The Fifth meeting of the African Union Steering Committee on Security Sector Reform (SSR) concludes in Addis Ababa

The Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, African Union Commission (AUC) organized the 5th African Union / Regional Economic Communities (RECs) SSR Steering Committee meeting, from 22 to 23 November 2023, at the AU Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, following the conclusion of the AU SSR Conference under the theme: “The AU SSR Policy Framework, a Decade of Implementation: Successes, Challenges, and Perspectives for the Future”.

The AU SSR Steering Committee was established on 4 September 2019. The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 874th meeting held on 5 September 2019, commended the AU Commission for establishing the SSR Steering Committee and also recommended the committee to work closely with Member States in implementing SSR in the Continent. It is in this regard that the AU Commission established a triannual SSR Africa Forum and an annual Steering Committee, where the AU, Regional Economic Communities, the UN, and international partners can jointly identify priorities, align their approaches, and provide guidance to Member States on ways and means to enhance and streamline security sector governance in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution.

This year’s steering committee meeting started by adopting the report of the fourth meeting of the AU SSR Steering Committee Meeting. Ms Jocelyne Nahimana, AU Expert on SSR in the Governance and Conflict Prevention Directorate of AUC, then presented AUC’s Report on the progress made in supporting Member States to implement their SSR Policies and strategies, in line with the AU SSR Policy framework and on the status of the implementation of the recommendations made by the fourth meeting of the AU SSR Steering Committee. She further gave insights on the current status of partnerships and funding of
security sector reform processes, in line with the AU SSR framework. Each REC/RM provided an update on its regional support to encourage SSR initiatives in Member States and especially on issues related to SSR partnerships, Financing and Coordination.

Participants proceeded to a Consultative session on the draft AU Operational Guidance Note “Oversight and Accountability for the Security Sector”, which the Commission, in partnership with the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF), has been developing since April 2023.

In the following Session, participants presented their reflections on the outcomes and recommendations of the conference “The AU SSR Policy Framework, a Decade of Implementation: Successes, Challenges, and Perspectives for the Future” on the 21 and 22 of November 2023, in order to identify concrete steps to strengthen cooperation and to enhance future implementation of the AU SSR Policy Framework, also agreed to submit the recommendations to the AUPSC for strategic guidance on the way forward.

The steering committee also revised the three-year strategic plan and program that is aimed at enabling the AUC, in collaboration with member states, RECs/RMs, and partners, to continue supporting the design and implementation of nationally owned and led SSR processes, including through establishing coordinated and integrated approaches among national, regional, and international actors. Participants then validated an updated version of the TOR for the AU SSR Steering Committee and to use it as a guidance for the work of the committee regarding the implementation of the AU SSR Policy Framework, the support to member states and the sensitization of SSR across the continent.

Before concluding the 5th Steering Committee meeting, participants agreed on the actions to be taken to enhance the implementation of the AU SSR Policy Framework for the next ten years in line with the three-year AU SSR Strategy.

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