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THIRD JOINT RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION AND  
AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM

11 – 12 DECEMBER 2023

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

PSC/APRM/Retreat.3 2023)

## CONCLUSIONS



**CONCLUSIONS OF THE THIRD JOINT RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE  
AFRICAN UNION AND AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) held their Third Joint Retreat in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa, from 11 to 12 December 2023, under the theme: **“Strengthening diversity management in Africa as an effective response to governance, peace and security challenges in Africa”**. The Third Joint Retreat was co-chaired by H.E. Ambassador Jainaba Jagne, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the AU and the PSC Chairperson for the month of December 2023 and H.E Dr. Abdoulie Janneh, Chairperson of the African Peer Review (APR) Panel of Eminent Persons.

2. Noteworthy, the holding of the Third Joint Retreat took place when the APRM was celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**II. OPENING CEREMONY**

3. On 11 December 2023, the Co-Chairs declared the Third Joint Retreat opened and delivered their opening statements. They outlined the purpose of the Joint Retreat pursuant to both Assembly and PSC Decisions. It was recalled that the 30<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the Union, through [Assembly/AU/Dec.686 (XXX)], mandated the APRM as an early warning tool for conflict prevention. Subsequently, the PSC, at its 914<sup>th</sup> meeting, requested the AU Commission and the APRM Secretariat to organise a Joint Retreat to thoroughly interrogate the various Country Review Reports. To date, the PSC and the APRM have held two successful joint Retreats in Durban, eThekweni Municipality, South Africa, in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

4. The following dignitaries made opening remarks, Dr Vasu Gounden, Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) on behalf of H.E Madam Graça Machel, Co-Chair of the Elders and Chairperson of ACCORD Board of Trustees; H.E. Prof Eddy Maloka, APRM Continental Secretariat Chief Executive Officer and Honourable Amara Kallon, Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone in his capacity as the Chairperson of the APR Focal Point Committee.

5. Representatives of AU Institutions and Organs participated in the third Joint Retreat as follows: the Pan African Parliament (PAP) and African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AUDA-NEPAD). Also in attendance were the following: Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

**III. ORGANISATION**

6. The Third Joint Retreat had two High-Level Panels focusing on two themes. The First High-level panel facilitated discussions on the overall theme of the retreat, *“Strengthening Diversity Management in Africa as an Effective Response to Governance, Peace and Security Challenges in Africa”*. The Second High-Level focused on reflections on the *“20th Anniversary Celebration of the APRM: “Accelerating and Deepening Governance Reforms: Measures and Interventions by the APRM.”*

7. The Third Joint Retreat agenda focused on the following areas of discussion, namely:

- (i) Presentation on the APRM Impact Study over the last 20 Years;

- (ii) Presentation of the APRM Country Review Report of the Republic of Niger;
- (iii) Presentation of Methodology for Implementation of AGR Reports: Case of AGR 2023 On UCG – Chad, Comoros, Sierra Leone and Lesotho;
- (iv) Presentation of the Outcomes of the Joint Retreat of the AU Panel of the Wise and APR Panel of Eminent Persons;
- (v) Presentation on Foreign Interference and Military Coups in Africa;
- (vi) The launch of the Africa Governance Atlas; and
- (vii) Update on the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa.

#### **IV. HIGH-LEVEL DISCUSSION ON STRENGTHENING DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA AS AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO GOVERNANCE, PEACE AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN AFRICA**

8. In accordance with the theme of the Joint Retreat, a High-Level panel discoursed on strengthening diversity management in Africa as an effective response to governance, peace and security challenges in Africa.

9. The High-Level panel comprised H.E Baleka Mbete, Former Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa and Former member of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, H.E. Lassina Zerbo, former Prime Minister of Burkina Faso and Tana Forum Board Member, H.E. Assoumani Youssouf Mondoha, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Union of Comoros to the AU and Chairperson of the AU Permanent Representative Committee (PRC); Prof. Babacar Kante, Chairperson of the AU Panel of the Wise and H.E Khayar Oumar Defallah, Minister for APRM and APR Focal Point of the Republic of Chad.

