H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, AUC Chairperson
by Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security

I am pleased to launch Peace Dividends – the online newsletter of the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) of the African Union Commission (AUC). The objective of this newsletter is to create greater awareness and enhance information-sharing of the governance, peace and security policy initiatives and actions of the PAPS Department.

The increasing complexity of the governance, peace and security landscape on the African continent cannot be overemphasised. The challenges in these areas are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

Our experience of the last 20 years has underscored the need to build on the lessons of the past – and to be open to innovation. Agenda 2063, Africa’s blueprint for regional integration and development, clearly encapsulates the nexus between peace, security and development.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

The continued and emerging threats to peace and security in several of our Member States remind us that silencing the guns will be a long process that should entail the concerted efforts of the AU, Member States, RECs, citizens and all stakeholders to commit to realise sustainable development, deepen democratic governance, and uphold peace and security.

...Through the AU institutional reforms, we put in place mechanisms that will allow our Union to be more effective, efficient and more fit for purpose. We made headways in restructuring, improving and putting systems in place that will yield greater results, while abiding by principles of transparency and accountability. While much work remains, we are bringing the AU closer to the people and strengthening Africa’s place on the global stage.

FOREWORD

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Conflict and crisis situations
The realization of the vision and aspiration of the African Union is dependent on a well-articulated strategy that is grounded in contemporary realities and firmly anchored in the political will of Africa’s leaders. In recognition of the need for a strong relationship between the Commission and the political leadership of the Union, towards the effective implementation of the Union’s priorities, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat paid a two-day working visit to the Chair of the African Union, President Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the meeting with the Chair of the Union, the two leaders discussed socio-economic developments, the continental response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation of peace and security on the continent, and the institutional reform of the Commission.

The nine priorities of President Tshisekedi as chair of the (Union Silencing the Guns in Africa; Implementing the AfCFTA and the African Commodities Strategy; Construction of Grand Inga hydropower project; Fight Against COVID-19; Development of Africa’s human capital; Promotion of Africa’s cultural heritage; Promotion of zero tolerance for gender-based violence, gender parity in the AU and in member states; Lay the groundwork for the African Humanitarian Agency, advocate on behalf of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons; Fight climate change) provides strategic guidance to the Commission on its efforts towards the realization of the aspirations of the Union.

Addressing the multiple governance and security challenges confronting the continent which have been exacerbated by the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic requires robust interventions backed by a political commitment at the continental, regional, and member state level to comprehensive implementation.
Between March and June 2021, the AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) undertook field missions to South Sudan, Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR) to assess first-hand the political, security and humanitarian situations and to engage with a diverse range of actors.

In South Sudan, the PSC followed up on the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement. In Sudan, the PSC assessed the progress made in the implementation of the Constitutional Declaration and the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement, the formation of the Transitional Government, and the removal of Sudan from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism. In CAR, the PSC examined the challenges arising from the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, and acknowledged the government’s efforts in returning to constitutional order.

The PSC convened several high-level sessions, including on Libya (see the Communiqué of the 997th meeting of the PSC held at the ministerial level on 18 May 2021 on the Situation in Libya, of the AU Peace and Security Department), Mali (see the Communiqué of 1001st meeting of the AU PSC on the situation in Mali, 1 June 2021, of the AU Peace and Security Department), and on Silencing the Guns in Africa.

The meeting dedicated to Covid-19 stressed the importance of universal access to the vaccines, while emphasising the need to scale...
up Africa’s vaccine manufacturing capacity, and the sharing of intellectual property.

The PSC renewed the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) until 31 December 2021. It also convened a session on emerging challenges and critical lessons for sustainable peacekeeping operations in Africa, as well as a meeting on women, peace, culture and gender inclusivity in Africa. The 13th Retreat of the PSC was held in May 2021 in Kenya, with a view to enhance its capacity in promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. The retreat focused on 1) the strategic vision and priority areas for the new AU PAPS portfolio, 2) improving the working methods of the PSC, 3) priority activities for the utilisation of the AU Peace Fund, and 4) monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for the implementation of the AU Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2030.

