AFRICAN UNION ROADMAP FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

1. On 15 April 2023, fighting erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by Abdel Fattah AL-BURHAN (Lt-Gen), and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Mohamed Hamdan DAGALO (Lt. Gen), following weeks of tension. The African Union Peace and Security Council swiftly convened an emergency meeting on 16 April 2023 on the situation and called for a political solution to the Sudan crisis.

2. Council further urged the Chairperson of the Commission, to plan an immediate ceasefire mission to Sudan. With the crisis intensifying, the Chairperson of the AU Commission on 20 April 2023 convened a high-level meeting of interested stakeholders, which adopted a communique requesting the AU Commission Chairperson to establish an expanded Mechanism for the crisis in Sudan bringing together all interested stakeholders on a single platform, to avoid a proliferation of initiatives. The AU Commission was further directed to develop a roadmap for the resolution of the conflict in Sudan.

Core Objectives

3. This Roadmap aims to identify all the elements for addressing the immediate and long-term impact of the conflict, change the trajectory, and lay the groundwork for the political processes that will return Sudan to the path of transition to democratic and inclusive civilian rule.

4. Accordingly, the Roadmap as a strategic pathway towards peacemaking and peacebuilding is designed to:

   i. Identify the mechanisms that would coordinate various levels of actors;

   ii. Secure a pause, reduction or halt in the hostilities sufficient to address its objectives;

   iii. Facilitate humanitarian access in all affected areas, particularly populated areas of Khartoum, Omdurman and Darfur;

   iv. Promote respect for International Humanitarian Law and the International Human Rights Law, especially the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, humanitarian assets and personnel including health workers and humanitarian staff, as well as the free and safe movement of civilians;

   v. Explore pathways and establish collaborations for promoting a credible process to deliver a transition to an inclusive, democratic, civilian-led political government; and

   vi. Support neighbouring states to facilitate safe, dignified and expeditious passage for those fleeing the violence, and with international agencies to ensure reception arrangements at border crossings.
5. While acknowledging that the humanitarian elements are urgent given the levels of need among the population, the other actions will need to be pursued concurrently with the overall objective of achieving the full resumption of a credible political transition in Sudan.

**Key Actionable Elements**

a. **Establishing the necessary Coordination Mechanism**: The Expanded Mechanism on Sudan will be based on the configuration of the High-Level meeting held on 20 April 2023 under the auspices of the Chairperson of the AU Commission. In the framework of the mandate and working plan of the Platform, outlined by the Chairperson of the Commission in leading this coordination with other regional and international stakeholders as a roadmap for its implementation. The Chairperson of the Commission will be supported by a Sudan Task Team composed of the African experts in crisis management and resolution, mission planning, humanitarian assistance, women, youth, peace and security, and emergency response. This Task Team will ensure full coordination between PAPS Commissioner, other relevant Commissioners as appropriate, and report regularly to the Cabinet of the Chairperson.

The Mechanism will also coordinate all international actions on the Sudan crisis, to enable the international community to speak with one voice, to ensure resources are utilized optimally, and to prevent the proliferation of initiatives which may reduce the efficiency of common action and could be manipulated by the belligerents and open the way for external interference.

The Expanded Mechanism has been constituted to ensure full inclusivity and transparency, by embracing all states and relevant organizations with interest in resolving the conflict, and have influence and leverage with the Parties to the conflict. Given its expanded nature in providing guidance to implementation of actions, it has therefore been agreed that a second layer would be established, the “Core Group”, that would strive to maintain a balance between inclusivity/leverage, while at the same time allowing for quick action and implementation of decisions. The Mechanism will facilitate a single-track mediation/facilitation process, coordinated by the Core Group, under the leadership of the AUC Chairperson.

b. **Immediate, Permanent, Inclusive and Unconditional Cessation of Hostilities**: Several calls for a ceasefire have been made from the outbreak of the Sudan conflict on 15 April 2023, including the invitation to the belligerents to respect the Holy Festival of Eid al-Fitr. There have been a number of 72 hour ceasefires, which have only been partially respected. Moreover, the ceasefires to date have had a very limited objective, namely to facilitate the evacuation of expatriates from the fighting to other countries, facilitate services for civilians, safer parts of the country, or to neighbouring states and/or through limited airlifts. While the efforts towards a more comprehensive ceasefire continue, it will be necessary to engage the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to seek other specific forms of de-escalation, including temporary/geographically limited pauses in hostilities, protection and restoration of civilian infrastructure, limiting hostilities to certain areas to allow for zones of safety to emerge, reductions in military mobilisation and actions, and other de-escalatory measures that might be considered appropriate.

