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REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AU COMMISSION ON THE COMMON AFRICAN POSITION ON THE 2020 REVIEW OF THE UN PEACEBUILDING ARCHITECTURE, TOWARDS AN ENHANCED GLOBAL PEACEBUILDING SYSTEM

I.   INTRODUCTION

1.   The 899th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), held in Luanda, Angola, on 5 December 2019, requested the AU Commission "…to evolve a draft Common African Position ahead of the review…of the UN Peace Building Architecture planned to take place in 2020..." This request is consistent with the implementation of Agenda 2063, especially its flagship programme of Silencing the Guns in Africa, as well as underlining Africa's role as an important stakeholder in international peacebuilding efforts. Accordingly, this Common African Position (CAP), developed in implementation of this PSC decision, outlines the critical issues that will guide the engagement of African countries during the Inter-governmental process of the 2020 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture (UN PBA).

2.   It should be recalled that, the concept of peacebuilding was introduced by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, in the document "An Agenda for Peace" in 1992. It was conceived as an integral part of UN efforts to promote peace and found its place among the organisation's more traditional instruments, namely preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peacekeeping. In his efforts to improve the UN interventions in this regard, in October 2019, the UN Secretary-General launched the process for the next quinquennial review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. The last review was conducted in 2015. The 2016 UN twin resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016), adopted by the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council, respectively,, call for a "comprehensive review of United Nations peacebuilding" to be conducted during the 74th session of the General Assembly. In addition, Resolutions A/RES/71/276 and S/RES/2413 (2018) requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, at its 74th session, "a detailed report in connection with the next comprehensive review of the peacebuilding architecture, focusing on continued implementation of resolution 70/262, and progress in the implementation of the recommendations and options contained in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace."

3.   The CAP is premised on the AU strategies, policies and programmes on peacebuilding and inputs from the following Departments in the Commission, namely, Peace and Security, Political Affairs, Gender Women and Development, the Office of the Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security as well as the AU Missions in South Sudan and Sudan. The document has also benefitted from consultations with the African Caucus on Peacebuilding at the United Nations in New York, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and African civil society organisations, as well as think tanks on the continent. The CAP is, therefore, Africa's contribution to the 2020 review of the UN PBA with a view to enhancing the performance and output of the nascent global peacebuilding architecture.

II.   THE AU FRAMEWORK FOR PEACEBUILDING

4.   The AU Policy Framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) as adopted by AU Policy Organs in Banjul, The Gambia in 2006, is an integral element, within the continuum of the AU Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Similarly, PCRD policy aspects are also articulated in the African Governance Architecture (AGA), which was

developed from provisions in Article 7(m) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and put in place in 2011. The APSA continuum comprises of "anticipation and prevention, management and resolution of conflict, and post-conflict reconstruction and development". Indeed, several years of implementation of PCRD in Africa have substantially revealed the need to infuse post-conflict stabilization strategies as an integral aspect of promoting and implementing PCRD in the Continent.

5.   While peacebuilding is the specific traditional form of support provided by the UN, to assist countries emerging from conflict/crisis to regain resilience, normalcy and overall functionality of their society and State, the notion and practice of African Union post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction and development is certainly much wider and indeed more comprehensive in focus than peacebuilding. The African Union PCRD, in which post-conflict stabilization is increasingly central, as witnessed in the Central African Republic, The Gambia, South Sudan, Sudan, and the Lake Chad Basin stabilization processes, to name but a few, integrate the following aspects:

-   Restoration or improvement of governance and governance institutions;
-   Consolidation of peace agreements that have been constituted;
-   Promotion of respect and implementation of human rights;
-   Restoration of human and state security;
-   Triggering socio-economic reconstruction and development;
-   Promotion of healing, reconciliation, justice and human rights;
-   Provision of humanitarian/emergency assistance;
-   Promoting of the participation of women and youth;
-   Building strategic partnership at the national, regional, continental and global level; and
-   Resources mobilization.

6.   In this respect, the UN tradition of peacebuilding has been expanded and adapted to fit into circumstances and demands of post-conflict settings in Africa. These settings are usually characterized by the following:

-   Collapsed or compromised governance institutions;
-   Weak security, political and socio-economic institutions;
-   Post-conflict legacy of illicit arms/weapons in the possession of civilians and non-state actors;
-   Lack of/weak responses to basic needs of life;
-   High levels of unemployment;
-   Socially and economically disadvantaged society;
-   National yearning for healing, reconciliation and justice; and
-   High expectations for rapid peace dividends.

7.   Hence, the intention and purpose of the AU PCRD, including stabilization efforts, is to respond, in a holistic manner, to these debilitating circumstances and therefore requires international resilience in order to restore normalcy and functionality of the African societies and states.

8.   In light of the foregoing, since 2006, the continental efforts towards full implementation of the PCRD projects has resulted in significant experiences and lessons, which should serve as a benchmark for the review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. It is therefore, advisable that in context of the formulation of the Common African Position on the Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture, the following lessons should be considered:

- Sustained political leadership of the PSC, and the relevant AU Organs, to ensure that the decisions, on countries emerging from conflicts/crises, should are implemented;

- Readiness of Member States or regions emerging from a crisis/conflict, to request support from the AU, RECs/RMs and other relevant actors. Some useful examples, in this context, are The Gambia, Central African Republic and Lake Chad Basin, which voluntarily sort the interventions of the AU. Such an approach ensures national/regional ownership and implementation of all aspects of the PCRD from needs assessment, implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

- The complementary role of the AUC-PCRD Centre in Cairo, Egypt, under the guidance of the AU Policy Organs, to provide technical expertise for implementation of PCRD activities, by Member States emerging from conflicts/crises;

- The AU, as a continental organization, facilitate the mobilization of financial, in-kind or technical support, such as Member States seconding staff, at their own expense, to support PCRD efforts. This process will ensure continental ownership, as well as encourage internal support to PCRD processes;

- AU providing a strategic role in the implementation of PCRD activities on the Continent, including setting the terms of engagement for all actors involved in PCRD efforts, as well as working with Member States to define the continent's relationship with others partners in this process;

- The centrality of the role and contribution of RECs/RMs concerned and the neighboring states of a country/region emerging from crisis/conflict;

III.   EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PCRD IN AFRICA

9.   A growing number of institutional actors are supporting African countries emerging from conflict or going through transitions. Consistent with the principles of national ownership and leadership of, and partnership for, peacebuilding; various AU entities are assisting the-affected countries in the articulation and implementation of their peacebuilding priorities within their national recovery frameworks, poverty reduction plans or national development programmes.