The Mediation and Dialogue Division of the PAPS Department provides dedicated support to the peacemaking efforts of the AU and its Member States. This includes support to high-level AU and Member State mediation, negotiation and facilitation engagements, as well as demand-driven, specialised technical deployments to AU Member States undergoing challenging political transitions.

As part of his good offices, the Chairperson of the AUC, Moussa Faki, has appointed several High Representatives – including to the Horn of Africa, Chad and Mali – to facilitate dialogue and mediation initiatives.

In August 2021, the High Representative for the Horn of Africa, former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, commenced engagement with all interlocutors in the region towards promoting and facilitating political dialogue, reconciliation and social cohesion. Basile Ikouébé, the High Representative in Chad, continues to engage national stakeholders, AU Member States and partners to mobilise support for the transitional roadmap aimed at restoring constitutional order.

In collaboration with other AUC departments, the PAPS Department has been instrumental in promoting the role of women in preventive diplomacy and mediation through its Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa). In May 2021, FemWise-Africa held a key training to strengthen the capacity of its members to effectively respond to crisis situations across the continent – with a specific emphasis on electoral disputes. It jointly organised a training on preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) with the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT).
Advancing human rights and transitional justice

The AUC commemorated the 27th Edition of the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda on 7 April 2021, with renewed continental commitment to fighting against hate speech and to protect human lives and dignity. The PSC subsequently hosted an open session on the theme, ‘Prevention of the Ideology of Hate, Genocide and Hate Crimes in Africa’.

In June 2021, the AU Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) adopted the Action Plan for the Human and Peoples’ Rights Strategy for Africa (2021–2031). This is intended to deepen respect for, as well as accelerate progress towards, the protection of African citizens’ human rights. Member States will take the lead in implementing the strategy, with the support of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and CSOs.

Additionally, the Department launched the African Youth for Transitional Justice (AY4TJ) platform as a pillar of the AU Youth for Peace initiative. The launch followed on from a training to promote impactful youth participation in transitional justice processes in Africa. This pioneer training focused on transitional justice practices in general – drawing from experiences across the globe and familiarising young peacebuilders with the AU Transitional Justice Policy. Youth engagement is critical in ensuring the effective implementation of the policy.

Good governance and democracy

The AUC deployed Election Observer Missions (EOMs) to several Member States between March and August 2021. These included Côte d’Ivoire, CAR, the Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Benin, Chad, Cape Verde, Algeria, Zambia and Ethiopia.

These multidimensional missions form part of the AU’s preventive diplomacy efforts. EOMs also identify programmatic intervention opportunities in support of Member States undergoing political transitions. Most notably in Zambia, the AUC – through its observer mission – facilitated the successful conduct of elections. This process saw a smooth transition of power to President Hakainde Hichilema.

As part of its efforts to advance public service administration, the PAPS Department organised the Second Conference of States Parties to the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration in April 2021. In the context of urbanisation and human settlement, the department – in collaboration with UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and UN-Habitat – launched a virtual series on the Harmonised Implementation Framework for the New Urban Agenda in Africa.
The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)/Security Sector Reform (SSR) Division within the PAPS Department participated in a joint field mission in June 2021 to Chad to follow up on AU support to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram.

The visit facilitated consultations on the development of technical tools and standard operating procedures (SOPs) on DDR. In line with the broader AU, UN and World Bank implementation framework on DDR, the AUC and the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) completed the development of training courses on the AU Operations Guidance Notes on DDR. In September, the PSC held an open session to commemorate Africa Amnesty Month, dedicated to the surrendering of illicit arms and ammunition.

The PAPS Department contributed to discussions on a model police law for Africa at the Pan African Parliament, in addition to supporting the organisation of the First Extra-Ordinary Steering Committee Meeting of the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL).

