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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1278TH MEETING

7 MAY 2025
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1278 (2025)

COMMUNIQUE



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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1278th meeting held on Wednesday, 7 May 2025 on Briefing on the AU Support to Member States (The Gambia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali and South Sudan) on Security Sector Reform (SSR): Lessons Learned and Perspectives on the Way Forward.

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements on SSR particularly, Communiqué [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCCLXXIV)] adopted at its 874th meeting, held on 5 September 2019; Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1(DCCCXLIV)] adopted at its 844th meeting held on 24 April 2019; Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM. 1 (DCCC)] adopted at its 800th meeting, held on 10 October 2018; Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCIX)] adopted at its 809th meeting held on 21 November 2018; and Communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.1219 (2024) adopted at its 1219th meeting, held on 28 June 2024;

Taking note of the opening statement by H.E. Ambassador Harold Bundu Saffa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Chairperson of the PSC for the month of May 2025 and the briefing by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, presented on his behalf by Mme Patience Zenalie Chiradza, Director of Governance and Conflict Prevention at the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department;

Also taking note of the statements by Colonel Musa Trawally, the Representative of the Republic of The Gambia, by Vice-Admiral Marosoa Randrianarisoa, the Representative of the Republic of Madagascar, by Ambassador Boutrous T. Deng, the Representative of the Republic of South Sudan and the Statements by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS);

Further taking Note of the statements by H.E. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General to the AU and Head of the United Nations Office to the AU (UNOAU), as well as by Dr. Dawit Yohannes, Representative of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS); and

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council,

1. **Commends** the Gambia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali and South Sudan for their efforts and the progress made in implementing SSR programmes in their respective countries; and for their readiness to share experiences from their ongoing SSR processes with other Member States, thereby contributing to peer learning and mutual support across the continent; and;
2. **Expresses appreciation** to the AU Commission and partners for their continued support to Member States in implementing SSR programs, which have been instrumental in providing technical support, including through AU SSR Policy Framework and Operational Guidance Notes, as well as promoting SSR as a cornerstone for lasting peace and security; and **encourages** the AU Commission and partners to continue providing the necessary technical and financial support to Member States undergoing SSR processes;
3. **Requests** the AU Commission to continue providing technical support to South Sudan in the implementation of the security arrangements as outlined in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), including through the deployment of SSR experts;

4. **Underscores** that SSR requires political will, national ownership, sustained long-term funding, and a focus on good governance to be successful as these elements are crucial for transforming security institutions, ensuring accountability, and promoting sustainable peace and development; in this respect, **encourages** Member States to integrate security sector governance principles into constitutional reform processes, in order to enhance the legitimacy and sustainability of SSR programmes; and **requests** the AU Panel of the Wise to support in mobilizing the political will and trust needed to connect SSR processes with broader governance efforts in AU Member States undergoing SSR Processes;
5. **Encourages** AU Member States to develop context-specific approaches to ensure that SSR contributions are based on an understanding of the security environment where efforts are mainstreamed into all phases of the conflict cycle, including sustainable peace, post-conflict reconstruction and development, as well as peacebuilding initiatives;
6. **Underlines the need** for the AU to utilize its comparative advantage, political neutrality and legitimacy to continue to promote the implementation of SSR and to advocate for enhanced security sector governance to sensitize AU Member States to undertake the necessary reforms within their national security policies and adapt capacities of different security actors to balance the use of military force and soft power, in addressing security threats;
7. **Requests** the AU Commission to enhance SSR coordination at different levels by strengthening collaboration among all critical units within the AU Commission, including the Post Conflict, Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) center, and to provide optimal assistance to AU Member States in need of SSR support; and in this regard, **encourages** the AU in partnership with the RECs/RMs and international partners, to coordinate and harmonize approaches for SSR support;
8. **Underscores** the need for RECs/RMs to develop and implement policies and programs on SSR that align with the AU's SSR Policy Framework and to collaborate with the AU Commission for technical support, strategic guidance, and resource mobilization; in this regard, **encourages** RECs/RMs to define roles in SSR implementation by assigning focal points and by developing regional SSR policies and strategies; and **also encourages** all RECs/RMs to establish SSR programs to assist their Member States;
9. **Also encourages** Member States engaged in SSR to establish national SSR coordination mechanisms for national stakeholders and international partners; and **calls on** the AU SSR Steering Committee to provide guidance in the overall coordination to align needs and priorities and to clarify roles and responsibilities;
10. **Encourages** the AU, RECs/RMs and partners within the SSR Steering Committee to continue convening annual and triennial forums (such as the annual meeting of the AU/RECs SSR Steering Committee and the triennial Africa SSR Forum) to enhance coordination on SSR implementation on the continent, to ensure the sustainability of continental SSR, and to provide regular briefings to the Council;
11. **Highlights** the need for proper dissemination of AU SSR policies, strategies, and tools by enhancing partnerships with African organizations, including Regional Training Centers of Excellence, specialized in security sector development and governance, to ensure outreach and training of wider audiences, including relevant tools such as the Operational Guidance Note; and **encourages** AU Member States, RECs/RMs to share experiences, lessons and best practices on SSR;
12. **Underscores** the imperative for inclusive, people-centered and gender-responsive approaches; and **highlights the need** for Member States and RECs/RMs to map the formal and informal networks, including hybrid actors and processes that influence decision-making to build trust

and confidence between national security actors, as a contribution towards more responsive implementation of SSR;

13. ***Calls on*** for ownership and sustainability of SSR processes through proper financial planning and for the AU to proactively support AU Member States in resource mobilization for national and regional SSR initiatives; and ***underlines the need*** for the AU Commission to mobilize funding for the SSR Strategic Action Plan and to coordinate with RECs/RMs in providing targeted technical support; and ***requests*** AU Member States to integrate SSR-related expenditures into their national budgets, in order to reduce reliance on international partners while also ensuring greater national ownership and sustainability of SSR processes;

14. ***Recognizes*** that SSR is a complex and prolonged process requiring consistent engagement and investment; in this regard ***appeals*** to international partners to provide sustained, long-term support to AU Member States undertaking SSR, and ***underscores the need*** to avoid short term funding approaches, ensure coherence, sustainability, and impactful outcomes in SSR programmes;

15. ***Underlines the need*** to strengthen the SSR capacity building initiatives of AU Member States in order to more effectively respond to security threats as well as to address the security needs of the population; and in this regard, ***encourages*** the continuation of assistance to AU Member States to enhance their SSR capacities;

16. ***Emphasizes the imperative*** of good governance in the security Sector as good security sector governance is critical to the success of SSR; and in this respect, ***encourages*** AU Member States to focus approaches that balance the civilian and military perspectives to ensure sustainable security sector governance and development; and ***also encourages***, Member States to prioritize the effective adoption of AU legal instruments related to governance, such as the African Charter on Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development among others;

17. ***Stresses the need*** for bridging the gap between policy and practice through a comprehensive, integrated and coherent approach to SSR, in line AU SSR Policy Framework and the UN Security Council resolution 2553 (2020), including a comprehensive approach between various thematic areas across the broader Rule of Law Framework;

18. ***Encourages*** the AU, RECs/RMs, and AU Member States to consider establishing a system of SSR champions to facilitate experience-sharing, raise awareness, and streamline SSR efforts across the APSA pillars, while promoting SSR as a key conflict prevention tool on the continent; and

19. ***Decides*** to stay actively seized of the matter.