10.   The PSC has considerably scaled up its engagement in peacebuilding, and adopted far reaching decisions concerning, consolidation of peace across the continent. The Council has convened sessions on the situations in Darfur; the Lake Chad Basin; Guinea Bissau; Mali and the Sahel; the Central African Republic and Somalia. It also convened thematic sessions on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration; Security Sector Reforms; Women Peace and Security; Transitional Justice and Reconciliation. The AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government has also called on the RECs/RMs and Member States to prioritize

implementation of PCRD and recommit themselves to the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI), placing it as a priority in the spirit of African solidarity. The operationalization of the AU Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development constitutes an important step in Africa's efforts to consolidate its peacebuilding architecture.

11.   The AU has established several Missions and Liaison Offices (AULOs) in countries affected by conflict or in difficult transitions. There are AU Missions in Somalia (AMISOM); in South Sudan (AUMISS); in Mali and Sahel (MISAHEL); Liaison Offices in Burundi, CAR, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Cote D'Ivoire, Sudan, Madagascar and Guinea Bissau as well as a Technical Support Team (AUTSTG) in The Gambia. In these countries, the AU is engaged in a wide range of peacebuilding activities including supporting the implementation of: the Somalia Transition Plan (STP); the Revitalized Agreement for Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan; and the 2015 Algiers Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the Sahel.

12.   Working together with partners, AMISOM is supporting the Federal Government of Somalia to streamline stabilization and early socio-economic recovery activities into the National Stabilization Strategy (NSS). The NSS is fundamental to post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding in Somalia as it outlines four key areas of focus: reconciliation, rule of law, local governance and community recovery. AMISOM is also engaged in capacity building through training on stabilization-related issues.

13.   In the Central African Republic (CAR), the AU continues to support the peace and reconciliation process within the framework of the African Initiative. The Peace and Reconciliation Agreement signed by the Government and 14 armed groups in Khartoum on 5 February 2019 provides a unique opportunity for peace consolidation in CAR. The AU is also supporting the reinforcement of the capacities of the national Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform (DDR and SSR) Coordination Mechanisms.

14.   In Guinea Bissau, the AU Commission continues to provide assistance to the Government in the areas of political dialogue and reconciliation, DDR, SSR and strengthening of rule of law institutions. In Madagascar, the AU coordinated partners to foster dialogue between the various parties and provided assistance in the design of a comprehensive SSR program.

15.   In the Lake Chad Basin, the AU Commission partnered with the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to develop a Framework for the stabilization of the areas affected by the activities of Boko Haram. The Regional Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience Strategy (RSS), which was subsequently developed out of this process, is a comprehensive regional framework to respond to the multi-layered challenges in the Boko Haram-affected areas of the LCB Region. The Commission continues to provide additional support to the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram (MNJTF).

16.   Overall, the implementation of PCRD since 2006 manifests the need for inclusive consultations between the post-conflict country and the AU, RECs/RMs, as well as with partners in order to create an environment that facilitates coordinated mobilization of political will and commitment, human and financial resources, as well as technical expertise. Needless to emphasize the imperative of national ownership and leadership, and the

generation of early peace and economic dividend for the grassroots population. In this context, the setting of national priorities is a key factor. The AUC-PCRD Centre in Cairo, Egypt, under the guidance of the AU Policy Organs, will provide technical expertise to improve timeliness, effectiveness, and coherence of activities in post-conflict countries on the Continent and to lay a foundation for sustaining peace and development

IV. THE UN-AU PARTNERSHIP FOR ENHANCED COOPERATION ON PEACE AND SECURITY

17.   Since the last review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture in 2015, the African Union and the United Nations have taken steps to advance their cooperation in the area of peace and security, in particular peacebuilding. In 2016, the UN Security Council adopted Presidential Statement S/PRST/8 recognizing the potential role that the African Union can play in post-conflict peacebuilding, recovery, reconstruction and development processes. The UN Security Council further noted that shared information and analysis between the United Nations, African Union and its sub-regional organizations is important for developing joint strategies and coordinating action on conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding, and encourages strengthened cooperation in this area. Subsequently, the two organisations signed the Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security in 2017; AU–UN Framework for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in 2018; and the Memorandum of Understanding between the UN Peacebuilding Support Office and the African Union Peace and Security Department in 2017. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace straddle peace and development. Thus, these policy frameworks recognise the importance of the nexus between peace and development; seek to promote improved collaboration, coordination and coherence between the two institutions in the area of peacebuilding; and commit to undertake joint actions in support of African countries emerging from conflict

18.   The practical manifestation of the collaboration between these two institutions has been demonstrated in several ways. A delegation of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) visited the headquarters of the African Union in 2016 and 2019 to hold dialogue with the PSC. The high-level consultations were aimed at nurturing the partnership between the two intergovernmental bodies in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa and explored ways to strengthen collaboration in addressing sub-regional challenges in Peacebuilding in the Great Lakes, the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel as well as the Mano River Union.

19.   In 2018, PBC convened an ambassadorial-level informal interactive dialogue with the PSC on "Enhancing Cooperation and Coherence with the AU in support of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa" and devoted its annual session in 2019 to the theme of Regional Approaches to Peacebuilding in the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin and Mano River Union. In 2019, the UN Security Council adopted a stand-alone resolution on silencing the guns in Africa which remains a key flagship project of AU Agenda 2063.

20.   This year, and as part of the informal phase of the 2020 Review, the PBC convened several ambassadorial-level meetings on national, regional and thematic focused meetings on peacebuilding in Africa. The consultations focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on peacebuilding efforts in West Africa and the Sahel; the Great Lakes; the Central African Region as well as its impact on institution building and financing. The African

Caucus on Peacebuilding, with the support of the AU Permanent Observer Mission made two joint submissions, on *Financing and Partnerships for Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace* and *Institution Building and System-Wide Engagement for Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*, to the informal phase of the 2020 Review of the UN PBA. For its part, the AU Commission through the Commissioner for Peace and Security submitted inputs on the question of "Financing and Partnerships for Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace". These and other engagements are important steps in the evolution of the AU-UN partnership on peacebuilding.

21.   The UN PBC, by extending support to African countries emerging from conflict, is contributing to advancing the AU's agenda on post conflict reconstruction and development. With the exit of Guinea and the impending exit of Sierra Leone, there will be four African countries on the agenda of PBC, namely, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia. PBC has also held policy dialogue on peacebuilding with the Governments of Burkina Faso, Chad and The Gambia. These and many other African countries have received substantial assistance from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF). To date, African countries have received approximately 82.7 percent of PBF funding in the period 2007-2020.

