

AFRICAN UNION

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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 1033RD MEETING (VIRTUAL) 21 SEPTEMBER 2021 ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/PS. 1033 (2021)

PRESS STATEMENT

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) dedicated its 1033rd meeting held on 21 September 2021 to an open session commemorating the International Day of Peace and briefing on the Second Edition of the Luanda Biennial "Pan African Forum for the Culture of Peace".

Council recalled Assembly Decision [Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.I(XIV)] adopted during the 14th Extra-Ordinary Session on Silencing the Guns held on 6 December 2020, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, which extended the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa for a period of ten (10) years (2021-2030) within the context of Agenda 2063.

Council also recalled Assembly Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec. 546-568(XXIV)] adopted during the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union held on 30 - 31 January 2015, in which the Assembly requested the AU Commission to "take all appropriate measures in consultation with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and Government of Republic of Angola to co-organize a biannual Pan-African Forum for a Culture of Peace in Africa, "Biennale of Luanda". Furthermore, Council recalled all previous decisions and pronouncements on this central theme and its related activities.

Council reiterated its commitment to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/53/243 B) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 September 1999, and the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration during the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in May 2013, which rededicated Africa towards the attainment of the Pan African Vision of '*An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena*'.

Council noted the opening remarks made by H.E Ambassador Mahamat Ali Hassan, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Chad to the AU and the PSC Chairperson for September 2021 and the remarks by H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security.

Council also noted the presentations made by H.E Ambassador Diekumpuna Nsadisi Sita Jose, Coordinator of the National Management Committee of the Luanda Biennale, the representatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and AMANI Africa Media and Research Services. Furthermore, Council noted statements by the AU Member States and the respective representatives of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs).

Council underscored the need for concerted efforts to address the underlying root causes of conflict and violence in the Continent in order to attain durable peace, security and socio-economic development as envisioned in Agenda 2063.

Council emphasized the imperative of sustained efforts towards collectively exploring avenues to proactively prevent conflict, manage existing ones, and transform them using the rich heritage, education, and all available forums to promote a culture of peace in the Continent.

Council encouraged all stakeholders to incorporate indigenous approaches to conflict prevention, management and resolution in the Continent, including involving local populations and utilizing widely held traditional practices within a given community. In this context, Council called for inclusive participation that

recognizes the value of women and youth as agents of peace in their societies.

Council emphasized the need to consistently cultivate a culture of peace, social justice and ensure that the citizenry's fundamental freedoms are protected in the Continent.

Council stressed the importance of strengthening the African cultural identity to build stronger resilient communities and achieve equality, inclusion, and social cohesion.

Council underscored the importance of ensuring that children access education from an early age to instil values that would enable them to resolve disputes peacefully, respect others, and be tolerant of differences. To this end, Council encouraged Member States to consider mainstreaming peace education into the curricula of their educational systems.

Council underlined the role that arts, culture and heritage play as catalysts for socioeconomic development and integration of the African Continent. In this regard Council encouraged Member States and all stakeholders to create platforms wherein arts, culture and heritage are used as instruments of dialogue, mutual understanding and promotion of sustainable peace.

Council highlighted the imperative of ensuring that valued African property such as historic buildings, archaeological sites, artwork, books/manuscripts and other artefacts that have been passed down from previous generations are preserved, particularly during armed conflict. Within this context, Council condemned any forms of intrusion, forceful occupation and coercion of guardians of religious buildings, historical establishments and protected areas, including UNESCO certificated and registered sites, by terrorists, armed groups and outlawed individuals.

Council acknowledged the importance of a multi-actor partnership between the government, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, the artistic and scientific community, media, and private sector, amongst others, to advance the importance of inclusive societies tolerant to diversity and the overall message of peace.

Council encouraged Member States, RECs/RMs, AU policy organs and AU institutions such as the African Academy of Languages, the African Audio- Visual Commission, the Vehicular Cross Border Language Commission and the Centre for Linguistic Studies and History through Oral Traditions to closely collaborate in the promotion of a culture of peace in the Continent.

Further, Council encouraged Member States, who are yet to do so, to ratify, sign and domesticate the AU and universal instruments related to arts, culture and heritage.

Council referred to Resolution A/RES/72/130 adopted by the UN General Assembly on 8 December 2017, at the initiative of Algeria, declaring 16 May as International Day of Living Together in Peace, which adds to efforts and messaging promoting peaceful coexistence.

Council commended the Republic of Angola and UNESCO on the successful convening of the inaugural Biennale of Luanda - Pan African Forum for the Culture of Peace from 18 - 22 September 2019, which created a peace movement and a collaborative platform to advance the culture of peace in the Continent.

Council looked forward to the Second Edition of the Biennale of Luanda - the PanAfrican Forum for the Culture of Peace earmarked to be held in the near future and encouraged Member States, RECs/RMs and partners to support this initiative that strives to promote the culture of peace in the Continent.

Council agreed to remain actively seized of the matter.