

# MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AUPSC

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**AMANI AFRICA**

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# MONTHLY DIGEST ON THE AUPSC – MARCH 2021

## THE MONTH AT A GLANCE

In March, Kenya was the chair of the PSC. A total of five substantive sessions were convened via video teleconferencing (VTC) during the month and one of the sessions had two separate agenda items. Although the month's programme of work envisaged a session on the situation in South Sudan, the session was not convened during the month.



FIG 1: PROGRAMME OF WORK PATTERN

Out of the sessions which took place during the month, two were convened at the Ministerial level and one was convened at the level of Heads of State and Government (Summit level). The meeting held at the Summit level addressed one thematic and one country/region specific agenda items, whereas the two ministerial level meetings were both committed to thematic issues. Council's remaining sessions of the month included a thematic session on the role of African Members in the United Nations Security Council (A3) States in advancing African issues in the agenda of the United Nations (UN) Security Council (UNSC) and a country specific session focusing on the situation in Sudan.

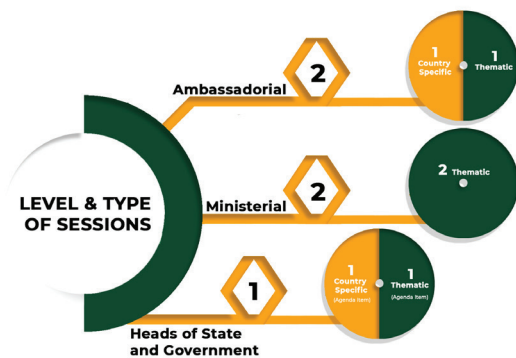


FIG 2: LEVEL AND TYPE OF SESSIONS

The outcomes of all sessions convened during the month were adopted as Communiqués while the session on the situation in Sudan did not have a publicly available outcome document. On average, it took up to seven days for the release of outcome documents.

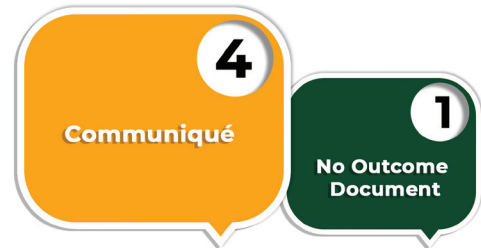


FIG 3: TYPE OF OUTCOMES

## UNIFIED ROLE OF THE A3 IN THE UNSC

On 4 March, Council convened its 983rd session on the PSC and the A3 under the theme: 'Unified role of the African Members in the United Nations (UN) Security Council (A3) in the UN Security Council. Amani Africa and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) also provided inputs to the discussion on the theme.

One of the positive developments welcomed in this session was the 'significantly enhanced cohesion, cooperation and coordination among the A3 over the years', as reflected from growing practice of issuing joint statements to the UNSC, joint media statements and a joint address to the UN media corps. Council also commended the efforts of the A3 in mobilizing support from other members of the UNSC and appreciated the initiative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to align its positions with the A3, forming the A3+1 arrangement in the UNSC. According to the 'Highlights of Security Council Practice' in 2020, the A3+1, delivered statements to the Council at 35 public meetings and open virtual meetings on agenda items focusing on African region and other thematic agenda items.<sup>1</sup> This number significantly increased in 2021 where the A3+1 delivered joint statements on 53 occasions<sup>2</sup>, showing a growing trend in forging a common approach between the A3 and the Caribbean representative within the UNSC. In this session, the

<sup>1</sup> UN, 'Highlights of Security Council Practice 2020', available at: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/highlights-2020>

<sup>2</sup> UN, 'Highlights of Security Council Practice 2021', available at: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/highlights-2021>

Council further stressed the need for strengthening ties with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Main outcome of this session remains the different mechanisms and measures highlighted to boost the engagement between the PSC and A3 with the view to enhancing the effectiveness of the latter in amplifying Africa's voice and position within the UNSC decision-making process. In this context, the Council decided to ensure monthly consultations between the A3 and the PSC Troika; agreed to establish a focal point from PSC Members to be in charge of cooperation and coordination between the PSC and the A3; stressed the need for the PSC to continue providing timely guidance to the A3; underscored the imperative of holding the High-Level Seminars on the promotion of peace and security in Africa; and reiterated the request for A3 to regularly report to the Council with the aim to incorporate their activities in the Report of the PSC on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa. Furthermore, it requested the Commission to enhance cooperation between the Council and the A3 at the Experts level and to work closely with the African research institutions. Given the important role that the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN would play in bridging communication between the PSC and A3, the session also emphasized the need for taking urgent steps to further strengthen the institutional capacity of the mission.

## SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN AFRICA: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS EFFECTS ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE CONTINENT

Council's 984<sup>th</sup> session convened on 9 March at the Summit level addressed two agenda items. As a Summit level meeting, the session was attended by H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya, as PSC's Chair of the month; H.E. Felix Tshisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as Chairperson of the AU for 2021 and H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission.

The first agenda item of the 984<sup>th</sup> session was committed to the topic "Sustainable Peace in Africa: Climate Change and its Effects on Peace and Security in the Continent". The outcome of this agenda item

was adopted as a [Communiqué](#).

During the deliberations on the first agenda item, H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa made a statement as the Chairperson of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC). Other participants at the summit level session included Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of March 2021; Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) President Felix Tshisekedi, as Chairperson of the AU; the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat; the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations and Head of the UN Office to the AU (UNOAU), Hannah Tetteh; Smail Chergui, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security and by H.E. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, the AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture.

The meeting served to discuss some of the pressing contemporary trends and concerns related to the impacts of climate change in the continent. Water scarcity, illegal trade in flora and fauna which contributes to desertification of arable lands and the spread of climate related violent conflicts were among the main concerns highlighted. The importance of strengthening frameworks on climate change resilience capacity was also among the issues which took centre stage of the discussions.

One of the key findings of the deliberations on this agenda item was Council's emphasis on the need to support the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change so that African concerns and an African common position on Climate Change is effectively reflected at the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). COP26 was conducted in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021. the conference brought very limited wins for Africa. Some of the outcomes were not exactly favourable for the continent nor could they meet the expectations set by the African Group of Negotiators, led by Gabon's Chairship. Some of the positive gains for Africa achieved at COP26 include the commitment by countries to end deforestation by 2030, agreement by 100 countries to cut emissions of methane – a substance responsible for a third of man-made global warming – by 30%; agreement for developed countries to double their collective provision of climate finance for adaptation to developing countries from 2019 levels by 2025; and a pledge of 1.5 billion US dollars made by

10 countries as well as the EU and the Bezos Earth Fund to go towards the protection and restoration of the Congo Basin. Another key win for Africa has also been the consensus reached on the prioritisation of the adaptation agenda.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, 12 years after the goal was set, developed countries are yet to meet their commitment of contributing 100 billion US dollars towards building the climate adaptation and mitigation needs of developing nations. While the African Group of Negotiators is estimating that the committed funds should be 700 billion US dollars a year to meet the needs of developing countries, COP26 could not even achieve the inclusion of clauses in the text of agreed outcomes, binding developed countries to compensate developing States for the climate damage they have caused.

Another important point emphasised at the 984<sup>th</sup> PSC meeting was the need to accelerate the implementation of the outcomes of the First Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Congo Basin Climate Commission (CBCC) and the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin<sup>4</sup> as well as the outcomes of the International Conference on Saving the Lake Chad. The CBCC Summit was conducted in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, from 27 to 29 April 2018. The Summit led to the adoption of a Declaration containing seven key undertakings which aim to ensure the economic transformation of States in the Congo Basin area through the proper utilisation of blue and green economies. Among these undertakings was the decision for States of the CBCC to initiate and encourage climate investment plans which would not only combat adverse effects of climate change, but also promote sustainable economic development.

