H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of Tanzania, and in her capacity as AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) Chairperson for May 2024, hosted a High-Level Colloquium to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the PSC.

The colloquium took place at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre in Dar es Salaam on 25 May under the theme “20 Years of AU PSC as a Standing Decision-Making Organ: The Next 2 Decades of the Peace and Security We Want in Africa”. It also marked Africa Day.

Participants included PSC members, AU organs, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), Tanzanian government officials, civil society organisations, think tanks, academic institutions, and diplomatic corps.

In her keynote address, the president stressed the importance of collective efforts in advancing peace and security in Africa. She underscored the need...
to prioritise conflict prevention by re-energising AU preventive diplomacy, early action, and strengthening conflict prevention mechanisms, including mediation, dialogue and reconciliation processes.

H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, AU Commission Chairperson, highlighted the PSC’s contributions to peace and security on the continent, emphasising the need for collective action to revitalise and reposition the Council to meet evolving challenges effectively. He implored the PSC to continue to discharge its mandate effectively in order to preserve its institutional integrity and legacy.

Goodwill messages were delivered by Hon. Moulaye Mohamed Laghdaf, Minister Secretary General to the Presidency of Mauritania, and Hon. John Mulimba, Uganda’s Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

The colloquium had two working sessions. Panel one comprised former Nigerian president H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, who chaired the first formal meeting of the PSC on 25 May 2004; former Tanzanian president H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, who participated in the same meeting; H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye, former president of Burundi and Member of the AU Panel of the Wise; H.E. Saidi Djinnit, the first AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, in whose tenure the first PSC meeting was held; and Nashiba Nakabira, African Youth Ambassador for Peace, Eastern Region. The panellists shared deep insights from the performance of the AU PSC over the past two decades, and highlighted critical lessons for the future.

Panel two was themed “Relevance, Practice and Performance: The Role of the PSC”. Panellists comprised Amb. Churchill Ewumbue Monono, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cameroon and PSC Member; Lady Justice Effie Owuor, Chairperson of the Panel of the Wise; H.E. Madam Bineta Diop, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Women, Peace and Security; Amb. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the AU and Head of the United Nations (UN) Office to the AU; El-Ghassim Wane, former director at the inception of the PSC and former UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative and Head of the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; Amb. Salvator Matata, Head of COMESA Liaison Office to the AU; Dr. Admore Mupoki Kambudzi, former head of the PSC Secretariat at the inception of the PSC and former director of the Peace and Security Directorate; Dr. Hesphina Rukato, former Deputy Chief of Staff, AU Commission and former Deputy CEO, NEPAD Secretariat; and Dr. Vasu Gounden, Executive Director
of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD).

Other highlights included a presentation on key milestones on data analysis on PSC@20 by Amb. Bankole Adeoye, and an award ceremony where Suluhu was presented a Special Medal Award by Mahamat. Suluhu presented a Special Award to Obasanjo, who chaired the first formal meeting of the PSC on 25 May 2004; Kikwete, who participated in the same meeting; and Ndayizeye and Mahamat.

Other medal recipients included Djinnit, Wane, Kambudzi, who all played important roles at the PSC’s inception; and Denise Ahidjo Awa and Mustoofa Mohammed, AUC interpreters at the time of the inception of the PSC. Current ambassadors/members of the AU PSC, Amb. Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS); Amb. Onanga-Anyanga; H.E. Madam Diop; Dr. Alhadji Sarjoh Bah, Director, Conflict Management Directorate; and Neema Nicholaus Chusi, Head, PSC Secretariat, received similar recognition.

In closing the High-Level Colloquium, Hon. January Makamba, Tanzania’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, reiterated his country’s commitment to fostering collaborative efforts to reduce conflict and promote cooperation. He said Africa was sufficiently endowed with the necessary resources to achieve the goal of Silencing the Guns on the continent.

The High-Level Colloquium concluded with the adoption of the Dar es Salaam Declaration, presented by Amb. Innocent Shiyo of Tanzania, signifying a historic commitment by the AU PSC and other African stakeholders to end conflicts and foster peace, security, and stability for the prosperity and integration of the continent.
Before the 20th Anniversary High-Level Colloquium, the University of Dar es Salaam hosted a Public Lecture titled “The Peace and Security we Want in Africa” on 24 May. The event was jointly organised with the AU to raise awareness ahead of the 20th anniversary celebration the following day.

