11TH RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE STUDY AND WORKING METHODS OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

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CONCLUSIONS
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CONCLUSIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) held its Eleventh Retreat from 29 to 31 October 2018, in Cairo, Egypt. The Retreat was dedicated to the discussion on the comprehensive African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Study and the working methods of the PSC.

2. The Retreat was officially opened by H.E Khaled Amara, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui. Ambassador Lazare Safouesse Makayat, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Congo to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for the month of October 2018, chaired the Retreat.

3. The Retreat took place within the context of deliberating on the outcomes of the Comprehensive Study on APSA from 2002 to the present, which integrated a review of the implementation of the African Governance Architecture (AGA), from 2012 to date.

4. In the same context, the Retreat was guided by Assembly decision [Assembly/AU.Dec.635] adopted in January 2017, which took note of “the recommendations for the proposed reforms to further strengthen the African Union, in the following five (5) areas: a) Focus on key priorities with continental scope; b) Realign African Union institutions in order to deliver against those priorities; c) Connect the African Union to its citizens; d) Manage the business of the African Union efficiently and effectively at both the political and operational levels; e) Finance the African Union sustainably and with the full ownership of the Member States.” The deliberations of the Retreat, as informed by outcomes of the APSA Study, focused on the following aspects, namely:

- Implementation of the APSA from 2002 to the present;
- Implementation of the AGA from 2012 to the present;
- Evaluation of work of the PSC and consolidation of PSC working methods; and
- Essence of the Reform of the PSC.

5. During the deliberations, emphasis was placed on the following aspects of the work of the PSC:

II. ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

6. The Retreat acknowledged that the PSC embarked on a vibrant and sustained process of addressing conflicts and crises in various parts of Africa since its operationalization in 2004, and continues to do so. The PSC placed as its centre of its strategic business the promotion of peace, security and stability in line with the mandate of the Council enshrined in Article 6 and 7
of the PSC Protocol, towards implementing the appropriate Assembly decisions to achieve sustainable peace in Africa.

7. Looking at the work carried out by the PSC since 2004, the PSC has been able to forge itself into well-organized and better prepared AU Organ, alert to its tasks and responsive to demands for its engagement. The PSC, as the main pillar/locomotive of the APSA and the AGA, has made significant progress since its operationalization, as exemplified below by the following of its important achievements, among others:

i. Consolidation of promoting peace, security and stability as required by the mandate of the PSC. This has enabled the PSC to anticipate and effectively monitor conflict/crisis situations. In this context, the PSC has also deployed efforts to devise ways and means to address emerging threats to peace and security.

ii. Deployment of various peace support operations and missions in areas of the Continent affected by conflicts, such as AMISOM, AMIS, AFISMA, MISCA, LRA, MNJTF, G5 Sahel.

iii. Elaboration of detailed and predictable provisional monthly programmes of work and the Indicative Annual Programme of Work of the PSC of the PSC, which has led to significant improvements in the conduct and strengthening of the current activities of PSC’s business, as well as, streamlining its recurrent activities and mandatory meetings, which take place each year;

iv. Development of working methods and their review when need arise as to allow the PSC to stand up to and address emerging circumstances and situations, in a systematic manner;

v. Continuous appropriation and application of some key provisions of the PSC Protocol;

vi. Laying the foundation for strengthening coordination between itself and other sister AU Organs and RECs/RMs in both conflict prevention and interventions to resolve conflicts/crises on the ground;

vii. Streamlining and strengthening the role and work of the African members of the UN Security Council. Providing strategic guidance for enhancing relations with the United Nations system and other international organizations on peace and security issues in Africa;

viii. Consideration of periodic briefings by AU Commission and the relevant RECs/RMs secretariats on elections in Africa, which has significantly contributed to the capacity of the AU to prevent or failure of which, to better manage and resolve election-related conflicts and crises;

ix. Creating conditions conducive for strengthening cooperation and coordination between the AU Commission and the UN Secretariat, as well as with the EU Commission on peace and security issues in Africa by providing strategic policy guidance;

x. Organization of retreats and undertaking field missions which have further enriched its work, including giving visibility to its activities;
xi. Seizure and consideration of important thematic issues of relevance to the promotion of peace, security, and stability, as well as development, in Africa. These themes include the plight of children in violent conflicts; women, peace and security; the nexus between corruption, peace and security; combating terrorism violent extremism and radicalization; the link between climate change, peace and security; the humanitarian situation in Africa; combating corruption; proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa; and genocide and hate crime, to mention some of them;

xii. Establishing and operationalizing subsidiary bodied as lines of expertise in support of the work of the PSC;

xiii. Mobilizing within the AU system for a predictable and sustainable budget for the activities of the PSC and its subsidiary bodies. Notably, the PSC activities are fully funded from the AU regular budget;

xiv. Carrying out active interaction/engagements with the parties and or interested parties to a given conflict/crisis situation during PSC field missions, in processes aimed at finding solutions to the situations; and

xv. Demonstration of will power for self-introspection with a view to further strengthening the PSC process, as exemplified by the PSC launching the Comprehensive APSA Study discussed by the 11th Retreat of the PSC.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS ON ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

