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**13TH RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON ITS
WORKING METHODS IN THE CONTEXT OF AU INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS**

**27 TO 29 MAY 2021
MOMBASA, KENYA**

PSC/Retreat.13

CONCLUSIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) held its 13th Retreat on its Working Methods in the Context of AU Institutional Reforms in Mombasa, in Mombasa, Kenya from 27 to 29 May 2021. The Retreat was chaired by Ambassador Salah Francis Elhamdi, the Permanent Representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the AU, in his capacity as the PSC Chairperson for May 2021. The Retreat was officially opened by Her Excellency Ambassador Raychelle Omamo, the Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya. The AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, made opening remarks on behalf of the Chairperson of the AU Commission.

2. The following thirteen PSC Members attended the Retreat at the level of Permanent Representatives, namely Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nigeria and Senegal. Malawi was represented by the Charge d'Affairs

3. It should be noted that the 13th Retreat of the PSC had the highest representation at the ambassadorial level, with the participation of 13 Ambassadors. The list of participants is annexed to the present document.

4. The Retreat came as an additional important step by the PSC in its efforts to review and further strengthen its working methods, with a view to enabling the Council to more effectively discharge its mandate of promoting peace, security and stability in Africa, within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) as embodied in the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC Protocol).

5. The PSC Committee of Experts also met from 26 to 29 May 2021, on the margins of the Retreat to finalize Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030.

6. The Retreat focused on four major segments, namely:

- a) A presentation on the "Strategic Vision and Priority Actions for the New AU Political Affairs Peace and Security (PAPS)' Portfolio, by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Adeoye Bankole;
- b) A presentation on the "Working Methods of the PSC: Challenges and Way Forward", by the Acting Secretary to the PSC, Ms. Neema Chusi;
- c) Presentation on the "Priorities of Activities on Peace and Security for the Utilization of the AU Peace Fund, by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Adeoye Bankole;

- d) Presentation by the Chairperson of the Committee of Experts (CoE) on the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the implementation of the AU Roadmap of practical steps to silence the Guns in Africa by 2030.

II. ON THE STRATEGIC VISION AND PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE NEW AU POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY PORTFOLIO

7. The PSC was briefed on the following five (5) strategic pillars of the Vision and Priority Actions for the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Portfolio:

- i. Implementation of the new PAPS structure (DPA & PSD merger) for better coordination and impact;
- ii. Re-energized AU Early Warning System, Conflict Prevention and Mediation;
- iii. Integrated Capacity for Conflict Management, especially in Countering Terrorism/ Violent Extremism;
- iv. Strengthening Democracy and Good Governance;
- v. Inclusive and Smart Partnerships for Human Security.

8. During the discussion that ensued, consensus was reached on the following aspects:

a) **On Early Warning**, emphasis was laid on the need for regular horizon scanning briefings and informal consultations as platforms for the Commission and Council to share, particularly 'sensitive' early warning information. In this regard, Council agreed to convene the following informal consultations:

- i. Monthly early warning meetings between the PSC Ambassadors/Charge d'Affaires and the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security;
- ii. Quarterly consultations between the PSC and the Chairperson of the Commission accompanied by the Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security;
- iii. Full cooperation of Member States with the Commission, whenever their countries are mentioned/concerned in such early warning briefings;
- iv. Regular consultations between the Commission and the concerned Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs);
- v. Further strengthening the early warning capacities of the RECs/RMs;

- vi. Utilizing the AU Peace Fund, under window 1, as part of an AU Early Response Mechanism; and
- vii. Holding regular consultation meetings with the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA).

b) **On elections in Member States**, the PSC:

- i. Emphasized the need to ensure that the Reports of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on elections in Member States are more comprehensive and analytical, in order to further enhance the credibility and integrity of both, the election processes and the reports of the AUC Chairperson;
- ii. Underlined the need for the Commission to provide all necessary support to Member States, upon their request, including deployment of election observers;
- iii. Undertook to continue to support the PAPS Department, taking into consideration the need to ensure that the Department has the necessary capacity, including financial and human resources, in order to enable the Department to more effectively discharge its mandate;
- iv. Underlined the necessity for the PAPS Department to discharge its mandate in this regard in accordance with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; and
- v. In this context, the PSC agreed to always consider the budget of the PAPS Department before its submission to the PRC.

