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16TH RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON THE REVIEW OF ITS WORKING METHODS

5 - 6 NOVEMBER 2024

DJIBOUTI, DJIBOUTI

PSC/Retreat.16 (2024)

CONCLUSIONS



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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) held its 16th Annual Retreat on the Review of its Working Methods from 5 to 6 November 2024, in Djibouti, Djibouti. The Retreat was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Jean Leon Ilunga Ngandu, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the AU, in his capacity as the PSC Chairperson for November 2024. During the Opening Ceremony, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, delivered a statement on behalf of the Chairperson of the AU Commission.

2. The Retreat was officially opened by H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Spokesperson of the Government of the Republic of Djibouti. During the Official Opening Ceremony, statements were also delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and PSC Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Jean Leon Ilunga Ngandu and by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security.

II. PARTICIPATION

3. The Retreat was organized at the Ambassadorial level. All PSC Members, namely: Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo; Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, The Kingdom of Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda participated at the Retreat, accompanied by the Members of the PSC Committee of Experts. The AU Commission was represented at the highest level by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, who was accompanied by Dr. Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, the Director for Conflict Management Directorate and Ms. Patience Zanelie Chiradza, the Director for Governance and Conflict Prevention, Ms. Neema Chusi, the Head of the PSC Secretariat, as well as support staff. The detailed list of all participants is herewith attached as an Annex.

III. RATIONALE

4. The 16th Annual Retreat of the PSC was organized as part of the ongoing efforts to further strengthen the PSC working methods, with a view to enabling the PSC to more effectively and efficiently discharge its mandate of promoting peace, security and stability in Africa, within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and African Governance Architecture (AGA), as embodied in the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (herein after referred to as 'PSC Protocol').

IV. AGENDA OF THE RETREAT

5. The Retreat focused on the following key Agenda Items, namely:

- a) PAPS Footprints in Africa;
- b) Virtual tour of the ASF Continental Logistic Base;
- c) PSC Working Methods and Budget of the PSC; and
- d) Brainstorming on the Future of Complex Political Transitions in Africa: A Prospective Analysis of the End State and AU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Governments; and the PSC Sanctions Sub-Committee.

V. SUMMARY OF KEY OUTCOMES OF THE RETREAT

A. On the PAPS Footprints in Africa

6. After taking note of the presentation by the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Bankole Adeoye, and while acknowledging that the tool « **AU PAPS Footprints in Africa** », is still work in progress, commended the Political Affairs Peace and Security (PAPS) Department for the innovation in the development of the tool, which is still work in progress, and underscored;

- a) The importance of de-segregating the data in the tool, in order to ensure enhanced clarity, including detailed information on the legal basis of each activity, the categories of the activities, the impact of each activity, progress registered thus far, challenges to be urgently addressed and intended target users and target beneficiaries of the programmatic activities being implemented by the PAPS in various Member States;
- b) The need to link the activities with the outcomes and the necessary working documents for each country, including all related decisions of the Assembly Decisions and PSC Communiqués and/or Press Statement, as well as reports of the of the AU Commission;
- c) The need for the tool to take into consideration the complexities of Member States in political transition and the activities being implemented by PAPS in supporting such countries to facilitate their expeditious return into the AU Family;
- d) The need for the tool to also include information relating to early warning on potential areas of instability in Africa, in order to further enhance the conflict prevention mandate of the PSC;
- e) The need for more clarity regarding the intended objectives and outcomes of the activities;
- f) The need for the DPAPS to ensure broad access by the intended users to the tool.

7. The PSC Members emphasized the need for the “The AU PAPS Footprints in Africa,” to be finalized, as soon as possible and shared with Member States.

B. On the Virtual tour of the Continental Logistic Base

8. The PSC took note of the virtual tour of the Continental Logistics Base, as well as the briefing by the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and:

- a) Commended the Republic of Cameroon for its generosity in hosting the Continental Logistics Base.
- b) Took note of the challenges to be urgently addressed, including the maintenance costs and the fact that some of the donated equipment is exposed to the harsh weather conditions and, as a result, is rusting;
- c) Also took note of the visit to the CLB in August 2024, by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security; and H.E. Ambassador Churchill Ewumbe Monono, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cameroon to the AU;

- d) Urged the AU Commission to also appeal to other partners for assistance, including technical support to maintain and keep the equipment in a safe condition, including strategic lift assistance of the equipment to where it is needed most in the Continent;
 - e) Requested the AU Commission to submit to Council a comprehensive inventory of the equipment at the Base, including detailed recommendations on where some of the equipment can possibly be utilized immediately;
 - f) Took note of the appeal by the Commission to all Member States with strategic airlift capacity, to assist in transporting the equipment from the CLB to the Peace Support Operations in need, such as MNJTF and AUSSOM, and to the Regional Logistics Depots;
 - g) Also proposed the utilization of part of the Crisis Reserve Facility of the AU Peace Fund to support the airlifting of some of the equipment from the AUCLB to Member States and theatres where they are needed;
 - h) Urged the AU Commission to consider various options, such as sea drift, which would be comparatively a cheaper way of transporting the donated equipment to where it is urgently needed;
 - i) Directed the Military Staff Committee to urgently undertake a Field Mission to Douala with a new set of Terms of Reference (ToRs) and provide a detailed Report and Plan of Action for consideration to Council at the latest by December 2024p
 - j) Directed the AU Commission to submit a comprehensive report and the action plan matrix on the CLB, providing inventory costs for maintenance and airlifting/sea drift of the donated equipment, including key recommendations to decongest the Base and transport the equipment to where it is needed;
 - k) Urged the Commission to urgently take necessary steps to mobilize required resources to build a security fence around the site for the CLB and the Medical Training Center, and
 - l) Took note of the proposal by the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security for the PSC to consider undertaking a field visit to the CLB, in early 2025.
9. The PSC requested the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department to provide a Comprehensive Report and Plan of Action (Matrix) to Council for consideration as soon as possible.

