OPENING REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY SMAIL CHERGUI,
COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

AT THE

WORKSHOP ON TEN YEARS OF AFRICAN UNION POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:

A REFLECTION ON PROGRESS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

19 OCTOBER 2016
AFRICAN UNION HEADQUARTERS
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
Excellency, Ambassador Catherine Mwangi, Chairperson of the PSC for October
Excellencies, Ambassadors Permanent Representatives to the AU
Excellency, the Chairperson of the UN Peacebuilding Commission
Excellency, the UN Assistant-General for the Peacebuilding Support Office
Heads and Representatives of International Organizations
Distinguished Participants
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to seize this opportunity to welcome you to this important
workshop to reflect on Ten Years of the implementation of the African Union
Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy and new
opportunities for a more robust PRCD implementation.

As you all know, the AU PCRD Policy was adopted in 2006, to provide a
continental framework for coordinating and supporting peacebuilding
processes in Africa. The policy aims to support the efforts of post-conflict
countries in consolidating peace and preventing relapse into conflict through
the implementation of comprehensive, inclusive, nationally owned processes
designed for their short, medium and long-term stabilization, recovery,
reconstruction and development. These are long-term processes aimed at
creating conditions conducive for sustainable peace, based on the principles
and values of equality, human dignity, respect for fundamental human rights,
and provision of basic physical, legal and economic security to the population.
Moreover, these processes provide us with unique opportunities of building
confidence in new political systems that include all segments of society in the
reconstruction and development processes in the concerned countries.

The AU PCRD policy is underpinned by five core principles, namely,
African leadership; national and local ownership; inclusiveness; equity and
non-discrimination; cooperation and cohesion, and capacity building for
sustainability. The five core principles “constitute the basics minimum values and standards that inform action across all PCRD activities and programmes.” The principles will ensure that PCRD activities address the root causes of conflict, contribute to the creation of sustainable peace, social justice, renewal and participatory governance.

Since the adoption of the PCRD Policy, the Commission has taken a number of steps towards its implementation. These include identification of joint activities in support of implementation of peace agreements in Member States emerging from conflict; conducting needs assessment missions; consolidating and scaling up security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration initiatives; and sustained collaboration with RECs/RMs and civil society organizations. The engagements have also been geared towards developing and implementing Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and Peace Strengthening Projects (PSPs) in areas of deployment of AU Peace Support Operations, and through the AU Liaison Offices.

Moreover, all PCRD programmes and policies are obliged to mainstream gender and comply with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and related AU instruments. In furtherance of fostering women’s empowerment and gender equality, the Commission sponsored initiatives to promote women’s participation in democratic processes and institution building in post-conflict settings.

**Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As we celebrate ten years of the AU PCRD Policy, we need to consider the evolving global peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction discourse
and how it impacts our response in light of interconnected strategic, structural and operational challenges. As a dynamic organisation, the African Union has taken note of the review of the UN’s Peacebuilding Architecture, the report of the Advisory Group of Experts and that of the High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations and the Global Study on UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

I wish to outline several lessons that we have learned, and which can build on more effective Peacebuilding in Africa. Firstly, the most obvious lesson is demonstrated by the recent relapses of several post-conflict countries into violence and instability, highlighting the crucial necessity for coherent PCRD strategies and interventions in Africa.

Secondly, and in view of the magnitude and complex challenges of PCRD, more attention must be given to coherence and coordination of all actors to enhance synergy of action, and integrated planning and operations, which effectively lead to the structured and effective implementation. This will require close coordination at the strategic, policy and operational levels. With a view of consolidating PCRD implementation, and in light of the two UN reports on peacebuilding and peace support operations, we look forward to reflecting and advancing creative joint modalities on how to move forward in addressing the current persisting reality of disjointed implementation, and work towards efforts both at the AU, RECs/RMs and Member State level for greater impact.

Moreover, if properly calibrated, PCRD interventions would be critical to the AU’s conflict prevention strategies. This requires taking into
consideration the regional dimensions and trans-national nature of conflict in Africa, which necessitate the formulation of PCRD interventions that address these realities.

Further, the African Union and the UN Peacebuilding Architecture should explore practical modalities of sharing experiences focusing on measures to develop appropriate tools for knowledge management and information sharing, that can empower the continental and regional mechanisms to respond to PCRD Policy implementation initiatives. In this regard, an annual meeting between the AU and the UN to share experience, lessons learned and progress on the implementation of the PCRD Policy should be institutionalized.

**Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen**

Over the past the decade, the AU has undertaken a number of innovative measures in furtherance of the PCRD policy. One such innovation is the Africa Solidarity Initiative (ASI) whose funding conference was launched in July 2013 in Addis Ababa, as part of activities marking the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU. The aim was to mobilize both in-kind and funding support for post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts in the countries emerging from conflict. Whereas most donor processes and conferences concentrate primarily on financial pledges, the ASI prioritizes various in-kind contributions from African countries. These include sharing of expertise, best practices, offering training facilities, exchange familiarization schemes and capacity building.
The overall goal is to promote a paradigm shift that promotes African self-reliance driven by the motto: “Africa helping Africa”. Let me emphasize the fact that this Initiative does not seek to overlook the support from traditional and new partners in any way. Rather, it seeks to provide an opportunity for Africa to generate additional “out-of-the-box” ideas for addressing post-conflict reconstruction and development challenges and contribute towards a renewed sense of promoting intra-African solutions to the complex challenges of post-conflict reconstruction and development.

It is our expectation that the ASI will galvanize the private sector, as an important stakeholder in reconstruction and socio-economic development. The contribution made by the private sector to the AU’s fight against the Ebola virus outbreak provides invaluable lessons.

At this juncture, I equally stress the need for local perspectives and empowerment of the marginalised as key to sustaining peace. The effort to involve local communities and convert their in-kind contribution and indigenous knowledge into coherent plans and programmes requires patience, greater resources. Yet identifying mechanisms for local participation and empowerment is critical to sustaining peace.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am encouraged by steps taken by the PSC to activate its Sub-Committee on PCRD. When fully activated, this committee would provide critical strategic and policy guidance to the Commission on the implementation of the PCRD policy. I am pleased to inform you that the Inter-Departmental Task Force on PCRD which was inaugurated in May is now fully
functional. The AU has already undertaken its first needs assessment to the CAR under the framework of the Task Force in August 2016.

The outcome of the needs assessment is now being used to guide a Solidarity Conference in Addis Ababa, on 7 November 2016, to mobilize in-kind, capacity building, as well as financial contributions, from the AU member states to enable Africa to deliver as one at the Donor conference for supporting PCRD efforts in CAR in Brussels on 17 November 2016. I encourage all member states to demonstrate solidarity with the government and people of the CAR by making concrete pledges and commitments to the stabilization and reconstruction efforts of that sister country.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

In view of the foregoing, allow me to take a futurist outlook of the AU PRCD Policy implementation. As we all know, the PCRD policy framework has, since 2013, been aligned with, and mainstreamed into Africa’s strategic vision of ‘silencing the guns’ by 2020 and Agenda 2063 that envisions a socio-economic transformation of Africa through sustained growth and development. A successful implementation of the PCRD Policy would, therefore, put Africa on the right path to silencing the guns and achieving a conflict-free, peaceful, progressive and integrated Africa by 2063. I, therefore, call upon you to use this workshop to identify lessons and draw conclusions to facilitate the accelerated implementation of the PCRD policy.

I wish you fruitful deliberations as the Commission looks forward to the conclusions on this meeting.

I thank you for your kind attention.