



UNITED NATIONS – AFRICAN UNION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

New York, 19 April 2017

Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security

I. Introduction

Since the establishment of the African Union in 2002, the legislative bodies and senior leadership of both the United Nations and the African Union have strongly endorsed closer cooperation and coordination in peace and security, leading to a more strategic partnership. This endorsement is based on a recognition that African peace and security challenges are too complex for any single organization to adequately address on its own.

Both the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, at their 7816th and 628th meetings respectively,¹ reiterated the need to transform the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union into one that is predictable, systematic and strategic. They recognized the imperative for close coordination and cooperation based on their respective comparative advantage and complementarity in peace and security, and burden-sharing on the basis of collective responsibility to respond early, coherently and decisively to prevent, manage, and resolve violent conflict.

In fulfilment of this mutual determination, the United Nations Secretary-General and the African Union Commission Chairperson have endorsed this Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, as a basis for collaboration through joint mechanisms and regular consultations. Under the Joint Framework, the African Union Commission and the United Nations Secretariat will strive to collaborate from the earliest indications of conflict on the African continent. In particular, they will work together to identify and respond to indicators of potential conflict and plan for prevention, as well as cooperate on early warning. Should preventive efforts fail, the African Union Commission and the United Nations Secretariat commit to work together throughout the stages of conflict management – preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peacebuilding. These stages are neither separate nor sequential, but form a continuous and integrated response to the “cycle of conflict”. A partnership characterized by a continuous and forward-looking

¹ S/RES/2320 (2016) and PSC/PR/COMM.2 (DCXXVIII) of 18 November 2016 and 29 September 2016 respectively.

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engagement ensures that any threat of conflict is addressed in a timely manner and emerging conflict receives early attention so that peace will be sustained.

This Joint Framework builds on the Declaration between the United Nations and the African Union entitled “Enhancing United Nations-African Union Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union”, signed in Addis Ababa on 16 November 2006². Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations provides for the role of regional arrangements in the maintenance of international peace and security. United Nations organs have also called for a stronger partnership: The Secretary-General in his *Report on Strengthening the Partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of Peace and Security in Africa, including the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union*³; the General Assembly⁴; and the United Nations Security Council, including in Resolution 2320 of 18 November 2016⁵. The need for closer partnership was also recognized in the report of the 2015 High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations⁶ and the subsequent report of the Secretary-General, “The Future of United Nations Peace Operations”⁷. The need to build mediation capacity and deepen strategic and operational partnerships in carrying out mediation efforts was also recognized by the Secretary-General in his *Report on the Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations on mediation*.⁸ The African Union has also been advocating for a more predictable partnership with the United Nations, as provided for in, among others, the African Union Peace and Security Council Communiqué of 29 September 2016 on *Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa*, in line with the 2002 African Union Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council.

II. Partnership Principles

The United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission note the primary role of the United Nations Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, recognize the essential role of regional arrangements as elaborated in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, and express the desire to forge closer cooperation between the two Organizations in the promotion of peace and security in Africa, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The United Nations-African Union partnership will continue to be guided by a number of basic principles. Both Organizations recognize that the attainment of peace through joining efforts to resolve conflict is critical to the achievement of fundamental development goals. They believe that a priority focus of United Nations-African Union efforts throughout the cycle of conflict

² A/61/630 annex

³ S/2016/780

⁴ See for instance, GA resolution 61/296 of 5 October 2007.

⁵ Security Council resolution 2320 (2016).

⁶ S/2015/446.

⁷ S/2015/682.

⁸ A/70/328

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must be the search for sustainable political solutions in keeping with international standards and principles. Both Organizations further acknowledge that the protection of civilians, the promotion of human rights standards and the prevention of human rights violations, as well as respect for international humanitarian law, are fundamental principles of any peace and security effort. They also agree that the participation of women is key to achieving sustainable peace and that more needs to be done to advance the women, peace and security agenda.

Both the United Nations and the African Union have adopted long-term objectives in development: the United Nations has adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030), while the African Union has adopted Agenda 2063 as well as the initiative to Silence the Guns by 2020. Both Organizations will continue to collaborate towards facilitating the implementation of these goals.

