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REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ OF 27 OCTOBER 2014 ON STRUCTURAL CONFLICT PREVENTION

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I.   INTRODUCTION

1.   This report is submitted in pursuance of communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLXIII) adopted by Council at its 463rd meeting held on 27 October 2014 and devoted to the following theme: "Structural Prevention of Conflict – Reinvigorating States in Fragile Situations in Africa". The report provides an update on the follow-up steps taken by the Commission with respect to the finalization of the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework (CSCPF), as a tool to facilitate a Commission-wide and coordinated approach to prevention, as well as the development of a Country Structural Vulnerability Assessment (CSVA) tool, for the early identification of a country's structural vulnerability to conflict. It concludes with observations on the way forward.

II.   BACKGROUND

2.   The costs of managing conflict (whether in fielding peacekeeping operations, providing humanitarian relief, engaging in lengthy peace-making efforts or undertaking post-conflict reconstruction) are high. This lends further credence to the long-standing adage that 'prevention is better than cure'. Recognising that the human, financial and material costs of prevention are far less compared to the devastating consequences of armed violence, the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have, over the last two decades, developed policies and instruments aimed at preventing violent conflict on the continent, both operationally and structurally.

3.   As Council is aware, operational or direct prevention consists of actions designed to address the proximate or immediate causes of conflict, normally taken during the escalation phase of a given conflict, where proximate, dynamic factors come into play. Proximate causes are factors that are likely to contribute to violent conflict or its further escalation. These may include political factors (political transitions, electoral disputes, leadership struggles, exclusionary ideologies, growing inter-group competition); security-related factors (changing intra-state military balance); economic and social factors (mounting economic problems, growing economic inequities, fast paced but unequal development and modernisation).

4.   One of the main objectives of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) is the anticipation and prevention of conflict, as stipulated in its article 3. In this respect, the Protocol contains detailed provisions on direct conflict prevention, as illustrated by the articles relating to the powers of Council [article 7 (1 a & b)], the determination of its agenda [article 8 (7)], entry points and modalities for action (article 9), the role of the Chairperson of the Commission [article 10 (2)], the responsibilities of the Panel of the Wise (article 11), the Continental Early Warning System-CEWS (article 12), and the African Standby Force [article 13 (3d)]. It is also worth recalling the provisions of the PSC Protocol on the relations with the RECs (article 16), the Pan-African Parliament (article 18), the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (article 19), and civil society organizations (article 20).

5.   In communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCLX) adopted at its 360th meeting held on 22 March 2013, Council agreed on a number of practical steps to facilitate the discharge of its direct conflict prevention mandate. Among others, mention should be made of the following:

(a)   strengthening of the linkages between early warning and early response, which requires that the relevant AU policy organs operate with the required flexibility and act effectively on the information provided to them regarding potential conflicts and crises;

(b)   periodic review by Council, at least once every six months, of the state of peace and security on the continent, using horizon scanning approaches, on the basis of updates provided by the CEWS, relevant AU institutions, such as the Panel of the Wise, African and international think tanks, civil society organizations and other stakeholders;

(c)   briefings by the Commission and other stakeholders, at least every two months, on electoral processes in Africa, as provided for in press statement PSC/PR/BR(CCCXI) adopted by Council at its 311th meeting held on 16 February 2012, bearing in mind that elections on the continent have more often than not been marred by violence, sometimes leading to full-blown conflict; and

(d)   operationalization of the 2009 Livingstone Formula on the interaction with civil society.

6.   With regards to monitoring and analysing proximate causes of conflict, the AU and several of the RECs have tailored their early warning systems to the gathering, monitoring and analysis of so-called event data in a systematic way. At the AU, the CEWS has developed specific tools to enable the systematic and continuous monitoring of conflict, anchored on data driven analysis and based on agreed upon indicators. These include the Africa Reporter (focusing on incident and situation reports from AU Field Missions and Offices), the Africa Media Monitor/News Desk/Live Mon, and Profiles Module. As a constituent part of the APSA, in particular the CEWS, the RECs are required to continuously inform Council on their activities and when necessary brief it.

