

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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The Inaugural Lessons Learned Forum on AU Peace Support Operations and the African Standby Force kicks off in Abuja



The African Union (AU) Commission, in collaboration with the Federal Republic of Nigeria held the Inaugural Lessons Learned Forum on AU Peace Support Operations (PSOs) and the African Standby Force (ASF) from 1 to 3 November 2022 in Abuja, Nigeria. The Inaugural Lessons Learned Forum was aimed at assessing how implementation of AU PSOs have been facilitated; ascertain the various ways in which the ASF have been utilized since its establishment; and identify key lessons that can contribute towards the full operationalization and utilization of the ASF.

The Inaugural Lessons Learned Forum was officially opened by the Honarable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Geoffrey Onyeama who welcomed the participants to Abuja and the Forum, on behalf of the President, government and people of Nigeria. The Minister noted that twenty years after the adoption of the Protocol Establishing the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC), the AU, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and Coalitions of States combined have conducted about 27 Peace Support Operations, facilitated two (2) support missions to curb the Ebola Virus Disease and provided assistance to COVID-19 mitigation efforts. H.E. Geoffrey Onyeama emphasized the need for workable solutions and models of operations based on the peculiarities of each country where PSOs are required and deployed. He also thanked H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security for his initiative and conduct of this important Forum that

brought together relevant institutions and experts to learn lessons after about 20 years of PSOs and operationalization of the ASF.

In his opening statement, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security indicated that the Inaugural Lesson Learned Forum is the culmination of a personal desire to ensure that the AU continuously enhance tools and mechanisms to address conflict, peace and security. “I have always been eager to ensure we learn lessons on how to enhance the effectiveness of AU PSOs, together with those conducted by RECs/RMs and Coalitions of State. This is, therefore, the opportuned time to bring together experts from field missions and Headquarters as well as relevant national institutions and partners to discuss the commonalities, differences, opportunities and challenges of Africa-Led PSOs to enhance our effectiveness,” said Ambassador Bankole Adeoye.

Ambassador Bankole Adeoye noted that the AU have demonstrated its capacity to maintain peace and security on the continent and have made clear that Africa is the first responder to its conflict situations, considering the number of PSOs deployed since 2003. He underscored the role of RECs/RMs in addressing security challenges on the continent, including the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination between the AUPSC and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the success of Africa’s peace and security endeavors. Amb. Adeoye also underlined the need to optimize the partnership between the two decision-making organs (AUPSC and UNSC) as well as the joint work and collaboration between the AU Commission and the UN Secretariat to ensure alignment of political and strategic objectives that will guarantee operational effectiveness and achievement of PSO mandates.

H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye concluded by calling for a workable and practical roadmap to achieve financing of AU-led PSOs in a sustainable and predictable manner to ensure effectiveness of AU and UN PSOs in Africa.

During the three-day Forum, participants underscored the importance of early and adequate consultations between the AUPSC and RECs/RMs Policy Organs as well as with the UNSC to agree on the objectives, including the processes for mandating, implementation, management, benchmarks as well as timelines and exit strategy of a PSO. The need for predictable, adequate and sustainable funding for Africa-Led PSOs were emphasized to ensure that resources fully match the mandates of such operations. The importance for agreement on the phases, timelines as well as benchmarks and conditions for success agreed upon between host states and missions was reiterated as a way to ensure mandates are attainable, measurable and can be met.

It was also noted that whilst the ASF was envisioned to be continentally coordinated and utilized by the AU, it has been regionally facilitated and owned by the RECs/RMs. Within this context, the need for alignment of the vision of the ASF, with current practices and realities was emphasized. In this regard, and in line with the objectives of this Inaugural Lessons Learned Forum, the lessons from the experiences of the 27 PSOs conducted during the past 20 years will contribute to the reconceptualization of the ASF to ensure its full operationalization and utilization – pursuant to Article 13 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council.

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