In his welcoming remarks, the university’s Vice Chancellor Prof. William-Andey Lazaro Anangisye referenced the 2023 Ibrahim Index of African Governance and highlighted Tanzania’s significant contribution to peace and security in Africa. He emphasised the role of the University of Dar es Salaam in intellectual activism, shaping the “Dar es Salaam School of Thought”. Here both professors and students played a pivotal role in the production of knowledge and the ethos of university thinking and African liberation.

Amb. Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, stressed the importance of prioritising women’s empowerment and emancipation in the vision for peace. He also emphasised championing democracy and implementing robust child protection policies to effectively respond to conflicts.

“The peace we want must empower youth, and prioritise women’s emancipation, child protection and sustainable development,” he said, urging African youth to hold the AU accountable for peace and security over the next two decades.

In his keynote address, Adebayo Olukoshi, Professor of International Relations at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, set the stage for open and constructive deliberations on the symposium’s theme – “The Peace and Security we Want in Africa”. Olukoshi said with the advent of the new millennium and in global realities, the AU created the PSC in May 2004 to help provide more bite to conflict prevention and management in Africa. He said 20 years on, it’s clear that had it not existed, it would have been necessary to invent it now. He reviewed the successes and challenges encountered over the past 20 years and provided a number of observations that needed action.

These included the thought that there would be no durable peace if continental normative frameworks, institutions and leaders were ignored. He said Africa must “put her money where her mouth is”. The continent needs to “call a spade a spade when dealing with national, regional and continental issues of concern”, and also to “re-energise the concept of non-indifference in the face of persistent and emerging security and governance challenges”.

Similarly faced with governance deficits, the functioning of peer review mechanisms needed to be enhanced, he said. The PSC should broaden its consultations before taking decisions to ensure compliance, and Regional Economic Communities-AU synergies should be rationalised and made mutually reinforcing. “Time for change is now,” he said.

A panel discussion focused on the AU PSC’s achievements, challenges and opportunities. The first discussant, H.E. Amb. Lt. Gen. (Ret) Paul Ignace Mella, reviewed the evolution of peace support operations, their current complexities, and the need for comprehensive and integrated responses by Africa to conflicts.

The second, Eginald Mihanjo, Professor of Strategic Studies, told participants that the nature of insecurity
today took the form of irregular threats. He said strong economies called for strong defence, and increased freedom could lead to more insecurity threats. War had become an industry, he said, calling on the AU to address conflicts from the strategic lenses of generational legacies, and not short-termism.

The Public Lecture provided a platform for dialogue among various stakeholders including students, youth, think tanks, researchers, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector. It also offered an opportunity to reflect on the AU PSC’s 20th anniversary achievements, challenges and prospects in promoting peace, security and stability in Africa.

Discussions revolved around the state of peace and security in Africa and the PSC’s role in conflict prevention, management and resolution. Participants stressed the need to strengthen early warning systems and conflict prevention mechanisms; prioritise inclusive mediation, dialogue, and reconciliation processes; empower women and youth as agents of positive change; and invest in capacity-building initiatives and grassroots resilience.

In his closing remarks, Hon. January Makamba, Tanzania’s Foreign Affairs Minister, commended the speakers for their contributions to a “truly enriching lecture” aimed at ensuring peace and security in Africa. He acknowledged the continued support of all international and regional stakeholders, including CSOs, think tanks, and academic institutions, and called for the AU’s stronger determination and collective engagement in striving for the “peace we want in Africa”.

It is noteworthy that this beautiful, prestigious institution was the first university in the then Tanganyika, built from a fundraising campaign by former president Julius “Mwalimu” Nyerere among Tanganyika African National Union members and the public.
INDUCTION OF THE AU PSC MILITARY STAFF COMMITTEE IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA

An AU PSC Military Staff Committee (MSC) Induction Programme was held from 27-29 May in Dar es Salaam. The event, officiated by Lt. Gen. Salum Haji Othman, Chief of Staff of the Tanzania People’s Defence Forces, focused on clarifying the MSC’s role in supporting the PSC’s work. It involved a comprehensive analysis and examination of various conflict and security situations across the continent.

