

AFRICAN UNION

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## CONCEPT NOTE

### OPEN SESSION OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON ENHANCING AFRICAN UNION EFFORTS IN IMPLEMENTING POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

PLENARY HALL, OLD AU CONFERENCE CENTRE, ADDIS ABABA, 13 JUNE 2014

#### **I. Background**

Over the past few years, the number of violent conflicts has been significantly reduced, and important advances made in conflict resolution, thanks to the collective determination and efforts of Africa, with the support of its partners. However, the recent relapses into violence and instability in the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan, as well as conflicts in Mali and Somalia, highlight the challenge, and therefore, the imperative for post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa, as well as the need for more concerted action in consolidating peace in countries emerging from conflict.

It is in this context that the AU has stepped up efforts in post-conflict reconstruction, in line with the policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) adopted by the Executive Council of the African Union (AU) in July 2006 in Banjul, The Gambia. It should be recalled that the AU PCRD is intended to serve as a guide for the development of comprehensive policies, strategies and measures that seek to consolidate peace, promote sustainable development and pave the way for growth and regeneration in countries emerging from violent conflicts.

#### **II. Context**

The AU PCRD policy recognizes the fact that, in the early phases of the transition from conflict to peace, peace processes often remain fragile and the risk of resumption of violence is always high. Indeed, countries emerging from violent conflicts are often characterized by weak or non-existent capacity at various levels of State, society and economy, ruined institutions and the absence of a democratic culture, good governance, rule of law and respect for human rights.

Since the adoption of the AU PCRD policy in Banjul in 2006, the Commission has taken a number of steps towards its implementation, including the undertaking of AU-led multidisciplinary assessment missions to countries emerging from conflict. The missions made detailed recommendations on how best the AU and its Member States can assist the countries concerned in the area of post-conflict reconstruction, and prepared the ground for the launching of the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI), with a view to mobilizing resources from within Africa in support of post-conflict reconstruction programmes in the aforementioned countries.

Notably, the conceptualization of the ASI reflects a number of innovative dimensions and, in addition to the financial needs, it also encourages the mobilization of contributions in-kind, knowledge sharing, best practices and capacity building amongst AU Member States. It also provides a unique opportunity for generating additional 'out of the box' ideas for addressing PCRD challenges, as well as promoting intra-African solutions to post-conflict reconstruction and development by actively involving the private sector.

During its 19<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, from 9 to 16 July 2013, the Assembly of the Union adopted Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.425 (XIX) on the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI), requesting the Commission, in close collaboration with the countries concerned and all other Member States, RECs, and other relevant African institutions, to roll-out a full implementation plan, to mobilize in-kind, capacity building, as well as financial contributions to support post-conflict reconstruction activities and efforts in the African countries concerned. The Assembly invited partners, including the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), UN Secretariat and organizations, as well as other relevant partners, to fully support the ASI.

The first African Solidarity Conference (ASC) was organized on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014 in Addis Ababa to formally launch the resource mobilization process. The mobilization of such support from Africa at this critical stage, together with possible increased pledges of support from Africa's international partners, including South-South ones, will go a long way towards buttressing the post-conflict reconstruction agenda of the AU. In its broad dimensions, the ASI has the potential of promoting mutual self-reliance, regional integration, and the new paradigm of 'Africa helping Africa'.

Post-conflict reconstruction and development still remains the forgotten baby of peace efforts in Africa. Yet, people in countries emerging from conflict in Africa are yearning for the peace dividends. It is the responsibility of the African Union and its Member States not to allow these hopes to fade. As the continent winds up the commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OAU-AU, this open session is timely and constitutes a major contribution to enhancing the spirit of pan-Africanism, solidarity and African renaissance, which is encapsulated in the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) for post-conflict reconstruction and development.

Despite these efforts, the PCRDR efforts are still saddled with a number of challenges and gaps. By the end of 2013, the post-conflict map in Africa continued to expand, defying in Africa expectations to the contrary, with the advent of the crises in the CAR and South Sudan. Despite efforts at emphasizing African leadership and ownership, there is still a wide gap between intentions and the reality on ground. Africa and African institutions including continental, regional and national institutions are still not on the driving seat of most post-conflict initiatives on the continent. The Ministerial Committee for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development need to be reactivated and empowered to join the mobilization for continental post-conflict reconstruction. The PCRDR Unit in the AU Commission needs to be strengthened in terms of human and other vital resources to stand up to the task of coordinating PCRDR efforts on the continent.

### **III. Objective**

The purpose of the open session on “Enhancing AU Efforts on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development” in Africa is to sensitize Member States and the international community on the necessity to redouble efforts in consolidating peace in the post-conflict phase in order to prevent relapse into violence and to generate peace dividends. It is intended that during the debate, views will be exchanged on the best means and ways of effectively addressing the root causes of conflicts in Africa, prevent relapse into conflict, building on the existing post-conflict initiatives, including the African Solidarity Initiative for the mobilization of support for post-conflict reconstruction and development.

Accordingly, the following lead questions should inspire and guide the debate:

- i. How much has the PSC, as one of the locomotive engines, done since 2006 to advance PCRDR in Africa?
- ii. How can Africa best prevent relapse to violent conflicts and ensure the sustenance and consolidation of peace on the continent?
- iii. How can Africa provide leadership and promote national and local ownership in post-conflict reconstruction and development as articulated in the AU PCRDR policy?
- iv. What can be done to further promote and ensure that the African Solidarity Initiative delivers tangible results to the communities emerging from conflict?
- v. How can we build the necessary African capacity to address post-conflict reconstruction and development challenges at national, regional and continental

#### **IV. Expected Outcome**

The open session is expected to highlight and upgrade the issue of post-conflict reconstruction and development on the priority ladder of the peace, security and development agenda of Africa. It is also expected that the outcome will contribute toward enhanced capacity for resource mobilization at national, regional and continental Levels in support of PCRD programmes in countries and regions of Africa emerging from conflict.

#### **V. Participants**

Participants to the open session will be drawn from all AU Member States, representatives of diplomatic missions in Ethiopia, development partners, academicians, civil society, think-tanks and other relevant stakeholders. The session will be interactive in nature and participants are encouraged to be frank, objective and innovative in making concrete proposals in addressing the post-conflict plight in Africa.

**VI. Interventions (written or verbal) will be limited to a maximum of four (4) minutes.**