III. ON THE PSC WORKING METHODS: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

9. The PSC held an extensive discussion on the challenges facing the Council, largely caused by non-compliance by some PSC Members with the provisions of the PSC Protocol, the Rules of Procedure and the Manual on the Working Methods of the PSC. The PSC reached the consensus that rather than elaborating new working methods, all PSC Members and the Commission should strictly comply with existing instruments. More specifically, the PSC agreed as follows:

- i. All PSC Members to fully comply with the PSC Protocol, Rules of Procedure of the PSC and the Manual on the Working Methods of the PSC, particularly Article 5 (2) (h), on the requirement of having a sufficiently staffed and equipped permanent missions at the Headquarters of the Union to be able to shoulder the responsibilities which go with membership;
- ii. All PSC Members should have physical Permanent Mission at the Headquarters of the AU, in Addis Ababa, and in a situation where a PSC

Member closes its Permanent Mission, such a member will forfeit its right as a member of the PSC, and the concerned region will nominate another country to be a member of the PSC in line with the provisions of the PSC Protocol and the Modalities for the election of Members of the Peace and Security Council;

- iii. Besides, the PSC will request a legal opinion on the case of the Republic of Benin, Member of the AUPSC, who closed its Permanent mission to the AU;
- iv. Take note of the concern raised by the PSC Members of the Northern Africa Region, with regard to the regional representation of Members on the Council, and agreed to continue with discussion on the matter;
- v. Once the list of monthly rotation of chairships is circulated, PSC Members should formally send three months in advance, their confirmation of readiness to chair the Council, in order to afford all upcoming PSC Chairs the necessary time and the required predictability for sufficient preparations;
- vi. Paragraph 69 of the Manual on the PSC Working Methods should only be treated as an exception and not an option;
- viii. Monthly early warning meetings between the PSC Ambassadors/Charge d’Affaires and the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security;
- ix. Quarterly consultations between the PSC and the Chairperson of the Commission and the Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security;
- vii. The need for regular consultations with relevant AU stakeholders and Organs on thematic items/topics in the PSC Annual Indicative Programme of Work;
- viii. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 8 (2) of the PSC Protocol, limiting PSC high level meetings (ministerial/summit) to only two in any given month;
- ix. Full compliance with the provisions of the PSC Manual on time management (paragraph 34). The PSC Secretariat shall ensure implementation;
- x. Full compliance with the Manual on the PSC Working Methods on Silence procedure in adopting Outcome Documents of the PSC meetings such as communiques and Press Statements.
- xi. Full and immediate implementation of the PSC decision, particularly those adopted at the level of Heads of State and Government or Ministers. In this regard, the PSC should monitor the implementation of PSC decisions on a regular basis in accordance with paragraph 50 of the Manual on Working Methods of the PSC.

- xii. PSC Committee of Experts, with the support of the PSC Secretariat, shall prepare a zero draft communique of PSC meetings held at the Heads of State and Government level, ahead of the meetings and circulate it to all PSC Members for consensus building, at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance. The Zero Draft Communique may be amended following the summary of the key elements for the outcome document as read by the Chairperson;
- xiii. Full compliance with the accreditation system for all participants for PSC meetings in order to ensure confidentiality of the meetings (both, physical and online), including draft outcome documents, in line with the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol and the Manual on the PSC Working Methods;
- xiv. The PSC Secretariat, shall submit for consideration by Council, proposals on best means and ways of preventing leakages of PSC working documents and on possible more secure online platforms for PSC meetings;
- xv. PSC Committee of Experts to continue developing the Matrix of implementation all decisions of the PSC, in accordance with Paragraph 50 of the Manual of Working Methods of the PSC;
- xvi. Activating the approach of agreed language from previous relevant communiqués in developing new draft communiqués on the same subject, where applicable;
- xvii. To further enhance the capacity of PSC Committee of Experts, including with the support of the UN, Partners and relevant think tanks, in accordance with the provisions of the protocol establishing the PSC and its Working Methods Manual;
- xviii. To change the referencing of PSC Working Document (communiqués, press statements and reports) from the Roman numerals to normal numbering (eg. 1001(2021)) with effect from June 2021;
- xix. PSC Chairperson to hold monthly briefings with the PRC on the activities of the PSC;
- xx. Consistent and effective coordination between the Chairperson of the month and the Chairperson of the PRC to avoid any overlaps in their respective work programs;
- xxi. Emphasizing the role of the Chairperson of the month in contributing to ensuring the visibility of the Council including through engagement with accredited African and international media, in accordance with the agreed language of the PSC;