AU COMMEMORATES KWIBUKA30 WITH A RENEWED PROMISE TO PREVENT GENOCIDE

On 7 April the AU Commission, in collaboration with the Rwandan Embassy in Ethiopia, solemnly observed the 30th commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda (Kwibuka30), under the theme “Remember-Unite-Renew”.

This was a call to all AU Member States, continental organisations and civil society organisations (CSOs) to reaffirm their unwavering support to preventing and fighting genocide, and to ensure it never happens again, in Rwanda or anywhere else.

The commemoration featured various activities, including a “walk to remember” in honour of the victims and survivors, prayers by religious leaders, and a minute’s silence to pay homage to those who fought to end the genocide. There was a candle-lighting ceremony as a sign of hope and resilience, and a documentary highlighting the root causes of the genocide against the Tutsi. A video showed recorded testimony by a survivor who bravely shared her ordeal and that of her family during the 1994 genocide.
The event was attended by AU Member State representatives, AU organs, religious institutions, diplomatic corps members, human rights institutions, intergovernmental organisations, United Nations agencies and other international organisations, CSOs, think tanks, academic institutions, and members of the Rwandan community in Addis Ababa.

Earlier on 4 April, as part of the commemoration, the AU Peace and Security Council held an open session on hate crimes and the fight against genocide ideology in Africa. The AU Commission staff also observed a minute’s silence on 8 April 2024 at the AU Headquarters.

Another key highlight was AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat’s appointment of Senegal’s Adama Dieng as the first AU Special Envoy for the prevention of genocide and other mass atrocities. Dieng, a former Under Secretary-General and UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, is to drive the AU agenda to combat the ideology of hate and genocide in Africa.

INAUGURAL AMBASSADORIAL-LEVEL JOINT CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF AU PSC AND ECOWAS MSC

The AU Commission’s Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department facilitated the first joint consultative meeting of the AU PSC and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Mediation and Security Council (MSC) at ambassadorial level in Abuja on 24 April.

This formed part of efforts to enhance the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and Regional Economic Communities (REC) organs. Emphasising comparative advantage and complementarity, the meeting focused on the following agenda items:

• Contextualising AU and ECOWAS cooperation in peace, governance and security.
• Formulating a concerted strategy to sustain zero tolerance for unconstitutional changes of government and combat terrorism effectively.
• Mobilising resources for regional and continental peace operations – sharing experience and lessons.
• Building synergy, coherence, coordination and complementarity.

Among other recommendations, they urged the operationalisation and revitalisation of existing regional security mechanisms such as the Nouakchott and Djibouti processes. Both entities agreed to institutionalise their cooperation by holding annual joint consultative meetings alternately at their Addis Ababa and Abuja headquarters. The second meeting is scheduled for 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
Commissioner Bankole Adeoye paid a working visit to Ottawa from 10-13 April at the invitation of the Canadian government. The visit was designed to strengthen ties between the AU and Canada’s government, and was a follow-up to the AUC Chairperson’s visit to the country in 2022. That was to further deepen cooperation in key areas, particularly in promoting democracy and good governance.

Commissioner Adeoye and Canada’s Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly discussed the upcoming High-Level AU Commission-Canada dialogue as a platform to enhance shared priorities. These include peace and security, the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2719 (2023), and the future of peacekeeping. This meeting, at the Government Guest House, was followed by a working breakfast with Joly and her team at Global Affairs Canada. There they agreed to strengthen cooperation especially in peace and security.

The Commissioner was briefed by representatives of the Sub-Saharan Africa Branch of Global Affairs Canada. They discussed elections, the African Peace and Security Architecture, peace support operations and assessed contributions, and the upcoming High-Level Canada-AU Commission dialogue.

Hon. Robert Oliphant, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada, met with Adeoye, and discussed how Canada, guided by the AU’s Agenda 2063, could invest more in development, governance, peace and security in Africa.

On 11 April, Adeoye addressed the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and International Trade of Canada on the richness of Africa in terms of resources and youth. This was followed by an engaging interactive session.

The Commissioner also held consultations with Professor Teddy Y. Samy, Director at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, along with the African Diplomatic Corps in Ottawa. There he briefed the audience on Africa’s conflict landscape and the AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department’s efforts in promoting good governance, mediation, human rights, election, security sector reform/disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, and peace and security, in line with Agenda 2063.