<sup>3</sup> *An often-overlooked aspect, the climate adaptation agenda is an important element of the Paris Agreement which seeks to ensure that sufficient funds are mobilised towards bolstering the adaptive capacity of countries, so as to build their resilience against the adverse impacts of climate change. For Africa, investing on this approach might be essential particularly in addressing some of the impacts of climate change which are caused as a result of natural circumstances than man-made interferences.*

<sup>4</sup> *The CBCC was set up in 2017 with the basic aim of accelerating the implementation of climate transition and economic transformation in the Congo Basin. The Commission was established in accordance to the decision made at the 2016 COP22, to set up climate commissions for three relevant regions of Africa – the Chad Basin area, the Sahel region and the Island States. The Blue Fund for the Congo Basin is a fund allocated as part of the concept of “blue economy” which essentially implies the facilitation of economic activities linked with seas, oceans and their coastal areas. The Blue Fund for the Congo Basin is aimed at enabling States in the region move towards economic activities which focus on management of water resources.*

The International Conference on Saving the Lake Chad was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 25 to 28 February 2018. The conference was a joint initiative of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and the Government of Nigeria. The conference mainly aimed to address the urgent need of rescuing Lake Chad from the imminent risk of completely drying up. Lake Chad, which has been the main source of livelihood for millions of people in the region, has been faced with environmental and socio-economic challenges leading to its shrinkage and loss of over 90% of its surface water. In order to respond to this dire situation, a key agreement reached at the Abuja conference was to implement the Transaqua Project<sup>5</sup> as the preferred and feasible option to save the lake.

In terms of key requests made by Council, the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) was requested to include climate change related security threats as part of its regular briefings to the PSC. In that regard, it is worth noting that climate change was one of the central issues that Council was briefed on at its 1014<sup>th</sup> session on CEWS. Council also requested to be provided with feedback regarding the status of drafting the report of the AU Commission Chairperson, on the nexus between climate change and peace and security in the Continent, as well as the appointment of a Special Envoy on Climate Change and Security. It is to be recalled that Council first made both requests at the 774<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 21 May 2018.

A key decision adopted at the 984<sup>th</sup> meeting with regards to the climate change agenda item was to establish an AU Special Fund for Climate Change. However, no timeline was provided for the implementation of this decision. Since the 984<sup>th</sup> session, Council has conducted one other session in 2021 – the 1051<sup>st</sup> session convened on 26 November – and the request for the establishment of the Special Fund was reiterated at that session.

The establishment of the Special Fund for Climate Change is now incorporated as one of the targeted social aspects of the monitoring and evaluation

<sup>5</sup> *The Transaqua Project is a proposal for the diversion of water from the Congo River Basin, to replenish Lake Chad. While the LCBC, representing Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Algeria, the Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, and Sudan opted for the implementation of this proposal, DRC, whose basin water would have to be diverted has been in strong opposition of the project. The project still remains at its planning stage and its future depends not only on the results of feasibility studies still being carried out, but also the cooperation and collaboration of all concerned stakeholders, if a potential geopolitical crisis and clash over resources is to be averted.*

mechanism of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns by 2030.<sup>6</sup> As can be understood from this monitoring and evaluation mechanism, the responsibility for replenishing the fund is to be shared among various relevant stakeholders including the AU Commission, member States, RECs/RMs, the CAHOSCC and Private Sector.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF PARAGRAPH 15 OF EXT/ASSEMBLY/AU/DEC.1(XIV) ON THE ISSUE OF WESTERN SAHARA

The second agenda item addressed at Council's 984<sup>th</sup> Summit level session was a follow up on the implementation of paragraph 15 of the decision on Silencing the Guns of the 14<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Summit (Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1(XIV)). The outcome of this agenda item was adopted as a [Communiqué](#).

H.E. Brahim Ghali President of the Saharawi Republic took part in the discussions regarding the second agenda item, as the concerned State.

The escalating tension between the Kingdom of Morocco and Saharawi Republic noted in the period during which the session was held served as the background to convening the session.<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 15 of Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1(XIV) calls on the PSC to engage the Kingdom of Morocco and the Saharawi Republic to addressing the military tensions which

<sup>6</sup> See Report of the PSC on its activities and the status of peace and security in Africa, Assembly/AU/3(XXXV)Annex3 (2022), submitted to the 35<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in February 2022.

