Roundtable on Developing a Roadmap and Inter-Departmental Task Force for the Implementation of AU PCRD Policy

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Remarks
By Dr. Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, Head Crisis Management and Post Conflict and Reconstruction Division, AU Commission
Roundtable on Developing a Roadmap and Inter-Departmental Task Force for the Implementation of AU PCRD Policy,
Wednesday 18 May 2016, 9.00am-1.00pm, Venue Caucus Room 22, AU New Conference Centre

Distinguished Guests,
Fellow colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking all present for attending this crucial meeting that is aimed at developing a roadmap and inter-departmental Task Force for the Implementation of the AU PCRD Policy. It is my hope that through this meeting we successfully open the dialogue on how we can cohesively develop a ‘best work practice’ in post-conflict reconstruction and development across the Commission.

This year, as the Commission celebrate ten years of the AU PCRD Policy, we need to consider the evolving global peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction discourse and how this impacts our response in light of the interconnected strategic, structural and operational opportunities and challenges. From a normative and operational perspective, the tenth anniversary of the AU PCRD Policy, presents us with a unique opportunity to outline best practice and lessons learned by the AU, RECs/RMs and Member States. I am convinced that going forward a reflective and deliberative process like the one we are having today would provide authoritative guidance for the implementation of the policy.

To address some of the structural strategic and operational challenges, several processes and platforms are relevant.

Firstly, the Commission is increasing its efforts in facilitating the establishment of PCRD mechanisms at different levels, and in particular enhancing the capacity of the Commission, regional and sub-regional bodies, as well as ensuring greater contribution, in the spirit of the African Solidarity Initiative. The Commission will increase its engagement with the RECs, the UN Peace Building Architecture, the World Bank and the African Development Bank and deepen in-country linkages with our AU Liaison Offices to implement joint programmes in the six pillars of the PCRD Policy, namely, security; humanitarian/emergency assistance; political governance and transition; socio-economic reconstruction and development; human rights, justice and reconciliation, and women and gender.

Secondly, the Commission and RECs/RMs will provide regular briefings on PCRD to the AU PSC. Doing so would strengthen the PSC’s policy guidance and political oversight to PCRD efforts. Additionally, the agenda of PSC-RECs/RMs consultative meetings held twice a year will include discussion of PCRD activities in the continent.

Thirdly, the Commission is scaling up its engagement with the RECs/RMs to develop their capacities to serve as the regional focal points or the first responders for PCRD. At the national level, the
Commission is committed to supporting post-conflict Member States in establishing inter-ministerial committees or other appropriate follow-up mechanisms on PCRD.

In order to address the funding and other challenges facing the AU-led PCRD interventions, the following strategies are recommended:

i) A funding window should be established by the AU and the RECs for PCRD interventions, especially for those relating to regional and cross-border initiatives such as the Sahel region in West Africa and the LRA affected triangle in CAR, DRC and South Sudan. As a first step, the Commission is proposing for a percentage of the Peace Fund to be dedicated to PCRD as this would facilitate sustainable interventions in the post-conflict Member States.

ii) It is critical that the needs of post-conflict Member States are assessed regularly and systematically, and reported on, to better inform resource mobilization efforts. In this context, it is envisaged that the AU PSC Sub-Committee on PCRD would contribute to the follow-up efforts.

iii) AU-led roundtables and pledging conferences should be organized regularly to generate additional support for post-conflict Member States. There is therefore a strong imperative to build on the Africa Solidarity Conference which was held in 2013 during which 3 million US Dollars was pledged. Efforts are underway to secure the pledged resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Experience over the past decade demonstrates that the architecture of the AU PCRD requires a multi-layer institutional enhancement through the following practical measures:

i) Operationalization of the PSC Sub-Committee on PCRD in Africa, to provide political leadership and oversight on implementation of PCRD activities. This measure will help in filling the gap left by the non-establishment of the AU Multi-Dimensional Standing Committee on PCRD.

ii) Operationalization of a PCRD Inter-departmental Task Force, to facilitate coordinated Commission-wide support to implement PCRD activities. I hope that this meeting will approve the Terms of Reference for the Task Force, formally launching this pivotal coordination and implementation mechanism.

iii) Establishment of appropriate PCRD implementation mechanisms at RECs/RMs and national level.

iv) Activation of formal linkages between the PSC Sub-Committee on PCRD and the UN Peacebuilding Commission, to enhance coordination and synergy between African and UN-led efforts towards peacebuilding and reconstruction.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our deliberations this morning should take into consideration the following questions;

I. What are the specific roles and responsibilities of the various divisions and departments in the implementation of the PCRD policy?
II. How can the AU ensure that its interventions are aligned with the priority areas identified by beneficiary countries?
III. What practical steps can the AU take to deepen its partnership with the RECs/RMs in the implementation of the PCRD Policy in the context of APSA and AGA?
IV. How can the engagement of Member States be scaled up to support the African Solidarity Initiative?
V. How can the African Solidarity Initiative be leveraged to enhance African Ownership of its PCRD Interventions?
VI. How should the Inter-departmental Task Force be structured to ensure that it operates in an efficient and effective manner?

In conclusion, I would like to state that the test of whether we can Silence the guns by 2020 and ensure that they remain silent forever, is to some degree contingent on the successful implementation of the AU PCRD Policy. The recent relapses of several post-conflict Member States is a stark reminder of the imperative for a robust, coordinated and more crucially, comprehensive PCRD interventions by the AU, RECs and other relevant stakeholders. The operationalization of the Inter-Departmental Task Force on PCRD is one small but significant step in that direction.

I thank you.