
1. The Inaugural Joint Retreat of the African Peer Review (APR) Panel of Eminent Persons and the African Union (AU) Panel of the Wise was held on 13th November 2022 in eThekwini, Republic of South Africa. The meeting was Co-Chaired by H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye, Chairperson of the AU Panel of the Wise, and Former President of the Republic of Burundi and H.E. Dr. Abdoulie Janneh, Vice-Chairperson of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons.

2. The meeting sought to explore measures to enhance collaboration between both AU Panel of the Wise, and APR Panel of Eminent Persons on conflict prevention and resolution on the continent.

3. The meeting was inspired by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) Press Statement of 19 December 2018 [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCCXIX)] in which the PSC encouraged the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons to work, where appropriate, in close collaboration with the AU Panel of the Wise, particularly in preventive diplomacy efforts.

4. The meeting was also organized pursuant to the Conclusions of the First Joint Retreat of the AU PSC and APRM held from 19 - 21 December 2021 in eThekwini, Republic of South Africa (eThekwini Conclusions). The eThekwini Conclusions were subsequently adopted by the PSC at its 1069th meeting held on 10 March 2022 [PSC/PR/COMM.1069 (2022)]. The PSC at its 1069th Meeting underscored the importance of experience sharing and carving out of areas of collaboration in conflict prevention between the AU Panel of the Wise, Pan African Network of the Wise and Femwise with the APR Panel of Eminent Persons.

4. In attendance at the meeting were: H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye, Chairperson of the AU Panel of the Wise, and Former President of the Republic of Burundi, H.E. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Member of the AU Panel of the Wise and Former Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa. The following members of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons attended the Meeting: H.E. Abdoulie Janneh- Vice-Chair of APR Panel, H.E. Amb. Inonge Lewanika-Mbikusita, H.E. Dr. Honore Mobonda, Hon. Lydia Wanyoto Mutende, H.E. Amb. El-Henfy Houssam El Din; Mattheus Gowaseb, H.E. Dr Cherif Rahmani, H.E Dr Ousmane Diallo, and Ali Ahmed Araita.

4. Also in attendance were: Ambassador Ashraf Rashed, Chairperson of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Committee of Elders, H.E. Mohammed Foday Yumkella, Minister of Political and Public Affairs, Chairperson of the APR Focal Points Committee, H.E. Khayar Oumar Defallah, Focal Point of the Republic Chad, H.E Amb Lineekela Josephat Mboti, Focal Point of the Republic of Namibia, Prof. Eddy Maloka, CEO of the APRM Continental Secretariat; Representative of the APRM National Structures of the Republic of Congo and Dr. Vasu Gounden, Executive Director of ACCORD, as well as APRM and AU Commission Staff.
5. The Vice-Chair of the APR Panel, Dr. Abdoulie Janneh welcomed H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye, Former President of the Republic of Burundi and Chairperson of the AU Panel of the Wise, H.E. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Former Deputy-President of the Republic of South Africa and Member of the AU Panel of the Wise, H.E Mohammed Foday Yumkella, Minister of Political and Public Affairs, Chairman of the APR Focal Points Committee as well as the APR Panel and distinguished guests who attended the meeting.

6. Dr. Abdoulie Janneh emphasised that the meeting was taking place in a particular context of the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government on the continent, particularly in West Africa. He underscored that unconstitutional changes of government continue to pose political instability that continues to represent a major challenge for the continent which constitutes a serious threat to democracy and the rule of law. He concluded by appealing to the meeting to reflect on the proposals for practical solutions to Member States who are struggling with this scourge.

7. The meeting deliberated on several issues including the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa, which continues to represent a major challenge to the continent and constitutes a serious threat to democratic consolidation and the rule of law; the exclusion of women and youth in conflict prevention as well as social, economic, and political spheres on the African Continent; imperatives of country and targeted reviews to facilitate the identification of root causes of conflict and deployment of appropriate responses; and Collaboration between the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, AU Panel of the Wise and its subsidiary mechanisms especially the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise), which brings together the AU Panel of the Wise and similar mechanisms within the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) such as the COMESA Committee of Elders.

8. While acknowledging considerable progress made towards enhancing synergy and collaboration among various structures within the AU, the forum emphasized the importance of strengthened collaboration to advance the continental agenda related to governance, peace and security. In this regard, the meeting reaffirmed commitment to democracy, good governance, rule of law, and human rights, and underscored the significance of the PSC in the promotion of peace, security, stability and the implementation of collaborative frameworks for addressing conflicts on the Continent.

9. Guided by relevant policies and decisions, the meeting considered potential areas of collaboration between the APR Panel and AU Panel of the Wise to include: identification of the root causes of conflict in Africa and deployment of strategic preventive measures to transform the situations; institutionalization of an annual retreat between the APR Panel and AU Panel of the Wise; joint briefing to the PSC; as well as promotion of African solutions to various challenges on the continent.

10. The Joint Retreat agreed as follows:

   a) The APRM Continental Secretariat and the Department of Political Affairs, Peace
and Security of the AU Commission to facilitate the collaboration including the development of modalities to be presented to the APR Forum of Heads of State and Government and the AU Assembly for consideration.

b) Enhanced collaboration between both Panels on conflict prevention and resolution.

c) Institutionalization of the Joint Retreat between AU Panel of the Wise and the APR Panel of Eminent Persons including similar Committees of Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms as an annual event.

d) Reflection on the broader definition of unconstitutional changes of government.

11. The Co-chairs congratulated and commended both Panels for successfully convening the Inaugural Joint Retreat between the AU Panel of the Wise and APR Panel of Eminent Persons which included the Chairperson of COMESA Committee of Elders and representatives of APRM structures.

12. The Co-Chairs also expressed deep appreciation to the APRM Continental Secretariat, led by Professor Eddy Maloka, CEO of the APRM Continental Secretariat and the AU Commission Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security led by H.E. Amb. Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Peace and Security for ensuring the convening the meeting between the AU Panel of the Wise and the APR Panel of Eminent Persons.

13 November 2022
eThekwini, Durban, Republic of South Africa

H.E. Domitien Ndayizye
Chairperson of the AU Panel of the Wise

H.E. Dr. Abdoulie Janneh
Chairperson of the APRM Panel of the Eminent Person