

Opening Remarks by Dr. Salvator Nkeshimana, Principal Officer, East and Southern Regional Desk, Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department, African Union Commission

Workshop for the technical and expert validation of CSOs Early Warning Reporting Guidelines and CPRM Framework, and Retraining of ECONet and SAPPC on early warning, and organizational development index portals

Distinguished representatives of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms,

Distinguished representative from APRM,

Leaders and representatives of our regional Civil Society umbrellas ECONet and SAPPC,

My colleagues from the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security,

Distinguished representatives from our partner GIZ

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to Nairobi for this important workshop on the technical and expert validation of the umbrella Civil Society Organizations' Early Warning Reporting Guidelines and the Conflict Prevention and Response Mechanism Framework, as well as the retraining of ECONet and SAPPC on their Early Warning and Organizational Development Index (ODI) portals.

Please accept the greetings of the PAPS leadership, specifically, Commissioner Bankole Adeoye and Director Patience Chiradza.

Allow me to express the sincere appreciation of the African Union Commission to our partners, particularly GIZ, for their continued support towards strengthening Africa's conflict prevention architecture. I also wish to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of all of us present here for the collective endeavour to contribute to a peaceful and integrated Africa. Your presence demonstrates our shared commitment to preventing conflict.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African Union has consistently recognized that sustainable peace cannot be achieved through the efforts of governments alone. It requires inclusive partnerships involving communities, civil society organizations, Regional Economic Communities, Member States and continental institutions working together within a common vision. This principle is clearly reflected in Article 20 of the AU Peace and Security Council Protocol, further operationalized through the Livingstone Formula, and reaffirmed by several PSC

communiqués, which encourage stronger collaboration among the AU, RECs, Member States and civil society organizations in early warning, conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy. This workshop is, therefore, not introducing a new partnership. Rather, it is taking practical steps to operationalize commitments that have already been endorsed by our Member States.

As we begin our work over the coming days, I would like to encourage all participants to appreciate the broader vision that underpins this workshop. While the agenda includes the validation of reporting guidelines, review of operational frameworks, simulations and technical training, these activities should not be viewed as isolated exercises. They are all interconnected components of a much larger objective: strengthening an African conflict prevention architecture that is more connected, more inclusive, more interoperable and ultimately more effective.

My expectation is that we begin by understanding this bigger picture before turning our attention to the technical details. The first sessions, including a presentation from PAPS, are deliberately designed to establish a common understanding of why stronger collaboration between the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and regional civil society umbrellas is essential for effective early warning and conflict prevention. We must first agree on where we are collectively heading before deciding how we will get there.

Once that common strategic understanding has been established, the workshop moves naturally into the validation of the draft Civil Society Early Warning Reporting Guidelines. These guidelines are not intended simply as reporting templates. They are designed to establish common standards for collecting, validating, analysing and sharing information in ways that improve the quality, credibility and usefulness of civil society contributions to continental and regional early warning processes. I encourage you to review these guidelines critically, drawing upon your practical experiences, so that the final product reflects both technical rigor and operational realities.

The same applies to the Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Management (CPRM) Framework for our CSO umbrellas ECONet and SAPPC. As we review this framework, I encourage participants to ask whether it genuinely supports coordinated action, clearly defines institutional responsibilities, and strengthens the link between early warning and early response. Our ambition should be to produce a framework that not only identifies risks but also supports practical decision-making and preventive action.

The workshop then progresses from policy and framework discussions to operational applications. Through simulation exercises, demonstrations and practical sessions, ECONet and SAPPC will have the opportunity to test, demonstrate and strengthen the functionality of their Regional Early Warning Systems. These sessions are particularly important because they allow us to move beyond concepts and demonstrate how early warning systems operate in practice.

Another important feature of this workshop is the opportunity to learn from other African experiences. The presentation by the AU's African Peer Review Mechanism will broaden our understanding of continental approaches to early warning, while the WANEP sessions will

provide practical lessons on governance, institutional management and sustainable operation of regional umbrella CSO early warning systems. We should approach these sessions not simply as presentations but as opportunities for peer-learning and exchange of good practices across institutions.

Finally, the workshop concludes with the transfer of ownership and continued operationalization of the regional platforms. This reflects an important principle of sustainability. Our objective is not to create systems that depend indefinitely on external support, but rather to strengthen regional institutions so that they can independently manage, maintain and continuously improve their own early warning capabilities while remaining connected to the broader African Peace and Security Architecture.

Distinguished participants,

By the end of this workshop, I hope we will have achieved several important outcomes.

First, I hope we will have developed a common understanding of the strategic role that regional civil society umbrellas play within Africa's conflict prevention architecture.

Second, I hope we will have validated ECONet's and SAPPC's practical reporting guidelines and conflict prevention frameworks that strengthen the quality and consistency of civil society reporting.

Third, I hope we will have enhanced the technical capacity of ECONet and SAPPC to operate their regional early warning and organizational development platforms effectively, and hence assure their strength contributes to the strength of the RECs/RMs and the AU.

Fourth, I hope we will have identified practical mechanisms for improving interoperability between regional civil society platforms, Regional Economic Communities, APRM and CEWS, while respecting institutional mandates and ownership.

Finally, I hope this workshop will strengthen trust among our institutions. Technology alone cannot prevent conflict. Reporting guidelines alone cannot prevent conflict. Sustainable conflict prevention depends upon trusted partnerships, shared standards, reciprocal information exchange and a common commitment to act before crises escalate.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Africa's future conflict prevention architecture will not be built by one institution working alone. It will be built through complementary institutions, connected systems, trusted partnerships and a shared commitment to protecting our communities from violent conflict. Every verified observation made by a community volunteer, every reporting and analysis made by regional CSO networks, and every decision taken by our regional and continental institutions contributes to that collective effort.

I therefore encourage all participants to engage openly, share their expertise generously, challenge ideas constructively and work together towards practical outcomes that will continue strengthening our collective capacity to anticipate, prevent and respond to conflict across our continent.

With these remarks, it is my honour to officially declare this workshop open.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Asanteni sana

Merci beaucoup

Shukran Jazilan

Muito Obrigado