In addressing conflict, the United Nations and the African Union will strive, wherever possible, to reach a common understanding of the problems and, through consultative decision-making, develop a collaborative approach. Full "jointness" may not always be achievable, but maximum convergence between the Secretariat and the Commission will always be the goal. When determining respective roles in providing an agreed response, the United Nations and the African Union recognize that their efforts must be combined in a complementary and mutually-reinforcing manner. This will be guided by the principles of mutual respect and comparative advantage, on a case-by-case basis and allowing for such advantages to evolve. While ensuring unity of effort in all aspects of the response, a clear division of labour and consultation are also essential for effective implementation. Both Organizations agree that transparency and accountability are also fundamental shared values.

III. The Essential Themes of the Partnership

The United Nations and the African Union have jointly identified the following focus areas on which they will collaborate under the partnership. Specific mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of these themes are set out in Section IV below.

A: Preventing and Mediating Conflict and Sustaining Peace

1) Identification of root causes of conflict:

The two Organizations will work together to develop a shared understanding of the key factors that give rise to conflict. To that end, they will exchange information and analysis on the root causes of conflict. This will form the basis for subsequent collaborative assessments on particular conflict situations and help identify how the two Organizations can work together to prevent or address them.

2) Conflict Prevention:

Building on a shared understanding of the causes of conflict, the two Organizations will share early warning information and analysis of potential hotspots, then work together to prepare options to respond, coordinate and/or collaborate on prevention.

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3) Good Offices and Mediation:

Good offices and mediation transcend conflict prevention and extend throughout the conflict cycle – from the emergence of disputes, to conflict management through peacekeeping and peace support operations, and the implementation of peace agreements. The United Nations and the African Union will collaborate closely in good offices, preventive diplomacy and inclusive mediation activities on the continent, in coordination with sub-regional organizations, as appropriate.

4) Cooperating on Electoral Matters and Governance:

The two Organizations underscore the consequences of poor governance as a source of violence and conflict in Africa and call for a system of good governance, including management of elections, that is inclusive, participatory and development-oriented. They will work together to strengthen cooperation and enhance the sharing of information on electoral matters.

5) Protecting Human Rights:

Human rights violations may be early warning signs of future conflict or indicators of the evolution of conflict. The two Organizations will work together in the field of human rights, in particular to strengthen human rights expertise and capacity.

6) Humanitarian assistance:

In an effort to reduce the impact of both natural and human-induced disasters, including those causing displacement on the continent, the United Nations and the African Union will work on strengthening response mechanisms. In that regard, the collaboration will focus on enhancing the coordination and effective utilization of existing early warning indicators through information sharing and appropriate humanitarian assistance. This will include strengthening the capacity of existing mechanisms to prevent and eliminate forced displacement, as well as the protection of civilians in conflict situations, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

B: Responding to Conflict

In efforts to address conflicts, or where new conflicts may erupt, the United Nations and the African Union will strengthen their efforts to coordinate their engagement in a mutually-supportive manner, across the range of possible responses - from mediation and conflict management to peacekeeping and peace support operations, and peacebuilding. To that end, the Secretariat and the Commission will support the strengthening of relations between the two Organizations at the policy and working levels, including through discussing and comparing their respective doctrines, policies and practices to ensure more complementarity. Building on the ongoing cooperation in conflict prevention and mediation, the partnership will seek collaboration from the earliest stages of contingency planning to ensure complementarity and unity of action, drawing on a forward-looking assessment of comparative advantages.

Cooperation in response to conflict will be based on agreed principles, including the primacy of political solutions.

C: Addressing Root Causes

Both Organizations recognize that sustainable peace and continued development require strengthening the capacity of national institutions to address the root causes of conflict in all its forms without recourse to arms or violent confrontation. This work is not sequential to efforts to prevent and address conflict, but should be adequately reflected and addressed in the design of peacekeeping and peace support operations and any other strategy developed to prevent or resolve violent conflict.

D: Continuous Partnership Review and Enhancement

In order to implement, review and continuously update aspects of the partnership, the Secretariat and the Commission agree to undertake regular reviews including lessons learned exercises both on country-specific situations and thematic issues. They will meet regularly at various levels to discuss issues of mutual interest, and review progress in the partnership. In addition to regular bilateral meetings between the Secretariat and the Commission, as listed in Section IV below, each Organization will ensure its own internal consultations and coordination. Such mechanisms will assist the Secretariat and the Commission to implement this Joint Framework.