7.   The AU is cognisant of the fact that conflict prevention must also include a structural, strategic dimension to address the root causes of conflict. Conflict and violence develop in environments characterized by structural factors: history of past social violence, unstable neighbourhoods, deep-seated poverty, in conjunction with societal conditions such as discrimination and economic deprivation/decline, political repression, ethnic polarisation, and various environmental and resource degradation problems that may contribute to political instability and conflict.

8.   These situations have been described in different terms and attributed to a variety of underlying reasons. In public and political debate, both in Africa and abroad, reference is often indiscriminately made to attributes such as "fragility", "instability", "state collapse", "state inversion", "state decline", "state decay", "state failure", "weak states", "quasi states", "degrees of statelessness". The Report of the High-Level Panel on Fragile States titled "Ending Conflict and Building Peace in Africa: A Call to Action", which was presented to, and endorsed by, the 22nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 26 to 27 June 2014 [Assembly/AU/ Dec.512(XXII)], discussed in-depth the issue of fragility. The Report "sees fragility not as a category of states, but as a risk inherent in the development process itself", adding that, "in the coming period, it will appear across Africa in different places and forms, at national or local level – including in

countries not currently classified as fragile". The Report notes that fragility in Africa is linked to rapid urbanization, youth unemployment, inequality and social exclusion, new natural resource finds, climate change, state building and peace building processes, which have the potential to put unbearable strain on national institutions, creating a risk of violence.

9.   Against this backdrop, structural prevention activities should support, *inter alia*, the balancing of political, economic, social and cultural opportunities among all segments of society, contributing to the strengthening of democratic legitimacy, the effectiveness of governance institutions, peaceful conciliation of group interests and bridging of dividing lines among different segments of society. When successful, such activities should lead to sustainable economic development, good governance and respect for human rights, viable political structures with the capacity to manage change without resort to violence, and healthy environmental and social conditions.

III.   <u>AU'S PRONOUNCEMENTS ON STRUCTURAL PREVENTION</u>

10.   Over the years, the AU has adopted several normative instruments designed to facilitate the structural prevention of conflicts. These instruments relate to human rights; governance and the fight against corruption; democratisation processes; disarmament; terrorism; and the prevention and reduction of interstate conflicts. They represent a consolidated framework of commonly accepted norms and principles, whose observance would significantly reduce the risk of conflict and violence and consolidate peace where it has been achieved.

11.   Council has, on several occasions, emphasized the need for renewed efforts towards the structural prevention of conflicts. In Declaration PSC/MIN/BR.1 (CCLXXIV) on the State of Peace and Security in Africa, adopted at its 275th meeting, held on 26 April 2011, Council noted that neglect by Governments of the political and socio-economic needs of the population, in particular the youth, create conditions favourable to the outbreak of crises and conflicts. Council expressed its conviction that the 2011 popular uprisings in North Africa should be used as an opportunity for Member States to renew their commitment to the AU's democratic and governance agenda, give added momentum to efforts deployed in this respect and implement the political and socio-economic reforms which are called for in every particular national situation, stressing the imperative of good governance, through the strengthening of democratic culture and institutions, respect for human rights, upholding the rule of law and people-centred constitutions, as means for preventing conflicts and enhancing the people's participation in fostering solutions to the prevailing problems.

12.   At its 360th meeting, Council stressed the need to address the root causes of conflicts in a systematic and holistic manner, and the imperative for all Member States, in line with their commitments under relevant AU instruments, to work towards ever-higher standards in the areas of human rights, democracy, good governance and conflict prevention, a prerequisite to attain socio-economic development and integration on the continent. Council agreed, within the framework of its conflict prevention responsibilities, to effectively follow-up the progress made by Member States towards the promotion of democratic practices, good governance, the rule of law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the sanctity of human life and international humanitarian law, as provided for in article 7 (m) of the PSC Protocol [PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCLX)].

13.   Subsequently, at its 463rd meeting, Council reiterated its conviction that situations of marginalization, abuses of human rights, refusal to accept electoral defeat, manipulation of

constitutions, mismanagement and unequal distribution of resources, lack of socio-economic opportunities, unemployment, as well as corruption, among other factors, are potent triggers of violent conflicts in Africa. Accordingly, Council stressed the imperative of good governance through the strengthening of democratic culture and institutions, respect for human rights, upholding of the rule of law, as well as of socio-economic development, as a means for preventing conflicts and fostering peace and stability on the continent. Council recognized that building strong, responsive and accountable state institutions at the local and national levels that deliver essential services, as well as ensure inclusive political processes, rule of law and public security, is key to preventing conflicts and consolidating peace building gains.