In relation with intensification of our efforts for a comprehensive Ceasefire, it is imperative to encourage the emergence of an intensive role for Sudanese political civilian actors. It is important that this Mechanism amplify the voices of civilians in favour of an immediate ceasefire and inclusive political process. The civilian front is to be strongly assisted, as a necessary condition for a successful political transition process.
The Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan and the Agreement on a short-term ceasefire and Humanitarian arrangements provides the basis for the Expanded Mechanism to ensure compliance with the terms of the ceasefire, through monitoring and verification of the Parties’ compliance with the ceasefire, as well as a Protection Force in collaboration with Sudanese authorities, needed to secure Humanitarian access as well as other critical civilian infrastructure as may be defined in the ceasefire agreement.

c. **Humanitarian Response:** A key objective of de-escalation will be the need to address the acute humanitarian needs of the population. Before the conflict broke out, an estimated 15.8 million people were already receiving humanitarian assistance in Sudan. This number has increased exponentially since the outbreak of the conflict, and is compounded by large numbers of refugees pouring into neighbouring countries, as well as large number of displaced inside Sudan. Immediate priorities include facilitating humanitarian access for the delivery of humanitarian supplies by identifying humanitarian corridors; opening up road, air, and water (riverine) routes; facilitating the evacuation of civilians; allowing for movements for re-supply, and reuniting of families, among others. The Mechanism will work closely with humanitarian actors, including Africa CDC, UN OCHA, UNHCR, IOM, as well as bilateral humanitarian agencies, guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence that govern the work of humanitarian actors.

The Mechanism should support humanitarian actors by complementing and enhancing their efforts through effective interventions with the belligerents and encouraging their cooperation with humanitarian actors. The Mechanism should also seek to engage with local actors, including Resistance Committees, who have been active in pursuing de-escalation and relief efforts in communities including engaging the belligerents in certain areas with regard to humanitarian corridors for evacuation of trapped civilians. With the evacuation of most of the international community, there will be a need to rely increasingly on local actors and communities, using their local networks and crowd-sourcing of scarce supplies, including medicines and food. Top priorities will be to re-open the banking system, which would allow civilians to access cash, and access to medicines for those in need.

d. **Protection of Civilians and Civilian Infrastructure:** The Parties should be reminded to abide by their obligations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and the principle of proportionality, and to desist from any attacks against the civilian population, protected persons such as medical and humanitarian personnel, and state and civilian infrastructure, such as medical centres, and humanitarian installations. The Mechanism should monitor the conduct of hostilities and draw the attention of the Parties to acts that breach IHL, with a view, at the minimum, to preventing further violations. Critical infrastructure such as water purification plants, electricity generation and distribution systems, key bridges and other transport routes, should be protected. Civilians should be allowed to travel in order to seek medical treatment and/or to reunite with families. Private property should not be taken by force, and the use of civilians as human shields must be avoided. Likewise, diplomatic premises should be protected as gross violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations & Consular Relations will not be tolerated.

e. **Role of the neighbouring states:** Neighbouring states have, on numerous occasions, expressed their deep concern regarding the conflict and their full commitment to a ceasefire, humanitarian action and a lasting resolution to the crisis. They are at greatest risk from the spill-over of the conflict across Sudan’s borders. Already there are tens of thousands of Sudanese and other nationals who have fled Sudan, many of whom find themselves stuck at
border crossings. There is a need to ensure that neighbouring states treat fleeing Sudanese and evacuees, already traumatized by the conflict and the arduous journey to the border, with compassion and solidarity, and that international agencies provide the necessary assistance at these border crossings, including reception centres with food, water, shelter and ablution facilities.

The Chairperson of the Commission will conduct a series of high-level active and direct consultations with the Leaders of the neighbouring countries of Sudan as well as other key capital cities, to engage on strategies to find a definitive, lasting and comprehensive solution to the crisis, including the modalities for an inclusive, fully representative political transition process.

Utilizing his good offices, the AUC Chairperson’s regional engagements will help to consolidate the single-track approach for African solutions in Sudan and deter the spill-over effects on the region. The Regional perspectives will enrich the search for a robust African response and collective security to the conflict in Sudan. The Chairperson, in this regard will dispatch emissaries to the neighbouring states of Sudan and the Horn of Africa region in the common search for sustaining Peace in Sudan.

f. **Resumption of an inclusive, fully representative Political Process**: A key element of the Roadmap is the identification of the leadership, mandate and timeframes for completion of the political transition which has been truncated now by the unnecessary conflict between SAF and RSF. The Mechanism will therefore need to engage the full range of Sudanese stakeholders including reaching out to political parties and civic actors, resistance committees, Women & Yoth groups, labour unions, professional bodies, the academia and other non-armed stakeholders in Sudan with a view to promoting a Proposal for the Resumption of the Political Process towards an inclusive, democratic, civilian-led transition government that is able to address the acute political and economic recovery of the country. The Proposal should seek to secure consensus on the pathway for resolving outstanding issues and moving towards the conclusion of the transition that addresses the underlying issues, such as the need for effective security sector reform. As part of the exercise, regional and international actors should be engaged to play a constructive role in the process. Such a Proposal should include timeframes and steps for the clarification and implementation of security and other arrangements compatible with the goal of achieving a civilian-led democratic dispensation.

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