<sup>7</sup> The longstanding dispute over Western Sahara between the Kingdom of Morocco and Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) – represented at the UN by the Polisario Front – escalated recently following clashes between the armed forces of the two parties which commenced after an offensive on Guerguerat launched by Moroccan forces in November 2020. In addition to the multiple reports of clashes and incidences of attacks between the two parties, the 984<sup>th</sup> PSC session also came in the backdrop of a press briefing by the Spokesperson of the UN Secretary General emphasising that the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has been receiving “unconfirmed reports of sporadic firing across the berm” – which is the wall separating Morocco on the west from SADR controlled areas on the east. It is also worth noting that at the time of publishing this Monthly Digest, the relationship between Morocco and SADR has not only continued to remain tense, but has further led to the deterioration of diplomatic relations between Morocco and Algeria, who is in support of the Polisario Front. In February 2022, Kenya, as the PSC Chair of the month, tabled Western Sahara as one of the agenda items to be addressed by the Council at the Summit level. Although the month's programme of work was never revised to the effect of removing the session from Council's agenda, a session was not convened to discuss the issue as planned.

“developed in Al- Guerguerat, the narrow Buffer Strip in Western Sahara, leading to the violation of the 1991 Ceasefire Agreement”.

While this Assembly decision could be regarded to have sufficiently served as a basis for the Council to convene a session on Western Sahara, there were some opposing views with regards to the Council's mandate in addressing the issue. Such oppositions emanate from a somewhat strict interpretation of Assembly/AU/Dec.693(XXXI) which decides to create an African mechanism to settle the dispute over Western Sahara, comprising an AU Troika of the outgoing, current and incoming AU Chairpersons as well as the Chairperson of the AU Commission. Having created this mechanism, the Assembly decided that the established Troika shall regularly report to it and as necessary, to the PSC at the level of Heads of State and Government. It further decided that the issue of Western Sahara is to be discussed only within the established framework and level.

The first interpretation of this decision would entail that both the AU Assembly and the PSC (at Summit level) may address the Western Saharan dispute. Another, more strict interpretation would suggest that the issue is to be addressed only within the framework of the AU Troika's reporting to the Assembly and where necessary, the PSC Heads of State and Government. The debate that PSC's 984<sup>th</sup> session on Western Sahara contradicts Assembly/AU/Dec.693(XXXI) is based on the second interpretation and draws attention to the fact that the agenda was tabled before the PSC Heads of State and Government, in the absence of a report from the established mechanism of AU Troika.

Granted however that the AU Troika mechanism on Western Sahara hasn't been actively operating and having regard to the resumption of military confrontations between Morocco and Sahrawi Republic, as well as the latest Assembly decision (Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1(XIV)) which calls on the Council to engage the two parties to the dispute, the 984<sup>th</sup> session seems to have had not only a logical backing but also sufficient legal ground.

At the 984<sup>th</sup> session, Council adopted some key decisions having regard to the resumption of armed confrontations between the two parties, in violation of ceasefire agreements. These are:

- i. for the AU Troika to urgently revitalize engagement with Morocco and Sahrawi Republic;
- ii. for the PSC to discharge its mandate on the Western Sahara conflict by reviewing the situation, at the Summit level and through briefings from the AU Troika;
- iii. for the PSC to request Morocco and Sahrawi Republic to immediately cease hostilities and engage in dialogue;
- iv. for the PSC to request AU Commission to urgently take necessary steps for the re-opening of the AU Office in Laayoune, Western Sahara; and
- v. for the PSC to undertake a field visit to the region, as soon as possible.

At the time of publishing this monthly digest – early 2022 – any of the decisions adopted at the 984<sup>th</sup> session is yet to be implemented. Moreover, the implementation of the first two decisions relies on the full operation of the AU Troika mechanism, a mechanism which hasn't yet been activated – despite its establishment in 2018, the Troika mechanism on Western Sahara hasn't convened its inaugural meeting yet.

## PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN AFRICA: EMERGING CHALLENGES AND CRITICAL LESSONS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

PSC's 986<sup>th</sup> session convened on 18 March was one of its two ministerial level meetings. The outcome document of the session was adopted as a [Communiqué](#).

In this session, the Council highlighted some of the critical issues that need to be addressed to ensure the effectiveness of AU Peace Support Operations (PSOs). Accordingly, the session noted with concern the issue of inadequate and unpredictable funding and the mismatch between mandates of PSOs and the financial, material and human resources provided to them. It is to be recalled that financing AU-led PSOs through UN assessed contribution has been high on the agenda of AU-UN relations in recent years despite

a deadlock over the issue after efforts to adopt a resolution at the UN Security Council failed to produce result in 2018 and 2019. In apparent move to take the agenda forward, the Council in this session requested the Commission to develop a 'common African position on funding of the AU PSOs and accessing UN assessed contributions' that would provide guidance to the A3. This request of the Council was followed up by the Commission and a draft zero consensus paper on Financing AU-led PSOs through UN assessed contributions was submitted to the Council for its consideration on 21 July 2021.

