

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

P. O. Box 3243

Telephone: 517 700

Fax: 5130 36

website: [www. www.au.int](http://www.au.int)

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**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE OPERATIONALIZATION
OF AN AFRICAN CENTRE ON POST CONFLICT
RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is submitted in pursuance of the relevant decisions of the African Union (AU) policy organs on the establishment of the AU Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (AU-PCRD Centre), in order to facilitate the deliberations of the Executive Council on the matter. The report recalls the previous deliberations and decisions of Council on this matter, and provides an update on recent related developments. It concludes with observations on the way forward.

II. BACKGROUND

2. As Council would recall, at its 16th Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa from 30 to 31 January 2011, the Assembly of the Union, through decision Assembly/AU/Dec.351(XVI), welcomed the proposal made by Egypt to establish an AU-PCRD Centre. The Assembly requested the Commission, in collaboration with the Government of Egypt, to undertake a study on the objectives, structure, financial implications and location of the proposed Centre, and to report to it.

3. In follow-up to the decision, the Commission submitted report EX.CL/711(XX) to the 20th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, held in Addis Ababa, from 23 to 27 January 2012. Apart from providing an update on the AU-PCRD Policy and its implementation status, the report addressed the following issues pertaining to the establishment of the PCRD Centre:

- i) objectives and role: the Centre would focus on raising awareness and enhancing knowledge and skills, promoting sustainable institutional mechanisms for post-conflict reconstruction, conducting research and documenting lessons learned, training and exchanging of experiences and expertise, enhancing complementarities and coordination among the actors engaged in PCRD processes, developing rosters of African experts on various thematic issues in PCRD in Africa, and resource mobilization;
- ii) structure: it was proposed that the Centre start with a limited staff capacity of seven individuals, to be gradually increased with time, depending on needs and availability of resources;
- iii) location: it was proposed that the Centre be located in Cairo, to take advantage of the capabilities, infrastructure and expertise of Egypt in the area of PCRD;

- iv) funding and budgetary issues: the proposed total budget for a year amounted to approximately US\$ 1.4 million, covering running cost and programmes, with Egypt committing in-kind support equivalent to \$250,000 US for the initial phase of the operationalization of the AUC-PCRD, including an office building. It was proposed that, during the first three years, the Centre be financed exclusively through extra-budgetary resources from AU Member States and international partners.

4. The report concluded by stating that, with the progress made in addressing conflict situations on the continent, there was an urgent need to step up the post-conflict reconstruction efforts and ensure that Africa plays its rightful role in this respect, bearing in mind that, at its core, post-conflict reconstruction is a political process. In this respect, it was stressed that the establishment of the AU-PCRD Centre would go a long way in enhancing the capacity of the Commission to meet the challenges at hand.

5. It is against this background that the Executive Council adopted decision EX.CL/Dec.687(XX), in which it took note of the report; noted with appreciation the contribution by Egypt to the conduct of the study; welcomed favourably the offers by Egypt and Uganda to host the Centre, and recommended that the two Member States undertake consultations with a view to finding mutually agreeable solution regarding the location of the Centre. The Executive Council stressed the need to generally reflect on the issue of equitable distribution of institutions and structures of the AU within the different regions of the continent.

6. At the 21st Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, held in Addis Ababa, from 9 to 13 July 2012, the Commission submitted a progress report on the implementation of decision Assembly/AU/Dec.351(XVI) – [document EX.CL/738(XXI)]. In that report, the Commission provided an overview of the key developments that took place since January 2012. These included:

- the consultations undertaken by the Commission with the Permanent Missions of Egypt and Uganda to the AU, to encourage the two countries to expedite their consultations, with a view to finding an amicable solution to the issue of the location of the Centre, in line with the Executive Council's decision;
- the note verbale sent by the Permanent Mission of Uganda to the Commission on 2 May 2012, forwarding a position paper spelling out comprehensively Uganda Government proposal on the establishment of the AU-PCRD Centre, including observations on the objectives and structure of the Centre, justification of Uganda's bid to host the Centre, proposed location of the Centre in Jinja, near the source of the White Nile River, with a description of the facilities available and other complementary advantages, and budget, including provision of office premises and other related facilities;
- the note verbale sent to the Commission by the Permanent Mission of Egypt on 21 June 2012, in which Egypt stressed that, although Uganda's offer to

host the Centre came at a very late stage, Egypt, in a spirit of cooperation and understanding, welcomed decision EX.CL/Dec.687(XX) allowing more time for consultations in order to reach consensus, reaffirmed its readiness to start immediately working with the Commission towards the effective establishment of the Centre, including helping in the mobilization of the necessary resources and providing premises, and stressed Egypt's advanced structure, as well as its contribution to the continental peace and security architecture.

7. In its observations, the report encouraged Egypt and Uganda to expedite their consultations, and expressed the Commission's readiness to assist in this respect and explore with them options that could be considered. The report proposed the possibility of establishing satellite institutions located in the different regions of the continent and linked to the Centre, wherever its Headquarters is located. These satellite institutions, which would be part of the AU PCRD Centre, could specialize in specific issues falling under the mandate of the Centre. In this respect, the report stressed that with its limited staff capability, the effectiveness of the Centre would greatly depend on the strength of the relationship it would build with relevant institutions across the continent.