As part of its efforts to fully capacitate its multi-dimensional Peace Support Operations (PSOs) across Africa, the AU conducted a pilot training to review the curriculum of the African Standby Force (ASF) Civilian Foundation Course (CFC). A mandatory course for civilian experts, the CFC focuses on instruments and frameworks of AU PSOs.

The training, which took place at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Ghana from May to June 2021, brought together 17 women and men drawn from existing the African Standby Capacity (ASC) rosters.

The ASC roster is a database of civilians who are experts in various peacebuilding fields. The Commission and RECs/RMs are coordinating efforts to boost ASC roster numbers, while encouraging more women to apply. The ASF is one of the five pillars of the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).
The PAPS Department, in partnership with the Training for Peace (TfP) programme, is developing a gender-responsive toolkit and a curriculum on data analysis and gender mainstreaming in SSR.

The Gender Peace and Security Programme (GPSP) is also producing a booklet titled My Voice, My Action, to showcase women’s agency in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Moreover, the GPSP has also commissioned a study on women’s participation in AU PSOs.

The PAPS Department is conducting advocacy efforts on the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security and its 10-Year Implementation Plan.

In April 2021, the AU Diaspora Youth Initiative virtually launched the first Inter-generational Dialogues (IGD) on Silencing the Guns. The IGDs aim to promote discourse and raise awareness among diaspora youth on ending conflict in Africa. Diaspora youth from at least 18 European countries are part of the initiative and collaborate on issues related to culture, politics, human rights and development.

In March 2021, the AUC launched a Continental Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance. The strategy is intended to enhance peace and security initiatives, bilateral cooperation, as well as borderland development between and among neighbouring countries. It marks an important milestone in the implementation of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP).

The strategy also provides orientation and coordination of border policies at the continental, regional and national levels for the AU, Member States and the RECs to develop a shared and inclusive border governance.

The AU and its Member States celebrated the 11th edition of African Border Day on 7 June under the theme, ‘Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want’. The commemoration aims to popularise the importance of borders in promoting peace and continental integration across Africa.

It also provides an opportunity to sensitise member states, border communities, RECs, CSOs and academia on the role of borders in peace, security and development – as underlined in the AU Convention on Cross Border Cooperation (the ‘Niamey Convention’) and the newly launched strategy.
The Central African Republic

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission (SRCC) to the CAR, Matias Matondo, continues to lead AU efforts to support the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR, which was signed in February 2019.

Commissioner Bankole Adeoye visited Bangui in June 2021 as part of a joint AU-UN-EU-ECCAS working visit in solidarity with the people and government of the CAR. During the visit, the Commissioner reaffirmed the AU’s solidarity with the government and people of the CAR, and reiterated the AU’s commitment to help the country overcome its challenges.

Côte d’Ivoire

The SRCC to Côte d’Ivoire, Joséphine Mayuma-Kala, continued to engage with national stakeholders to support reconciliation and social cohesion. These efforts contributed to the return of political exiles to the country, including former President Laurent Gbagbo.

The AU Liaison Office (AULO) also contributed to a range of peacebuilding efforts in the country, including advice to the National Security Council on issues of religious extremism, the protection of girls, climate migration, illegal mining, deforestation and SSR.

The office supported women’s political leadership by engaging with female candidates and advocating for equal representation, as well as the expansion of the FemWise-Africa Network in the country. The SRCC facilitated the AU Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA).

Democratic Republic of Congo

The SRCC to the DRC, Michelle Ndiaye, continues to lead AU support efforts for post-conflict reconstruction, development and peace, while also monitoring the political and security situation in the country.

In April 2021, the SRCC joined the Commissioner in supporting President Félix Tshisekedi in his capacity as Chair of the Union, in the Kinshasa 1 negotiations on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt.

The office accompanied Wamkele Mene, the Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), in April and July 2021 during his engagements with senior DRC officials. These engagements were intended to catalyse the country’s ratification of the treaty creating the AfCFTA.

