STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AT THE FOURTH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE EU-APSA SUPPORT PROGRAMME

22 FEBRUARY, 2022

NAIROBI, KENYA
Ambassadors and Colleagues from the RECs/RMs

Our dear host RECs, COMESA

Representatives from the European Union

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocols observed

It gives me great pleasure to welcome everyone to the 3rd Steering Committee Meeting on Early Response Mechanism and the 4th Steering Committee meeting of the EU Africa Peace and Security Architecture Support Programme. This meeting builds on the outcomes of the 35th AU Summit and the outcomes recently concluded AU-EU Summit.

In view of this, the commitment of both AU and EU to a renewed partnership is timely as it will address both the immediate opportunities and challenges as well as the long term possibilities.

The Summit also recognized that both Africa and Europe are facing growing common security challenges. This demanded a new Africa - Europe peace and security architecture that will build upon our long-standing cooperation and on the AU-EU MoU on Peace Security and Governance (2018) to combat instability, radicalization and terrorism, tackling the root causes of conflicts.

The Summit was held under the banner ““Two Unions, a joint vision”. What our leaders agreed to is a renewed partnership with the aim on solidarity, security, and prosperity for the citizens of the two Unions.

The EU Support Programme to APSA has enabled the AU and RECs/RMs to improve understanding, and strengthen their capacities for conflict prevention, management and resolution. In terms of coordination and cooperation, I am pleased to announce
that the AUC and RECs/RMs have developed a complementarity matrix which is a tool expected to promote greater synergy. I understand that in a recent meeting, both RECs/RMs and AUC agreed that they would endeavour to seek out potential areas of joint collaboration and organize an annual planning workshop in order to plan activities jointly. This is a commendable milestone and I applaud you all for this.

In our last meeting, we recognized the continued challenges posed by COVID-19 in implementing the 2021 EU APSA activities. In view of this, I would like to encourage all implementing Partners to be sensitive to this and seek innovative and realistic ways of executing their 2022 activities. In addition to this, I would also like to encourage all implementing partners to make every effort to improve the execution rate of the APSA Programme.

The support of the European Union in strengthening the capacity of the African institutions to foster peace and security by creating the African Peace Facility (APF) has been paramount. However, we must recognize that the APF is now transitioning to the European Peace Facility focusing on support to military aspects. In this regard, it is hoped that this meeting will throw light on other EU mechanisms that that provides support for civilian and police aspects of peace and security initiatives in line with the AU’s multidimensional approach in promoting stability on the continent.

Furthermore, the EU support towards the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF) cannot be over emphasized, and it is even more critical now in ensuring implementation of the new 5 Year Work plan on the enhancement of the ASF, working with the RECs/RMs that serve as the building blocks of the APSA

The milestones of the ERM Programme in responding to crises and recognizes that the speed of the response is critical to ensure emerging crises are addressed to prevent their escalation. Within
this context, the processes for accessing and utilizing this mechanism should be flexible enough to enable immediate action in response to early warnings.

Throughout the years, the ERM increased the role of the AU and RECs/RMs in the field of mediation/preventive diplomacy. It facilitated close follow-up of the decisions of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) as well as improved the interaction between various stakeholders during early interventions on the ground.

We also underscore the AU’s effort to introduce consideration and inclusion of the ERM in the AUC Annual Budget processes. This approach will enable more predictability and implementation of initiatives through allocation of specified amounts to the AU as well as to RECs/RMs in pass-through budgets.

There is a need for thematic approach, flexibility and adaptability, while still maintaining the ERM niche on conflict/ crisis prevention. In such contexts the ERM is to feed to and be inter-linked with other financing instruments, complementing initiatives that address wider spectrum of the African peace and security agenda including structural conflict prevention.

I would like at this juncture to commend the RECs/RMs for their continued commitment and dedication to the success of the APSA Programme. Your hard work and resilience has really taken APSA to another level.

It is important to note that despite these achievements, the dynamics on the continent particularly with regards to threats is changing. New threats are now emerging.
1. Terrorism and violent extremism which is now at an unprecedented scale.

2. Unconstitutional changes of government specifically in Guinea, Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso, which calls for a new approach in addressing peace and security on the continent.


4. Incorporating the impact that climate change has on peace and security issues.

These new threats require new counter approaches and recognizes that the existing response tools of mediation and dialogue are in themselves limited in responding to these new threats.

The newly merged Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security will need to develop new tools and devise new approaches to addressing these emerging threats.

It is important for us to bear these threats in mind when developing the next phase of APSA and look forward to the multi-annual planning workshop before the end of the year to do so.