8. Assembly Decision 635 adopted by the 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in January 2017 directs for “the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to be reformed to ensure that it meets the ambition foreseen in its Protocol, by strengthening its working methods and its role in conflict prevention and crisis management”. The ambition is for the PSC to be able to fully implement the provisions in its Protocol, coordinate activities of all APSA and AGA institutions and lead African efforts towards realizing a conflict-free Continent.

9. In this perspective, the Retreat underlined that the PSC has all necessary legal and institutional tools to ensure that it executes its mandate effectively as specified in the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The Retreat also underlined that implementation remains the main challenge which should be addressed.

10. The PSC agreed on the following:

a) On Conflict Prevention:

i. Strengthening coordination between the PSC and all the supporting APSA and AGA pillars.

ii. Organizing joint activities between the PSC and other AU Organs on peace and security issues to achieve the much-needed harmonization of initiatives. Undertaking joint field missions and sharing information on best practices in prevention was stressed.
iii. Enhancing the role of women in peace processes, including in mediation and conflict prevention efforts.
iv. Enhancing cooperation between the PSC and the RECs/RMs policy organs, particularly on giving effect to collective security, early warning and early response.
v. Harnessing the contributions/role of the civil society organizations into the work of the PSC. In this context, a data base of the civil society organization dealing with peace and security issues in the Continent should be developed by the PSC Secretariat as a reference framework of the PSC in the process.
vi. Establishing a trigger mechanism and indicators to facilitate the role of the PSC in assessing whether a given situation calls an early action by the PSC. In this context, the Commission should elaborate the mechanism and indicators for consideration by the PSC. (within the context of operationalization of the CEWS)
vii. Promote and enhance the implementation of the continental structural prevention framework and its tools of CSVA and CSVMS.
viii. Engaging member states concerned or affected by looming crises in order for the PSC to accompany them in their efforts to address issues relating to conflict prevention.
ix. Providing adequate and sustainable financial and other necessary resources for effective conflict prevention efforts.
x. Expediting the full operationalization of the PCRD Centre in Cairo, Egypt as an integral part of the APSA, with the aim of reinforcing AU capacities in preventing countries emerging from conflict from relapsing, through strong an effective PCRD programmes.
xii. Emphasizing on the need for the PSC to be consistent in the application of the provisions of PSC Protocol in all conflict/crisis situations.
xiii. The need for regular meetings/briefings between the PSC and the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the Commissioner for Peace and Security on peace and security matters in Africa, in line with Article 10 of the PSC Protocol.
xiii. Emphasizing on the informal consultation between the PSC and the parties to conflict in line with the provision of the PSC Protocol.

b) On Crisis Management:

i. Positioning the PSC to more actively play its locomotive role in guiding and harmonizing the efforts of all APSA and AGA institutions.
ii. Having acknowledged that root causes of conflicts remain active in the Continent, as highlighted in the APSA Study, emphasize was put on focusing efforts on mobilization of resources to support policy interventions on the ground to addressing root causes of conflicts and disruptive crises, as well as grievances in Africa.
iii. Deployment of all necessary efforts by all stakeholders for the rapid full operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF) and its Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) in order to provide the PSC with the required apparatus in its efforts to manage and resolve conflicts/crises.
iv. Accelerating the establishment of the institutional and regulatory infrastructure of the AU Peace Fund. Notably, the Peace Fund is increasingly benefiting from the political will of Member states as evidenced by the contributions made thus far. In this context, Member States are encouraged to continue in this positive spirit with a view to equipping Africa with is funding and therefore reduce dependency on external sources.
v. Strengthening coordination and synergy between the PSC and RECs/RMs policy organs across all cycles of conflicts in order to mobilize the required momentum in resolving conflicts. In this context, the PSC agreed to convene its meeting with the RECs/RMs policy organs to discuss and agree on modalities for coordination of peace efforts.

vi. Empowering the PSC for it to be able to institute individual punitive measures against peace spoiler or obstructionist to realization/restoration of peace in conflict situations. In this context, the PSC should elaborate a mechanism which will facilitate the imposition and implementation of punitive measures in all their relevant aspects, including identification of peace spoilers or obstructionists to peace efforts, monitoring of the implementation and review of the imposed punitive measures to determine next steps.

vii. Need to develop a modality for the PSC to be able to engage all parties to conflict in order to capture a broad view of the issues at stake and grievances. The Commission should take the necessary steps to work out this modality for PSC’s consideration.

