16TH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE EU AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE (APSA) SUPPORT PROGRAMME
18-20 NOVEMBER, 2019

AND

2ND STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EARLY RESPONSE MECHANISM (ERM), 21-22 NOVEMBER

Double Tree Hilton Hotel, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

OPENING REMARKS BY DR. ADMORE KAMBUDZI, DIRECTOR, PEACE AND SECURITY DEPARTMENT, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION
Our respects to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Host;
Mr. Didacus Kaguta Baz, Project Coordinator APSA, Representing the Executive Secretary of the East African Community;
Ambassador Hadiza Mustapha, Advisor on Peace, Security and Governance, Bureau of the Chairperson of the AUC;
Esteemed Directors and Colleagues from the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms;
Mr. Thomas HUYGHEBAERT, Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to the African Union
Colleagues from the AU Commission and the European Union;
Representatives of Civil Society Organisations
Distinguished Participants;
Good Morning!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Leadership of the African Union Commission, to this beautiful city of Dar es Salaam, venue of our 16th European Union Support Programme to the African Peace and Security Architecture (EU-APSA) Steering Committee Meeting, which for the first time is being held back-to-back with the 2nd Early Response Mechanism (ERM) Steering Committee Meeting.
As you would recall, our last APSA Steering Committee meeting was held in Casablanca, Morocco in December 2018, hosted by our Colleagues of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA). That Meeting provided us the opportunity to further consolidate areas of convergence in the process leading to the formulation of the EU APSA IV Support Programme.

In view of our principle of holding these EU Support Programme to APSA meetings on a regional rotational basis, I am delighted that the East African Community is hosting us here today. Hence, from the very onset, I would like to sincerely thank the EAC for this commitment and for the good arrangements made.

Equally, we extend our gratitude to the people and Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for their warm hospitality and for the excellent facilities placed at our disposal to ensure success of this meeting.

Distinguished participants, the continuous implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), in linkage with the African Governance Architecture (AGA) enables the AU, the RECs
and RMs to implement concrete actions and objectives aimed at achieving a conflict-free Africa. The AU Heads of State and Government have decided to rid the continent of violent conflicts and end the suffering of the people. The AU Peace and Security Council is leading continent-wide efforts to implement this Decision.

Indeed, for a decade and half, EU financial and technical support to the implementation of the APSA has rendered visible outcomes:

- APSA institutions have been established and are functioning in an increasingly convergent manner.
- Coordination among APSA implementers and stakeholders has been strengthened.
- Institutional and human professional and technical capacity has been enhanced, which is a good sign for the implementation of the next phase of the EU support programme to APSA: 2020 – 2023.
- The capabilities to gather early warning and to prepare for preventive action have been increased.
- Institutional capacities to assess, plan, deploy, and manage Peace Support Operations have also seen considerable improvement. Certainly, continuous enhancement of the
African Standby Force will need more attention as we continue moving forward.

Overall, EU support has significantly contributed to the promotion, maintenance of peace and security in Africa.

In the same vain, the ERM program has helped the AU in further strengthening its response capacity to crises. The ERM has increased the role of the AU and RECs/RMs in the field of mediation/preventive diplomacy with a view to preventing or containing crises. It facilitated close follow-up on decisions of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), as well as improvement in interaction between various stakeholders during early interventions on the ground.

Colleagues, our two Steering Committee Meetings this week come at a critical moment in the history of Africa.

The African Union is undergoing Institutional Reforms. Since the launching of the AU reform process in January 2017, significant progress has been made in its implementation. At the 11th Extraordinary Session of the African Union Summit, focusing on
Institutional Reforms of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, in November 2018, Member States decided that the African Union Commission Peace and Security Department and the Department of Political Affairs will be merged into a single structure to be known as the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department. This project has already reached an advanced stage.

Among the anticipated gains in this merger is the drawing closer of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and APSA, thus bringing together the traditions of governance, conflict prevention and resolution. This will be a game changer in onward APSA-AGA implementation.

To ensure harmonization and coordination of roles and to make sure that Africa speaks with one voice in the international arena, better defend its interests and work towards a more just and inclusive world order, a mid-year Coordination Summit of the AU and RECs was finally launched last July in Niamey, Niger. As you may be aware, this limited Summit reviews issues and progress on continental projects and makes recommendations to the AU Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly for decision making.
Furthermore, as you may be aware, at the inaugural Coordination Summit in Niamey, Ministers of the African Union (AU) decided that the AU theme of the year 2020 will be ‘Silencing the Guns: creating conducive conditions for Africa’s development’. As a flagship project of Agenda 2063, ‘Silencing the Guns by 2020’ as embedded in the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns, aims at ensuring that the weapons on the continent are silenced – thus putting an end to the suffering of all kinds generated by violent conflicts.

During our two Steering Committee Meetings this week, I want to challenge you.

As we discuss both EU APSA III and the ERM, I would like to invite everyone, in the vanguard of an unprecedented effort to discuss and exchange views on progress, challenges and lessons of implementation of APSA activities, as well as chart a realistic way forward.

Let us also take advantage of the 2020 theme on Silencing the Guns, for collective action and make peace a reality for all our people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights
violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts. In this context, we look forward to activities under APSA IV, contributing effectively to the efforts to make Africa a conflict free continent.

Given the complementary nature of the ERM with the other APF programs, it is also a welcome development that the two Steering Committee meetings are organized in a back-to-back format. The AU Commission encourages this synergy and coordination from which all the stakeholders could benefit.

I commend the EU for its continued support since 2004 and it remains active. Let me assure that with the AU Institutional Reform Process and the revitalisation of the Peace Fund and other initiatives, AU ownership and leadership is becoming an impactive reality.

As the implementation of APSA at the continental and regional levels transit to APSA IV support programme, the AU, the RECs/RMs and the EU need to ensure that the gains made are preserved and that appropriate measures are also taken in the following areas:
- Management of the 70% threshold commitment which regulates the disbursement into the AU – RECs/RMs process;
- Sustenance of staff implementing the programme in the AU and the RECs/RMs in order to avoid abrupt disruption of implementation due to rushed phasing out of staff. Any phasing out of staff should take into account the prevailing circumstances at the AU and RECs/RMs levels.
- While it is imperative that all EU APSA Support Programme implementers achieve set targets and results, any incentives and reward that may be provided for performance should be agreed upon and anchored on sound criteria.

Indeed, from the Nairobi Steering Committee Meeting of August 2018, through the Casablanca Steering Committee Meeting held also in December 2018, the Validation Workshop of May 2019 in Addis Ababa, to the current Steering Committee Meeting in Dar Es Salaam, our cumulative consultative process has led emphasis on the following critical areas to be the focus of EU APSA IV Support Programme:
- Peace Support Operation
- Early Warning and Response (including Climate Change)
- Coordination and Partnership (including with CSOs)
- Strong reporting monitoring and evaluation
- Cross cutting issues around the protection of women, youth and children.

In this context, women peace and security efforts of RECs/RMs should be supported. Equally, the AU should be supported in its efforts to build the capacity of women in mediation efforts.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to all the participants gathered here for coming to participate and contribute in these two back-to-back Steering Committee Meetings.

Last but not least, I also congratulate the entire PSD staff for the successful management of both programmes.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.

I thank you!