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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/ CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIXATIONS
1161ST MEETING

6 JULY 2023

ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1161 (2023)

COMMUNIQUE



COMMUNIQUÉ

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at the 2nd Annual Consultative Meeting between the Peace and Security Council and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) and Representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

The Peace and Security Council,

Noting the opening remarks by H.E Ambassador Mohamed Lamine Thiaw, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Senegal to the AU and PSC Chairperson for the month of July 2023; and the statement by the representative of the ECOSOCC, Mr. Osei Kyeretwie, Head of Programmes of ECOSOCC;

Also noting the statements by the representatives of the CSOs from the four regions of Africa, namely: the Southern Africa Partnerships for Prevention of Conflict [SAPPC (Southern Africa Region)], the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace [CAMYOSFOP (Central Africa Region)], the Institute for Security Studies [ISS (Eastern Africa Region)]; and the West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network [WADEMOS (Western Africa Region)]; as well as the the statement made by the representative of the Coordinators of the Pan-African Civil Society Organizations Network on Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PANPAPS);

Recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements on the engagement between the PSC and ECOSOCC and CSOs, in particular Communiqué [PSC/PR/Comm(CLXI)] of the 161st meeting, held on 16 December 2008, which adopted the Conclusions of the Retreat of the PSC, held in Livingstone, Zambia, on 4 and 5 December 2008 (the Livingstone Formula); as well as the Communiqué [INAUGURAL MEETING/PSC-CSOs.1 (2022)] of the Inaugural Consultative Meeting Between the PSC and CSOs held on 14 September 2022;

Reaffirming the unwavering commitment to the implementation of Assembly Decision [Ext/Assembly/AU/Decl.(XVI)], adopted during the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, which took place in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in May 2022; the Declaration of the Reflection Forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa (Accra Declaration) held in March 2022, in Accra, Ghana and adopted by the PSC at its 1077th meeting, held on 14 April 2022, as well as the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the year 2030;

Committed to the provisions of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC of the AU, particularly Article 20 on the call for active participation of CSOs in the promotion of peace, security, stability and development in Africa; and

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

1. **Commends** the work done by ECOSOCC in coordinating and mobilizing the CSOs to support the work of the PSC in the promotion of the implementation of the peace and security agenda in the continent; and **also commends** the dedicated efforts of the CSOs to enhance cooperation and collaboration with the PSC in promoting peace, peace security and stability in Africa, including the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the year 2030, as well as their role in promoting democratic governance and spearheading positive transformation, nurturing inclusive development, and empowering the voices of African citizens, with the meaningful participation of youth and women;

2. **Welcomes** the progress made by ECOSOCC in establishing the CSO's database which is expected to have a profound impact on enhancing the active engagement of CSOs in supporting the activities of the PSC and serves as a vital tool for mobilizing CSOs towards the effective implementation of AU instruments and frameworks focused on promoting democracy and good governance and prevention of conflicts; in this regard **calls on** ECOSOCC to expedite the finalization of the database and to ensure inclusivity and identification of theme-based classification of CSOs in order to better assist the work of the PSC and other AU Organs;
3. **Also welcomes** the support provided by partners, in particular the support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to ECOSOCC and CSOs in implementing the Declaration of the Reflection Forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Governments held in Accra, Ghana, through its programme of Silencing the Guns through the Cross-Border Corporation on Sustainable Peace and Development;
4. **Further welcomes** ECOSOCC's two flagship citizens' engagement initiatives, namely the Citizens' Forum and the People's Assemblies as mechanisms to provide the African citizenry with institutional platforms to provide civil society perspectives and feedback into the work of the Union, including the PSC;
5. **Takes note** of the establishment of a coalition of CSOs, the Pan-African Civil Society Network on Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PANPAPS), which may provide strong support towards preventing, resolving and addressing conflicts, as well as enhancing synergy among the CSOs and their engagement with the PSC; and **looks forward** to its collective and coordinated contribution in the promotion of peace, security, stability and development in Africa;
6. **Stresses** the ongoing role of CSOs as key actors in supporting governments to address systemic peace and security challenges encountered by nations as well as their critical role in delivering essential services to communities in need, empowering individuals through capacity-building initiatives, making valuable contributions to peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts, and preserving Africa's diverse cultural heritage;
7. **Calls on** the CSOs to improve coordination and cooperation through the PSC and ECOSOCC Mechanisms in order to effectively contribute in a cohesive manner to the work of AU Organs and programmes of the Union; in this regard, **highlights** the need to enhance and capitalize the engagement between the PSC and CSOs on the African continent as outlined in the AU Constitutive Act, the PSC Protocol, and the Livingstone Formula, as well as other relevant AU instruments; and **also highlights** the need for the implementation of the Livingstone formula and Maseru conclusions, thereby **requests** the AU Commission in coordination with ECOSOCC to provide the status of the implementation, challenges and recommendations on the way forward;
8. **Underscores** the role of the CSOs in several thematic areas, such as on control of illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and in the implementation of the Assembly of the AU Decision on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa; and **requests** the CSOs to continue advocating the work of PSC, including through the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030 and to regularly engage the PSC on their activities;
9. **Emphasizes** the need for the inclusion of the CSOs in the activities of the Inter-Regional Knowledge Exchange Platform (I-RECKE) and Africa Supporting Inclusive Transitions Facility (AFSIT) to ensure that the voices of the civilians are included in AU's peace and security activities;

10. **Encourages** the CSOs to strengthen their roles in promoting the culture of peace, through educating African citizens on the cultural of peace, peacebuilding and intercommunity dialogue in the fight against ideologies of hate, including hate speech; and **emphasizes** the imperative to cultivate additional opportunities for engagement between CSOs and the PSC in pivotal domains, which include providing support to mediation and peace-making efforts and expert contribution to early warning and advice on peace support operations;
11. **Also encourages** the CSOs to enhance their efforts to respond to the increasingly complex and challenging threats to peace and security in the continent as the interface between policymakers and the grassroots stakeholders; and **further encourages** to use the social media to prevent conflicts and/or by disseminating reliable and credible information, and alerting society and decision makers about dangerous situations as well as in responding to misinformation, disinformation and incitement of hate and violence;
12. **Stresses** the critical role that CSOs and African think tanks can play in meaningfully contributing towards strengthening the institutional and policy instruments for prevention and resolving conflicts in the continent; in this vein, **underlines** the importance of the launching of the Network of Think Tanks, Research Centers and the report of the mapping exercise of CSOs working on governance, peace and security matters, by the AU Commission;
13. **Calls on** for regular engagements between the CSOs and AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms (RMs) on advancing democratic governance, peace, security and stability on the Continent;
14. **Looks forward** to the implementation of actionable strategies on how best the PSC can engage African CSOs to present a common plan to support the work of the PSC and the implementation of Article 20 of the PSC Protocol, the Livingstone Formula, the Maseru Retreat Conclusions, Decision on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa as well as the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030;
15. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

2023-07-06

Communiqué of the 1161st Meeting of the Peace and Security Council held on 6 July 2023, at the 2nd Annual Consultative Meeting between the Peace and Security Council; Economic, Social & Cultural Council; and Representatives of Civil Society Organization

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

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