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**FIFTEENTH AFRICAN UNION**  
**SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**  
**ON DEFENSE, SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**12 MAY 2023**

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**REPORT OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL  
COMMITTEE OF DEFENCE, SAFETY AND SECURITY (STCDSS)**

# **REPORT OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF DEFENCE SAFETY AND SECURITY**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the African Union (AU) Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS) was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 12 May 2023.
2. The meeting was preceded by the meeting of Experts held from 9 – 10 May 2023, which deliberated on the Report of the Chairperson, documents submitted for consideration and updates provided by the Commission, in preparation for the meeting of the African Chiefs of Defense and Heads of Safety and Security (ACDSS) held on 11 May 2023, which made recommendations to the meeting of Ministers.

## **II. ATTENDANCE**

3. The 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS was attended by delegates from AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.
4. The list of participants is attached as **Annex 1**.

## **III. SESSION I: OPENING CEREMONY**

### **Assumption of roles and responsibilities by the Members of the Bureau of the 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary MEETING OF THE STCDSS**

5. In line with Rule 16 of its Rules of Procedure (RoP), the Bureau of the STCDSS assumed its responsibilities as follows:
  - a. Chairperson: (East Africa) Union of Comoros;
  - b. 1st Vice Chairperson: North Africa (Pending Member State Consultations);
  - c. 2nd Vice Chairperson: (Southern Africa): Republic of Botswana;
  - d. 3rd Vice Chairperson: (Central Africa) Republic of Burundi; and,
  - e. Rapporteur: West Africa: Republic of Senegal.

### **Opening Statements**

6. The AU Commission was represented by the Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, who welcomed delegates to the 15th Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS. He highlighted critical peace and security challenges in the continent and requested Member States as well as RECs/RMs to continue working together towards silencing

the guns for a peaceful and stable Africa. He also outlined the current situation in Sudan which has led to the loss of lives of countless civilians and destruction of properties and reiterated the call from the African Union for an immediate, unconditional cease fire in the interest of the people of Sudan.

7. The Chair of the 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS, H.E. Youssoufa Mohamed, Minister of Defence of the Union of Comoros expressed appreciation to the Government and people of Ethiopia for their usual warm hospitality. He acknowledged the presence of Ministers and Chiefs of Defence and commended the ACDSS for the quality of their report. He also outlined some of the challenges in the Continent including conflicts in the Great Lakes, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo and reiterated that Africa should not remain the epicenter of conflicts but needs to ensure unity of efforts to prevent conflict. He further called for cessation of hostilities, mediation and inclusive dialogue as well as humanitarian assistance in the Sudan. He concluded with a call for improved coordination between the AU and the RECs/RMs and self-sufficient financing for effective and timely deployment of Peace Support Operations (PSOs) to address conflicts.

## **Discussions**

8. The meeting took note of the request to declare that the North Africa Regional Capability (NARC) is operationally ready for deployment as part of the African Standby Force (ASF) and requests the Commission to conduct a verification for the declaration of readiness of this mechanism.

## **Adoption of the Draft Agenda and Work Program**

9. Prior to the adoption of the agenda, a minute of silence was observed in respect of fallen heroes, particularly those that have paid the ultimate price in pursuit of peace and security in the continent.
10. Subsequently, the draft Agenda/Annotated Work Programme was presented and adopted and is attached as **Annex 2**.

## **IV. CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEMS**

### **SESSION II: PRESENTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION**

11. The meeting, having considered the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission, the presentations made, and on the basis of the deliberations, decides as follows:
  - a. **Requests** Member States and RECs/RMs to domesticate and fully implement the African Union Master Roadmap (AUMR) on Silencing the Guns by 2030 to achieve its vision and objectives.

