



**RETREAT ON THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION PEACE FUND
11 JANUARY 2020**

REPORT

I. BACKGROUND

1. During the 35th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union held from 4 - 8 July 2019, the Executive Council decided that a Retreat bringing together the Peace and Security Council, the Bureau of the Permanent Representatives Committee, the Board of Trustees and Executive Management Committee of the AU Peace Fund and the Chair of the Sub-committee on General Supervision and Co-ordination of Budgetary, Financial and Administrative Matters shall take place before the February 2020 Summit to take stock of the status of operationalization of the Fund and agree on the medium term strategic funding priorities for the AU Peace Fund.
2. In addition to these stakeholders, the AU High Representative for Financing the Union and the Peace Fund, the Chair of the Committee of Fifteen Finance Ministers (F15) and the Chairs of the Sub-Committees on Audit Matters and Structural Reforms were also invited to the Retreat.

II. RETREAT OBJECTIVES

3. In line with the July 2019 Executive Council decision, the Retreat had two primary objectives: To take stock of the operationalization of the Fund; and to discuss the medium term strategic funding priorities of the AU Peace Fund. The Retreat was originally structured into five main sessions as follows:
 - Session I: Background and Context;
 - Session II: Review of overall progress to date;

- Session III: The respective roles and responsibilities of the AU Policy Organs, and Peace Fund governance bodies;
 - Session IV: Medium term strategic priorities for the Peace Fund, and
 - Session V: The roadmap for the operationalization of the remaining elements of the AU Peace Fund.
4. It was agreed during the Retreat that Session IV would be postponed to another occasion to allow the Peace and Security Council to reflect on the strategic priorities with a view to providing guidance on this matter following a dedicated Council deliberations. In parallel, the Board of Trustees would make recommendations to the Chairperson of the Commission on an appropriate medium-term funding envelope for the Fund.

III. SUMMARY OF SESSION DELIBERATIONS AND KEY OUTCOMES

Opening Session

5. The Chairperson of the Commission, the Chair of the Permanent Representatives Committee, the Chair of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Chair of the Peace Fund Board of Trustees made opening statements which are summarized below.
6. The revitalization of the AU Peace Fund was taken within the framework of a set of wider financial reforms. These reforms are set out in a number of AU Assembly decisions taken by the between 2015 and 2017 and can be summarized as follows :
- Financial autonomy and reduced dependency;
 - Prudent management of resources and improved accountability;
 - Timely and predictable payment of all Member State assessed contributions to the African Union based on the principles of ability to pay, solidarity, and equitable burden-sharing, to avoid risk concentration.
 - Predictable and sustainable financing of the AU's operational peace and security activities through the revitalization of the AU Peace Fund and the pursuit of strategic partnerships.
7. Remarkable progress has been made since the Assembly took the decision to revitalize the Peace Fund in 2016. The primary objective of the Assembly in 2015 was to improve the AU's financial autonomy and predictability of financing of peace and security priorities. It was recognized that the old financing modalities of the Peace Fund were not effective and only generated limited resources.

8. Under the old arrangements, the AU was only able to raise \$6m on average in any given year over the twenty year period. As a result, the Union became highly dependent on external resources to drive the continental peace and security agenda. In 2015, with respect to programme funding for peace and security activities, the AU was 97% dependent on partner funding.
9. The promotion and maintenance of peace and security on the continent is a core mandate area of the Union. Reducing this alarming level of dependency and regaining autonomy and ownership of the peace and security agenda was, therefore, one of the Assembly's key objectives when it took its decisions in 2015 and 2016.
10. Since 2017, fifty AU Member States have contributed to the AU Peace Fund and a total of **\$141m** has been collected. This is a clear testament to the validity and effectiveness of the Assembly's Decisions. While strategic partnerships on peace and security will always be required, the Peace Fund with its \$400m endowment from Member States will enable the AU to drive its own peace and security agenda on the basis of its own assessment of the problems and its own determination of the appropriate solutions. The Fund will enable the PSC to move from issuing Communiqués to taking concrete actions.
11. There are many who doubted AU Member State's commitment to delivering on the Peace Fund financing. The AU has made good progress on Member State financing. In 2020, with the assistance of the AU High Representative and the Board of Trustees, the Commission will be exploring avenues for resource mobilization with the African private sector and in due course the prospects for partnership with other bilateral and multilateral partners.
12. The AU must now turn its attention to agenda setting and prioritization. Here we look to the Peace and Security Council to play its full role in setting the strategic priorities that the Fund will finance. Historically, the Peace and Security Council has played a limited role in providing strategic guidance on what the 1993 Peace Fund should finance. This is one of the gaps the revitalized Peace Fund intends to address. The scope of the Fund has already been established by the Assembly, within that framework the PSC should define the strategic objectives that the Fund should finance.
13. On performance and accountability, we have a high-calibre Board of Trustees in place since November 2018 that has been working hard to ensure the full operationalization of the governance and management structure in 2020. With their guidance, we will ensure that credible annual Fund financing levels are established. This will ensure that Fund balances are not rapidly depleted while ensuring strategic objectives can be delivered while maintaining the highest fiduciary standards.