Another key point discussed at the session is the issue of AU's command, control and coordination with Police and Troop Contributing Countries (P/TCCs), and coordination of decision-making process between AU and RECs/RMs regarding PSOs. One of the lessons that emerged over the years particularly in the context of AMISOM is that in many instances, the command and control of the troops was exercised by the TCCs but not by the Force Commander. It is in this light that the session underscored the importance of ensuring AU command, control and coordination with P/TCCs based on the relevant mission management documents. As there is also ambiguity over the respective role and responsibilities of AU, RECs/RMs and Member States regarding mission planning, deployment, management and liquidation, the session stressed the need for harmonizing and coordinating the decision-making process in this respect. In addition, the importance of ensuring the deployment of 'appropriately trained, experienced and skilled personnel in all AU-led PSOs'; strengthening the relationship and complementarity between Peace operations and peacebuilding activities; and the full operationalization of the African Standby Force were also highlighted in the session.

## WOMEN, PEACE, CULTURE AND GENDER INCLUSIVITY

On 22 March 2021, the council convened its 987<sup>th</sup> open session at a ministerial level on 'women, peace, culture and gender inclusivity in Africa' through zoom platform. The session was convened in line with PSC's annual indicative programme and in the context of its previous decisions that it shall hold open sessions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, in March of each year. Outcome of the open session was adopted

as a [Communique](#) released 5 days after the session.

The aim of the session was to provide an open platform for discussing on how to build a “gender-inclusive culture of peace in Africa”. The open session was the first ministerial level meeting since council's decision in 2010 to convene a session on WPS as a standing agenda.

Centre of the discussion was regarding the importance of women's inclusion in peace processes and women's access and participation in decision making and peace processes. Further, the council stressed the importance of adopting comprehensive approach based on the four pillars (prevention, protection, participation &, recovery & relief) for full & effective implementation of gender equality and WPS agenda. Pertaining the theme of the session, the council stressed the importance of exploring cultural strategies in mediating, managing and transforming armed conflict. Pertaining this, the council suggested Member States to invest in arts & culture that embrace women's participation and promote peace in the continent.

The council also acknowledged the contribution of various actors including FemWise & African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) for advancement of gender equality in peace processes. Indeed, aligned to the goals of WPS agenda, several milestones have been realized in recent years such as the development of the Continental Results Framework (CRF) with assistance of the various actors working on WPS and gender mainstreaming.

As a main concern, the council discussed Covid-19 related violations of human and people's rights, especially against women and girls. The council also accentuated its concern regarding the disseminating harmful practices across the continent affecting women and girls including FGM, and early and forced marriages and recruitment of children in conflict. In this regard and related to the SGBV, the council argue Member States to prosecute perpetrators and other heinous crimes and to ensure justice for the victims.

Concerning SGBV, the council urge Member States and RECs/RMs to address stigmatisation of survivors of SGBV related trauma by sensitising communities on support structure for such survivors and victims. In other instance, the council request the AUC Chair to

capacitate the office of the AU Special Envoy on WPS through human and financial resources. Further, the council commend AU partners to ensure sustained material support to African WPS agenda.

## OTHER PSC ACTIVITIES DURING THE MONTH

According to its plan for the month, the PSC was also able to conduct two field visits by the end of the month, the first one being to South Sudan – conducted from 24 to 26 March – and the second one to Sudan – conducted from 30 March to 1 April. The reports on the field visits conducted to both countries were considered on 13 April 2021, at Council's 990<sup>th</sup> session.



## MEDIA AND RESEARCH SERVICES

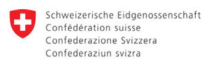
### ABOUT AMANI AFRICA

Amani Africa is an independent African based policy research; training and consulting think tank with a specialization and primary focus on African multilateral policy processes, particularly those relating to the African Union.

We support the pan-African dream of peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa through research, training, strategic communications, technical advisory services, and convening and facilitation.

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