

5th Annual informal consultative meeting between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission on climate and peacebuilding

Monday, 28 November 2022

Virtual

Summary

1. On 28 November 2022, the Chair of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU PSC), H.E. Ms. Emilia Ndinelao Mkusa, and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission of the United Nations (UN PBC), H.E. Mr. Muhammad Abdul Muhith, co-convened the 5th annual consultative meeting between the two bodies on climate and peacebuilding. The meeting aimed to exchange views on the impact of climate change on peacebuilding in Africa and identify critical gaps in existing efforts to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change.
2. In her opening remarks, **H.E. Ms. Emilia Ndinelao Mkusa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Namibia to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC**, welcomed members of the AU PSC and the UN PBC, noting how the meeting is important for building a collaborative and comprehensive approach to supporting peacebuilding efforts in Africa. She acknowledged the strong leadership of the AU PSC in advancing the Post-Conflict and Reconstruction Development (PCRD) agenda in Africa and lauded the launching of the AU Post-Conflict and Reconstruction Awareness Week, the revision of the AU-PCRD policy and the launch of the Cairo Center amid constrained resources. She noted climate change as one of the most pressing contemporary global concerns, which has implications for peacebuilding efforts in Africa and stressed the importance of advancing a common African position on climate and security as reiterated at the recently concluded COP27. The Chairperson of the AU added that when left unaddressed, climate change impacts can be potential triggers for rekindling disputes. Hence, it was important to integrate climate sensitivity into peacebuilding mechanisms in conflict-affected settings. She concluded that today's deliberations present an opportunity to reflect on how AU and UN can create synergies and collaborate in peacebuilding to enhance and strengthen responses to address the adverse impacts of climate change in Africa.
3. **H.E. Mr. Muhammad Abdul Muhith, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the UN and Chair of the UN PBC**, thanked the members of the AU PSC for organizing this year's consultative meeting on the climate-peacebuilding nexus, noting the Secretary General's message on how many of today's conflicts are linked to growing climate crisis. Referring to the PBC's consistent engagements with the Africa and country specific and regional contexts the Chair noted Africa's vulnerability to climate

change, which is also becoming a risk multiplier in conflict-affected settings. He stressed that these risks had been reflected in the Commission's advisory role to the Security Council and the ECOSOC, encouraging several initiatives to address linkages between climate change and peacebuilding, including PBF's growing portfolio of climate-informed peacebuilding projects. He congratulated the African Union and the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding in Africa for their recently launched Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP) initiative at the CoP27. He noted that it is encouraging to see that one of the four pillars of this initiative aims at strengthening the climate adaptation and peacebuilding nexus. He was hopeful that this meeting would explore how the partners could enhance their support to advance the materialization of policies and action plans on climate change, including addressing the gaps in climate finance, developing an effective early warning system, and mitigating the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and youth in Africa. The Chair also referred to the call of the AU-PSC and the Security Council upon AU Commission to develop a "Common African Position on Climate Security" which will contribute to mainstream climate security risk assessment and policy planning.

4. **Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support**, expressed appreciation for the continued partnership between the AU PSC and the UN PBC in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa. She noted that the focus of this year's meeting - the nexus between climate and peacebuilding - is a top priority for the United Nations and well aligned with the UN Secretary-General's messaging on climate risks and peacebuilding in Our Common Agenda. She acknowledged that climate change is a threat multiplier to peace and security and a potential amplifier of existing vulnerabilities, tensions, and conflicts on the continent, threatening the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 as well as the AU's flagship initiative – Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030. She emphasized that the interlinkages between climate and peacebuilding require a multidimensional and integrated approach that combines knowledge of climate risks with the economic, social, and political realities of regions and countries on the continent. She noted that the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) is committed to addressing the adverse effects of climate change through financing by the Peacebuilding Fund to avert the risk these effects have on reversing progress in peace processes. She underscored the importance of continuing our collective efforts in the climate-peacebuilding nexus for sustaining peace, adding that PBSO will continue to support the United Nations system and its partners, including through close collaboration with the UN Climate Security Mechanism, to address the cross-cutting issues of socio-economic, political, and gendered climate change and conflict dimensions.
5. **Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union**, commended the two Chairs for convening this timely meeting on climate