Session I: Background and Context

14. The AU High Representative for Financing the Union and the Peace Fund set the scene with an overview of the background to the process and reflections on progress and lessons learned as follows:
- a) The operationalization of the AU Peace Fund has been a long journey with some differing points of view along the way but there is now broad consensus. The process of establishing this Fund is irreversible and remarkable progress has been made.
 - b) The implementation of the 2016 Assembly Decision on the revitalization of the AU Peace Fund has established a unique instrument that will enable the AU to finance continental peace and security activities. The financing challenges of the 1993 Peace Fund have been addressed as evidenced by the collection of \$141m in Member State contributions since 2017.
 - c) The governance and management arrangements for the Peace Fund will ensure the Fund is managed to the highest possible standards.

Session II: Summary of overall progress to date

A. Update on the establishment of governance and management structures

15. The Chairperson of the AU Commission presented an overview of progress in the establishment of the key governance and management structures of the AU Peace Fund as follows:
- a) The AU Peace Fund governance and management structure is made up of a Board of Trustees, Executive Management Committee, Independent Evaluation Group and a Peace Fund Secretariat.
 - b) With respect to the governance and management structure, the Board of Trustees was established in November 2018. It is made up of representatives from the five AU regions and two of the AU's strategic partners the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). The Board has met four times since it was established.
 - c) During its 2 May 2019 meeting, the Board of Trustees reviewed and approved the terms of reference for the remaining structures: the Fund Manager, Independent Evaluation Group and Peace Fund Secretariat.
 - d) The Fund Manager is being selected through an open tender process based on terms of reference reviewed by the F15 Experts and endorsed by the Board of

Trustees. The process will be concluded by February 2020. The open tender was launched on 25 May 2019. Fourteen (14) bids were received and evaluated in July 2019 and five firms were shortlisted. An enhanced due diligence process of the shortlisted firms was approved by the Board of Trustees and is currently underway.

- e) The Peace Fund Secretariat structure was presented to Member States for consideration as part of the new departmental structure of the AU Commission. The proposal for the new AU Commission departmental structure, including the Peace Fund Secretariat, was adopted by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (PRC) on 4 December 2019. The proposal will be presented to the Policy Organs for adoption in February 2020.
- f) In line with the January 2018 Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.687(XXX), the Peace Fund Secretariat will report to the Chairperson of the Commission who is the Accounting Officer of the Union and Chair of the Executive Management Committee of the AU Peace Fund. The Secretariat will be located in the Bureau of the Chairperson but will work closely with the departments covering Political Affairs and Peace and Security issues in the Commission. The draft terms of reference for the Director of the Peace Fund Secretariat will be considered by the Board of Trustees in their 12 January 2020 meeting.
- g) The Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) shall undertake periodic independent evaluations of the Fund in order to provide an objective assessment of the performance of the Fund, including the impact of its funded activities, administrative management, effectiveness and efficiency. These reports will be available to all stakeholders.
- h) The IEG shall be made up of seven members, five from the African Union regions and two from International Co-operating Partners. The IEG shall elect a Convenor, who will be one of its members from the AU Member States. The IEG shall be selected through a competitive merit-based, open and transparent process based on selection criteria endorsed by the Board. The recruitment of the IEG will be initiated in February 2020.
- i) While the AU has over fourteen Special Funds, it is acknowledged that managing Funds is not a core competence of the AU. It is for this reason that results, accountability and effectiveness have been elusive in the implementation of these various Funds. In light of this experience the Assembly decided to establish a new governance and management architecture for the Peace Fund that is designed to ensure strong delivery, impact and fiduciary standards. This has in some cases challenged old ways of doing business and identified various weaknesses in the existing management systems and processes.
- j) The 2018 External Auditors Report raised serious concerns with respect the AU's financial management and accountability and this is a major area of concern for our Member States. The Chairperson of the Commission has personally prioritized this matter with a view to ensuring audit findings are implemented and staff that

