



PRESS RELEASE

WORKSHOP TO FINALIZE THE GUIDELINE ON THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND NATURAL DISASTER SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Addis Ababa, 4 September 2015: The Peace and Security Department and the Department of Political Affairs of the Commission of the African Union (AU), held a three-day workshop to finalize the Guideline on the role of the African Standby Force (ASF) in Humanitarian Action and Natural Disaster Support (HANDS) Operations, from 1-3 September 2015, at the African Union Headquarters.

The workshop was opened by Mr. Sivuyile Bam, Head, Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD). In his statement, Mr. Bam underscored the importance of the ASF for effective planning and deployment of critical assets and personnel in situations of complex emergencies. *"The ASF is able to harness civilian, military and police in support of the prevention and response to humanitarian crisis and natural disasters, thus, the Guideline calls for an enhancement of African capacity to deal with the emerging complex humanitarian emergencies,"* he said.

On his part, the representative of the Department of Political Affairs, underlined the significance of humanitarian principles in peacekeeping operations. He further stated the need for a strong linkage between the AU Commission, the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and the Member States for effective coordination of humanitarian action on the continent.

The workshop provided an opportunity to exchange views with relevant stakeholders on the role of the ASF in HANDS and on how the ASF can support the coordination of humanitarian crisis and natural disasters response, thus, creating a platform for an important contribution towards enriching and finalizing the Guideline, ensuring that all aspects of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are in line with international best practices.

Participants were drawn from a cross-section of policy makers and practitioners, including but not limited to the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), the AU Mission in Somalia, the AU Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa, the United Nations Office to the AU, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Norwegian Refugee Council Liaison Office to the AU and the

Commission (PSD, DPA, Rural Economy and Agriculture and Department of Social Affairs).

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