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**12TH RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON
STRENGTHENING ITS WORKING METHODS AND EFFORTS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION,
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND PEACE CONSOLIDATION IN AFRICA**

**24 – 26 JUNE 2019
RABAT, MOROCCO**

PSC/Retreat/12/2019

CONCLUSIONS



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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) held its Twelfth Retreat from 24 to 26 June 2019, in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco. The Retreat was dedicated to the consideration of the draft Manual of the Working Methods of the PSC and on discussion on strengthening the working methods of the PSC in Conflict Prevention, conflict management and Peace Consolidation in Africa.

2. The Retreat was chaired by Ambassador Dr. Brima Patrick Kapuwa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Chairperson of the PSC for June 2019. The Retreat was officially opened by His Excellency Mohcine Jazouli, Minister Delegate to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, in charge of African Cooperation. Dr. Admore Kambudzi, Director for Peace and Security Department delivered a statement on behalf of the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui.

3. During the Retreat, the PSC considered and adopted the draft Manual of Working Methods, as annexed to the Conclusions of the Rabat PSC Retreat, and received presentations on conflict prevention, crisis management and conflict resolution, as well as on post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa. These presentations, which were crafted in the spirit of AU Agenda 2063, more specifically the AU flagship project on silencing the guns in Africa, highlighted the various challenges currently impacting on the effectiveness of the Council in addressing the multiple threats to peace and security in Africa.

II. CONFLICT PREVENTION

4. The PSC was informed that there were several factors and circumstances which affected the efficiency of its operations when undertaking conflict prevention strategies, namely inadequate funding, voluntary nature of preventive work on the part of Member States, lack of support to deployment of preventive mechanisms, categorization of some cases of looming crisis as too sensitive for consideration by the PSC, non-committal to the spirit of non-indifference as provided for in APSA, and others. It was particularly underscored that funding of certain key activities continues to rely on international partners, with the concurrent late disbursements of these funds, often provided with conditions.

5. Furthermore, in cases of conflicts, there may be need for an upward traction by the PSC, especially for those that require elevation to the Heads of State and Government level of the PSC for consideration.

6. The Retreat was informed of the need, on the part of the PSC, to see the opportunity of further scaling up the use of horizon scanning and other tools, in undertaking assessment of each conflict or crisis in the Continent, taking into account the past, current and prospective trends in a given situation. This step will enable the PSC to frequently monitor the evolutions of flashpoints and adapt approaches in order to enhance opportunities for effective remedies.

Indeed, this would also facilitate in bringing about behavioural change among actors at an early stage, before much aggravation in a situation has taken place.

7. Sustained engagement in the Commission in diagnosis and policy formulation, for submission to policy organs for debate and way forward was raised as an area that requires further improvement. In this context, reference was made to previous requests by the PSC to the Commission to undertake a comparative study on constitutionalism in Africa with a view to building common parameters for promoting shared African constitutional values and practices.

8. The PSC was also informed that there was an absence of modalities for responsibly and proactively engaging countries which face crises. Yet, Article 9 of the PSC Protocol could be used by the PSC to develop and enhance such modalities. Such modalities could include the PSC raising the matter with the Permanent Representative of the concerned country and proposing timelines in addressing the matter. Further on, the PSC could request the Chairperson of the Commission to make a report on the issue to the PSC on the basis of Articles 2, 3, 7, 9, and 10 of the PSC Protocol. Such a report would form the basis of an appropriate PSC decision to address a looming crisis with indication of measures to be taken against those actors, which may be found to be fuelling the crisis.

III. CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

9. On crisis management and conflict resolution, the PSC was appraised of the challenges of coordination, as well as parallel and competing initiatives amongst the AU, RECs/RMs actors, as well as between the African actors and international actors. As a result, the impact is lack of maximal use of comparative advantages, subsidiarity and complementarity among the actors.

10. In this light, it was stated that international goals are not always aligned with those of the AU and RECs/RMs, thus affecting African efforts to apply African solutions and the strategies employed to address conflicts and therefore resulting in varying outcomes.

11. Council was further appraised of the growing external interference as exemplified by multiplication of externally driven initiatives and increase in foreign military bases which Africa has no control over. This situation needs to be addressed by AU Policy Organs in a decisive manner, in conformity with relevant AU texts, in particular, the Common African Defence and Security Policy (paragraph 11), in which it is stipulated that the defence and security of every African country is directly linked to that of all other Member States of the AU. In this context, the PSC should organize a session open to all AU Member States to discuss the matter and propose a concrete way forward in addressing this issue.

IV. ON POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

12. With regard to the post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) in Africa, the PSC was informed that key amongst the existing challenges was lack of tailored funding for PCRD. PCRD activities require more funding, which necessitates innovative approaches to mobilize resources. The meeting was also informed of the imperative of post-conflict countries to enhance their ownership of the process, and encourage domestic mobilization

of resources. Furthermore, the PSC was informed that there were no AU or RECs apparatus to undertake research, monitoring and evaluation and to inform policy formulation or review on such matters. It was also highlighted that the PSC needs to reactivate its sub-committee on PCRD. In addition, cooperation between the AU and the RECs/RMs on PCRD activities was emphasized.