are found to have breached established rules and regulations are appropriately sanctioned.

- k) As we move to the full operationalization of the revitalized Peace Fund, the governance and management system that has been put in place must ensure the highest fiduciary standards and accountability in the management of the Fund. The recruitment of Secretariat staff will be undertaken in a manner that ensures that the AU Commission is able to attract the best talent in Africa and operationalize the rest of the structure in line with best practice. All posts for the Peace Fund Secretariat and the IEG will be competitively recruited, terms of reference will be posted on the AU web-site and other channels and also circulated to Member States.

B. Update on Financing Matters

16. The AU Commission provided an update on financial matters including the status of Member State contributions to the Fund; the current banking arrangements and the development of financial rules and regulations.

Status of Contributions

17. As at 31 December 2019, 50 AU Member States had contributed a total of \$141m to the AU Peace Fund. The overall collection target for 2017 - 2019 was \$195m. There is, therefore, a gap of \$54m.

Interim Banking Arrangements

18. Pending the completion of the procurement of fund management services, the Board of Trustees strongly recommended that the AU Commission place Member State contributions to the AU Peace Fund in interest-earning accounts rather than current accounts.
19. In response to the Board's recommendation, the AU Commission has so far placed Member State contributions in two interest earning accounts in two banks on the continent. These are Ecobank, Kenya and Standard Bank, South Africa. Since the placement of these funds in interest earning accounts in August 2019, \$1.65m dollars has been earned in interest.

Financial Rules and Regulations

20. In July 2019, the AU Executive Council *requested the Commission to update the FRR to reflect the relevant financial and management provisions of the Assembly decisions on the revitalized AU Peace Fund within the framework of the review of the FRR for due consideration by the AU Policy Organs.*

21. In line with this policy guidance, the AU Financial Rules and Regulations will include an Annex on the AU Peace Fund Financial Rules and Regulations, Member States will consider the proposed draft as part of their review of the overall AU Financial Rules and Regulations and present the final package to the AU Policy Organs for consideration and adoption.

C. Update on the AU-UN discussions on the use of UN assessed contributions to finance AU mandated or authorized peace support operations

22. The Commissioner for Peace and Security provided an update on the on-going discussions on securing predictable and sustainable financing for AU peace support operations through United Nations (UN) assessed contributions as follows:

- a) Alongside the process to revitalize the AU Peace Fund, the issue of UN financing of AU Peace Support Operations has been a top priority for the AU. In the AU Peace and Security Council Communiqué adopted at its 689th meeting held on 30 May 2017, the AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) requested the following: That the UN Security Council (UNSC) should take practical steps towards the adoption of a substantive resolution that establishes the principle that AU mandated or authorized Peace Support Operations authorized by the UN Security Council should be financed through UN assessed contributions, with decisions on the financing of specific missions to be taken on a case by case basis.
- b) In November and December 2018, the African Members of the UNSC (A3) - Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia, tabled a draft resolution on financing of AU Peace Support Operations to the UN Security Council for adoption. However the process stalled as the UN Security Council was not willing or ready to adopt the position of the AU as articulated in the 2015 Common African Position and by the AU Peace and Security Council – based on the relevant Assembly decisions.
- c) The Commission appreciates the commitment and direction of the AU PSC and its continuous reaffirmation of the comparative advantage of AU PSC mandated or authorized peace support operations that undertake rapid deployment and offensive operations where required, based on the principle of non-indifference as provided for in the AU Constitutive Act and as integrated in the African Peace and Security Architecture. This has served as the basis for our engagement with the UN Security Council, emphasizing the common African position to enhance the predictability and sustainability of the financing of AU-led peace support operations, undertaken within the framework of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and authorized by the UN Security Council.
- d) The attempt by the African Members of the UN Security Council (A3) to table the draft resolution again in 2019 stalled once again. In this regard, and following series of meetings and deliberations by the AU Peace and Security Council, including by its Experts, the AU Peace and Security Council at its 881st meeting

