AU HOSTS CIVIL SOCIETY WORKSHOP ON INFLUENCING STRATEGY FOR SECURITY SECTOR REFORMS

Addis Ababa, 06 December 2018: From 3 to 5 December 2018, the Peace and Security Department of the Commission of the African Union (AU) in collaboration with the Directorate of Citizens and Diaspora Organizations (CIDO) hosted a workshop for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on Influencing Strategy for Security Sector Reforms. The workshop was held in
partnership with the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) and Oxfam Novib. The main objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of CSOs to develop and implement strategies aimed at positively influencing and engaging in Security Sector Reform.

The workshop was held within the framework of a project titled “Engaging Civil Society in Security and Justice Sector Reform” which was launched at the AU Commission in 2017 in partnership with the ASSN and Oxfam. At the level of the AU, the project is led by the Peace and Security Department and the Directorate of Citizens and Diaspora Organisations (CIDO) with technical support of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).

The project is designed to enhance the capacity of CSOs to participate more meaningfully in the formulation and implementation of security and justice sector reform policies and programs and to foster people-centered security governance across Africa. The project further provides an opportunity to forge dialogue and a working partnership between CSOs, the AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs). The project is anchored in the relevant provisions of the Constitutive Act of the AU, the Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security Council, the Livingstone Formula, and the AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (SSR), all which underscore the critical role of civil society in efforts aimed at promoting peace, security and stability in Africa.

The workshop brought together twelve CSOs drawn from Central African Republic, Niger, Somalia, and South Sudan. Also present at the workshop were representatives of the relevant RECs/RMs, namely, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), members and staff of the ASSN as well as Oxfam staff from Novib and project country offices.

The workshop enhanced the understanding of participating CSOs on the practical framework to design and implement influencing strategies related to SSR. Discussions focused on how CSOs can advocate for, and contribute to the various SSR interventions at the national and regional levels, and on identifying context-specific entry-points for effective CSOs engagement.