10. Following extensive deliberations, the following observations and recommendations were made to mitigate diversity-related conflicts:

- (i) The need for the PSC to continue its support to the APRM, particularly in its country review exercises, which provide a wealth of empirical findings on the nature and causes of conflict and political tensions; and encouraged the APRM to provide timely early warning reports on governance deficits, marginalization, inequitable access to resources and repression of liberties;
- (ii) The need to promote the politics of interest instead of the politics of identity and promote social cohesion; and the need to harness the positive elements of diversity whilst instituting mechanisms to effectively manage negative aspects; furthermore, the need to elevate the importance of incorporating the RECs/RMs in the efforts to strengthen the positive impacts of diversity through the development of policies and programmes that accommodate the interests of the diverse people in their jurisdictions;
- (iii) The need to take advantage of community and traditional leadership, as well as grassroots initiatives in mediating differences and grievances, as well as the role in maintaining peace in communities;
- (iv) The imperative to curb all forms of discrimination and intolerance; encouraged Member States to endeavour to align their national visions and development plans with the AU

Agenda 2063, particularly Aspirations 1 and 6. In this regard, stressed the importance of popularizing Agenda 2063;

- (v) Encourage Member States to undertake institutional reforms to further enhance the full and meaningful participation of women and youth in all spheres of politics and development;
- (vi) The need to further strengthen the existing relationship between the AU Panel of the Wise and the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, particularly in conflict prevention, and highlighted the imperative of the full implementation of the eThekweni Conclusions, which underscored the importance of experience sharing and carving out areas of collaboration between the AU Panel of the Wise, the Pan African Network of the Wise, FemWise and the APR Panel of Eminent Persons in preventive diplomacy efforts;
- (vii) The need for the APRM Continental Secretariat to contribute towards the African Governance (AGA) and African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), particularly in developing strategies to further enhance preventive diplomacy;
- (viii) The imperative of having a common language and, in this regard, commended Member States which took the initiative to introduce Swahili in their respective education curricula and urged others to do the same to promote African languages and culture;
- (ix) The need to emulate the practices on diversity management from South Africa, Kenya, Uganda and other Member States.
- (x) The imperative of facilitating free movement within the Continent in order to further enhance regional integration; and
- (xi) Highlighted the need to inculcate Pan-Africanism and establish educational programmes in this regard.

**V. HIGH-LEVEL DISCUSSION ON THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE APRM: ACCELERATING AND DEEPENING GOVERNANCE REFORMS: MEASURES AND INTERVENTIONS BY THE APRM**

11. The Third Joint Retreat accordingly included a theme on reflecting on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the APRM, focusing on accelerating and Deepening governance reforms: measures and interventions by the APRM.

12. Members of the High-Level Panel included Honourable Amara Kallon, Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Chair of the APR Focal Point Committee; H.E Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika, Vice-Chairperson of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons; H.E Mohamed Ashraf Rashed, Chairperson of the APRM National Governing Council (NGC) of Egypt, Chairperson of the APRM Continental Committee of NGCs and Chairperson of COMESA Committee of Elders and Mr. Ahmed Bening, Secretary General of the Pan-African Youth Union (PAYU).

13. Following extensive deliberations, the following observations and recommendations were made:

- (i) Underlined the need to reform the divisive colonial systems and redouble efforts on further enhancing African common objectives and practices;

- (ii) Highlighted the need to promote cultural exchanges and cross-border programmes, including cross-border trade, in order to facilitate regional integration;
- (iii) The need for concerted efforts to mainstream gender in all activities and create conducive conditions for meaningful participation of women and youth in this regard highlighted the importance of establishing national coordinating mechanisms to encapsulate all youth structures, reinforce existing structures and create platforms for exchanging best practices and expertise;
- (iv) The necessity to champion public service reforms in the respective Member States, including promoting engagement of youth through National Youth Councils on governance issues;
- (v) The imperative of concerted efforts towards popularising the APRM and establishing a network of parliamentarians for APRM and other platforms for advancing the APRM activities;
- (vi) The need for the full accession of AU Member states to APRM and the need to further enhance the capacity of the APRM to effectively discharge its mandate;
- (vii) The need for the APRM to reexamine the objectives and methodology of undertaking country reviews to ensure that Countries under review avoid relapses into conflict or experiencing unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) and the imperative of APRM to accompany political transitions to enable them to swiftly return to constitutional order;
- (viii) The need to harness the potential of the African diaspora in contributing towards the continent's development; and
- (ix) Took note of the initiative to develop an African Index for Governance to encourage good governance, democracy, and constitutionalism.