- b. **Notes** with appreciation, the adoption of the Consensus Paper on Predictable, Adequate and Sustainable Financing for AU Peace and Security Activities by the AU Assembly and **requests** the Commission to support the African Members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council (A3) to advance AU's position on access to UN Assessed Contributions.
- c. **Requests** Member States to support current efforts for the allocation of funds for the budget of USD\$ 4,717,606.45 for the Continental Logistics Base (CLB) for 2024, approved by the 36<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly and further **requests** that specific funding for additional infrastructure development and daily operational costs is also approved and allocated.
- d. **Requests** the Commission to facilitate current concerted efforts to operationalise the ASF Command, Control, Communication and Information Systems (C3IS) capability and report to the 16<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS.
- e. **Further requests** the Commission to work with the RECs/RMs to finalise the AU Strategic Lift Concept for consideration by the 16<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS.
- f. **Requests** Member States to continue to develop and enhance their PSO capacities in line with the ASF Training Directives and requirements that will enable effective force preparation and provision of highly trained and well-equipped personnel for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in the continent.
- g. **Requests** RECs/RMs to facilitate verification and reporting on their pledged capabilities to the AU to confirm personnel and equipment that are available for rapid deployment of the ASF as and when required, and as shall be directed by the relevant AU and RECs/RMs policy organs.
- h. **Requests** AU Member States, RECs/RMs, partners and other stakeholders to continue supporting current and future Africa-Led PSOs in implementing their mandates and **urge** Member States as well as external actors, to abstain from any act that hinders the achievement of the noble vision of silencing the Guns by 2030 and the realization of a peaceful and prosperous Africa as espoused in Agenda 2063.
- i. **Requests** the Commission, pursuant to paragraph 10 (v & vi) of the Report of the 14th Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS, to conduct a strategic review of the ASF with the participation of AU Member States, RECs/RMs and Report to the 16th Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS for consideration.

### **SESSION III – PRESENTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES AND REGIONAL MECHANISMS ON THE AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE**

12. The meeting received presentation on the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms on the African Standby Force. The meeting noted the extensive deliberations on the draft MoU and decides as follows:

- a. **Adopts** the Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms on the African Standby Force.
- b. That any amendments shall be considered in line with Article 23 and 24 of the MoU.

### **SESSION IV – UPDATES ON THE AFRICAN UNION COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK AND CONSIDERATION OF THREE COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK POLICIES**

13. The meeting received updates on the African Union Compliance and Accountability Framework and presentation of the three (3) Compliance and Accountability Framework documents and decided as follows:

- a. **Adopts** the draft African Union Strategic Framework for Compliance and Accountability in Peace Support Operations.
- b. **Adopts** the draft African Union Policy on Protection of Civilians in Peace Support Operations.
- c. **Adopts** the draft African Union Policy on Selection and Screening of Personnel for Peace Support Operations

### **SESSION V – UPDATES ON THE ASF AMANI AFRICA III CONTINENTAL MARITIME EXERCISE**

14. The meeting received updates on the ASF Amani Africa III Continental Maritime Exercise and noted:

- a. The updates provided by the Commission on the ASF Amani Africa III Continental Maritime Exercise, including the consultations with the Member States and RECs/RMs undertaken and the next steps. In this regard, **requests** the Commission to follow similar approaches used during ASF Amani Africa I and II and report the outcome of the exercise to the 16<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS.

- b. The request by Member States for the Commission to share additional documents and information on the ASF Amani Africa III Continental Maritime Exercise.

#### **V.ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE 15TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE STCDSS**

15. The Report of the 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS was presented and adopted by the Ministers of Defence.
16. The meeting reiterated the role of the STCDSS as per Assembly/AU/Dec. 227 (XII) and in line with the provisions of Article 15 of the Constitutive Act of the AU (2000). In this regard, this Report is hereby submitted to the 46<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU for onward transmission to the 37<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, scheduled to take place in February 2024.
17. The meeting further encourages the Commission to continue to provide regular updates and reports on progress towards the implementation of its decisions, particularly continued implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), in the next meetings of the STCDSS.

#### **VI.CLOSING**

18. In closing, the Chair of the 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS and the Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security thanked all delegations for their invaluable contributions leading to the successful outcomes of this meeting.