the horizon scanning approach as part of the effort to enhance its capacity for operationalizing its conflict prevention role. In addition, the PSC is likely to deliberate on ways of reinvigorating the early warning system and strengthening its linkage with early response.

The last session of the PSC on 29th session will be a briefing on AU support to member States in transition and post-conflict situations. At its 958th session dedicated to PCRDR in Africa, Council emphasised the need to consistently identify, initiate and promote PCRDR 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 provisional program for July also mentions in footnote the possibility of a briefing on elections in Africa, which is to take place at a date and time to be determined.