V.   AFRICAN PEACEBUILDING PRIORITIES

22.   Building and sustaining peace is a complex process that requires both effective partnership and long-term commitment to supporting conflict-affected countries. The major partners in that effort include national stakeholders—governments, civil society and increasingly, the private sector -- as well as relevant regional and international actors. Even though peacebuilding strategies may vary according to national contexts, the experience of African countries has shown that there are several peacebuilding priorities that deserve special attention. Consequently, the 2020 Review of the UN-PBA should consider the following key priorities:

A.   Financing for Peacebuilding

23.   Every durable peacebuilding effort rests on a combination of nationally identified peacebuilding priorities, implementation of an agreed peacebuilding plan supported by the international community, and ensuring adequate and predictable financial resources. Yet, mobilising adequate financial resources for peacebuilding remains a major challenge despite efforts by the AU and UN to address this gap. Meanwhile, as a follow-up to the 2015 Review of the UN Peacebuilding architecture, several proposals were advanced for diversifying sources of financing for peacebuilding through resources from Member States, and the private sector. The UN Secretary General report of 2019 noted that out of the 42 recommendations outlined at the 2018 report, 38 are currently being implemented, however, there has been limited progress with respect to 4 recommendations relating to financing, despite of the concerted efforts by the AU and UN to address this gap. Those proposals offered a wide range of innovative and forward looking options for financing Peacebuilding and remain relevant in today's world.

24.   Recommendations:

a) The UN, AU, RECs/RMs should support Member States to provide predictable, adequate and sustainable financing across the whole of the peace continuum, based on the priorities identified by the concerned countries emerging from conflict/crisis. Doing so would be crucial to realising the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agendas.

b) The AU, RECs/RMs and UN should undertake joint planning and assessment of peacebuilding needs, as well as advocacy and resource mobilisation for African countries emerging from conflict.

c) Address and utilize the interlinkages and synergies between the AU,UN, World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB) and AU financial tools and mechanisms, in order to enhance coordination and coherence.

d) Identify practical ways to advance synergies and complementarities between different financial mechanisms of the AU and the UN;

e) Examine the obstacles hindering action on the options presented in the 2018 Report of the UN Secretary General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to ensure predictable, sustained, flexible and accountable financing for peacebuilding.

f) Enhance the PBC role in bridging the difference in perspectives of technical financial experts and political decision makers in order to ensure that financing is channelled to address the strategic needs and priorities set out by the countries concerned.

g) The 2020 Review should also revisit the following three proposals that were put forward by the Secretary-General in 2018, namely:

 - Allocating a certain percentage of assessed contribution to support medium to long-term peacebuilding. This would ensure continuity, predictability and sustainability of financing for peacebuilding.

 - Allocating 15 percent of the final year of assessed contributions during the drawdown of peace operations for peacebuilding. This is crucial especially in situations involving transitions from peacekeeping operations to civilian-led peace consolidation efforts.

 - Committing 1 percent of all peace operations assessed contribution to peacebuilding. Given that the mandates of peacekeeping missions have a strong emphasis on peacebuilding, making such a financial commitment from the peace operations budget would pave the way for a seamless transition from military heavy peacekeeping to civilian-led peacebuilding. In the long run, it would contribute to orderly and predictable transitions, and sustainable peace.

B.   Conflict Prevention

25.   Conflicts have imposed a huge toll on Africa in terms of death and displacement. Thousands of lives have been lost with millions of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees with huge consequences on the displaced and host communities. The economic costs of conflicts in Africa are incalculable. In response to these adverse trends, the AU and the RECs/RMs have intensified efforts aimed at conflict prevention, often in partnership with international actors. Those efforts have focused on both preventing the outbreak of

crisis from erupting into violent conflict and supporting countries emerging from conflict from relapsing into conflict. There is a growing consensus that addressing the structural causes of conflict holds higher prospects of conflict transformation and laying the foundation for durable peace. The structural causes in Africa include, but are not limited to, economic and social inequalities, political marginalisation, poor governance, environmental degradation, high unemployment and deep-seated ethnic cleavages, as well as corruption and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In pursuance of its conflict prevention agenda, the AU and RECs/RMs have developed a number of tools to support their interventions.

26.   In addition to undertaking structural vulnerability assessments of countries, there is a renewed commitment to promoting effective governance as a means of addressing structural causes of conflict. The AU and RECs/RMs have also adopted complementary measures to develop and strengthen their operational conflict prevention capacities. This has been reflected in the creation of early warning systems that proactively help to identify emerging crises in countries and regions, supporting the establishment of national response mechanisms, the articulation and implementation of national action plans for conflict prevention, and in the formation of mediation teams to undertake missions to crisis countries. Several non-governmental and civil society organisations continue to make contributions to these various processes of conflict prevention, as have several international actors.

27.   Recommendations:

a) Given the important roles of the AU and the UN in conflict prevention in Africa, there is need for both organisations to undertake joint conflict analysis, assessment and action in preventive diplomacy and mediation. At the same time, there is need for enhanced collaboration, in line with key principles of subsidiarity and complementarity as contained in the relevant frameworks governing the relations among RECs/RMs on the one hand, and AU, RECs/RMs and UN on the other hand, in the development of Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Frameworks.

b) AU, RECs/RMs and Member States need to agree on the modalities to ensure early and effective response. An early warning system that is not matched by an effective early response mechanism would not yield the desired dividends. Strengthening national peace infrastructures is an important step in addressing the existing gaps between early-warning and early response. Rebuilding and strengthening state institutions is a primary element to be considered in peacebuilding, while taking into consideration of identified national priorities. The UN needs to support the AU, RECs/RMs to enhance their capacity to offer assistance to member states in this regard.

c) AU and RECs/RMs should undertake joint assessments and analyses with a view adopting joint approaches to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace as well as supporting Member States' efforts to strengthen their national conflict prevention and management mechanisms. The UN should provide support for these processes under the existing cooperation frameworks.

d) The AU, UN and the RECs/RMs should establish partnerships with key stakeholders to enhance the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and democratic institutions

to promote good governance. The collaboration may take the form of technical assistance, knowledge and skills transfer to strengthen the capacity of regional, national and local institutions to address the root causes of the conflicts and promote judicial accountability, economic governance and the rule of law.

