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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1163RD MEETING

21 JULY 2023
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/MIN/CN.1163 (2023)

CONCEPT NOTE

COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO THE SECURITY CHALLENGES IN AFRICA

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The security challenges in Africa are diverse, although armed conflicts are the most prevalent. Indeed, many other political, economic and social factors continue to weaken the continent and lead several States to abandon or marginalize peripheral regions, especially along borders or the most remote areas. Thus, it is common to observe that an increasingly young population is demanding more social integration, jobs and opportunities in several countries.

2. In addition, these security challenges have seriously evolved on the continent, particularly with the emergence of asymmetric threats such as terrorism and violent extremism, which are sometimes accompanied by hints of identity-related issues, global warming and cybercrime, as well as intra-African migratory movements that can be a source of conflict and fuel frequent struggles for access to land, resources or jobs.

3. Given the scale of these challenges and their disastrous consequences on the continent, the responses in most affected states are varied and sometimes mixed. The complexity of these security challenges, which is mainly linked to the interconnectedness of the aforementioned threats, has prompted responses by the populations, Member States and international organizations. On behalf of the people, specific categories of groups (women, youth, and religious and identity groups) and civil society organizations have developed endogenous solutions to prevent or address many threats to their security. Similarly, the States are responding by developing various mechanisms relating to the physical or virtual protection of their citizens.

4. At the level of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), efforts are also being made to support countries in conflict and those in transition towards attaining peace by addressing the existing and potential root causes of conflict. The African Union (AU) continues to play a crucial role in the prevention and resolution of crises on the continent by bringing peace and security into an African perspective through the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) programme.

5. Thus, from a semantic and an operational point of view, community responses to security challenges combine the initiatives and measures offered by the people, often referred to as “communities”, and the institutional measures that are being implemented.

II. EFFORTS TO BETTER SUIT COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO THE CURRENT SECURITY CHALLENGES

6. The multidimensional nature of the current security challenges requires a holistic analysis of their contexts and response mechanisms. In this regard, it is worthy to note that Member States have shown a strong political will to incorporate this community dimension into their approach to conflicts by developing instruments for a thorough threat assessment and providing resources for strengthening resilience systems.

7. At the continental level, the adoption of the AU Convention on Cybercrime and Protection of Personal Data, the establishment of a continental mechanism of civil capacity for disaster preparedness and response by the 1043rd meeting of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), held on 29 October 2021, the establishment of the AU Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) in Cairo, Egypt, and the Livingstone Formula to facilitate cooperation between the Union and African civil society in the fields of peace and security are some of the innovative ways to foster community participation in peace processes.

8. In the past, the PSC, at its 975th meeting, held on 27 January 2021 under the theme “*Peace, Security and Development: taking security challenges into account in financing development*”, emphasized the importance of leadership and national ownership. Emphasis was also placed on the inclusive participation of all stakeholders, including women, youth, poor communities, civil society and the private sector, in conflict and efforts towards preventing conflicts and crises, transforming existing conflicts and preparations towards reconstruction and socio-economic development.

9. Notwithstanding these efforts, suiting community responses to the current security challenges requires the consideration of the lessons from both urban and rural communities through the full implementation of self-assessment mechanisms. In any case, the empowerment of vulnerable groups, especially women and youth, enhances the sustainability of the interdependent processes of peace, sustainable development and human security, be they at the community or national level.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

10. This meeting aims at attaining the following objectives:

- i. To discuss the need to strengthen the resilience of the people to the current multidimensional security challenges in order to achieve the reduction or elimination of the root causes of these challenges;
- ii. To assess the modalities of scaling up the contributions of the people, including youth and women and African civil society to preventive diplomacy initiatives in accordance with UN Resolutions 1325 and 2250 and the Livingstone Formula;
- iii. Explore measures for constructive civil-military cooperation in the implementation of peace support operations in Africa, particularly in situations of violent extremism;
- iv. Promote the accession of African Union Member States to the self-assessment processes aimed at determining national and local vulnerabilities in order to promote the mapping and documentation of lessons from the experience of the communities.

IV. PROPOSED TALKING POINTS

11. To achieve the above-outlined objectives, the following talking points are proposed for consideration to guide discussions :

- i. Which approaches should be used to effectively address the multifaceted security challenges on the continent?
- ii. How can we enhance the contributions of the people, including the youth and women, as well as the African civil society to preventive diplomacy initiatives in accordance with UN resolutions 1325 and 2250 and the Livingstone Formula?
- iii. How can we promote the accession of African Union Member States to self-assessment mechanisms aimed at determining national and local vulnerabilities in order to promote the mapping and documentation of lessons from the experience of communities?
- iv. How can we foster constructive civil-military cooperation and the inclusion of impacted communities in peace support operations in Africa, particularly in situations of asymmetric conflict or violent extremism?

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

12. In light of the foregoing, the PSC may consider the following:

- i. Address the growing multi-dimensional threats to peace, security and development in Africa, including climate change, armed conflicts, as well as natural disasters that affect the living conditions and livelihoods of communities;
- ii. Acknowledge the need for a multidimensional, holistic and inclusive approach to address the root causes of conflict and all security crises, as well as highlight the inextricable nexus between peace, security and socio-economic development;
- iii. Commend the contribution of communities to the peace, stability and development efforts being made in Africa, particularly with regard to the building and consolidation of social cohesion as a guarantee for lasting peace, as well as the maintenance of mutual trust among the various segments of society and especially the prevention and resolution of ongoing or latent conflicts;
- iv. Highlight the significant role of traditional and religious leaders, youth and women, especially women mediators, in peace processes and the contribution of civil society stakeholders in identifying early signs of threats to peace and security in Africa;
- v. Emphasize the need to place communities at the heart of the quest for peaceful solutions and urge Member States and the international community to promote the virtues of inter-communal dialogue as an indispensable tool in conflict management;
- vi. Highlight the need to prevent conflict to build resilient communities and societies by combating poverty and inequality, as well as strengthening public institutions and the role of civil society in the promotion of peace and good governance;
- vii. Encourage Member States to enhance inclusive, transparent and effective development policies that promote the participation of communities in order to prevent or resolve conflicts and ensure sustainable peace and security; and
- viii. Urge Member States to continue to strengthen the resilience of communities, particularly cross-border communities, in the fight against transnational threats to peace and security.

VI. PARTICIPANTS AND FORMAT

13. The PSC session will be held at the Ministerial level, and it will be chaired by H.E. Ms. Aïssata Tall Sall, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad of the Republic of Senegal and PSC Chairperson for July 2023. Following opening remarks by the Chairperson of the PSC, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye will make an introductory statement on behalf of the Chairperson of the AU Commission. The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) will provide the main briefing. After the briefing, Members of the Council may engage the briefer further to seek clarifications or more information. This will be followed by a closed session of the PSC and representatives of the AU Commission.

VII. DATE AND LANGUAGE

14. The Ministerial PSC meeting will be held virtually on Friday, 21 July 2023, starting at 12:00 (noon) Addis Ababa local time. It will be conducted in two of the AU's Official Working Languages: English and French.

African Union Commission (AUC)

PAPS Digital Repository

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PSC Outcomes

Communiqués

2023-07-21

Communiqué of the 1163rd Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, held on 21 July 2023, on Community Responses to the Security Challenges in the Continent.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

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