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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1263RD MEETING

6 MARCH 2025
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/CN.1263 (2025)

CONCEPT NOTE

CLIMATE CHANGE : CHALLENGES TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Climate change has become an aggravating factor in Africa's multidimensional crises, exacerbating conflicts, forced migrations, and socio-economic challenges. It is recognized as a threat multiplier, amplifying pre-existing vulnerabilities and creating new challenges for human security and regional stability.
2. Rising temperatures, desertification, water shortages, and intensified natural disasters directly and indirectly threaten peace and stability on the continent. Recurrent floods and cyclones cause tragic human losses and significant economic destruction.
3. Climate change generates a vicious cycle of destabilization, threatening peace and security in many African regions. It jeopardizes prospects for sustainable development and political stability, hindering the realization of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.
4. In this context, the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) will hold a virtual meeting on Thursday, March 6, 2025, dedicated to "Climate Change: Challenges to Peace and Security in Africa." The session will assess ongoing efforts to address climate-related security challenges on the continent.

II. CONTEXT

5. Africa is one of the continents most exposed to the effects of climate change, despite its low contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions (less than 4%). According to the World Bank, Africa accounts for only 3.8% of total global emissions. Yet, from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa and the southern regions, African countries are experiencing severe droughts and floods with devastating consequences.
6. Climate change presents several major challenges for Africa, including food and water insecurity, which threaten agricultural production and water availability. This leads to food shortages and mass displacements, fueling social and political tensions that can escalate into violent conflicts.
7. Water stress and food insecurity increase the vulnerability of communities. In 2023, over 282 million people in Africa suffered from undernourishment (FAO). Additionally, climate-related disasters have forcibly displaced over 7 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNHCR). This increased pressure on natural resources fuels conflicts, particularly in the Sahel, where 80% of violent clashes in 2022 were linked to competition for water and arable land (UN).
8. Climate change reduces arable land, limits access to drinking water, and disrupts traditional livelihoods such as farming and livestock rearing. Consequently, rural communities already struggling with poverty and inequality face intensified competition for scarce resources, often leading to inter-community tensions. Moreover, natural disasters, including floods and droughts, are becoming more frequent and intense, exacerbating humanitarian crises.
9. Climate change also weakens state governance, making it harder to maintain security and public welfare. This creates opportunities for terrorist and criminal groups, who exploit climate-related frustrations to recruit and expand their influence, further threatening regional stability.

10. Thus, climate change is not just an environmental threat—it undermines social cohesion and governance, necessitating an integrated approach that combines climate adaptation and resilience, sustainable development, and peacebuilding.

11. In light of the above, the AU has been undertaking efforts to address the challenges of climate change in peace and security. In May 2018, the AU-PSC requested the AU Commission to conduct a study on the climate-conflict nexus through its Press Statement (PSC/PR/BR.DCCLXXIV) on “the link between climate change and conflicts in Africa and addressing the security implications.” This request was reiterated in the PSC Communiqué of the 1051st Meeting of 26 November 2021 on Climate Change, Peace, and Security, which emphasised the need for an informed climate-security-development nexus for Africa. The AU Commission has been working to finalize the climate-related security risks assessment study, in consultation with Member States, and defining the varying security impacts of climate change on the African continent, while mobilising a Common African Position towards climate change and security.

12. The 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU in February 2022, adopted the Decision 815 acknowledging the “inextricable link between climate, peace and security”. Furthermore, the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) underlined the role of climate change as a potential threat multiplier in the context of conflict and human security. Climate change was also identified as a cross cutting issue in the African Peace and Security Architecture 2016-2020 roadmap. Within the AU Commission, the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment and the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security are at the forefront of the collective work to address the Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus.

13. In a significant step towards developing a unified African response to climate change-related peace and security risks, the AU Commission hosted a three-day consultation on the Development of the Common African Position on Climate Change, Peace, and Security from 27 to 29 August 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya. The workshop brought together AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), African Climate Commissions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), African research centers, academia, subject matter experts, and other regional stakeholders.

14. The collaborative effort, supported by international partners, culminated in the Africa Climate Security Risk Assessment (ACRA), which provided essential preliminary data for developing the Common African Position on Climate, Peace, and Security (CAP-CPS). The Nairobi meeting adopted eleven guiding principles, including African ownership and leadership, a focus on prevention and resilience building, multifaceted and cross-sectoral responses, and the necessity of partnerships and mutual accountability. The principles also emphasised the importance of recognising the diverse impacts on different societal groups, leveraging indigenous knowledge, and encouraging community engagement and empowerment.

15. Nine key challenges were identified, such as governance and fragility, management of natural resource conflicts, non-state actors, climate variables, sustainable livelihoods, displacement and mobility, differential vulnerabilities, impacts on maritime security, and the negative effects of climate mitigation and adaptation interventions. To address these challenges, eleven priorities were also outlined, including conflict-sensitive climate adaptation, strengthening regional organisations, finance, just transitions, technology transfer, effective governance of natural resources, and early warning systems.