14.   Council expressed full support to the recommendations contained in the report of the High-Level Panel on Fragile States and requested the Commission, working closely with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and with the support of relevant international partners, to actively work towards the implementation of these recommendations. Council acknowledged the establishment of mechanisms aimed at monitoring progress in governance, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the UNECA-led Africa Governance Report (AGR), which provide early warning tools to anticipate the occurrence of governance-related conflicts, as well as the progress made towards the operationalization of CEWS at the level of both the AU and the RECs. More specifically, Council underlined the need for :

(i)   the establishment and strengthening of responsive, accountable and strong institutions at the local, national, regional and continental levels;

(ii)   the acceleration of the signature, ratification and domestication of relevant AU instruments, as well as the implementation of sustained sensitization and popularization activities;

(iii)   the enhancement of compliance with the existing instruments;

(iv)   the effective use of existing mechanisms and instruments such as the APRM and the AGR, in order to better monitor and improve the quality of governance in Africa; and

(v)   greater involvement of the AU Panel of the Wise, the Pan-African Parliament and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights in the overall efforts to promote good governance and prevent conflicts, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol.

IV.   CONTINENTAL STRUCTURAL CONFLICT PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

15.   In communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLXIII), Council commended the Commission for its efforts to finalize the elaboration of a Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework, following the meeting it convened in Kigali, Rwanda, from 14 to 16 June 2013, as a tool to facilitate a Commission-wide and coordinated approach to structural conflict prevention. Council requested that this process be expedited.

16.   The design of the CSCPF responds to the following needs: (i) hastening the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA); (ii) strengthening the coordination and harmonization role of the AU vis-à-vis the RECs, as stipulated in the PSC Protocol; (iii) mainstreaming conflict prevention into the activities and programs of the Commission; and (iv) addressing the structural or root causes of conflict in Africa more

systematically. The CSCPF is intended to serve as a template to guide the Commission in supporting Member States in their structural conflict prevention efforts.

17.   The CSCPF conceives preventive action as a comprehensive tool involving direct or operational steps before large-scale violence occurs, as well as a strategic focus on the structural causes of conflict. While direct and structural prevention remain two distinct policy responses based on the kind of 'causes of conflict' they seek to address, each requires the other in order to be effective. This notwithstanding, direct and structural prevention approaches can be deployed at all points of the conflict cycle.

18.   An Inter-Departmental Task-Force on Conflict Prevention has been established in 2014 to mainstream conflict prevention in the programs and activities of the Commission. Since its establishment, the Task Force has met several times, and has developed a draft joint action plan on conflict prevention.

V.   COUNTRY STRUCTURAL VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT AND STRUCTURAL VULNERABILITY MITIGATION STRATEGY

19.   In communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLXIII), Council commended the efforts by the Commission to develop a CSVA tool to facilitate the identification of a country's structural vulnerability to conflict at an early stage, with special emphasis on areas that are relevant in identifying drivers of violent conflict: (i) socio-economic development; (ii) good governance, rule of law, democracy and human rights; (iii) security sector; (iv) environment and climate change; (v) gender and youth; (vi) post-conflict peace-building; and (vii) transitional justice and reconciliation. Council encouraged the Commission to expedite the completion of the CSVA process, with a view to availing this tool to Member States as part of their national efforts to prevent conflict and sustain peace and stability. The CSVA report will serve as a basis for elaborating an appropriate Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy (CSVMS).

a)   Country Structural Vulnerability Assessment

20.   Acknowledging that there are no linear paths from the root, structural or underlying causes of conflict to the actual outbreak of conflict, the CSVA will allow Member States to identify potential structural causes of conflict – such as the exclusion of identity groups and other forms of discrimination and/or economic deprivation, enduring societal stress or various long-term forms of environmental and resource degradation, with severe governance implications, as opposed to proximate and more immediate factors.

21.   The CSVA and CSVMS tools build on the process and experience of the APRM of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in particular the NEPAD Framework Document, as adopted in October 2001, and the APRM Principles, as adopted at the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), held in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002. Also of relevance is the decision of the 6th Summit of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee on "Objectives, Standards, Criteria and Indicators" for the APRM, as adopted in Abuja, Nigeria, in March 2003.