held on 19 September 2019 decided that all discussions regarding UN financing of AU peace support operations authorized by the UN Security Council should be put on hold. The communication by the AU PSC to the African Members of the UNSC (A3) to postpone submission of the draft resolution that was being sponsored by some permanent members of the UNSC and subscribed to by the other Council members was on the basis that the draft did not properly and sufficiently reflect the spirit of partnership that should guide cooperation between the AU PSC and UNSC.

- e) The AU PSC's position was based on the realization that whilst the UN continues to reiterate its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, it is not yet ready and willing to demonstrate this responsibility through the use of UN assessed contributions to finance AU peace support operations in a predictable and sustainable manner.
- f) Through Assembly Decisions 562 and 577 adopted in Addis Ababa and Johannesburg in 2015 respectively, Africa took the bold initiative to contribute, extracting from the Union budget, 25% of the cost of AU peace and security activities, including peace support operations. In this regard, and through Assembly Decisions 605 adopted in Kigali in 2016, AU Member States decided to revitalize and endow the AU Peace Fund with \$400 million.
- g) Unfortunately, the UN Security Council is asking the AU to demonstrate the ability to cover 25% of the cost of each AU peace support operations which was never the intention of the AU Assembly. It was agreed that forward discussions with the UNSC would clarify this matter to ensure there is no ambiguity.

D. Update on the scale of assessment

- 23. The AU High Representative provided an update on the regional consultations on the scale of assessment for the AU Peace Fund.
- 24. The objective of the regional consultations was to listen to the views of the five AU regions on whether a formula on how to apportion the \$80m within each region can be agreed upon and to take stock of the operationalization of the enhanced governance and management structure of the AU Peace Fund pursuant to Assembly Decisions 605 (XXVII), 635(XXVIII) and 687(XXX).
- 25. The AU High Representative presented a report on the outcome of the regional consultations to the Executive Council in July 2019 in Niamey. Consultations with all regions had taken place. In one region, the matter was deferred to the Ministerial level and consultations at this level are still outstanding. In another region a final consultation was still required to conclude on the matter.

26. The AU High Representative concluded that he was ready and available to finalise the consultations with the two remaining regions.

E. Update on Audit Matters

27. The Chair of the Sub-Committee on Audit Matters presented the key audit decisions related to the AU Peace Fund and key issues arising from these decisions. The presentation covered the key challenges regarding the management of the AU Peace Fund arising from the lessons learned from the management of AU Special Funds, the recent 2019 Special Audit on the AU Peace Fund and the management of the 1993 AU Peace Fund.

28. The Chair briefed the Retreat as follows:

- a) The Sub-Committee has expressed its concern regarding the overall management of the AU's Special Funds, including some that are said to have been dormant for over five (5) years. The Sub-Committee recommended that a detailed analysis of the status of these funds be conducted by the Finance department in consultation with relevant departments and that such an analysis should be audited prior to its consideration by the Sub-Committee. One of the funds that was identified as dormant was the AFISMA special fund, which is said to have a ledger amount of US\$ 15 million.
- b) With regard to the legacy Peace Fund of 1993, the Special Funds Audit Report indicated that the Fund had a general ledger amount of US\$ 56,658,169.17 million, while the cash flow bank balance as at 31 July 2019 was US\$32,879.07. However, following the presentation by the Finance department, it seems that the actual current General Peace Fund cash flow balance is US\$ 56,658,169.17, and that the US\$15million of AFISMA was an actual cash flow figure that was included in the cash flow balance of the legacy Peace Fund of 1993.
- c) There is a need for accurate information and consistency in the information presented to Member States. The sub-Committee is of the view that the AU accounting system and practice needs to be reviewed.
- d) With regard to the Internal Audit report on the 2016 Peace Fund, the Sub-Committee found that there were several internal control weaknesses. The sub-Committee was happy to hear that following the audit and advise by the Board of Trustees Member State contributions have been placed in interest earning accounts.
- e) It is important to ensure that the various governance and management structures and AU Organs operate in a harmonised and coherent manner to avoid heavy bureaucracy and lengthy decision-making processes that will limit the responsiveness of the Fund.

