

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

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During September, Chad will assume chairship of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC). Council's indicative programme for the month envisages seven substantive sessions. Out of these, two are expected to address country/region specific concerns whereas the remaining five will be committed to various thematic topics. All of the planned sessions are expected to be held virtually. Two of the sessions will be open sessions.

The month's first session is expected to take place on 2 September. The session will be committed to an updated briefing on the situation in Mali and consideration of the report of PSC's evaluation mission to Mali. The decision to constitute a PSC evaluation mission to Mali was made at Council's 1001st session, which took place during June. At the session, Council suspended Mali and underscored conditions that shall be met by the current transitional authorities. The upcoming session and the evaluation report may serve to shade light on how far these conditions have been met in addition to providing updates on the general political and security situation in the country.

On 6 September, Council is scheduled to consider and adopt via email exchanges, the draft program of work for October 2021.

The second substantive session of the month scheduled to take place on 8 September will be an open session dedicated to the commemoration of 2021 Africa Amnesty Month. Council has convened annual sessions to commemorate Amnesty Month since 2017, following the AU Assembly's decision to declare the

month of September of each year as amnesty month, until 2020. While 2020 was the last year for the commemoration of 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.

On 14 September, the PSC will meet to prepare for two of its upcoming joint annual consultative meetings scheduled for October. The first one will be its annual consultative meeting with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which has been taking place since 2007. This year's meeting will mark the 15th consultative meeting between the two Councils. The other annual consultative meeting of the PSC which is expected to take place during October is its joint consultative meeting with the European Union (EU) Political and Security Committee (PSC). This year's PSC meeting with the EUPSC will be its 13th annual consultative meeting.

On 16 September, Council will convene its third substantive session to receive a briefing on continental and regional activities in the area of mine action in Africa. Council's 837th session convened in April 2019 highlighted the indiscriminate nature of mines, among other "excessively injurious" weapons and stressed the need for member States to ensure compliance and implementation of relevant instruments such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), the Maputo Declaration aiming to achieve a mine-free world by 2025 and the Mine Action and Explosive Remnants of War Strategic Framework. The upcoming briefing may provide updates on the status of implementation of these instruments.

The fourth session of the month is scheduled to take place on 21 September which is also the second open session of the month. The open session is dedicated to the commemoration of International Day of Peace, where Council will also receive briefing of the second edition of the Luanda Biennial “Pan African Forum for the Culture of Peace”. A joint initiative of the AU, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Government of Angola, the Pan-African Biennale was held for the first time in September 2019, in Luanda, where it was agreed that the forum would be convened every two years. The first edition of the forum served to highlight the importance of strategic partnerships to scale up projects for sustainable peace in Africa, the value of disseminating good practices for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and the need to showcase cultural diversity in Africa and demonstrate the resilience of the people in the face of conflicts. The second edition is expected to be held under the theme “Strengthening the Pan-African Movement for a Culture of Peace and Non- Violence: Towards a Global Partnership”.

Council’s next session, which is scheduled for 23 September, will consider 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 prevent violence in contexts of elections.

On 28 September, Council may have, subject to confirmation, a ministerial level session addressing the projected impact of withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya on Sahel region and the rest of the continent. The presence of foreign fighters in Libya has been challenging the implementation of the October 2020 ceasefire agreement and is considered as a threat to the successful conduct of the

elections planned for December this year. While the withdrawal of these foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya is critical for the success of the country's peace process, there is fear that if not properly managed, it will result in the spread of terrorist fighters and arms into the wider Sahel region and the rest of Africa. Council's session may thus focus on mechanisms that shall be employed for the effective management of the departure of these foreign fighters from Libya.

The last session of the month, which is scheduled to take place on 30 September, will consist of two agenda items. The first one will be consideration of strategic priorities for the utilisation of the AU Peace Fund. It is to be recalled that the PSC Committee of Experts convened during August under Cameroon's chairship to consider this particular issue. The upcoming session could hence serve to update Council which types of peace and security initiatives the Committee of Experts has identified as priority areas to receive funding through the three thematic windows of the Peace Fund. The second agenda item is dedicated to the consideration of a zero draft African consensus paper on the financing of AU-led peace support operations (PSOs) using UN assessed contributions. The submission of the draft was requested at Council's 986th session, where the AU Commission was requested to develop a paper presenting common African position for funding of AU PSOs through UN assessed contributions. Both agenda items are expected to be presented by the Chairperson of the PSC Committee of Experts for August 2021, Cameroon.

In addition to its substantive sessions, Council's provisional programme indicates that the Committee of Experts will be meeting within the month to consider the implementation status of PSC decisions.