and peacebuilding, as CoP27 concluded its work just a few days ago in Sharm El-Sheikh. He noted that although contributing less than 4 percent of global emissions, Africa is seeing temperatures rising faster than the global average. He recognized that climate change exacerbates existing risks, creates new ones, and complicates efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace. He noted the destabilizing effect of climate change in eight peacekeeping operations and special political missions in Central and West Africa, including the Sahel. However, he added that good practices and opportunities for climate-informed peacebuilding are abundant, as several stakeholders are increasing the capacity for risk analysis and integrating a climate lens into conflict prevention, peacemaking, and peacebuilding efforts. He noted the many ongoing efforts to develop more and better data to better understand climate projections and trends and to reinforce the UN's analytical and early warning capacity. He highlighted the added value of the Climate Security Mechanism by the United Nations, which seeks to connect the work on climate and peacebuilding of the United Nations and its Member States with all relevant partners, including regional organizations such as the African Union, international financial institutions, and civil society organizations. He also added that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had emphasized the importance of building the capacity of marginalized groups to achieve climate resilience, focusing on women and youth due to the strong overlap between climate vulnerability, insecurity, and women's inequality. He concluded by acknowledging the launch of a landmark initiative by the Egyptian Presidency entitled "Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace", which seeks to promote integrated climate action in support of sustainable peace and development.

Member States welcomed the briefings and made the following observations:

6. Members appreciated the AU PSC and the UN PBC for convening this annual consultative meeting on a very important topic for Africa, the climate-peacebuilding nexus, following the successful conclusion of COP27.
7. Members recognized that Africa is the continent least responsible for climate change yet suffers disproportionately from its consequences, including floods, droughts, heat waves, forest fires, storms, cyclones, and the rise of sea level. It threatens the primary sectors such as agriculture, livestock fishing, and forestry. They also recognized the negative impacts of climate change on food security on the continent and reiterated the need to continue supporting agriculture initiatives and efforts to adaptation to climate change.
8. Members called for proactive and effective measures to avert the effect of climate change on peace and security, adding that official and accurate data must guide response to climate threats. In this regard, members look forward to the AU commission report on the climate and security-related risk assessment study, which delves into the nexus between climate

change and security in Africa and hopefully provides a guide to Africa's approach to climate security.

9. They reiterated calls for more sustained and predictable structural financing to address the adverse effects of climate change, including increased investment into early warning and prevention systems along with the AU PCRD policy framework, which promotes a holistic approach to the prevention of climate change-related conflicts, and the mainstreaming of climate-induced assessment into the African peace and security risk analysis.
10. Member States welcomed the revitalization of the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) policy framework and the operationalization of the PCRD Center in Cairo, Egypt. They called for support to existing AU initiatives and strategies on climate change, supporting the AU Commission to delve into peacebuilding aspects and identify concrete recommendations on how best to operationalize its own-grown frameworks, including the 2022-2032 AU Climate Change Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan, African adaptation initiative, the Africa renewable energy initiative, Africa and Blue Economy Strategy. They also highlighted some encouraging results of the CoP27 conference, particularly the loss and damage fund for vulnerable countries and the Climate Response for Sustaining Peace (CRSP) initiative.
11. They called for strong regional, national, and local leadership of climate-related initiatives to increase ownership. They also emphasized strengthening institutions, building community capacity in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and increasing coordination with international partners for successful initiatives.
12. Member States expressed support for regular dialogue between the UN PBC and the AU PSC to coordinate a common approach toward peacebuilding efforts in Africa and beyond. They encouraged efforts to strengthen synergies and cooperation, adding that the PBC could play a prominent role in exploring avenues with the AU for strengthened and coordinated response to prevent the reversal of peacebuilding gains in Africa.
13. Member States recognized that climate change is a multifaceted challenge that disproportionately affects vulnerable groups and communities, particularly women and youth. They underscored the importance of gender and youth-responsive approaches in climate-related peacebuilding, noting the need for interventions to be sensitive to the needs and amplify the voices of women and youth.
14. They recognized the need to mainstream climate-induced security risk in the AU peace and security architecture and its ongoing reforms.

15. The Commission expressed its commitment to working more closely with the African Union Peace and Security Council in mobilizing support for its peacebuilding priorities through its country and region specific as well as thematic engagements, while continuing to draw attention of the United Nations to the adverse impacts of climate change in peacebuilding efforts of Africa.