The AULO also supported AU Special Envoy for the African Medicines Agency (AMA), Michel Sidibe, to sensitise DRC authorities on the ratification of the protocol creating the AMA. These support activities complement ongoing efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2021, the AULO organised a tweet chat with young Congolese citizens on their role in peacebuilding and creating ‘The Africa We Want’.
Libya

The SRCC to Libya, Wahida Ayari, continues to support national efforts for peace, reconciliation, and democratic governance in the country. In April 2021, the AULO supported a two-day working visit by AUC Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat and PAPS Commissioner Bankole Adeoye to assist Libya in its search for durable peace, reconciliation and reconstruction.

The AUC continued its active participation in all tracks of the International Follow-up Committee on Libya (IFCL) of the Berlin Process and the preparatory meetings of the Berlin Conference 2, held in June 2021. At the Berlin Conference 2, the AU called for the full implementation of the Political Roadmap adopted by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Tunis in November 2020, which followed the Ceasefire Agreement of October 2020. The AU also called for an end to foreign interference – including the withdrawal of foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya. The continental body also highlighted the importance of the national reconciliation process and the protection of migrants, as well as the national election, which is slated for December 2021.

In May 2021, the AU revitalised the Tripartite Task Force (AU-UN-EU) on migration to address the situation of African migrants in Libya.

Mali

In July 2021, the PSC and the PAPS Commissioner engaged with Malian stakeholders to identify areas of support in the implementation of the transition programme. This included the conduct of elections for a return to civilian rule, and following up on the 2015 Peace Agreement.

The newly appointed AU High Representative to Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), Maman Sidikou, is leading efforts to support reconciliation and transition processes. The AULO has been working closely with the Transition Government and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Mediator for Mali, former Nigerian President Goodluck E. Jonathan, to ensure the implementation of the 2021–2022 Government Action Plan on the transition.
Somalia

The SRCC and Head of the AU Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), Francisco Madeira, continues to lead AU efforts for peace and stability in Somalia. The AU conducted an independent assessment from April to June 2021. The main objective of the assessment was to outline the organisation’s future engagement with the country beyond the current focus on supporting security efforts. A more expansive engagement approach would include stabilisation, institution-building, deradicalisation, and post-conflict reconstruction and development, as the central pillars of state-building in Somalia.

AMISOM continues to support communities in South Central Somalia with basic social services to alleviate hardships as part of its Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) initiative. This includes the construction of schools, health facilities and water wells. These QIPs are mostly implemented in areas that have been liberated from Al-Shabaab.

The mission also continued to push for Somalia to implement the 30%-women quota in both the Upper and Lower House of Parliament. AMISOM led a series of engagements with the participation of women’s rights activists, the youth, academics, CSOs and Members of Parliament.

South Sudan

The SRCC to South Sudan, Joram Biswaro, continues to lead AU efforts to support the peaceful implementation of the 2018 Revitalised Peace Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS). The SRCC engages with numerous political actors, including the EU, the Troika (the US, UK and Norway), the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the IGAD Special Envoy to South Sudan and the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC).

The AULO in Juba facilitated the visit of the PSC to the Rajaf Cantonment Site in June 2021. The occasion provided impetus for the government and international partners to increase funding and logistics support to the South Sudan SSR programme.

In June 2021, the AULO coordinated the first of several planned solidarity and fact-finding visits to crisis-ridden parts of South Sudan. These areas face challenges such as communal fighting, violent cattle rustling, child and women abduction, floods and locust invasion. The fact-finding mission was jointly undertaken with members of the African Diplomatic Corps, UNMISS, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) Liaison Office and RJMEC.

The PRC Chair, PSC Chair and PAPS Commissioner paying homage to African heroes and heroines who served and paid the ultimate sacrifice.
'One effect of sustained conflict is to narrow our vision of what is possible…’

Nelson Mandela