C. Managing Transitions

28.   Post-conflict transitions are an inherently complex process, requiring careful coordination of actions by multiple national stakeholders and international actors. The nature, scope and timing of various stakeholders' and actors' involvement critically depends on the phase of the post conflict transition, stretching from stabilisation to consolidation, drawdown and withdrawal of peacekeepers to peace building and socio-economic recovery and development. While the national capacity of countries emerging from conflict are usually weak at the initial stages of the transition, it bears special emphasis that the primary responsibility for managing transitions rests with the national actors – the government and national stakeholders. Effective management of post-conflict transitions, therefore, requires a whole-of-society approach which allows all national stakeholders to act in concert. The principal objectives in managing various aspects of transition have to include assisting national authorities and other national stakeholders to assume responsibility for the tasks performed by regional and international actors in the early stages of the transition, and addressing the main sources of state fragility by investing in and prioritising support to strengthening national institutional and governance infrastructure. It is equally important for national transition processes to be placed within the sub-regional context.

29.   Recommendations:

a) The governments of countries emerging from conflict have the primary responsibility for peacebuilding and should therefore lead the effort in articulating the priorities for peacebuilding. Every phase of the transition should contribute to enhancing national ownership to build national resilience. In this vein, it is important to delineate the roles of both regional and international partners in national peacebuilding efforts and establish a process for joint periodic review of progress.

b) Under the leadership of the national authorities, the AU, UN and RECs/RMs should assist in carefully sequencing the transition from a peacekeeping mission through political mission to socio-economic recovery and development. Before the closure of the peacekeeping missions, the AU, UN and RECs/RMs should undertake a joint assessment of the country's situation and make recommendations for the government to manage the peace and security interventions in that country.

c) Consistent with the recommendation of the Secretary-General in 2018, more resources should be provided to the PBF from its transitions window to cover two years before and five years after mission drawdown. This would bolster national capacities, reduce vulnerabilities, guarantee peace dividends and contribute to building long-term resilience.

d) The AU, RCEs/RM in partnership with the UN-PBC could help improve transitions by encouraging the generation of early, inclusive, and comprehensive preparations for transition processes to mitigate the risk of relapse. The Commission's convening and

bridging role allows for bringing together various stakeholders and partners with a view to ensure coordinated and coherent responses to peacebuilding.

D.   Effective Governance, through inclusive, resilient and responsive institutions

30.   Effective and accountable governance is a critical factor in sustaining peace and promoting sustainable development. The important role of governance to peace and development is well acknowledged in both the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. At its core, effective governance rests on building and strengthening national institutions, including security and justice institutions. Moreover, accountable, inclusive and responsive institutions contribute to conflict prevention and help in identifying national priorities for building and sustaining peace, including the implementation of relevant strategies. Peacebuilding is best sustained when the general public enjoys its dividends, which include peaceful and secure co-existence; social and public goods and the creation of opportunities for investment and wealth generation. Making these a reality is dependent on the availability and effective functioning of governance institutions that provides for an effective social contract. The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic tested the capacity and viability of state institutions worldwide, and is covered in the health section below.

31.   Recommendations:

a) All stakeholders involved in peacebuilding efforts should be guided by the principles of accountability, transparency, inclusivity and a transformative approach. National governments can make significant contribution to peacebuilding by effective service delivery, decentralisation and strengthening local development. Moreover, political dialogue is key to inclusiveness and nurturing and sustaining confidence in peacebuilding. Thus, creating dialogue forums is an essential task of governance.

b) The AU, RECs/RMs with the support of the UN should scale up their support for conflict-affected countries by strengthening institutions, systems and processes of governance as part of broader conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. Thus, regional and international partners should leverage their comparative advantage to foster effective governance.

c) Regional and international peacebuilding actors should enhance their capacity building support for CSOs, political parties and Electoral Management Bodies (EMB) to ensure regular, free and fair elections and also support the capacity building effort of legislative, judicial, security and over sight mechanisms such as National Human Rights Commissions as well as the Office of Ombudsmen. This would contribute immensely to sustaining peace and guaranteeing long-term development.

d) There is need to support Member States in setting up stable and strong national institutions in the field of security and justice. The Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) should be used to provide support in building capacities of local police forces and sharing of good practices.

E.   Transitional Justice

32.   Transitional Justice (TJ) processes in post-conflict contexts are an important component of peacebuilding. Transitional justice simultaneously has a restorative and retributive effect in peace building. It is critical in re-building social trust which also allows victims of conflicts to witness legal reckoning for those that committed atrocities. However, not all instruments or processes of transitional justice should be punitive. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC), for example, are predicated on the notion that both victims and perpetrators of crimes should have an opportunity to reflect on their past experiences and move on with the task of nation building and peacebuilding. Thus, transitional justice frees all from being held prisoners of a dark past. The complicated nature of transitional justice processes means that the design of relevant mechanisms has to be country-specific, as one approach does not fit all national contexts. At the same time, transitional justice processes should be consistent and compliant with regional and international human rights norms and standards.

33.   Recommendations:

a) National authorities in African countries emerging from conflict should draw on, and align their efforts to the provisions stipulated in the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goal 16.

b) Regional and international actors should respect the principles of national ownership and leadership in their support for the articulation, design and implementation of transitional justice processes. When there is a strong sense of ownership by the people who live in the shadows of conflicts the chances are high that transitional justice processes would contribute to healing and accountability.

c) National authorities as well as the regional and international actors supporting the establishment of national transitional justice mechanisms should incorporate national ownership and leadership in the national peacebuilding plan or framework to assure appropriate planning and funding of the relevant mechanism. Advance planning for transitional justice programs would ensure that evidence of crimes is collected in a timely manner for future prosecution of the perpetrators. The absence of evidence would hamper accountability in post-conflict settings and could erode reconciliation efforts.

d) Consistent with the AU Transitional Justice Policy, national authorities and their international partners should ensure "the choice of the combination of TJ measures should endeavour to mutually reinforce, and ensure the complementarity of, the objectives of peace and reconciliation on the one hand and justice and accountability, as well as inclusive development, on the other hand".

e) National authorities should ensure that Transitional justice processes articulate special measures of support for women and youth as victims to ensure their physical and psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration. Thus, "Provision should also be made for ensuring active participation of women and youth through affirmative action measures in designing and implementing the full measure of transitional processes crafted for the transitional needs of the affected country."

