

Press Statement by the Chair of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission

New York/Addis Ababa, 28 October 2020 – The African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission held a virtual informal consultative meeting on 23 October to identify ways of further enhancing cooperation between the two bodies in support of peacebuilding in Africa.

They recognized the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the countries and regions under the consideration of the Peacebuilding Commission (West Africa and the Sahel, Central Africa, Lake Chad Basin and the Great Lakes), and the crucial role of women and youth to help address them, as well as in implementing the African Union's flagship project of "Silencing the Guns" in Africa.

They noted with concern the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction development efforts led by the two bodies in conflict-affected countries and regions, and discussed possible means of mitigating the impact of the pandemic, especially on women and children. The two bodies stressed the need to work more closely together with closer collaboration and information sharing between the United Nations and the African Union on peacebuilding/Post-Conflict Reconstruction Development activities to effectively tackle root causes of instability in parts of the sub-regions, in partnership with relevant Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and concerned stakeholders at the local, national, regional and international levels, while ensuring that the Women Peace and Security agenda is mainstreamed in those activities. They also underscored the need for peacebuilding support to be based on principles of national ownership and sovereignty.

The annual interaction built on the inputs of the PBC and the AUPSC-endorsed Common African Position into the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, which were sent to the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council on 2 July and 8 October respectively. Among other things, the two bodies stressed the need to ensure complementarities and coordination between different financial mechanisms of the United Nations and the African Union. They recognized the importance of AU-owned and led Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) efforts on the continent, and in this regard welcomed the establishment of the AU Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction Development as a positive step in further developing and enhancing the implementation of AU-PCRD strategies in Africa.

They recognized that trilateral cooperation between the United Nations, regional/sub-regional organizations and international financial institutions has proved to be particularly productive in some of the peacebuilding support to the continent and encouraged similar approaches going forward in support of countries emerging from conflict or going through complex transitions. They also welcomed the new UN Peacebuilding Fund Strategy for 2020-2024 which aims at strengthening the UN's strategic cooperation with regional organizations, including the African Union, on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The AUPSC and the PBC members commended the African Union's Initiative on "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020" and the theme of the year of the African Union for 2020 "Silencing the Guns: creating conducive conditions for Africa's development", which contributes to good governance, peace, security and development. Members welcomed ongoing support provided to the Initiative by the UN System and encouraged further support for African women- and youth-led initiatives to fast-track the implementation of the 'Silencing the Guns' agenda.

Member States welcomed stronger engagement of AU representatives in PBC meetings, and emphasized the need to further enhance the consultative mechanisms between the AUPSC and PBC with a view to supporting effective partnerships for peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction strategies and programs in Africa. They encouraged further discussions on cross-cutting issues of mutual interest, including financing, institution-building, and women, peace and security. They suggested to hold more frequent meetings between the two bodies, including at the expert level, and, if resources permit it, to consider a future joint retreat in 2021, with a view to develop practical recommendations to both bodies for deepening their relationship. In this regard, they requested their respective secretariats to present a joint proposal to the Chairs of the PBC and the AUPSC.