- f) With respect to the revitalized Peace Fund, and in line with lessons learned from the management of the legacy Fund, it is strongly recommended that the majority of the resources be focused on programmatic interventions rather than operating costs. This will ensure that the core objective of the Fund, financing peace activities, is met.
- g) There should be clear guidance on the management of investments, and disbursing of funds, and the future replenishment after fund has reached the target amount.

29. The following key points emerged from Session II discussions:

- The establishment of the original Peace Fund in 1993 and the revitalization in 2016, is a reflection of one of the AU's core strategic objectives as enshrined in the Constitutive Act. All Member States are, therefore, committed. Heads of State and Government have set the strategic priority, the AU now needs to put in place the critical success criteria required to ensure a high-performing Fund.
- Self-reliance and self-financing is critical. A fund of this size needs careful management and we need to look at best practice. The highest standards in transparency and accountability required. It is clear that the Commission could not manage the legacy Funds appropriately. The operationalization of the revitalized Peace Fund will need to take into account the lessons learned.
- On the governance and management structure, it is standard practice for a fund of this size to have a dedicated governance and management structure of this nature. The structure that is currently being operationalized similar to how other similar international funds are managed. Decision-making processes will need to be streamlined to ensure that the responsiveness of the Fund is not undermined.
- Detailed investment guidelines have been developed and reviewed by the Committee of Finance Experts (F15) as well as the Board of Trustees. These include guidance on the percentage of funds to be retain in money market accounts to meet the liquidity requirements for the Fund's programmatic requirements and crisis response requirements. These will provide the basis for the Fund Manager's engagement.
- On replenishment, Member States will only be required to contribute the difference between the full endowment level and funds that have been spent.
- A special strategy to mobilize funds from countries that have not made their full contributions is required.

- The objective of the AU Peace Fund is to deliver timely and effective responses to crises on the continent. There is a consensus, based on experience, that the general AU rules and regulations are not adapted to the requirements of crisis operations and new rules and regulations are required. Developing specific rules and regulations for funds of this nature is standard practice for special purpose Funds. Several of the United Nations' funds are covered by what are called Supplements to the General UN Financial Rules Regulations.
- Assembly Decision 605 also called for rules and regulations to be developed for the Fund. The key issue is that the rules and regulations for the Peace Fund will be AU financial rules and regulations contained in an Annex to the General AU Rules and Regulations and will be considered and adopted by AU Policy Organs.
- The consolidation of 1993 legacy Peace Fund into the revitalized Peace Fund is an urgent priority but should be implemented in line with the July 2019 Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.1061(XXXV), which calls for an audit of the legacy Fund prior to any consolidation. A timeline for consolidation should be drawn up following the presentation of the audit findings.
- Following the audit of the legacy Fund, the balance of uncommitted funds should be used to finance a 2020 Budget for the AU Peace Fund.
- All dormant accounts should be closed immediately.
- The AU Commission's presentation on the legacy funds shows that Member States have made double payments. Appropriations from the regular budget to the legacy Peace Fund are still being while Member States are paying in line with the general scale of assessment to the revitalised Peace Fund. This should not be the case. When the Commission started assessing Member States for contributions to the revitalised Peace Fund in 2017, no additional payments should have been levied.
- Private sector resource mobilization is critical and should be pursued in 2020 but they will want fiduciary assurances on the management of the Fund as well as program impact and effectiveness.
- On the scale of assessment, two perspectives were presented as follows: \$141m has been raised in three years. The general scale works so the AU should continue to apply. On the other hand, some Member States from the northern region were of the view that the general scale would place a heavier burden on the northern region and therefore some form of a regional scale should be applied. In this regard, some members circulated a proposed scale.
- The issue of predictable and sustainable financing for AU mandated or authorized peace support operations remains unresolved. UN financing through assessed contributions remains critical. There has been a long dialogue on this matter.