F.   Women, Peace and Security

34.   Women continue to be disproportionately affected by structural and material barriers that limit their participation in peacebuilding processes. Women and girls continue to suffer varied forms of abuses including Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), in situations of crisis and conflicts. Furthermore, women suffer other forms of injustices including limited access to justice and inequalities in the society.   Women Mediation Networks are establishing themselves as platforms to consolidate and coordinate the power of women's organisations. Overall, efforts to advance gender equality have been haphazard and not mainstreamed in a meaningful, comprehensive, cross-sectoral, or coordinated way. Thus, there needs to be a twin-track (i.e. gender mainstreaming and gender focus) that delivers greater numbers of women (defined quantitatively) and quality and impactful outputs (defined qualitatively). For the UN Peace Building Architecture to strengthen its relevance to women facing the double burden it has to move away from the state-centric, blueprint-focused and technically oriented approach.

35.   The adoption by the Peacebuilding Commission of an ambitious gender strategy and the successive Gender Promotion Initiative led by the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as the AU Continental Results Framework (CRF) represents progress in the right direction. Translating the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) normative frameworks into meaningful outcomes requires mainstreaming their provisions in national governance structures, allocating more funding for programmes on promoting the advancement of women and girls, and including women in decision-making positions relating to sustaining peace and peacebuilding. For the WPS frameworks to create this access, a pipeline is required to build reliable links between international resources and local women-focused CSOs who are at the forefront of building resilience against the outbreak and effects of conflicts and other emergencies.

36.   Recommendations:

a) National authorities should promote women's leadership in key peace and security positions, and in peacebuilding processes, including in leadership positions by institutionalising women's empowerment in the development and implementation of UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans (NAPs). Funding for NAPs should be prioritized in national budgeting processes as well as by international actors involved in peacebuilding.

b) National authorities as well as regional and international actors should offer support for the implementation of the regional women's rights instruments such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, (the Maputo Protocol) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). Moreover, there is need to adopt a holistic and whole of Government approach and the establishment of mechanisms to champion, monitor and report on the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 National Action Plans across all sectors in alignment with the AU Continental Results Framework (CRF).

c) Efforts by national authorities, regional and international actors should aim to support women's economic resiliency through capacity-building and support to local economic activities for women's economic empowerment as well as strengthening monitoring

and evaluation mechanisms. To be effective, such support should be evidence-based with gender-disaggregated data in order to effectively assess the impact of interventions and actions, and to inform gender policies, initiatives and actions within peacebuilding.

d) Build national legal processes and frameworks with a survivor-centrerd approach that should address sexual and gender-based violence and incorporate mechanisms for justice and accountability for perpetrators as part of the overall peacebuidling process.

e) Civil Society organisations in Africa should support solidarity experience sharing and lessons exchange programmes for women's networks such as FEMWISE and the African Women Leadership Network (AWLN).

G.   Youth and Peacebuilding

37.   Youth peace and security is a cross-cutting issue that intersects with social protection, peacebuilding and empowerment programmes. In all conflict situations in Africa, young people have been and are at the centre of instability both as victims, actors and, increasingly, as potential drivers of change. The agency of youths should be fully engaged in all aspects of peace processes. Local youth-led organisations and networks have a nuanced understanding of the local context and know how to navigate the environments in which they operate. However, they face various barriers in accessing funding, while regional and gender disparities as well as disability issues are often not taken into account or are treated as an afterthought.

38.   Meanwhile, youth engagements with political and governance structures, and policy-makers is slowly gaining traction and momentum. Many African countries do not yet have national youth policies, and where they do exist, they are either outdated or unimplemented. As organisations compete for scarce resources, there tends to be little room for youth programmes and activities. At the same time, there is lack of coordination and coherence which leads to programme fragmentation and duplication. Given the growing youth populations in many African countries, pro-active policies that result in political, economic and social empowerment of youth can help reduce the allure of joining criminal and terrorist networks as well as illegal migration.

39.   In a landmark development, in July 2020, the AU Peace and Security Council, as well as the UN Security Council encouraged Member States to support and integrate youth into decision-making processes, recognizing their unique role in strengthening the national, local and community-based capacities in conflict and post-conflict situations.

40.   Recommendations:

a) National authorities, with the support of the AU, RECs/RMs and UN, should develop national and regional frameworks to foster youth participation in peace processes and mainstream youth in all national and regional peace and security policies and programmes. In particular, designing and implementing national policies for youth inclusion in peace processes by domesticating UNSCR 2250 and other related instruments cannot be over emphasized.

b) National authorities should undertake evidence-based and participatory research to gain better understanding of the complex realities of youth in conflict settings, their challenges, opportunities, trends, trajectories and contributions. Based on this, inclusive and evidence-based policies must be formulated in conjunction with youth. Clear national and regional youth roadmaps should be established and political support mobilised to ensure that policies and strategies are implemented in a timely and effective manner. The Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) 2020-2029 adopted by the PSC at its 933rd meeting held on 23 June 2020, provide guidelines in mainstreaming and enhancing youth participation in all stages of peacebuilding processes namely, national, regional and at continental level. The AU, RECs/RMs and UN should support projects and programmes that target youth; the interventions should be informed by evidence-based policies. Targeted support should be provided for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees, former child soldiers or ex-combatants. These diverse categories of youth can bring valuable insight into the lived-experiences of conflict, and so informing action and policies for responsive peacebuilding. They can also be deployed in large national projects in public works programs and agriculture. This will harness their energies and provide them a means of livelihood.

c) The relevant entities of the UN system should assist national efforts in the design and implementation of conflict sensitive education as an important step towards empowering youth and deepening their participation in peacebuilding and stabilisation processes. The inclusion of youth in articulating national visions would represent an important opportunity for a holistic integration and formulation of a long-term plan. It may be crucial to also promote the development of national youth services. In many African countries, national youth service, after completing tertiary education, have proven to provide constructive immediate economic opportunities for youth and serves as the thread for stitching fragile societies thereby fostering a sense of community and strengthening national cohesion.

H.   Preventing and Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism

41.   Terrorism and violent extremism is one of the emerging threats to stability and security on the continent. The rise in terrorism and violent extremism has made youth particularly susceptible to indoctrination and recruitment. It has exacerbated by existing grievances leading in some instances to inter-communal tensions and violence. Africa, especially in its Sahel, Northern and Horn of Africa regions, has been hardest hit, with intensified attacks resulting in deaths, injury and the displacement of large segments of the civilian populations. The depth of the problem of violent extremist and terrorist groups is highlighted by the presence of Boko Haram, Islamic State in the West Africa Province (ISWAP) Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) in various countries in the Sahel and Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Compounding the threats of violent extremism are porous borders, transnational criminal networks such as human and drug trafficking and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). As these problems have grown, the search for national and regional approaches has intensified.