C. On the PSC Working Methods and Budget of the PSC: Challenges and Way Forward

10. The PSC took note of the presentations by Dr. Alhji Sarjoh Bah, the Director of the Conflict Management Directorate and Ms. Neema Chusi, Head of the PSC Secretariat, on the PSC Working Methods, whose scope included the status of implementation of the decisions of Council, the PSC Indicative Annual Programme of Work, challenges to be addressed and recommendations on areas that require improvements, going forwards. The PSC:

- a) Expressed concern over the gap between early warning and early action in terms of conflict prevention and, in this regard, underscored the need for the AU Commission to submit to Council periodic early warning reports, mindful of the related sensitivities/ confidentiality, in order to further enhance the conflict prevention mandate of Council;

- b) Underlined the need to improve the methodology of drafting PSC decisions, as well as the need for the PSC to dedicate more time to review the status of implementation of the decisions/pronouncements;
 - c) Underscored the need for the PSC to continuously pay particular attention to the Member States in political transition, including through the provision of technical assistance to facilitate the expeditious restoration of constitutional order and those emerging from conflicts in order to prevent relapse;
 - d) Also underlined the need for enhanced outreach activities, in order to popularize and raise public awareness of the PSC and its work ;
 - e) Stressed the need for scaling up the interactions and collaboration between the PSC and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and, in this regard, called for the revival of the annual joint consultations, at least twice per year, while also continuously enhancing the collaboration and interactions with individual RECs/RMs, including by undertaking joint field missions, in order promote and deepen strategic convergence and common messaging;
 - f) Also stressed the need for enhanced interactions and collaboration between the PSC and other Organs of the Union whose respective mandates are complementary to the mandate of the PSC, including undertaking joint field missions;
 - g) Underlined the need for the PSC to always include in the budget for the field missions, some symbolic humanitarian gesture in support of populations in dire humanitarian situations in IDP and Refugee camps;
 - h) Emphasized the need to strike a balance between country situations and thematic files on the agenda of the Council to preserve its *raison d'être*, The need for the monthly PSC Chairs to fully comply with the provisions of paragraph 12 of the Manual on the Working Methods of the PSC and Annual Indicative Programme of Work (AIP) in developing the Monthly Provisional Programme of Work, and in particular, to reduce the introduction of new thematic issues on the agenda of the PSC and to always strike a balance between their individual national self-interests and Continental interests;
 - i) The need for reviving and regularizing the monthly briefings by the PSC Chairperson to the PRC, on the activities of the PSC, in order to ensure accountability to the broader membership of the AU;
 - j) The importance of reinforcing the use of the PSC Troika at all necessary levels (from the PR level to the Committee of Experts level, to the Ministerial and Heads of State level), including in immediate follow-ups on the recommendations of PSC field missions;
 - k) Emphasized the need to synchronize the overlaps between the provisional monthly programme of work of the PSC and the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC);
11. The PSC further emphasized:
- a) The need for the PAPS Department to always circulate all working documents for the activities of the PSC, in good time ahead of the meetings in line with the relevant provisions of the Manual on PSC Working Methods (Article 16);

- a) The need for the Committee of Experts (CoE) to regularly consider the Matrix of State of Implementation of the PSC Decisions at least quarterly, which shall be, henceforth, known as the 'Djibouti Formula';
- b) The need to further enhance the confidentiality and integrity of the PSC work, including the working documents for its activities;
- c) The importance of enhancing PAPS collaboration with other AU Commission Departments to maximize responses and to be more impactful on nexus projects;
- d) The need to ensure that all PSC Members attend the Annual Retreats of the AU Special Envoys/Representatives;
- e) The need to consider the possibility of transcribing the records of PSC meetings in order to ensure accuracy and minimize the possibility of distortions;
- f) The need to regularize the reporting by the Military Staff Committee to the PSC, on its activities;
- g) The need for including the working languages of all PSC Members, in order to enable them to more effectively participate in the PSC meetings; and agreed that the PSC Budget should include the AU languages of Members of the PSC;
- h) The need to institutionalize and regularize interactions between the PSC and the Commission Chairperson, consistent with the Mombasa Retreat Conclusions, as well as with the rest of the Commissioners of the other AU Commission Departments.

D. On the Future of Complex Political Transitions in Africa: A Prospective Analysis of the End State and AU Responses to Unconstitutional Changes of Governments

12. The PSC took note of the presentation by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and had a preliminary reflection on the Future of the Complex Political Transitions in Africa: A Prospective Analysis of the End-State of AU Responses to Unconstitutional Changes of Government and the operations of the Sanction Committee

13. The PSC reiterated the AU's zero tolerance of unconstitutional changes in Africa, brainstormed on new developments regarding the implications of unconstitutional changes of government, and looked forward to the finalization of a comprehensive study on the matter incorporating the spirit and content of the deliberations at the 16th Retreat. Council also deliberated on the possibility of convening at the level of Heads of State and Government to deepening appreciation and provide further guidance on the issue of UCGs (to be caveated on the maturity of the process).

VI. CONCLUSION

14. Participants expressed gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Djibouti for graciously hosting the Retreat and for the warm hospitality.

2024-12-09

Communiqué of the 1250th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, Held on 9 December 2024 on the Adoption of the Conclusions of the 16th Annual Retreat of the PSC on the Review of its Working Methods, held in Djibouti, Djibouti from 5 to 6 November 2024.

Peace and Security Council

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