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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
963<sup>RD</sup> MEETING

12 NOVEMBER 2020  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(CMLXIII)

**PRESS STATEMENT**

## PRESS STATEMENT

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) dedicated its 963<sup>rd</sup> meeting, held on 12 November 2020, to an Open Session on the theme: “Youth, Peace and Security: Advancing Youth Roles and Capacities for Silencing the Guns in Africa” in commemoration of the Africa Youth Month.

Council **noted** the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the AU and PSC Chairperson for November 2020, H.E. Ambassador Tesfaye Yilma; the statements made by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui; AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, H.E. Professor Sarah Anyang Agbor and the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Minata Samate Cessouma, read on her behalf by the Head of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat, Ambassador Salah S. Hammad. Council **also noted** the presentations made by the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Youth, H.E. Ms. Aya Chebbi, as well as by the five African Youth Ambassadors for Peace representing the five AU geographic regions, namely, Mr. AlHafiz Hassan Ahamat (Central Africa); Mr. Mohamed Edabbar (North Africa); Ms. Emma Ng’ang’a (East Africa); Mr. Moctar Kane (West Africa); and Ms. Karabo Mokgonyana (Southern Africa). Council **acknowledged** the statements submitted by the representatives of the AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), United Nations (UN), partners and other relevant stakeholders.

Council **recalled**, once again, the African Youth Charter, adopted by the 7<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of AU Assembly of Heads of States and Government held in Banjul, The Gambia, on 2 July 2006, particularly Article 17, which recognizes the important role of the youth in promoting peace and security in Africa. Council **also recalled**, once again, Aspirations 4 and 6 of Agenda 2063, namely, a peaceful and secure Africa and an Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by its people, especially women and youth and caring for children; Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.591 (XXVI)], adopted by the Assembly at its 26<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 30 to 31 January 2016, in which the Assembly adopted the theme of the year 2017 as “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth”, which laid the foundation for mainstreaming youth participation in the programmes of the AU Commission and also Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec. 753] adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its 33<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session held from 9 to 10 February 2020; as well as UN Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419(2018).

Council **further recalled** its previous decisions and pronouncements on youth peace and security, in particular, Communique [PSC/PR/COMM. (CMXCIII)] adopted at its 933<sup>rd</sup> meeting held on 23 June 2020; Communique [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCLXV)] adopted by Council at its 665<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 13 March 2017, Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR. (DCCCVII)] adopted at its 807<sup>th</sup> meeting, open session held on 8 November 2018; and its 895<sup>th</sup> meeting, open session, held on 15 November 2019.

Council **reiterated** the important role that the African youth play at national, regional and Continental levels in contributing towards the promotion of peace, security and stability, as well as development in Africa, within the framework of implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, and Aspiration number 4 of Agenda 2063, as well as UN Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018).

Council **commended** the AU Commission for the launch of the AU 'Youth Silencing the Guns Campaign: Advancing Youth Roles and Capacities for Silencing the Guns in Africa' in July 2020 which mobilize and engage African youth for the actualization of 'silencing the guns' within the context of the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security. In this regard, Council **welcomed** the activities undertaken by the AU Commission, in collaboration with the RECs/RMs, since the launch of the campaign, including regional consultations, intergenerational dialogues, capacity building, innovation challenge, as well as production of a youth-led silencing the guns themed song.

Council **noted with appreciation** the supportive role of youth in promoting good governance, peace, security and development in Africa despite the challenges imposed by COVID-19 pandemic. Council **commended** the youth across the Continent who presented positive contributions in promoting peace, security and stability, as well as development in the Continent. Council **urged** the youth to continue utilize relevant continental, regional and national instruments to create further impact and transformative changes in the lives of disadvantaged young women and men, including those who are displaced and living with disabilities.

Council **noted with appreciation** the efforts being deployed by the AU Youth Envoy and the five African Youth Ambassadors for Peace for the development of regional conflict prevention projects to be implemented with support from youth in their respective regions, in line with the five priorities of the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security.

Council **encouraged** Member States to continue to mainstream and facilitate the participation of the youth in all stages of peace processes and in national development, among others, by addressing all challenges which are inhibiting effective and meaningful participation of the youth in running the affairs of their countries, both in rural and urban settings, as instrumental for silencing the guns in Africa.

Council **underscored** the importance of Member States to be responsive to the legitimate needs of the youth, to promote vocational training and policies that directly address the needs of the including addressing youth unemployment. Council **also underscored** the importance of Member States to adopt specific measures aimed at their meaningful participation in policy and decision making.

Council **stressed** the necessity of the implementation of the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and security and its 10-year implementation plan, and **requested** the AU Commission in collaboration with the RECs/RMs, to provide requisite support to Member States

for the domestication of the Framework, including through the development and implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs).

Council ***underlined*** the importance of robust and sustained synergy, coordination, partnership and collaboration between all relevant stakeholders, including the AU and its Member States, RECs/RMs, UN and development partners to advance the YPS agenda and avoid duplication of efforts. In this regard, Council ***commended*** the establishment of a Taskforce on Youth, Peace and Security comprising relevant Departments at the Commission and RECs/RMs, which facilitate the smooth implementation of the AU youth, peace and security programmes. Council ***emphasized*** the need for regular convening of stakeholders' meetings to update and plan implementations, as well as facilitate experience sharing, lessons learned and best practices to support the advancement of youth, peace and security agenda.

Council ***reiterated*** its request to the AU Commission to regularly brief the Council on the status of progress in the implementation of the 10-Year Implementation Plan of the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security and challenges faced, including through periodic reports and annual briefings.

Council ***underlines*** that the engagement between the AU Commission and the youth groups and networks, including in relation to the implementation of the continental framework should be governed under the consultative status granted by AU Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).

Council ***congratulated*** those Member States which have already signed and ratified the African Youth Charter and the UN Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) and ***underscored*** the importance of all those Member States, which have not yet done so, to also do the same.

Council ***agreed*** to remain actively seized of the matter.