42.   Recommendations:

a) National Governments should develop and implement Preventive and Countering Violence Extremism strategies that address the root causes of insecurity and threats to peace and stability including socio-economic disparities, political exclusion, as well as adopt a bottom-up approach which ensures that local communities do not feel victimized by national security agencies. It is critical to raise awareness and adopt a whole-of-society approach which engages civil society, community leaders, youth, and women. Building bridges between civic and state actors is an important first step.

b) The AU, RECs/RMs and UN should undertake concerted action to increase information sharing among relevant national authorities on the movement of terrorist and extremist groups, promote joint training of public officers involved in counter-terrorism, improve border management and enhance regional initiatives to curb the flow of small arms and light weapons, illicit drug and human trafficking. In this vein, it crucial to build effective early warning and early response systems based on existing national and regional arrangements.

c) National authorities, in collaboration with relevant partners, should strengthen the coordination of counter-terrorism efforts at the sub-regional, regional and international levels. Information-sharing, training of public officers involved on counter-terrorism, border security and management, arms control, inter-community dialogue and cutting the flow of financing for terrorism would be greatly enhanced through closer multilateral cooperation. The development of regional counter-terrorism initiatives such as the Accra Initiative is critical to tackling the spill over effect of violent extremisms.

d) The AU, RECs/RMs and relevant entities of the UN system should provide support Member States to review their national counterterrorism strategies and action plans and to align them with the regional and international strategies in order to ensure synergy, harmonisation and coherence.

e) The AU, RECs/RMs and relevant entities of the UN system should also continuously enhance the capacities of security institutions in African countries to address and disrupt terrorist threats and transnational criminal networks. Enabling communities and local government structures to engage in preventing violent extremism should be part of the capacity enhancement.

f) Addressing root causes of terrorism, especially those of socio-economic nature; and adopting holistic and comprehensive strategies for effectively countering terrorism

I. <u>Enhancing Health Systems as part of Peacebuilding Processes</u>

43. Experience in the past six years has shown the adverse impact that infectious diseases can have on peacebuilding processes. In 2014-2016, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone all pursuing peacebuilding and on the agenda of the PBC, were severely hit by Ebola. Presently, the outbreak of COVID in 2020 is not only causing deaths but wreaking havoc on the health systems and peacebuilding efforts of countries emerging from conflict. The COVID-19 pandemic has tested the capacity of state institutions worldwide. It has also underlined the need to prioritise the building of resilient, inclusive and responsive

institutions to manage the outbreak of infectious diseases which can have destabilising effects on sustaining peace and peacebuilding.

44.   COVID-19 has again thrown into sharp relief the importance and vitality of health in peace and security and how peace building efforts can be halted and existing conflicts be intensified. Pandemics have the capacity to exacerbate the underlying roots of conflict, particularly inequality resulting in renewed violence and threatened peace processes. Despite the growing evidence of the impact of pandemics on peacebuilding, health is still considered a matter of social development. This calls for a paradigm shift that recognises the significant implications of epidemics and pandemics to human and national security, including peacebuilding efforts.

45.   Recommendations:

a) African countries should increase public investment in the health sector on the basis of the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other related Infectious Diseases which set the target of allocating at least 15 percent of annual budgets to the improvement of the health sector in African countries. Thus, public health should be seen as part of the broader national, regional and global security ecosystem.

b) African countries, with the support of relevant international partners, should give priority to the rehabilitation and strengthening of public health systems, which should be incorporated into peace operations and form an important component of peacebuilding initiatives. Countries emerging from conflict should be encouraged to strengthen their public health institutions including the establishment of Disease Control Mechanisms and adequate funding to cater for emergencies such as Ebola, COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. It is important to prioritize socio-economic recovery support for war-affected countries in the post-COVID-19 era.

c) The AU and the RECs/RMs should commit to strengthening regional, continental and international public health institutions. Scaling up support for the African Centre for Disease Control (ACDC), the West African Health Organization (WAHO) and similar structures across the continent is critical to improving Africa's capacity to respond to pandemics and other public health emergencies. Support for these efforts should be provided by the private sector as well as relevant international institutions. Enhancing the interface between these various structures is critical to responding to public health emergencies especially in peacebuilding contexts where national capacities have been weakened by conflict and neglect.

d) National authorities, with the support of relevant international partners, should undertake national and regional vulnerability and risks assessment to identify and contextualize responses to health security threats. Moreover, the various stakeholders in the health domain should strengthen collaboration in the areas of research in diseases and access to healthcare, local/traditional medicines to support access to health care, especially in peacebuilding contexts.

e) National authorities need to ensure health policies and initiatives are inter-sectoral and holistic including but not limited to physical, mental, social and spiritual health services. In order to cater for women, youth, the elderly, the disabled and war

wounded, it is critical to mainstream gender considerations into public health policy decisions. Special attention should be given to vulnerable groups and displaced persons. The provision of psychosocial support should be given high priority in peacebuilding contexts.

J.   Regional Approach to Peacebuilding

46.   Conflicts and crises in Africa have displayed a tendency to spill across borders, affecting the safety of communities as well as economic activities and political stability in more than one country. The growing recognition that such crises and related peacebuilding efforts cannot be adequately addressed within national contexts has provided the impetus for regional approach to crisis management and peacebuilding. Thus, regional approaches have increasingly been developed to address the peacebuilding efforts in the Lake Chad Basin, the Great Lakes region, the Mano River Basin and the Sahel region. In such contexts, the need for synergies and complementarities between partners is of utmost importance, in this case, the AU, the relevant RECs/RMs and the UN. Indeed, the commitment to improve coherence and enhance collaboration among multiple partners in sub-regional contexts has given rise to the articulation and adoption of regional stabilization frameworks as instruments that significantly reduces the transactions costs among all actors and stakeholders.

47.   Recommendations:

a) African governments need to intensify their political cooperation on transnational threats to peace and security in their countries. This would entail   implementation of existing frameworks for the management and control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW); Drug and Human Trafficking; Transboundary Resource Management, including water and the perennial challenge of Transhumance. Ensuring closer and deeper collaboration between RECs/RMs, AU-RECs/RMs and AU, UN and RECs/RMs would guarantee the sustainment of peacebuilding efforts.

b) Political cooperation among neighbouring countries should entail developing and implementing concrete strategies for tackling regional peacebuilding challenges through sustained and early engagement to deal with transnational issues such as trans boundary resource management; supporting inclusive dialogues on national and regional issues; and institutional reforms within some of the organisations implementing regional responses. The UN, AU and the RECs/RMs should offer pertinent proposals in these areas.

c) The development of regional stabilization frameworks such the Stabilization Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin should recognise the role of women and youth as critical and active participants in both the conflict as well as peacebuilding initiatives.

d) The UN, AU and the RECs/RMs should support investment in cross-border and regional programmes for peacebuilding, in particular activities aimed at building and strengthening sub-regional, national and local institutions and human capacity development.

e) African Governments in collaboration with the AU, RECs/RMs and the UN need to enhance their collaboration for planning and implementation of programmes and

projects designed to address context-specific cross border challenges and sub-regional dimensions of peacebuilding. Establishing joint multinational stabilization programmes with particular emphasis on non-military components such as vocational training for the youth to overcome poverty and unemployment, and educating them about culture of peace and peacebuilding would be an important step in this direction.