Adeoye met with Hon. Natasha Kim, Associate Deputy Minister of National Defence, and held discussions on Canada’s support to enhancing AU PSOs, counter-terrorism capacities, and operationalising the African Standby Force and the prospects of UNSC Resolution 2719.

The Panel also reviewed key initiatives such as joint electoral observation preventive diplomacy missions in support of peaceful and credible elections, and a fact-finding mission to South Sudan.

On 26 April, Panel Members held informal consultations with representatives from AU Member States undergoing political transitions to review progress and challenges. The Panel also engaged with the AU High-Level Ad Hoc Committee on South Sudan and regional countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Sudan, to synchronise efforts supporting South Sudan’s forthcoming elections.

Kanté outlined critical recommendations for enhancing the Panel’s impact, including deepening its collaboration with similar mechanisms at the regional levels under the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise Network) and supporting the formation of a permanent framework for political dialogue in AU Member States to enhance inclusivity and broaden participation.

Hon. Lady Justice (Retired) Effie Owuor was elected the next Chairperson of the Panel from May 2024 to February 2025.

The AU High-Level Panel for Sudan (HLP-Sudan), chaired by H.E. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, with Panel Members H.E. Dr. Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe and Amb. Francisco Madeira, has undertaken three shuttle diplomacy missions in the region since its inauguration in January 2024. This is in line with the AU and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) roadmaps for the resolution of the conflict in Sudan.
During its first mission the Panel visited Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Its first stop was Port Sudan, where it engaged with senior officials of the Sudanese Sovereignty Council, including its leader, H.E. General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. The HLP-Sudan also met representatives of the signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement for Peace in Sudan, political parties, FFC-Democratic Bloc, women’s groups, the Humanitarian Aid Commission, civil society, university vice-chancellors, the media, and others.

The Panel then visited Cairo, where they consulted with the League of Arab States, senior officials in the Foreign Affairs Ministry, and a broad cross-section of Sudanese political and civilian actors based in Egypt. In Addis Ababa, the Panel engaged with representatives of the Rapid Support Forces and the civilian coalition Taqadum.

Finally, in Djibouti, the Panel held discussions with the Executive Secretary of IGAD. The Panel was granted an audience by H.E. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of Djibouti and the current Chair of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State, where they discussed the AU-IGAD collaboration in efforts to resolve the Sudan crisis.

Furthermore, the HLP-Sudan discussed with all stakeholders the urgent need to convene an inclusive Sudanese political dialogue that would enable the return of stability in Sudan.

During its second shuttle diplomacy mission, the HLP-Sudan revisited Port Sudan, to continue its consultations with General Al-Burhan and other members of the Sudan Sovereignty Council, and reiterated its call for an inclusive political dialogue. The HLP-Sudan also met with H.E. Taye Selassie, Ethiopia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, who reassured its support for its mandate to restore peace and stability in Sudan.

In the third shuttle diplomacy, AU and IGAD jointly visited South Sudan and Uganda, where they engaged the Heads of State and senior government officials to support their ongoing mediation efforts, especially towards the upcoming Sudanese-led dialogue. The Panel also met with Sudanese people displaced in these countries, including representatives from civil society, professional groups, women, and youth, to seek their views on resolving the conflict.
The AU Commission, in collaboration with Morocco’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, organised the 3rd Specialized Training for AU Election Observers from 29 April to 3 May in Rabat, Morocco.

H.E. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, in his opening remarks said: “Africa should have its own teams of observers to endorse electoral processes, validate results, and thereby avoid post-electoral disputes.”

AU Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Commissioner H.E. Amb. Bankole Adeoye said: “Since 2022, the Specialized Training of AU Election Observers has trained over 150 African experts in election observation methodology based on the AU Mission’s Curriculum.”