## **VI. DELIBERATIONS**

14. The Third Joint Retreat considered briefings on various studies conducted by the APRM aimed at apprising the Council on the methodology and the impact of the reviews undertaken over the years. Following an unconstitutional change of government in the Republic of Niger and its subsequent suspension from participating in all AU activities in accordance with normative instruments of the Union, the Country Review Report on Niger was not considered.

15. Following the comprehensive presentations and discussion on the agenda items under consideration, the PSC and the APRM:

### **A. On the Presentation of the APRM Impact Study over the last 20 Years**

- (i) Took note of the APRM Impact Study and its similarity to the Afro Barometer report and expressed concern over the apparent governance deficit on the Continent;

### **B. Presentation of Methodology for Implementation of AGR Reports: Case Of AGR 2023 On UCG – Chad, Comoros, Sierra Leone and Lesotho;**

- (i) Took note of the progress reports presented by Chad, Comoros, Sierra Leone and Lesotho and commended these countries for voluntarily participating in the study on UCG; encouraged them to redouble efforts in implementing the recommendations emanating from the Africa Governance Report 2023; and welcomed the commitment made by Chad to present a detailed progress report on the implementation in the fourth joint retreat;

**C. Presentation of the Outcomes of the Joint Retreat of the AU Panel of the Wise and APR Panel of Eminent Persons;**

- (i) Welcomed the outcomes of the Second Joint Retreat of the AU Panel of the Wise and the APR Panel of Eminent Persons held on 10 December 2023 in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa, and witnessed the signing of the Communique of the Second Joint Retreat and Framework of Cooperation between the AU Panel of the Wise and APR Panel of Eminent Persons; encouraged the two Panels to implement the Framework of cooperation and to further enhance synergies in areas of conflict prevention and peace-making in Africa;

**D. Presentation on Foreign interference and Military Coups in Africa**

- (i) Emphasized the need for collective security approaches to mitigate interference on the Continent;
- (ii) Affirmed the need for exchanging of early warning information and analyses between all relevant stakeholders, including the military, intelligence and academia, in order to prevent debilitating conflicts with risks of reversing economic gains on the Continent;
- (iii) Underscored the imperative of concerted efforts to promote regional integration in line with Aspiration 2 of Agenda 2063 to ensure a politically united continent, with unity of purpose based on Pan-Africanism;
- (iv) Highlighted the need to massify education on the Continent to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth to realise a prosperous Africa;
- (v) Stressed the importance of one African market, eliminating barriers to trade in Africa and boosting intra-Africa trade; in this regard, underscored the need for Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to rally behind the African Continental Free Trade (AfCFTA);
- (vi) Underlined the need for universal access to energy to contribute towards Africa's growth; and also highlighted the importance of further improving infrastructure on the Continent, including roads, ports, healthcare, and all other essential services; and

**E. The launch of the Africa Governance Atlas**

- (i) Encouraged Member States to make their observations and forward them to the APRM Continental Secretariat for consideration and possible inclusion in the final report;

**F. Update on the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa**

- (i) Took note of the activities by the Tana High-Level Forum on Security and the theme for 2024, which is "Africa in an evolving global order".

## VII. CONCLUSION

16. During the second day of the third Joint Retreat, the PSC and APRM considered the status of Implementation of the Conclusions of the Second Joint Retreat of the PSC and APRM Joint Retreat, followed by the Draft Conclusions of the Third Joint Retreat. The Secretariats were requested to disseminate the matrix of the status of the implementation of the Conclusions for the consideration of the Council.

17. In the closing ceremony, a representative of the European Union, representing all partners, delivered a goodwill message. H.E. Ambassador Aminu Nasir, the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the PSC. H.E Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika, Vice-Chair of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, and H.E. Ambassador Jainaba Jagne, Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the AU and PSC Chairperson for December 2023, gave closing remarks.

18. The PSC and APRM expressed gratitude to the Government and People of the Republic of South Africa for the hospitality extended to the delegations and for graciously hosting the Third Joint Retreat.

19. The participants commended the PSC Secretariat and APRM Continental Secretariat for the collective and successful organisation of the Third Joint Retreat. They looked forward to the 4<sup>th</sup> Joint Retreat in South Africa in November 2024.

African Union Commission (AUC)

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Partnerships

African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

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2023-12-11

# Conclusions of the 3rd Retreat of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Held from 11 - 12 December 2023, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Peace and Security Council

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