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DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

BRIEFING TO THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (PRC) SUB COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE (HRDG)

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I. CONTEXT

1. The African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) seek to address issues of democratic governance, peace and security, in a comprehensive way by addressing the root causes of conflict as a way to prevent, mitigate as well as manage and resolve conflicts. Since the two architectures were formally established 10 years apart even though the rationale for their foundation, mandates and objectives are related and interlinked, there were clear challenges in delivering effectively as one. The African Union, to ensure efficiency at both political and operational levels decided to increase synergies, bridge the gap by calling for the merger of two separate departments to make Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), as well as transition what used to be the AGA Secretariat to an AGA-APSA Secretariat in 2021.

2. The change within the African Union Commission was reflective of the need to create holistic solutions to multifaceted problems. Specifically, it provided due attention to addressing structural causes and drivers of conflict - governance deficits, human rights violations, impunity, Unconstitutional changes of Governments, and failure to uphold the rule of law and constitutionalism as importantly as conflict management and resolution.

3. In 2011, when the AGA was created as a Pan African Architecture on Governance – it was hinged on the African Governance Platform (AGP)1. The Platform was established by an assembly decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.1 (XVI)) as an institutional framework composed of 11 AU Organs and institutions along with 8 Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with a formal mandate for the promotion and sustenance of Democracy, Governance and Human Rights. The AGA-APSA Secretariat, as a coordinating mechanism for the Platform, has prioritized its principal objective to deepen synergy, coordination, cooperation and harmonization of shared values instruments among AU organs, institutions and RECs on democracy, governance, human rights, peace and security.

4. Further than the aforementioned role, the Secretariat is also entrusted to serve the PRC Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance (HRDG). The PRC Sub Committee on HRDG, has been established by the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) under the Executive Council decisions EX.CL/Dec.1015 (XXXIII) and EX.CL.Dec.1 (XXXVI) which was in line with the declaration of the 2011 AU Summit, Assembly/AU/Decl.1(XVI). The mandate of the Sub-Committee is primarily to promote AU shared values on human rights, democracy and governance. The functions of the Sub-Committee include hearing briefings from AGA Platform, recommending policy initiatives, draft declarations, draft resolutions and decisions in the area of human rights, democracy and good governance, considering proposals concerning the programs, policies, strategies of AU human rights, democracy and governance initiatives; support efforts and initiatives aimed at the full

[1] African Governance Platform Members are all AU Organs, Institutions and RECs are - AUPSC, AUC, ACHPR, AfCHPR, PAP, APRM, AUABC, ECOSOCC, ACERWC, AUCIL, NEPAD - AUDA and all the 8 RECS.

operationalization of the AGA and its synergy with the APSA. The Sub-Committee has 15 Members, namely, Zimbabwe (Chair), Rwanda (Chair), Tunisia (2nd V.Chair), Burundi (3rd Chair), Senegal (Rapporteur), Cameroon, Chad, Eritrea, Mauritius, Malawi, Zambia, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Niger and Libya.

5. On the other hand, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) as the standing policy organ of the AU for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, and a Member of the African Governance Platform, was established to be a collective security and 'early warning' arrangement with the ability to facilitate timely and efficient responses to conflict and crises. The PSC's core functions are to conduct early warning and preventive diplomacy, facilitate peace-making, establish peace-support operations and, in certain circumstances, recommend intervention in Member States to promote peace, security, stability, support of peace-building, and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as humanitarian action and disaster management. The PSC and its Secretariat are members of the AGP and critical to the promotion of issues of democratic governance on top of peace and security. Although the engagement of PSC or its secretariat in the Platform has been minimal, the opportunity it presents to be the key body for addressing root causes of conflict is undeniable. The Current Members of the PSC are as follows: Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Djibouti, Gambia, Ghana, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia.

6. Like two sides of the two coin, the PSC and the Sub Committee have never engaged with each other or the Members of the AGA Platform on issues that are critical to the continent. The establishment of the PRC Sub-Committee, although comes at a later stage, presents this opportune moment where these bodies come together to deliberate on issues that are of significance to Member States, Organs and RECs.

II. RATIONALE

7. The PRC Sub-Committee on HRDG debuted in 2019 is a relatively newer policy-making body. To date, there has never been a joint engagement with PSC and these two bodies. The rationale behind facilitating a joint engagement between the PSC and two stands solely on the need to create synergies and coordination. This synergy will have an impact not only at the Member States level but through the involvement of the African Governance Platform will have the potential to transcend into creating synergies at the Organ and RECs level to address issues of good governance, rule of law, basic fundamental right, as well as the potential to make peace reality. As key policy-making organs of the Union, the PSC and PRC Sub Committee joint engagement comes at a critical time and has the potential to forge new collaborations in unchartered but promising territories.

8. Additionally, our African Union Member States are going through a challenging period with regressions in democratic governance which is creating regional trends that are concerning. However, creating sustained peace and security within and out of Member States is a task that would require joint solutions. The value placed on Member States coming together to discuss issues of Democratic, Governance, Peace and Security as core focuses, share experiences; dialogue and forge a way forward for the implementation of practical solutions is imperative. This potentiality can create synergies that

have a multiplier effect and possibly ideate solutions that can catapult Africa's peace and security dim reality to a bright one.

9. This engagement, will be the first of its kind and it is believed it will create possibilities for regular partnerships; opportunities for the Members of the African Governance Platform to engage both PSC and PRC on matters of critical importance and facilitate a safe space for dialogue to address trends, challenges, and prospects of democratic governance, peace and security.

10. Therefore, it is in this regard, that the PSC Secretariat and the AGA-APSA Secretariat are jointly facilitating a joint engagement between the Members of the PSC and the PRC Sub-Committee on HRDG. This first engagement will be focused on exchanging views of the mandates of each body, accomplishments, and current plans in order to further find elements of synergy ad collaboration. The Secretariat will also provide a presentation on joint activities for the consideration of the members. The joint activities will be recommended for 2022 and is expected to engage the bureaus of both PSC, PRC Sub Committee and the AGA Platform.

III. OBJECTIVES

11. The overall objective of the engagement is to create synergies and coordination among the distinguished Members of the PSC and the PRC Sub-Committee in an effort to address poignant issues relating to Governance, democracy, and human rights in one voice. Specifically, to facilitate discussion and engagement among the Members of the PSC and PRC Sub Committee HRDG on current and critical issues to address challenges and discuss solutions at the Member States, RECs/RMs and AU level; and to discuss and identify joint programs and initiatives going forward.

IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

12. The meeting is envisaged;

a) to identify trends, challenges, and prospects to address current and recurring challenges on the continent at the Member States level, at the REC/RM level and at the AU level;
b) to brainstorm and identify joint programs and Initiatives.
c) to institutionalize the Peace and Security Council and Permanent Representatives Sub-Committee annual joint consultations.

V. FORMAT

13. The meeting will be chaired by the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of August 2022, The Gambia with the participation of PSC members States and Members of the HRDG.

VI. DATES AND VENUE

14. The meeting will take place virtually on 1 August 2022.

VII. WORKING LANGUAGES

15. The meeting will be conducted in **Arabic**, **English and French** with simultaneous interpretation availed for the period of the engagement. However, the working documents will be provided in French and English.

VIII. CONTACT DETAILS OF THE COORDINATING TEAM

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