The training, which comprised 75 trainees, mostly youth and women from nearly 50 African countries, included an open brainstorming session on election issues with senior officers from the AU Commission and other African experts. It also included the dos and don’ts of election observation, and case studies. This year, on 2 May, PAPS and the Policy Center for the New South (PCNS) held the first ever Dialogue-Seminar on Elections and Democracy in Africa. Themed “New Perspectives, Lessons Learned, and Best Practices”, it sought to enhance the understanding of key issues related to elections, democracy and political stability in Africa. It also addressed the crucial role of free, fair, and transparent elections in establishing stability, legitimacy, and inclusive governance in Africa. Karim El Aynaoui, Executive President of the PCNS, opened the seminar. This was followed by Adeoye’s keynote speech. AU officials, civil society organisations, and media professionals engaged in peer learning and collaborative explorations of strategies for advancing democratic governance in Africa.
The Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Department, under PAPS Commissioner Amb. Bankole Adeoye, in collaboration with Sierra Leone and Algeria, convened a historic online interactive consultation on 22 May.

They met with African civil society organisations (CSOs), think and do tank groups, media, and academia to discuss the geopolitical and strategic considerations for expanding the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and developments around it.

The Common African Position (CAP) on the UNSC Reform (Ezulwini Consensus) was adopted by AU Member States in 2005. It calls for allocating two seats in the permanent category with all its prerogatives and privileges, including the right of veto, and two additional seats in the Council’s non-permanent category, with a total of five seats.

The Consensus led to the establishment of a committee of 10 Heads of State and Government (the C-10), which is coordinated by Sierra Leone. The C-10 has been in the forefront championing for the implementation of the CAP. The focus of the consultations between Adeoye and African CSOs was to obtain the input and support of participants to popularise and accelerate this CAP before the 11th Ministerial Meeting of the C-10 on the UNSC Reform. This will be held on 9 and 10 June in Algiers, Algeria.

During the consultations, Adeoye said the AU had been a fundamental actor in the enforcement of peace and security on the continent. However, the challenges posed by Africa’s limited representation on the UNSC restricted the AU’s ability to deliver effective and concrete conflict resolution.

He said the quest for the UNSC Reform was a legitimate demand. In efforts to support conflict resolution in Africa, it was impossible to dissociate it from peace operations, largely concentrated on the continent and implemented by the UNSC, he said. Algeria and Sierra Leone’s ambassadors shared similar views and justification for the AU’s position.

The session was moderated by the head of the AU’s Economic, Social and Cultural Council Secretariat, William Carew.
MEETING OF THE EXPANDED MECHANISM ON SUDAN

On 29 April, the AU convened a meeting of the Expanded Mechanism on Sudan, to review the recent political and security developments in the country. The AU High-Level Panel on Sudan spoke on its activities and plans for the next phase. The United States, as one of the conveners of the Jeddah Peace Process, spoke on preparations for the next round of negotiations. France, Germany and the European Union, as the conveners of the Paris Conference, reported on its outcomes. And the United Nations (UN) spoke about the UN Security Council meeting on Sudan.

Participants examined approaches to engaging the belligerents and relevant Sudanese stakeholders towards ending the conflict. The AU and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and partners agreed to intensify and coordinate their efforts to compel the belligerents in Sudan to agree to and uphold a ceasefire. And more urgently, to facilitate immediate humanitarian access in Sudan and neighbouring countries.

In line with the AU-IGAD Roadmap for the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan and through the High-Level Panel on Sudan, the AU is committed to the coordination of all regional and international stakeholders and regular engagements with all partners to ensure that efforts are aligned with the interests of the Sudanese people and the region.

AU CONCLUDES JSA IN SUPPORT OF SOMALIA POST-ATMIS SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

The AU undertook a joint strategic assessment (JSA) mission in Somalia from 24-30 April. The mission was mandated by a decision made at the 1205th AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) meeting about Somalia's briefing on the government's proposal for a post-AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) security arrangement.

The JSA focused on the overall situation in Somalia, including the political, security, humanitarian and human rights dimensions, in order to better position the AU’s engagement in support of a post-ATMIS security arrangement in the country. The AU team met with key stakeholders, including representatives of Somalia’s government, Federal Member States, civil society organisations, United Nations (UN) systems including the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia, UN Support Office in Somalia, and UN Country Team, ATMIS, police- and troop-contributing countries’ ambassadors, and international partners.