22.   The conduct of the CSVA process will be facilitated by the *Africa Prospects* tool, which is part of the AU CEWS application suite. *Africa Prospects* is designed to assess the vulnerability of countries to conflict, based on its profile or set of structural indicators. The CSVA expands on the results generated from *Africa Prospects* by complementing them with a narrative and explanatory analysis, which would include reference to root causes of conflict.

b) **Conflict Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy**

23.   The CSVMS focuses on strategic and long-term measures which are developed by the countries concerned. The CSVMS is a key output of the process. It explores the dimensions upon which the AU and the RECs can best support. The actions to be undertaken may include measures at regional levels to address structural/root causes of violent conflict. In developing possible response strategies, existing AU policy instruments will be taken into account.

c) **Modalities for initiating CSVA and CSVMS**

24.   While the Manual and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for CSVA and CSVMS are yet to be developed, the process of generating them would involve the following steps:

(i)   the CSVA is generated through a request from a Member State, simultaneously addressed to the REC it belongs to as well as to the Commission;

(ii)   it is envisaged that the process of producing a CSVA report would not exceed two months. It would be carried out by the concerned Member State with the support and assistance of the Commission and the relevant REC;

(iii)   following the finalization of the CSVA, the concerned Member State together with the Commission and the relevant REC, will commence work on a CSVMS. It is envisaged that the CSVMS would be completed within four months;

(iv)   the concerned Member States would be encouraged to update Council on the CSVMS implementation process and progress made, detailing the impact of the measures taken on structural conflict prevention; and

(v)   the report of Council to the Assembly of the Union on its activities and the state of peace and security in Africa would include updates on the implementation of their CSVMS, as provided by the concerned Member States;

VI. **OBSERVATIONS**

25.   As Council is aware, the Assembly of the Union, in the "Solemn Declaration on the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU", adopted in Addis Ababa, on 25 May 2013, on the occasion of the Union's Golden Jubilee [Assembly/AU/Decl.3(XXI)], pledged not to bequeath the burden of conflict to the next generation of Africans, setting as an objective the elimination of all conflicts by 2020, within the framework of "Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want". The Assembly expressed its determination to anchor African societies, Governments and institutions on respect for the rule of law, human rights and dignity, popular participation, the management of diversity, as well as inclusion and democracy. It also committed itself to place the African people, in particular women, children and the youth, as well as persons with disabilities, at the centre of the Union's endeavours, and to eradicate poverty. At its 430th meeting held on 24 April 2014 on the theme "Silencing the Guns: Pre-requisites for Realizing a Conflict-Free Africa by the Year 2020" [Press Statement PSC/PR/BR.(CDXXX)], Council agreed on the need for the elaboration of a roadmap towards achieving the set objectives.

26.   Against this background, the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework represents an integrated and harmonized mechanism. In combination, the CSVA and CSVMS

processes offer a unique opportunity for the AU and the RECs to assist Member States in addressing the challenges at hand. The aim is to devise practical structural prevention measures. I encourage Member States to fully utilize these new tools.

27.   On its part, the Commission will continue to take all the necessary step to extend the required support to Member States, with particular emphasis on the establishment of national peace infrastructures, including early warning systems, to support efforts aimed at conflict prevention at the local and national levels, as requested by Council at its 463rd meeting. In this regard, and following requests from Ethiopia, Mauritania, Zimbabwe and South Africa, the Commission extended to these Member States technical support and capacity development for the establishment and operationalization of national early warning units, as well as Situation Rooms. This support includes the sharing of tools for data collection and analysis, as well as conflict assessment methodologies, and the provision of training. The Commission stands ready to assist other Member States.

28.   While these efforts are on-going, it should be kept in mind that structural conflict prevention cannot be separated from direct conflict prevention. Council, the Commission and the Panel of the Wise should make optimal use of the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol, which entrust them with important powers in the area of conflict prevention. Equally important is the need for Member States to extend full cooperation to the relevant AU organs. I would like, in this respect, to recall that the PSC Protocol commits Member States to extend full cooperation to, and facilitate action by, Council for the prevention, management and resolution of crisis and conflicts.

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Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Follow-Up to the Peace and Security Council Communiqué of 27 October 2014 on Structural Conflict Prevention

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