IV. Partnership Implementation Mechanisms and Processes

In order to operationalize the essential areas of work of the partnership, both Organizations agree to support and participate fully in the coordination and discussion mechanisms described in Sections A through D below. These will evolve and adapt to the changing needs of the partnership, and will include, as appropriate, the participation of the relevant entities within both Organizations.

Detailed modalities and work-plans for each mechanism will be elaborated by the participants of the mechanism in question, in keeping with the goals and principles indicated in this Joint Framework. In developing such work-plans, all relevant best practices and cross-cutting issues and policies will be taken into account. The various work-plans will be incorporated into an annual roadmap of agreed objectives each year.

The Secretariat and the Commission will closely collaborate in the themes defined above through the following mechanisms:

A: Preventing and Mediating Conflict and Sustaining Peace

They will:

- 1) Hold periodic joint discussions, involving relevant experts and practitioners, on the root causes of conflict in Africa and how to address them;
- 2) Systematically share and discuss early warning analysis, including emerging human rights issues, from all relevant sources;



- 3) Continue to hold regular joint “horizon-scanning” sessions to identify emerging conflicts, compare analysis and develop common approaches to prevent the eruption of conflict;
- 4) Continue to hold annual United Nations-African Union Desk-to-Desk meetings, with the participation of the African Union, United Nations and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), to discuss country-specific situations and collaborate in preventing and resolving conflict;
- 5) Support efforts to complement the annual consultations between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council with regular exchanges when needed, to help both organs reach a shared vision before the adoption of resolutions and communiqués in response to conflicts in Africa;
- 6) Exchange on efforts and strategies of relevant entities in such areas as counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism as well as trans-national organized crime, including by sharing information, analyses of trends and threats and lessons learned;
- 7) Exchange on efforts and strategies of relevant entities to address the persistence of illicit inflows of weapons and ammunition into Africa, as well as proliferation, illegal acquisition, circulation and storage of weapons, including small arms and light weapons;
- 8) Strengthen cooperation in the promotion of national peace infrastructure to facilitate peaceful cross-border interaction between States and communities, and in assisting member States to address border-related conflicts;
- 9) Collaborate in processes that promote regional approaches to address peace and security challenges;
- 10) Undertake joint fact-finding/assessment missions to countries at risk of conflict, as feasible;
- 11) Exchange on efforts and strategies of relevant entities to strengthen governance institutions and structures, including improving public service delivery, combatting corruption, entrenching decentralization and local governance, promoting inclusive natural resource management, enhancing urban governance and human settlements.

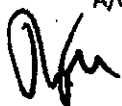
B: Responding to conflict

The Secretariat and Commission will:

- 1) Develop, through staff exchanges, seminars, workshops and discussions, a shared understanding of each other’s doctrines, policies, roles and practices as a necessary foundation for collaboration in responding to conflict;
- 2) Reinforce coherence, coordination and complementarity in mediation engagements to increase effectiveness;

- 3) Seek unity of purpose and action in addressing conflict by endeavouring to agree on the goals, vision and end state of their initiatives, and sharing such common understanding with their respective decision-making bodies. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to have early, continuous and multidimensional engagement throughout all phases of peace operations including planning, deployment, management and liquidation. Where feasible, joint assessments and collaborative planning should be undertaken;
- 4) Regularly review the key issues faced by the peace operations of both Organizations and bring the comparative advantages of each organization to bear in supporting the mandate implementation of all operations;
- 5) Collaborate towards strengthening the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) by supporting the APSA roadmap and the Silencing the Guns Master Roadmap and their respective work-plans.
- 6) Work to support the implementation of relevant aspects of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) as a mechanism to address structural causes of conflict.
- 7) Develop a shared vision for United Nations-African Union policing and collaborate in areas related to police doctrine and training, assessments and planning, as well as, where relevant, operational implementation;
- 8) Continue to collaborate in developing arrangements for the predictable and sustainable funding of African Union peace operations authorized by the United Nations Security Council, subject to the United Nations legislative framework including the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations financial regulations and rules and all applicable United Nations policies and standards, including the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP)⁹ on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces;
- 9) Collaborate in assessing and addressing the institutional capacity development needs of the partnership, in particular in the areas of mission management and support, subject to the United Nations legislative framework including the Charter of the United Nations, United Nations financial regulations and rules and all applicable United Nations policies and standards;
- 10) Cooperate on the development of training curriculum for personnel to be employed in AU peace support operations.
- 11) Exchange and coordinate, as appropriate, with United Nations entities with a humanitarian mandate to respond adequately to humanitarian crises;
- 12) Work jointly in support of the implementation of the AU humanitarian policy framework, including its Humanitarian Assistance in Natural Disasters (HANDS) policy and its Aide Memoire on the Protection of Civilians (POC).