The JSA draft report will be presented to the AU PSC soon.
ORIENTATION, TRAINING OF THE THIRD COHORT OF AFRICAN YOUTH AMBASSADORS FOR PEACE (AYAP)

The orientation and induction of the third cohort of African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAP) took place in Addis Ababa from 29 April to 3 May. Training focused on the AYAP’s mandate and intervention on youth, peace and security as stipulated in the Continental Framework for Youth, Peace and Security. There was also an introduction to the AU peace and security mechanisms/architecture, and advocacy and diplomacy skills and their role in elections came under the spotlight.

Amb. Bankole Adeoye, in his opening remarks, shared the AU’s priorities in governance, peace and security. He congratulated the five AYAP for accepting the invitation to serve the continent with integrity as Pan Africanists.

AU WORKSHOP ON CYBER DIPLOMACY

The AU Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) jointly organised a cyber diplomacy workshop for AU Member State embassies and permanent missions.

The workshop, held on 15 and 16 April in Addis Ababa, sought to scale up cyber diplomacy efforts at the AU, raise awareness on existing cyber threats and key priorities for cybersecurity, and foster discussions among the diplomatic community on the nature and extent of these threats.

In his opening remarks on behalf of PAPS Commissioner Bankole Adeoye, Amb. Calixte Aristide Mbari, Head of Democracy, Elections and Constitutionalism at the AU, said: “We are witnessing cyberspace increasingly becoming a new ground for geopolitical competition and sometimes attacks against national security. Therefore, the need to build trust and confidence in cyberspace among states is becoming increasingly pertinent.”

DiploFoundation’s Vladimir Radunović and Dr. Ferdinand von Weyhe, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Germany in Addis Ababa, also delivered remarks at the opening. Participants were drawn from AU Member State embassies, the AU Commission, the German Mission in Addis Ababa and GIZ.

Cognisant of increasing cyber threats and challenges, AU Member States developed the AU Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention), which was adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU in 2014 and entered into force on 8 June 2023.
MENTAL HEALTH, PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT TO THOSE IN CONFLICT, EMERGENCY AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

The AU organised a workshop on developing AU guidelines for addressing the mental health and psychosocial support needs of people in conflict, emergency, and post-conflict situations. The workshop, from 23-25 April in Monrovia, brought together experts and practitioners in peace and security, health, human rights, humanitarian aid, migration, and civil society organisations and representatives from communities working on mental health and wellbeing.

The participants reviewed a 2021 draft to incorporate best practices for protecting and promoting mental health and psychosocial wellbeing in conflict, emergencies, and post-conflict contexts. They exchanged views on strategies to ensure effective responses in AU and United Nations programmes designed for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) at the continental, regional, and national levels.

The workshop produced the first draft of the MHPSS Guidelines to address mental health at the continental, regional, and national levels. The process has contributed to identifying and mapping out key stakeholders who can drive mental health at all levels in the community.

AU STRENGTHENS APPROACH TO ADDRESS CLIMATE SECURITY RISKS

The AU’s Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Department, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), held a retreat in Addis Ababa from 9-11 May.

The Interdepartmental Retreat on the Climate Change, Peace, and Security Nexus also aimed to contribute to the methodology for developing the Common African Position (CAP) on climate change, peace and security.

The retreat brought together AU departments, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms, research organisations and development partners to explore the intricate links between climate change, peace and security in Africa.
Presentations were made by Conflict Management Director Dr. Alhadji Sarjoh Bah; Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy Director Harsen Nyambe; German Special Envoy for International Climate Policy H.E. Amb. Jennifer Lee Morgan; and H.E. Amb. Anthony Agotha: Ambassador at Large – Special Envoy for Climate and Environment, European External Action Service. Other speakers included Amb. Mohamed Nasr, Director of Climate, Environment and Sustainable Development at the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and COP27 Lead Negotiator; and Amb. Ahmed Abdel-Latif, Director-General, Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding.

Amb. Sinead Walsh, Director, Climate Change, Irish Department of Foreign Affairs; Myan Tantawy, Climate, Peace and Security, United Arab Emirates Permanent Mission to the United Nations (New York) and COP28 Presidency; and Dr Seth Osafo, Legal Adviser to the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change, also addressed delegates.

The retreat acknowledged the importance of cooperation between PAPS and ARBE and identified key areas for action, including the development of a CAP to provide a unified approach to addressing the climate-peace-security nexus. In addition, a collaborative framework will be established through the AU Climate Security Cluster to effectively address cascading climate security risks in Africa.

