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African Union Commission, the United Nations and World Bank officially launched the 4th phase of the DDR implementation framework

On the 19th October 2023, the African Union in collaboration with the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), the United Nations Department of Peace Operations (DPO), and the World Bank Group (WB) launched the fourth phase of the African Union Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Implementation Framework to be implemented from 2023 to 2025.

The event culminated with the formal signing of the partnership framework document by the representatives of all four entities. The Joint Partnership framework broadly elaborates the scope, principles, objectives and key activities for the phase four from 2023-2025.

At the opening ceremony, in his opening statement, Amb. Calixte Aristide Mbari, Head of Democracy, Elections and Constitutionalism Division, African Union Commission, noted that previous experiences have proved that an effective Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program can be a crucial element for wider stabilization and recovery interventions in Africa. It was also underlined that the framework provides an opportunity to strengthen and enhance the institutional and operational capacities of Member States, Peace
Support Operations, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (REC/RMs), and other institutions on the implementation of DDR related activities.

The United Nations Office to AU (UNOAU), Deputy Head of Office/Director of Political Affairs, Mr. Gerald Mitchell expressed the interest of the United Nations to continue to contribute to the partnership and to work together towards sustainable peace in Africa by strengthening the implementation of DDR in the broader context of peacebuilding, including the politics of DDR. This launch is an important step that will strengthen cooperation and partnerships and enhance the awareness and understanding about the importance of DDR processes in the African context.

On his part, Mr. Daniel Owen, Lead Social Development Specialist, Social Sustainability and Inclusion, East and Southern Africa for the World Bank expressed the support of the World Bank to this fourth phase of partnership between the African Union, United Nations and the World Bank on DDR. He underscored the fact that the launch is an extension of the AU DDR Capacity program, which was launched a decade ago, that focuses on leveraging the comparative advantages of partners engaged in conflict prevention and response across the continent.

The main objective of this event was to enhance awareness and understanding about the importance of DDR processes in Africa by reflecting on past achievements, sharing lessons learned on the overall contribution of the AUDDRCP, namely to the objective of sustainable peace throughout the continent; discussing the DDR evolution and new approaches and methods as well as the importance of the development guidelines and policies from the perspective of various stakeholders such as Member States, research institutions, academia, RECs/RMs, African Training Centres of Excellence and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

Since its first launch in 2011, the African Union Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Capacity-Building Programme (known as AU DDR Capacity Programme, AUDDRCP, since phase three) has achieved three phases of implementation which benefited from multiple rounds of support by the United Nations, World Bank and other partners. The second and third phases focused on the consolidation of the results achieved at the initial phase. The later phases also included a focus on human rights and conflict prevention and emphasized operational support to Member States and Peace Support Operations. The fourth phase in particular highlights the operational support, the preventive role of DDR as well as the politics of DDR. During its development, the program recognizes the importance of strategic and demand-driven intervention at the national and regional levels and targets both the African Union and Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms, and their partners such as African Training Centres of Excellence.

As way forward, the partner organizations plan to ensure that the partners’ institutional capacities at continental, regional and national levels related to data collection, analysis are strengthened. This will ensure that the results in the areas of conflict prevention and response are fit for purpose, and impactful. The partners are committed to maintain and strengthen their collaboration, while at the same time seeking new partnerships and resources to ultimately benefit the level of services in the area of DDR provided by the African Union, in close collaboration with the
Regional and Economic Commissions/Regional Mechanisms to the African Member States and beyond.

The official launch conducted at the African Union Headquarters was attended by Ambassadors and Permanent representatives, Addis Ababa-based institutions, Representative from the AU Liaison Offices, RECs/RMs, the UN Department of Peace Operations officers, UN office to the AU representatives, the World Bank, the European Union Delegation to the AU, the Center of Excellence (COEs), research institutions, relevant UN agencies and other partners, such as Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies and the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding.

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