K.   Partnerships for Peacebuilding

48.   Fostering partnership in support of peacebuilding reflects the recognition that peacebuilding is a multi-faceted process, involving the contribution of diverse national stakeholders and international partners who offer support to the countries emerging from conflict. All too often, the national stakeholders and international partners are challenged by a lack of shared vision, competing priorities, varying engagement tools, and a shortage of long-term financial resources. The fragmentation of strategies and tools undermine the ability of national, regional and international partners to work coherently in identifying country-specific peacebuilding priorities and challenges. Some progress has been made in forging partnerships among the UN, AU, RECs/RMs, the European Union (EU) and other key stakeholders.

49.   A number of best practices are emerging. For instance, the Regional Stabilization Strategy in the Lake Chad Basin connects and combines the networks, capabilities and resources of the local, sub-regional and multilateral governance mechanisms. It, thus, serves as an example of how such strategic frameworks can be used to connect key stakeholders both horizontally and vertically, as well as establish mechanisms and instruments that facilitate and institutionalize their roles in co-governing a shared social-ecological system. Despite this progress, there is a general acknowledgement that more needs to be done to deepen cooperation among the regional and international actors in support of national and sub-regional peacebuilding processes especially during the implementation phase.

50.   Recommendations:

a) Strategic and operational partnerships between the AU and UN in general should be strengthened in all peace and security issues pertaining to Africa in order to optimize the institutions' comparative advantages while ensuring complementarity. The PSC--PBC partnership is critical in supporting countries emerging from conflict in Africa. Nurturing and sustaining that partnership needs to be placed on a firm footing by annual consultations and joint-missions, rotating between Addis Ababa and New York and with discussions on a pre-identified thematic or country issue of mutual interest to both institutions.

b) The AU and UN partnership should help enable the AU to exercise ownership of PCRD efforts and engagements in the Continent, prioritizing support to efforts and measures aimed at revitalizing the AU -PCRD as well ensure closer collaboration and information sharing related to their respective operations and programmatic engagements on the Continent. In this regard, this partnership should benefit from and capitalize on the role and activities of the AU–PCRD Centre

c) The relationship between the AU and RECs/RMs should be guided by the principle of subsidiarity. Consequently, the mid-year AU-REC Coordinating Meeting needs to have

a strong focus on peacebuilding. While the principle of subsidiarity should underline AU-REC collaboration, division of labour in terms of addressing peace and security challenges through peacebuilding has to be based on comparative advantage.

d) The emerging partnerships should encompass more practical aspects for collaboration. In particular, this should include strengthening of existing cooperation platforms and mechanisms, including joint AU-RECs/RMs/UN horizon scanning and joint missions as well as jointly developing a practical and sustainable Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework as a means to measure success and determine lessons learned. This will be useful for planning and implementation of mission mandates.

e) The African Union Development Agency (AUDA/NEPAD), should support all efforts aimed at streamlining and identifying key entry points for the AU in its relationships with the various constituent RECs/RMs for strategic and policy development and effective post-conflict development and peacebuilding initiatives. This is consistent with African-owned and -led peacebuilding efforts.

f) Enhancing national and continental capacities for planning and implementing of programmes and projects designed to address context-specific cross border challenges and sub-regional dimension of peacebuilding.

VI.   IMPLEMENTATION AND INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

51.   As more African countries have emerged from conflict or sought to consolidate peace through democratization processes, regional and international initiatives to assist those countries have increased. The involvement of a plurality of external actors in support of national peacebuilding efforts is a prime example of regional and global solidarity for sustaining peace. Nonetheless, there are myriad challenges in the involvement of multiple actors in national peacebuilding processes, not least the lack of coordination, and potential duplications of policy actions. This argues for promoting partnerships among all relevant actors by improving inter-institutional cooperation.

52.   While the nature and scope of peacebuilding might vary by country contexts, there are three main issues around which inter-institutional cooperation should be developed: assistance in the design of national peacebuilding framework; financial support for peacebuilding; and mechanism for periodic consultation, joint monitoring, review and reporting on progress in implementation of peacebuilding process. The success in the implementation of national peacebuilding efforts critically depends not only on the ownership and leadership by national stakeholders but also the degree of cooperation among the relevant regional and international institutions in these three areas.

53.   Over the years, experience in African countries emerging from conflict or situations of fragility, has shown that a dense layer of mechanisms for peacebuilding has been created at the national level, mostly during the peacekeeping or special political missions. These arrangements often increase the transactions costs on national authorities who possess limited administrative capacity and technical expertise. A new organising framework is required that simplifies existing arrangements and vests greater authority on national authorities to convene the major regional and international institutions, including key bilateral partners involved in, or committed to, peacebuilding in the particular country.

Nationally-led consultations, involving governments, civil society actors and private sector, on peacebuilding should initially aim to discuss and decide on the institutions to be involved in each of the three main areas of support for national peacebuilding efforts.

54.   Inter-institutional cooperation in the three aspects of peacebuilding needs to draw on the comparative advantage of each of the key regional and international institutions. Thus, under the leadership and guidance of the national authorities, the AU, the relevant REC/RM and the PBC, should support countries emerging from conflict to articulate their national peacebuilding frameworks. Increasingly, national peacebuilding priorities are embedded in the Poverty Reduction Strategies, Prosperity Agenda or National Development Plan rather than in a separate peacebuilding framework. The role of the aforementioned institutions would be to guide and ensure that these national policy frameworks are sensitive to and incorporate priorities in peacebuilding

55.   Deepening the partnership between the AU-PSC and PBC through closer collaboration and coordination would be crucial to developing an interlocking global peacebuilding architecture. Such partnership will reinforce strategic convergence, promote inter-institutional cooperation, enhance regional and cross-pillar interventions as well as complement efforts at scaling up national peacebuilding efforts. All the key elements for joint action by the PSC and PBC have been articulated and agreed upon, as the preceding review shows. As part of the effort to deepen the partnership between the AU and UN in peacebuilding, cooperation between the PSC and PBC should include joint analysis, assessments and joint policy measures in the conflict-affected countries.

