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PRESS RELEASE

AU HOSTS INAUGURAL WORKSHOP ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY IN SECURITY AND JUSTICE SECTOR REFORMS

Addis Ababa, 3 November 2017. The African Union Commission hosted the inaugural workshop of the project *Enhancing Civil Society Engagement in Security and Justice Sector Reforms at Continental and Regional Levels*. The workshop was held over a period of three days from 1 to 3 November 2017, in partnership with the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) and with the support of OXFAM and the Catholic Organization for Relief and Development (CORDAID).

The objectives of the workshop were to build the capacity of civil society to engage in issues of Security and Justice Sector Reform (SJSR) at continental, regional and national levels through a series of training workshops, in collaboration with the African Union and the RECs/RMs and provide a continental platform for ongoing dialogue and interaction between the AU, the RECs/RMs and civil society on SJSR policies, issues and processes, thus enhancing the role of civil society in monitoring and providing critical feedback on SJSR impacts on the ground, in particular on community security.

The workshop brought together more than 50 members of civil society organisations (CSOs) from five countries (South Sudan, DRC, Burundi, CAR and Tunisia), representatives of RECs/RMs (IGAD, ECCAS and ECOWAS), together with the AU, ECOSOCC Peace and Security Cluster, the ASSN, CORDAID and OXFAM. The workshop deliberated on how CSOs can initiate and support effective SSR processes in their respective countries in cognisance of the contextual peculiarities.

The workshop highlighted the close collaboration between the AU and CSOs on matters of peace and security especially in the area of security sector reform and encouraged CSOs to broaden their engagement with partners to include the private sector, faith based organizations, particularly, the youth. CSOs have been requested to go beyond being watchdogs and become partners with national authorities and other stakeholders in matters of peace and security in Africa.

The workshop received presentations on the AU Policy Framework on SSR, and addressed various themes, including the basic concepts of Security and Justice Sector Reform, Democratic Security Governance and the Continental and Regional SJSR Policy Frameworks. The final day of the workshop was dedicated to interaction between all stakeholders and addressed issues regarding how the AU and RECs/RMs can work

with civil society to ensure more people-centered security and justice outcomes at continental, regional and national levels.

2017-11-03

AU Hosts Inaugural Workshop Engaging Civil Society in Security and Justice Sector Reforms Addis Ababa, 3 November 2017

Peace and Security

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