viii. Rationalizing the work of AU high/special representatives/envoys to get more value for the work of the PSC in conflict prevention and crisis management.

c) On Working Methods:

i. Imperative to deploy adequate capacity in terms of human resources in the embassies of the PSC Member States and the PSC Secretariat to assist the PSC in carrying out its activities.

ii. Streamlining the PSC subsidiary bodies and deploying more support towards the functioning of the PSC Military Staff Committee to address military/security related issues and the PSC Committee of Experts to function as a cross-cutting pool of expertise.

iii. Raising the level of participation of the PSC member states in field missions to conflict/post conflict areas. In this regard, the PSC agreed that for any field mission the PSC should be represented by at least ten (10) permanent representatives/ambassadors of the PSC for the mission to be undertaken.

iv. Increasing engagement of the PSC on humanitarian issues as provided for in relevant Articles of its Protocol.

v. Imperative for provision for all necessary information on a given conflict/crisis to enable the PSC to take informed decision. To this effect, the PSC agreed to accord itself adequate time to discuss issues on its agenda.

vi. In addressing the issues of time management in meetings to which partners are invited, the PSC agreed to on a limited number of guests particularly those most involved in resolving a given conflict/crisis.

vii. Harmonizing the efforts deployed by different stakeholders in conflict/crisis situations. In this context, the PSC requests the PSC Secretariat to develop a data base of partners playing a role in given conflict/crisis situations to be considered by the PSC.

viii. Need to mainstream voting in the decision-making of the PSC, where and when issues under consideration so necessitate.

ix. Providing indication in the monthly provisional programmes of work of the PSC of issues and the reports to be prepared to facilitate timely elaboration and circulation to the PSC Member States.
In rationalizing the number of meetings of the PSC, it was agreed that, once the PSC adopts its monthly programme of work, there should not be inclusion of other agenda items with exception of emergency situations.

x. Popularizing of the work of the PSC through reinforcing the existing structures in the Peace and Security department of the AU Commission.

xi. Identifying and implementing those provisions in the PSC Protocol that have been left dormant in the past, while their utilization can contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the PSC.

xii. The national interest of the Chairperson of the PSC of the month should not interfere or undermine the collective work of the PSC.

11. Furthermore, the PSC agreed on the following:

i) The PSC Secretariat should screen through all existing PSC working methods and propose a simplified consolidated text. The consolidated text may comprise the categories below:

- Duties of the PSC Chairperson;
- Development of the monthly programme of work of the PSC;
- Development of the annual indicative programme of work of the PSC;
- Rotation procedure of the PSC Chairship;
- Swapping practice of the PSC Chairship;
- Decision/outcome of the PSC: communique or press statement;
- Silence procedure;
- Framework for PSC Field Missions;
- Preparation and organization of PSC Retreats;
- Duties of the PSC Subsidiary Bodies/Sub-Committees;
- Cooperation between the PSC and A3;
- Interaction between the PSC and the P5;
- Organization and conduct of consultative meetings of PSC and other entities/actors.

ii) Need to establish a rigorous modality within the AU on the selection/vetting process on candidates presented for election as African Members of the UN Security Council (A3), with a view to promote and defend the common African position in respect of the AU Assembly decisions on the role of the A3 in the UN Security Council decision making process. In this context, the PSC Secretariat, in collaboration with the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN in New York, should elaborate a modality for consideration by the PSC.

iii) Respect and implementation of the principle of subsidiarity in the relationship between the PSC and RECs/RMs policy organs, across all cycles of conflict which provides for flexibility for the PSC to take over the tasks of addressing a given conflict/crisis situation whenever a concerned REC/RM has exhausted its efforts, but without resolving the conflict/crisis at hand. In situations where a REC/RM does not act swiftly to resolve a conflict/crisis, the PSC should utilize Article 9 of its Protocol to determine entry point.

iv) Fostering, by Member States, of the conditions necessary for effective implementation of provisions of Article 5 of the PSC Protocol on criteria for electing members of the PSC.
IV. CONCLUSION

12. The PSC took note of the proposal of the Kingdom of Morocco announced during its Retreat on the establishment of an African Peace and Security Institute dedicated to academic training, research and studies and promotion of AU policies in the domain of peace and security. In this context, the Retreat underscored the need for compliance with AU procedures for introduction and consideration by competent AU Organs of proposed new AU structures. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Morocco is to develop and submit a concept note to accompany this proposal in the process of its consideration by the competent AU organs.

13. The PSC expressed appreciation and gratitude to H.E. Abdel Al Fattah el-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Government and people of Egypt for the hospitality, facilities and support provided to the PSC during its Retreat.

Cairo, Egypt: 30 October 2018.