Experts Roundtable on Silencing the Guns held in Nairobi, Kenya

The African Union (AU) High Representative for Silencing the Guns, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, convened a three-day Experts Roundtable on Silencing the Guns, in Nairobi, Kenya, from 30 August to 1 September 2023, under the theme, “A decade of Silencing the Guns in Africa: Progress, Lessons Learned and the Way Forward”.

The meeting brought together African experts from the five regions of the Continent to brainstorm and review existing approaches and frameworks to silencing the Guns in light with the prevailing state of peace of security in the continent; examine achievements, gaps and challenges over the last ten years since the adoption of the solemn declaration on silencing the Guns in May 2013, as well as to chart the way forward for the initiative with view to achieve this noble goal by the new deadline of 2030.

Discussions were centered around the existing frameworks established by the AU Peace and Security Council to guide Member States, AU and RECs/RMs towards the attainment of a conflict-free Africa. In this regard, Experts reviewed the 2016 AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps to Silence the Guns and its Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism adopted by the PSC in 2021 to fast-track the implementations of the Master roadmap.

Participants highlighted the efforts deployed to silence guns in the Continent, including strengthening APSA and AGA tools to prevent and mediate conflicts. They however underlined that the first decade of the implementation of the Initiative of Silencing the Guns has many lessons to offer for the AU and its Member States in order to accelerate the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap. In this regard, participants underscored the necessity for an effective domestication of the Master Roadmap at national and regional levels, through tailored national action plans adapted to promote participation and contribution of the Africa citizenry, in particular women and youth.

H.E. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas who presided over the Roundtable underscored the need for concrete action to end conflicts in the Continent. “It is unfortunate that while we were discussing in this gathering how to enhance the continent’s responsiveness to the wave of Unconstitutional Changes of Government, another coup happened in Gabon, raising serious concern about the realization of our goals, and whether this is an unending trend”, he told the experts on the last day of the meeting.

The meeting outlined key areas to be prioritized in the next three years, including the prioritisation of peaceful settlement of conflicts, conflict prevention and strengthening the AU PCRD policies, particularly reconciliation. They further proposed strategies to enhance implementation efforts to curtail the spiral of violence fueled by the illicit circulation of firearms; the expansion of terrorist threats to various parts of Africa, as well as the resurgence of Unconstitutional Changes of Governments across the continent.

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