56.   At the same time, the African Development Bank's (AfDB) Transition Support Facility, the UN-Peacebuilding Fund, the World Bank and Multi-Donor Trust Funds should join efforts to offer and mobilise financial support for the implementation of national and regional peacebuilding frameworks. These same institutions are also well-placed to support national efforts in developing a plan for domestic resource mobilization, including exploring innovative financing modalities for peacebuilding. All the key institutions supporting both the development of the national peacebuilding framework and financing of peacebuilding should be included in the joint monitoring and reporting on the progress in the implementation of the national peacebuilding process. In other words, inter-institutional cooperation should be anchored on the principle of mutual accountability. The AU and PBC are well-placed to serve as platforms for regional and global review of progress in national and sub-regional peacebuilding efforts.

VII.   **CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD**

57.   The experience from close to two decades of AU peacebuilding efforts has yielded several important insights. Among these are the growing consensus on indispensability of national ownership and leadership of peacebuilding process; the importance of effective partnership in support of peacebuilding; the imperative for institution building and financing, and a strong emphasis on impact, through implementation at the field level. Giving full practical effect to the consensus on national ownership and leadership of peacebuilding remains work in progress. The 2020 Review should aim to make important contributions to each of these aspects of the consensus on peacebuilding.

58.   The Review represents a unique opportunity to identify areas and concrete measures to advance the AU-UN strategic partnership on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. To this end, the review needs to place particular emphasis on: enabling the AU to exercise ownership of PCRD efforts and engagements on the continent; ensuring closer collaboration and information-sharing on operational and programmatic engagements; and enhancing national and continental African capacities for planning and implementation of programmes and projects designed to address context-specific cross border challenges and sub-regional dimensions of peacebuilding.

a)   **National Ownership and Leadership**

59.   Building inclusive and responsive state institutions is a critical factor in national ownership and leadership of peacebuilding efforts, leading to much international commitment to enhancing state capacity. There is, however, less support for building the capacity of local non-governmental peacebuilders who are often front-line responders when it comes to preventing escalation of conflict, mitigating the impact of violent conflict, and finding solutions for local grievances. The local peacebuilders should not only join national authorities in the identification of needs, framing of the issues, design of the programme and design of the results framework but also be offered significant financial support to play those roles. In order to lend more credence to the principle of local ownership, targeted support should be provided to local peacebuilders to enhance their interventions at the micro-level. Support for the enhancement of local capacities should be done in tandem with assisting national authorities given the mutually reinforcing nature of the two levels of governance. The primary candidates for support should be women and youth organisations who play pivotal roles in national and local peacebuilding processes.

b)   **Effective Partnership for Peacebuilding**

60.   Peace-building engagements will be significantly enhanced if the partnership between the AU, RECs/RMs and the UN system is leveraged. This partnership would ensure greater coherence both at policy level but also in the implementation at the field level. It is therefore recommended that a more robust and central role be given to RECs/RMs in peacebuilding across Africa. These organizations have unambiguous understanding of their regions, with clearly established methods of engagements and dialogues in the management of their respective regions. A more regular engagement with the RECs/RMs under the auspices of the AU, may therefore be considered. The PBC would serve as an important bridge between the UN system, on one hand, and the AU and RECs/RMs, on the other hand. Enhanced coordination and synergy between the UNSC, the PSC, the PBC, RECs/RMs and the national governments would serve as a force multiplier for the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda. This synergy would ensure greater resource mobilization and partnership in silencing the Guns and sustaining peace on the continent.

c)   **Implementation at the Field Level**

61.   The field level is where the partnership for peacebuilding by national authorities and other stakeholders as well as regional and international actors should find full expression in the collective support for peacebuilding. Given that the regional context has a great influence on national peacebuilding efforts, there is an imperative to take into account regional dimensions of peacebuilding. Implementation at the field level, therefore, refers to

the national and sub-regional context. It is therefore critical for RECs/RMs to accompany their Member States to develop national and regional post conflict strategies and agree on modalities of implementation.

62.   In order to consolidate the nascent global peacebuilding architecture, the AU and UN should consider inviting the RECs/RMs to the existing regional coordination frameworks which will offer all relevant institutions an opportunity to reflect and review their support for peacebuilding in various countries. RECs/RMs has demonstrated the experience in handling political and security related dimensions of peacebuilding. However, their interventions are very limited when it comes to the development dimension.

63.   In this vein, the newly established African Union Development Agency (AUDA), should be a coordinating mechanism that streamlines and identifies key entry points for the AU in its relationships with the RECs/RMs for strategic engagements and policy development, and effective post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization. AUDA should therefore be the major interface between the AU and RECs/RMs, leveraging on its mandate, to ensure effective dialogue whilst ensuring that comprehensive recovery and stabilization plans are developed for the various regions. This would reduce the proliferation of strategies, ensure streamlined action and guarantee smoother transitions from peacekeeping to stabilization and long-term development.

64.   National peacebuilding efforts in many African countries are increasingly beset by a host of new or emerging threats, including pastoralists and farmers conflict, terrorism and violent extremism and outbreaks of diseases including such as the COVID-19 pandemic as well as climate change and its variabilities. Support for African countries emerging from conflict or difficult transitions to address these inter-related challenges have to be an integral part of implementation at the field level.

65.   The nascent global peacebuilding architecture should recognize these emerging challenges and the relevant institutions strengthened to address them in accordance to their respective mandates based on a contextual and needs based approach. Deepening the partnership between the AU, RECs/RMs, the PBC, the UN system and IFIs as well as providing adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for the work of these partners will all be important steps in this direction, and should therefore be at the centre of 2020 Review of the UNPBA. The AU in partnership with the RECs/RMs would continue to champion the African peacebuilding agenda as part of broader efforts to Silencing the Guns and the implementation of Agenda 2063.

d)   **Nature of the expected outcome of the 2020 UN peacebuilding review**

66.   The review should place emphasis on assessing the progress made in the implementation of the 2016 twin resolutions of the 2015 review at the field level; and identify remaining gaps and recommended actions to address them. In the same vein, it is critical to assess the implication of the ongoing UN reform package (peace and security pillar; development system; and management), on the implementation of the 2016 resolutions in the field. Hence, the 2020 review should be of a procedural nature in order to preserve the gains achieved in the 2016 twin resolutions and focusing on the field-level implementation of the recommendations that are still lagging behind.