Critical process was made in November 2016 through the adoption of United Nation Security Council Resolution 2320, but progress has been difficult since then.

- The enabling conditions for a meaningful partnership-based dialogue with key Member States within the UN Security Council may not be in place. In these circumstances, the AU should focus on delivering on its own commitments as set out in the 2015 and 2016 Assembly decisions on financial autonomy and accelerating progress towards full operationalization of the AU Peace Fund.
- The AU should continue to explore the scope for partnership with a range of actors including the UN but the primary focus should be in delivering on the Assembly decisions on the Peace Fund.

Session III: Roles and Responsibilities

30. This session focused on building a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Peace Fund governance and management structures and discussed the key interface between the Peace and Security Council, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Management Committee and other Organs and entities responsible for budget and audit matters.

31. The Chair of the Board of Trustees presented the roles and responsibilities of the PSC, Board of Trustees and Executive Management Committee (AU Commission) as follows:

- a) The central decision-making role on what the AU Peace Fund will fund rests with the relevant AU Policy Organs, in line with the established objectives of the Fund.
- b) The Peace Security Council sets strategic priorities for the Fund, considers proposed programmes, projects and budgets, and considers effectiveness and impact. With respect to Window 3 of the Fund (peace support operations), the PSC is responsible for mandating and authorizing peace support operations as well as mandate reviews and renewals.
- c) The Board of Trustees recommends appropriate budget allocations, ensures compliance and fiduciary oversight, approves annual independent review and mid-term evaluation priorities and also considers effectiveness and impact.
- d) Based on the PSC's strategic guidance, the AU Commission develops priority programmes, projects and budgets in line with financial and procurement rules and regulations, implements programmes and projects in line with financial and procurement rules and regulations and is responsible for monitoring, review and reporting.

- e) With respect to Window 3 of the Fund, the AU Commission co-ordinates the planning, budgeting and deployment and reporting for AU mandated peace support operations in line with approved financial rules and regulations.

32. The following key points emerged from Session III discussions:

- The Peace Fund is a unique instrument with specific governance and management arrangements but under the political guidance of AU Policy Organs.
- The roles and responsibilities that have been presented are very clear, these should be converted into a flow chart which will clarify matters even further. As part of this, the role of the sub-committees responsible for budget and audit matters should be reflected particularly their roles in budget approval and performance monitoring.
- The reports of the Independent Evaluation Group will be made available to all Organs as well as the Board of External Auditors to assist them in the execution of their respective performance monitoring and auditing roles.
- The decision-making processes need to be clear, in order to avoid slowing down the responsiveness of the Fund.

Session IV: Roadmap for the operationalization of the remaining elements of the AU Peace Fund.

33. The AU High Representative took note of the common understanding and commitment to the delivery of a fully operational Peace Fund in 2020 and presented the roadmap highlighting the following key priorities:

- a) On **financing**, the main priority was the completion of the procurement of fund management services. This was at an advanced stage and would be concluded in February 2020. The finalisation of the consultations on the scale of assessment was also critical as there was a reporting requirement in the February 2020 Summit. The remaining regions were encouraged to make themselves available to conclude the consultations. The finalisation of the AU Financial Rules and Regulations including an Annex on the Peace Fund and consideration and adoption of AU Policy Organs in July 2020 was proposed. This would require the AU Assembly to delegate the adoption of the FRRs to the Executive Council.
- b) On **governance and management structures**, the top priority was the establishment of the Peace Fund Secretariat and the Independent Evaluation Group within the first half of 2020.
- c) The budget process for the Peace Fund 2021 budget required the combine effort of a number of stakeholders, most importantly the PSC would need to identify the

strategic priorities as soon as possible, ideally in February 2020. This would also need to be accompanied by a recommendation by the Board of Trustees to the Commission on the appropriate budget ceiling to plan within. Both these elements would provide the basis for the preparation of the 2021 budget before it is considered by the Board of Trustees and followed by the sub-Committees, PRC and F15 with final adoption at the Executive Council level. Following the audit of the legacy fund, available balances could be used to finance a 2020 Peace Fund budget.

34. Member States endorsed the roadmap as presented and thanked the Chairperson of the Commission, the AU High Representative and Board of Trustees for their commitment and dedication in driving the process forward.

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