The CAP will be developed through consultations in the AU’s five regions. PAPS and ARBE will convene regional consultation workshops to inform the CAP. It is anticipated that the AU will present the CAP at COP29 in Azerbaijan in November 2024. In March 2025, a workshop of climate security experts and partners will be held to develop a comprehensive African Strategy and Action Plan on the Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus.

THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY ORGANISES INAUGURAL TRAINING ON BASIC OFFICE ADMINISTRATION AND WRITING STYLE FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE FOR THE GENERAL SERVICES STAFF

- 13 MAY 2024 -

In November 2022, the Training for Peace (TfP) programme assisted the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security to undertake a Training Needs Assessment (TNA). Although the TNA primarily addressed the needs of the substantive staff, it clearly emphasised the importance of enhancing the capabilities of the general services staff (GS-Staff) to support the Department’s objectives effectively. The need for training and capacity development was also emphasised during the Department’s pre-retreat preparations with the general staff in August 2023.

The GS-Staff is the Department’s support framework, supporting its overall functioning and performance. They are, therefore, a critical pillar for enabling the effective and efficient delivery of the Department’s mandate. In recognition of the need to enhance the capacity of the GS-Staff to support the effective delivery of the Department’s mandate, the Department, with the support of the TfP, organised a two-day training on Basic Office Management and Writing Style for Official Correspondence for thirty General Services Staff of the Department in May 2024.

The training was designed to equip the general staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support the Department’s technocrats in implementing its mandate. By enhancing their capacity coherently, systematically, and in an integrated manner, the training enables the general staff to play a more active and effective role in the Department’s operations.

Through participatory adult training and learning methodologies, the training raised awareness among the general staff about their role in the change management process. It enhanced their knowledge of general office management and administrative functions and provided them with human skills and office etiquette, including telephone skills and meeting and conference planning.

At the end of the training, participants gained a deeper understanding of their roles in the change management process and how best to effectively support their units and divisions, ensuring the smooth implementation of the Department’s mandate.
The Fourth AU and China Dialogue on Human and Peoples’ Rights, held on 22 April at the AU’s Headquarters in Addis Ababa, focused on deepening collaboration and charting joint action in key human rights and development areas.

The dialogue considered the unique historical, cultural, and political landscapes influencing human rights practices in Africa and China. Participants reflected on the promotion and protection of the right to development and education, business and human rights in Africa and China, human rights and recent technologies, and partnership and cooperation between the AU and China.

The deliberations encompassed multifaceted discussions on human rights, resulting in a nuanced understanding of shared priorities and delineating concrete pathways for cooperation in the areas of business, education, and technology.

AU, CHINA RENEW THEIR COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS

The highlights of the training were the concrete recommendations generated during the change management process on ways through which the G-Staff could meaningfully participate and contribute to the ongoing change process at the Department and the participants’ development of a process flow for the logistical arrangement of an emergency meeting of the Peace and Security Council.

The knowledge acquired will, it is hoped, enhance the Department’s efforts to implement its mandate.
The AU’s Director of Governance and Conflict Prevention, Patience Chiradza, who led the AU delegation, underscored the enduring relationship of mutual respect, collaboration, and a shared commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, as exemplified in previous editions of the dialogue. She highlighted the imperative of prioritising development efforts alongside a commitment to sustainable development agendas as expressed in the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights preamble.

The Chinese delegation was led by H.E. Yang Xiaokun, the Foreign Affairs Ministry’s Special Representative for Human Rights. From China’s perspective, which aligns with the AU’s, the right to development is a foundational pillar underpinning all other human rights. China’s own developmental trajectory serves as a testament to the transformative power of sustained progress. Participants included officials from China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mission of China to the AU, the AU Commission, the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights. The dialogue demonstrated both parties’ strong, unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of human and peoples’ rights.

### UPCOMING PAPS EVENTS

**2 - 3 JULY, 2024**

Aswan Forum, Cairo

**PAPS Department Retreat, 5-7 July 2024**

now rescheduled to September 2024

**18 - 21 JULY, 2024**

Mid-Year Summit, Accra

**20 JULY, 2024**

AU Inter-Regional Knowledge Exchange (I-RECKE) on Early Warning and Conflict Prevention / the African Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4Peace) Side Meeting