16. On 17 October 2024, the AU PSC and the UN Security Council (UNSC), during the 18th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting, among others, discussed the integration of climate-related security risks into peacebuilding efforts. They stressed the need for long-term strategies, based on comprehensive

risk assessments by governments and the United Nations, to support stabilization and build resilience, and encouraged the relevant UN and AU bodies, to continue to integrate this information, as appropriate, in their activities. Furthermore, they encouraged continued advocacy for efforts, to scale up international action and support, through inter alia, humanitarian and development action, resource mobilization and capacity-building, including on clean, sustainable, affordable, reliable, just and inclusive energy transitions, and energy efficiency in line with existing commitments in order to enhance the adaptation and mitigation capacity of countries from the region and to reduce their vulnerability to climate change.

17. The PSC Communiqué adopted at its 1240th meeting held on 30 October 2024 highlighted, among others, the necessity for enhanced cross-sectoral coordination among actors involved in climate, peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian issues. It called for the CAP-CPS as an informed framework for collaboration, prioritising water and food security, sustainable cross-border transhumance, and comprehensive responses to the impacts of climate change. Council also highlighted the need for ensuring national ownership and enhanced collaboration between Member States, RECs/RMs, the AU and the UN in the processes leading towards the development of the Common African Position, as well as exploring potential collaboration with new international partners on best practices while maintaining the African ownership of the process.

18. At COP 29 in November 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan, the AU Commission presented a comprehensive overview of its efforts to address the nexus between climate change, peace, and security in Africa. The presentation highlighted the development of the CAP-CPS, emphasising governance, inclusivity, and resilience. Key points included the need for enhanced early warning systems, leveraging local knowledge, involving the private sector, and mobilising finance to close the adaptation gap. The Commission also underscored the adverse effects of climate change on vulnerable groups and the necessity of a just transition to address Africa's unique challenges. The presentation concluded with a call for unity and proactive engagement to build a future of climate resilience, peace, and security for Africa and the world.

19. Moving forward, the AU Commission aims to complete the first draft of the CAP-CPS in further consultation with member states, RECs, Climate Commissions, and African institutions before mid-2025. This approach represents a significant step in tackling the complex challenges posed by climate change on peace and security, enhancing the AU's global influence, fostering collaboration, and attracting climate finance. It seeks to bridge policy gaps, integrate climate change into peace and security strategies, and address the root causes of conflict exacerbated by climate change.

20. In the trail of these African efforts to cope with the impacts of climate change, particularly in terms of security, it is important to prioritize, harmonize and give new impetus to African initiatives and structuring projects in the fight against climate disruption, with the aim of strengthening an action-oriented African model of climate resilience.

21. African initiatives aimed at strengthening the continent's resilience to climate threats, notably the African Adaptation Initiative (AIA), the African Agriculture Adaptation Initiative (AAA), the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel (GMVSS) initiative, the Security, Stability and Sustainability (SSS), require increased support, including through the mobilization of the necessary funding to strengthen the Continent's adaptive capacity in order to guarantee its food security, preserve its natural capital and biodiversity, and limit climate migration.

22. Furthermore, substantial support should be allocated to the three Climate Commissions, namely (i) the Sahel Commission, chaired by the Republic of Niger, (ii) the Island States Commission, chaired by the Republic of Seychelles, and (iii) the Congo Basin Commission, chaired by the Republic

of Congo. These Commissions represent an innovative framework for providing holistic solutions to the impacts of climate change and promoting the continent's sustainable development.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE PSC MEETING

23. This PSC session aims to:

- a. Assess the impact of climate hazards and extreme environmental phenomena such as droughts, floods and related population displacements on stability and security in Africa;
- b. Reflect on innovative strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change on peace and security in Africa;
- c. Raise awareness among all stakeholders of the link between climate change, peace and security in Africa;
- d. Explore ways and means of enhancing inter-African cooperation to strengthen the resilience of populations affected by climate change;
- e. Emphasize the importance of integrating environmental and climate dimensions into strategies to promote peace, security and development;
- f. Mobilize African and international players to develop global solutions to climate challenges.

IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

24. At the end of the meeting, the PSC is expected to adopt a communiqué that, among others:

- a. Urges the AU's partners to ensure sustained, predictable and sustainable funding, adapted to Africa's specific needs, in the fight against climate change and its impacts on peace and security;
- b. Encourages investments dedicated to the implementation of relevant African initiatives for the adaptation of African agriculture, as well as projects aimed at the sustainability of natural resources, the stability of human resources and the security of institutional resources;
- c. Stresses the importance of incorporating environmental and climate dimensions into strategies aimed at promoting peace, security and development in Africa;
- d. Encourages enhanced cooperation between African stakeholders and international partners in responding to climate-related challenges;
- e. Supports initiatives aimed at strengthening African capacities to anticipate, prevent and effectively manage the challenges of climate change, notably the African Agriculture Adaptation (AAA) initiative, the African Security, Stability and Sustainability (SSS) initiative and the three Climate Commissions, namely the Sahel Commission, the Island States Commission and the Congo Basin Commission.

V. DATE AND VENUE

25. The Meeting will be held virtually, using the Zoom platform, on Thursday, 6 March 2025, starting at 10:00 a.m., Addis Ababa Local time, and it will be conducted in two AU's official languages: English and French.

African Union Commission (AUC)

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PSC Supporting Bodies

PSC Secretariat

2025-03-06

Working Documents for the 1263rd Meeting of the Peace and Security Council to be held on 6 March 2025 on Climate Change: Challenges to Peace and Security in Africa.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

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