8. On its part, the Executive Council adopted decision EX.CL/Dec.710(XXI), in which it took note of the progress report and, once again, encouraged Egypt and Uganda to speed up the consultations, as previously requested, in order to reach an amicable solution on the location of the Centre. The Executive Council recalled the mandate assigned to the Centre, which is expected to collaborate closely with similar research centres and other institutions in Africa to maximize its impact, including the possibility of establishing satellite institutions, linked to the Centre, in other regions. The Executive Council requested the Commission to assist the two countries conclude their consultations before its next Ordinary Session and, if necessary, to submit proposals on the way forward. In the meantime, the Council requested the Commission to pursue its efforts towards the mobilization of the necessary resources for the operationalization of the AU-PCRD Centre, as well as to finalize the proposals on the modalities for the funding of the Centre and its structure, as requested in decision EX.CL/Dec.687(XX).

III. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS ON THE PROPOSED AU-PCRD CENTRE

9. In its efforts to assist the two countries to reach a consensus on the location of the Centre, the Commission, from 12 to 15 February 2013, dispatched a mission to Uganda. The mission was undertaken in response to the invitation by the Ugandan authorities for the Commission to inspect the facilities being offered and further interact with the Ugandan authorities.

10. The mission inspected the facilities offered by Uganda for the hosting of the Centre. These are located at the Uganda Rapid Deployment Capability Centre (URDCC) in Jinja, about 73 kilometers from Kampala, which also houses the Conceptual Training Centre for Peace Support Operation and Post-Conflict Activities, as well as the National Early Warning Centre. The mission was also provided with explanations on a

complimentary facility at the Lugazi National Defense College, which would support the Center during its initial stages. The URDCC, which offers optimum office space and ICT facilities, was indicated to have expandable capacity of an additional 10 acres of land to accommodate future office and housing expansion.

11. The mission also held meetings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters, where it met the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Relief and Disaster Preparedness, as well as other senior officials, including the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the AU and a representative of the Office of the Prime Minister. During the interaction, the Ugandan officials highlighted the critical importance of post-conflict reconstruction; recalled the contribution of Uganda to AU peace support operations; and emphasized the experience of their country in managing internal conflicts and successfully rebuilding affected regions and rehabilitating concerned communities. The Ugandan officials also pointed out the fact that their country was not hosting a single AU institution, and that its central location would strategically suit the planned PCRD Centre, making it accessible from all corners of the African continent.

12. The Ugandan officials also provided further clarity on their contribution towards the establishment of the Centre. This would include both financial and in-kind support for an initial period of three (3) years, as well as the provision of human resources. In this respect, the Ugandan authorities pointed to Uganda's experienced civilian, military and police personnel, whose expertise would greatly facilitate the start-up of the Centre.

13. The mission found the discussions with the Ugandan authorities extremely useful and productive. It took careful note of the many points emphasized by the Government of Uganda in articulating its position and presenting key elements to be considered for the determination of the location of the proposed AU PCRD Centre.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

14. The Commission notes with satisfaction the interest that the establishment of the AU-PCRD Centre has generated among Member States. The recent relapse into violence of South Sudan and the Central African Republic highlights the urgent need to intensify efforts towards post-conflict reconstruction and peace building. The African Solidarity Conference (ASC), which was held in Addis Ababa, on 1st February 2014, as part of the African Solidary Initiative (ASI), to mobilize resources from Member States in support of countries emerging from conflicts, aims to build on this goodwill to further the implementation of the AU-PCRD Policy. The Commission would like to seize the opportunity of this report to reiterate its appreciation to the countries that have made financial and in-kind pledges during the ASC and to encourage other Member States to follow suit.

15. Uganda and Egypt should be commended for availing facilities and other types of support for the operationalization of the AU-PCRD Centre. It is critical that the two countries expedite their consultations and reach an amicable solution on the issue of the location of the Centre. The Commission is committed to continue assisting the two

countries in this respect. Further steps by the Commission, as requested by the Executive Council, will depend on the final decision on this matter, including finalizing the proposals on specific aspects of the establishment of the Centre, the speeding up the resource mobilization work and undertaking other related tasks.

16. The Commission would like to indicate that, in addressing the issue at hand, and in order to fully take advantage of the facilities offered by Egypt and Uganda, it would be beneficial to consider the possibility of co-locating the Headquarter of the Centre in both Cairo and Jinja. Each outfit would specialize in a specific area: research, documentation of lessons learnt and awareness raising, on the one hand; skills enhancement, training, exchange of experiences and expertise, project planning, monitoring and evaluation, on the other. The Centre and its two outfits would be supported by satellite institutions across the continent, based on their respective comparative advantages.

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Report of the Commission on the operationalization of an African centre on post conflict reconstruction and development

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