V. OUTCOMES

13. The Retreat confirmed the continued relevance of the PSC Protocol to address the evolving challenges and threats to peace and security in the Continent. In this regard, they stressed that there is no need to review the PSC Protocol but to focus on strengthening the PSC in the areas of conflict prevention and crisis management, as well as its working methods. Also, the PSC further underscored the need to establish modalities of partnership between itself and the RECs/RMs Policy Organs on peace and security with a view to facilitating and enhancing cooperation and collaboration focusing on an effective and efficient division of labour based on the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantages within the framework of the APSA and AGA.

14. There was need to regularly assess the evolution of conflicts and crises in the continent, including their root causes, to enable the PSC to frequently monitor the evolutions of flashpoints and adapt approaches in order to enhance opportunities for effective remedies. In this context, it was agreed to increase the regularity of briefing sessions with the AU Commission, on issues relating to looming crises with a view to assembling the relevant information for appropriate action by the PSC.

15. That prevention is a very critical tool for conflict management and therefore it requires predictable funding in order to ensure sustainable engagement. Members underscored the need to have the PSC Secretariat prepare an annual budget for the activities to be funded through AU regular budget. This should include activities for preventive aspects of the work of the PSC.

16. The PSC emphasized the need to further strengthen the existing AU institutional tools for research as part of the PSC's efforts to promote a holistic approach in addressing peace and security challenges. The PSC reiterated its request to the AU Commission to submit regular reports to the PSC on peace and security situations in the Continent, with a view to providing timely and adequate information on conflict prevention to facilitate decision making by the PSC. Furthermore, the PSC stressed the importance of engaging African research think-tank/institutions focusing on conflict/crisis situations in Africa.

17. There is need to ensure a robust approach on using preventive measures by Council to address tensions from escalating to full blown conflict. Hence, the Retreat highlighted the necessity to have regular interface with the AU Commission and the RECs/RMs Policy Organs to ensure common understanding of the various emerging conflict situations. They stressed that the RECs/RMs are usually better informed of the situations and should be the first respondent, within the context of comparative advantage, subsidiarity and complementarity.

18. The PSC and RECs/RMs should be working in synergy in order to ensure effective and efficient use of resources. Hence, they could bring forward their comparative advantages and better address emerging or ongoing conflicts.

19. There is need to establish, together with the RECs/RMs Policy Organs, criteria for assessing looming crises and emerging situations, in the framework of the implementation of Article 12 of the PSC Protocol. It is necessary to ensure that there was common understanding of parameters, benchmarks and principles that define entry points for interventions.

20. Regarding the issue of persistent denialism by some AU Member States on the prevailing conditions that may be undermining peace on their territories, Council highlighted that this deprives it of the opportunity to take timely action. The PSC agreed that such situations could be addressed through gradual engagement with the RECs/RMs and individual Member States affected to ensure support towards intervention strategies through APSA-AGA tools.

21. The subjective assessments of conflict situations remains a concern. In this context, Council underscored the need for timely and objective conflict analysis and subsequent engagement to ensure credibility and effectiveness of the Council.

22. There is necessity for improved working relations between the PSC and the AU Special Representatives/Envoys and AU High Representatives. It was agreed to hold each year a PSC session during which AU Special Representatives/Envoys and AU High Representatives will provide briefings on peace and security situations in Africa and interact in order to better inform the PSC for decision making. Furthermore, the PSC emphasized the need to invite, through the Chairperson of the Commission, newly-appointed Special Representatives/Envoys and High Representatives to exchange views with the PSC before they proceed to the field.

23. There is need for enhanced engagement on conflict situations to ensure timely interventions, including action for bringing about mitigations in the concerned situations.

24. There is need for information sharing and interactive sessions on the role of the PSC in the operation of the AU Peace Fund. Hence, the PSC agreed to engage further with the AU High Representative for Financing the Union and the Peace Fund as often as possible.

25. For the PSC to have a more holistic approach to conflict prevention, crisis management and conflict resolution, as well as post-conflict reconstruction and development, the various relevant Departments/services of the AU Commission should collectively provide the requisite coordinated support and information to the PSC. In this context, the PSC stressed the need for regular interactions with these Departments. This is more so, given the decision of the Assembly to merge the Peace and Security Department and the Department of Political Affairs into one Department.

26. There is need to have regular interactions with UN, especially the members of the UN Security Council, given that they have counterparts available in Addis Ababa.

27. The post conflict reconstruction interventions should be undertaken taking into account the national plans and policies of the receiving states.

28. The post-conflict reconstruction efforts require national ownership and therefore countries emerging from conflict should take the lead in carrying out projects with the support of the AU, RECs/RMs and international partners.

29. There is need for an enhanced publicity and popularization of PSC activities in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa.

VI. CONCLUSION

30. The PSC expressed appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Mohammed VI of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Government and people of Morocco for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to the PSC delegation and members of the AU Commission, as well as facilities and support provided to the PSC during its Retreat.

Rabat, Morocco: 26 June 2019

African Union Commission (AUC)

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Peace and Security Council

Retreat - Conclusions

2019-06-26

12th Retreat of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, 24 - 26 June 2019, Rabat, Morocco.

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