Addis Ababa, 06 September 2019: From 03 to 04 September 2019, the Peace and Security Department of the Commission of the African Union convened an “Inaugural Meeting of the African union steering committee on security sector reform (SSR)”, at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa.

The meeting gathered forty five (45) participants from Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanism’s (RM), AU liaisons offices, AU Commission, South Africa Embassy in Addis Ababa, AU organs including the Pan African Parliament, ECOSOCC and international partners including United Nations, European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), African Security Sector Network (ASSN), the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF) and Institute for Security Studies (ISS).
The objectives of the meeting were: to i) review and approve the draft of the Terms of Reference of the AU SSR Steering Committee, ii) discuss on the coordination status of the implementation of the SSR Policy Framework in Member States and RECs engaged in SSR initiatives, and to iii) formulate required priority actions.

The meeting was opened by H.E. Cessouma Minata Samate, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs on behalf of Amb. Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security.

She welcomed the enthusiasm of participants, and highlighted that Security Sector Reform has remained an important item of the African Union’s peace and security agenda, especially since the adoption of the Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development by the AU Assembly in 2006 which led to the endorsement of the AU SSR Policy framework in 2013.

In addition, she mentioned that the 2017 AU Roadmap for Silencing the Guns acknowledges that the failure to transform African defense and security forces into professional and disciplined national security institutions that are subject to civilian oversight and control has often led to eruption of, or relapse into conflict, thus perpetuating cycles of violence and disrupting stabilization and peace-building efforts.

She recognized existing gaps of SSR coordination among stakeholders and encouraged participants to actively strengthen the vision for the Steering Committee and articulate its working modalities so that it can truly fulfil its functions, in order to enhance effectiveness of implementation of the AU Policy framework on SSR, in a more coordinated way.

The meeting concluded on common understanding of the objective of the AU SSR Steering Committee which is a consultative platform between AU, RECs, RM and international partners on SSR coordination. The role of the Steering Committee should deal both with policies and operational matters.

It was recommended that members and observers of the SSR SC need to align approaches and to synergize efforts, in order to streamline SSR, through the process of conflict prevention, crisis management and reconstruction.

In order to harmonize approaches and to address existing coordination gaps, it was strongly recommended to conduct a joint mapping on SSR activities and actors on continental level. The modalities of conducting the mapping is the main identified action point.