

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Venue: Abuja, Nigeria

Workshop on Capacity Building on Compliance and Confidence Building in Peace Agreements

Strengthening Peacebuilding Capacity in the Horn of Africa and Reinforcing AU Efforts Beyond the Signing of Agreements

The African Union Commission (AUC), through the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), convened a Capacity Building Workshop on Compliance and Confidence Building in Peace Agreements from 13 to 16 December 2025 in Abuja, Nigeria.

Funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the workshop brought together representatives of the AU High-Level Panel mandated to oversee the implementation of the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (P-COHA) H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, and H.E. Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; the Deputy Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission to Somalia (DSRCC); representatives of PAPS; senior officials of the AfDB; technical experts and consultants on peace agreements; current and former Heads of Mission and peace monitors from AU Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mechanisms (MVCM) mission; senior military officers; and other AU officials.

The workshop, themed “*Strengthening Monitoring and Confidence Building within African Union Peace Missions*,” provided a collaborative platform for participants to deepen their understanding of compliance and confidence-building in peace agreements. It facilitated the sharing of best practices and lessons learned from AU-led missions, including Ethiopia, validated the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the selection of the Head of Mission and Teams of African Experts under the AU-MVCM mission, and enhanced coordination for the effective implementation of peace agreements.

The main objectives of the workshop were to strengthen the AU’s operational capacity to monitor, verify, and enforce compliance with peace agreements; equip AU staff, experts, and consultants with practical skills on compliance and confidence-building; foster coordination among AU departments, AfDB, and key partners; and develop actionable recommendations to improve compliance monitoring mechanisms. The workshop also aimed to share experiences from Ethiopia and other African contexts to better capacitate future peace support missions.

Participants were encouraged to propose practical, action-oriented strategies aligned with African aspirations, with a strong emphasis on citizen-centred peace processes and the protection of the rights and well-being of Africans affected by conflict.

Opening the workshop, Sheku Tejan Sesay, MVCM Coordinator, acknowledged the invaluable support of the AfDB and international partners, including Norway, the United

Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, Ireland and the European Union, noting that the collaboration reflects global solidarity, technical excellence, and African ownership, key pillars for strengthening compliance mechanisms and achieving durable peace.

Also speaking at the workshop, Ambassador Salah Hammad, representing the Director of the Conflict Management Directorate (CMD), underscored that the discussions were critical not only for strengthening current missions but also for informing the design and effectiveness of future ones. He highlighted the need to continuously enhance the capacity of monitoring teams and to address financial and resource constraints that affect their work. While the Pretoria Peace Agreement served as a key case study, he emphasised the importance of broadening discussions to include other peace agreements across Africa to promote experience-sharing and mutual learning.

“As we exchange experiences and best practices, we must remain guided by one fundamental principle: the well-being of African citizens. Every life lost is one too many. Protecting African lives must remain our ultimate objective,” he stated.

Dr. Abdul Kamara, Director General of the African Development Bank, highlighted AfDB’s technical assistance in promoting regional stability and crisis containment across Africa, including support for dialogue, facilitated negotiations, and the successful conclusion of peace agreements. He emphasised that peace and development are inseparable, two sides of the same coin.

While acknowledging the substantial resources required for peacekeeping and peacebuilding, Dr. Kamara stressed that *“signing a peace agreement is only the beginning—implementation is where the real work lies.”*

The workshop featured insightful presentations by Air Marshal (retired) John Brian Chikonzo, former Chief of Staff of the African Standby Force (ASF), on strategic experiences of the ASF, and Ambassador Mouktar Osman Karie, Deputy Head of AUSSOM, on operational lessons from Somalia. Discussions highlighted the complex and interlinked challenges facing peace efforts, followed by a panel on challenges and recommendations. Participants also underscored the importance of resource-sharing among AU missions and commended the AU’s financial accountability and implementation mechanisms, particularly in the Ethiopian peace process, as critical tools for building trust, enhancing transparency, and supporting the implementation of the Pretoria Peace Accord.

Further presentations focused on the strategic and operational experiences of the AU MVCMM, highlighting achievements, success stories, challenges, and the AU’s continued efforts to sustain political dialogue in the implementation of the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA).

Key thematic areas discussed included compliance mechanisms in peace agreements; confidence-building tools and procedures; operationalisation of monitoring missions; lessons and challenges from AU MVCMM operations; coordination with national, regional, and international stakeholders; and drafting and reporting compliance observations. Participants also deliberated on draft guidelines for the selection of the Head of Mission and the Team of African Experts (TAEs).

Overall, the workshop enhanced participants’ understanding of compliance and confidence-building frameworks, strengthened capacities for monitoring, verification, and reporting on peace agreement implementation, consolidated best practices from previous missions, and

produced practical recommendations for institutionalising compliance and accountability mechanisms within AU peace operations.

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Editor's Note

About the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (P-CoHA)

Brokered by the AU, through a High-Level Panel, the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (P-CoHA) was signed on 2 November 2022 between the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) after two years of conflict. The mandate of the Agreement was subsequently endorsed by the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 1120th meeting on 9 November 2022.

Article 11 of this landmark Agreement entrusts the African Union, through the Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mechanism (MVCM), with the responsibility to monitor, verify, and ensure compliance with its provisions, an undertaking central to peace, stability, and reconciliation in the Horn of Africa.

About the African Union Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mechanism (AU-MVCM)

In a bid to ensure the implementation of the P-COHA, the AU-Monitoring Verification and Compliance Mechanism (AU-MVCM) Mission was established in the Tigray Region on 29 December 22 under the guidance of the Chairperson of AUC and the Decision of the PSC.

The AU-MVCM plays a critical role in monitoring and verifying adherence to the provisions of the CoHA. Since its establishment, the Mission, comprising the Team of African Experts (TAEs) and Liaison Officers (LOs) from the Ethiopian National Defence Force and the Tigray People's Liberation Force (TPLF), has made significant contributions and recorded notable achievements in advancing the P-CoHA.

Through impartial reporting and engagement, the Mechanism builds confidence among the parties and facilitates sustained political dialogue aimed at improving implementation in the Tigray region.

The AU-MVCM seeks to safeguard the integrity of the Permanent COHA and strengthen African ownership and agency in peace implementation processes.

About the Pretoria Agreement

The Pretoria Agreement serves as the guiding framework for the AU-MVCM mission and comprises 15 articles. Key provisions include:

- Article 3: Permanent Cessation of Hostilities
- Article 4: Protection of Civilians
- Article 5: Humanitarian Access
- Article 6: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)
- Article 11: Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance with the P-COHA

The implementation framework is further guided by the Nairobi I and Nairobi II Declarations, which complement and operationalise the Pretoria Agreement.