⁹ A/67/775-S/2013/110, annex.



C: Addressing Root Causes

The Secretariat and the Commission will:

- 1) Work to include peacebuilding strategies in all of the relevant coordination and discussion mechanisms described above, in particular in the collaborative planning of conflict prevention and peace operations, taking full account of cross-cutting themes, such as justice, human rights, children's rights, youth unemployment, gender and reconciliation;
- 2) Strengthen coordination and cooperation on peacebuilding, including where feasible through joint assessment missions of countries emerging from conflict or countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission and joint advocacy and resource mobilization in support of peacebuilding activities;
- 3) Work jointly in support of the implementation of the African Union Policy Framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, including the African Solidarity Initiative;
- 4) Continue to develop United Nations-African Union cooperation programmes to stem the illicit flow of weapons and ammunition into Africa, including Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), and collaborate in Security Sector Reform (SSR), Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), Mine Action, Child Protection, Counter Terrorism and other areas of mutual interest.

D: Continuous Partnership Review and Enhancement

The two Organizations will conduct regular discussions and review of the partnership, and the implementation of this Joint Framework, through:

- 1) Regular meetings between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and the African Union Commission, as appropriate;
- 2) Annual retreats between the United Nations Office to the African Union, representatives of relevant United Nations Departments/Offices, the African Union Peace and Security Department and Department of Political Affairs to develop joint work-plans and take stock of the implementation of previous work-plans;
- 3) Annual Desk-to-Desk meetings, bringing together desk officers from the United Nations and the African Union, as well as officers from RECs/RMs, to enhance relations at the working level and to identify joint programmes;
- 4) Regular periodic video tele-conferences between United Nations and African Union desks on current issues, to enhance common understanding and forge collaborative approaches;
- 5) Regular video tele-conferences at the Director level to enhance collaboration and information-sharing and strengthen the work done between the desks, as well as to prepare Joint Task Force meetings;

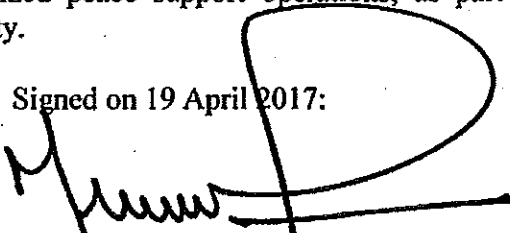


- 6) Joint Task Force meetings at the Principal level once a year, with additional discussions by video tele-conferences, as needed. Joint Task Force's recommendations would provide guidance for cooperation on peace and security between the two Organizations;
- 7) Participate in and facilitate as appropriate the annual consultations between the African Union Peace and Security Council and members of the United Nations Security Council. They will encourage collaborative and informed decisions by the two Councils to enhance partnership between the two Organizations. Regular consultation between United Nations Security Council and African Union Peace and Security Council member States, including between their respective Presidents, will also be encouraged and facilitated to enhance mutual understanding and the exchange of information. Joint field missions could also be organized;
- 8) Consult, as appropriate, in the drafting of reports on conflict situations to their respective Councils;
- 9) Convene the United Nations-African Union Annual Conference between the United Nations Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and their meetings on the margins of the African Union Summit and the General Assembly General Debate in order to assess progress in the partnership between the two Organizations, and provide strategic direction.

E. Enhancing the predictability, sustainability and flexibility of financing for AU-led peace support operations

Building on the "Decision on the outcome of the retreat of the Assembly of the African Union" (Assembly/AU/Dec.605 (XXVII)) on the financing of the Union, in particular the Peace Fund, as well as on United Nations Security Council Resolution 2320 (18 November 2016), the two Organizations have expressed the willingness to consider options to enhance the predictability, sustainability and flexibility of financing of African Union-led United Nations Security Council-authorized peace support operations, as part of their partnership in the area of peace and security.

Signed on 19 April 2017:



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