- xxii. The Incoming Chairperson should hold a monthly meeting with the Coordinator of A3 at least one week before assuming Chairship, in order to promote enhanced harmonization and synergy. These meetings should be reinforced by quarterly meetings at the level of PSC Troika and the A3 as a whole;
- xxiii. The Incoming Chairperson should hold a monthly meeting with his UNSC counterpart at least one week before assuming the PSC Chairship;
- xxiv. Need to immediately appoint a Council's Focal point in charge of cooperation and coordination between the PSC and the A3 and following up on the issues of PSC and UNSC dialogue and cooperation, in line with the PSC communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(CMLXXXIII)] adopted at its 983rd meeting held on 4 March 2021.

IV. ON THE PRIORITY ACTIVITIES ON PEACE AND SECURITY FOR THE UTILIZATION OF AU PEACE FUND

10. Following the comprehensive presentation by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security on the priority activities on peace and security for utilization of the AU Peace Fund, the PSC also had an extensive discussion and reached consensus on the following aspects, mindful of the primary responsibility of the United Nations to promote and maintain international peace and security:

- i. The need for immediate utilization of the Fund while ensuring transparency and accountability;
- ii. The PSC Committee of Experts to work, with the PAPS Department in identifying priority activities, together with financial implications, for consideration by the PSC;
- iii. Ensuring that the priority activities are more focused, well defined and aligned with the decisions of the Assembly and the PSC;
- iv. The AU Commission to expeditiously implement the AU Assembly decisions pertaining to the opening/reopening of AU Liaison Offices and to undertake an assessment on the existing ones;
- v. Notwithstanding the prerogative of the Chairperson of the Commission to appoint Special Representatives of the Chairperson of the Commission (SRCCs) and in the spirit of the ongoing AU institutional reforms, the need for ensuring prior consultations between the Commission and the PSC in appointing Heads of AULOS, as well as the need to ensure that the AULOS regularly brief the PSC;

- vi. Enhancing the institutional capacity of AULOS taking into consideration their key role in preventive diplomacy;
- vii. Considering providing capacity building in terms of Post conflict reconstruction and development, within the framework of window 2 of the Peace Fund;
- viii. Inclusion of quarterly briefings on the Peace Fund in the Indicative Annual Programme of Work of the PSC.

V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISM

11. The Chairperson of the Committee of Experts briefed the PSC on the progress made by the Committee on the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap, and the PSC agreed on the following:

- i. Commended the PSC Committee of Experts, the PSC Secretariat and the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) for their efforts in the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030;
- ii. Adopted, in principle, the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030, in prelude of its final adoption during a formal PSC session;
- iii. Underlined the need for the Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism to be officially conveyed to the AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa its implementation and utilization as templates for the elaboration of his future reports;
- iv. To circulate the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030, once officially adopted, to all RECs/RMs for the implementation;
- v. The ISS, PSC Secretariat and the Silencing the Guns Unit to organize meetings with the RECs/RMs, to exchange views and agree on the modalities of the implementation of the Mechanisms;
- vi. To enhance the capacities of the PAPS Silencing the Guns Unit in order to bring the necessary support to the AU high Representative and to be responsible for coordinating the overall implementation of this framework;

- vii. While considering that all the outputs within the mechanism are of paramount importance, the AU high representative should keep updating on all these outputs in the framework of his annual report to the AU Assembly while highlighting some of them depending on the context, priority, relevance, the link with the Theme of the year.

VI. CONCLUSION

12. The PSC moved a Vote of Thanks that was delivered by H.E. Ambassador Idriss Mohamed Farah, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti to the AU, in his capacity as General Dean of the Diplomatic corps accredited to Ethiopia, to the Government and the people of the Republic of Kenya, for hosting the Retreat and for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to the PSC Delegation. The PSC also expressed deep appreciation to the Institute for Security Studies for its support to the PSC Committee of Experts and the PSC Secretariat in the finalization of the Draft Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030.