



**Remarks by Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security  
at the Inaugural Lessons Learned Forum on African Union Peace  
Support Operations and the African Standby Force  
Abuja, Nigeria  
1 – 3 November, 2022**

**Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, of the Federal Republic of  
Nigeria H.E. Geoffery Onyeama;**

**The Director General of the National Intelligence Agency;**

**Ambassador of the Republic of Namibia and Permanent  
Representative to the African Union and Chair of the Peace and  
Security Council for the month of November 2022;**

**Esteemed members of the PSC,**

**Heads of Missions and Special Representatives of the Chairperson  
of the AU,**

**Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to the UN Office  
to the AU**

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen;**

It is my immense pleasure to welcome you all to the inaugural lessons-learned forum – the first of many to come - which brings together institutions and individuals from across and beyond the continent that have and continue to contribute greatly to the quest for a conflict-free, peaceful and stable Africa. Indeed, as I look around the room, I see vast the experience represented here. I am hopeful that the outcomes of our interactions over the next three days will enable us to clearly identify tangible lessons and good practices that will contribute immensely towards

enhancing current efforts to achieve lasting peace in our beloved continent.

Excellencies, esteemed guests, ladies and gentlemen, let me commence my statement, by first appreciating the President and Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for co-hosting this Inaugural Lessons Learned Forum, and indeed the Director General of the National Intelligence Agency of Nigeria for availing this prestigious facility to us, including for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us so far.

Let me also take this opportunity to pay tribute to our brave men and women who have paid and continue to pay the ultimate price to ensure that peace, security and stability prevails in our Continent.

Excellencies, this Inaugural Lesson Learned Forum is the culmination of a personal desire to ensure that we continuously enhance our tools and mechanisms to address conflict, peace and security. This interest came about when, as a member of the PSC, our deliberations and field visits revealed that the challenges, opportunities and context across the missions we oversee are the same. Thus, 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 opportune 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.

20 years after the adoption of the Protocol Establishing the PSC, the AU and RECs combined have conducted about 27 PSOs and facilitated 2 support missions to curb the Ebola virus disease. From these experiences, the AU have demonstrated its capacity to maintain peace and security on the continent and have made clear the following:

1. **First**, that Africa is the first responder to its conflict situations, as have been demonstrated by the number of PSOs deployed since 2003;
2. **Second**, that the RECs/RMs are closer to the conflicts that occur in their regions and therefore takes initiatives to address such challenges. As such as we strive to operationalize the ASF, the role of the Regional Bodies need to be underscored;
3. **Third**, cooperation and coordination between the AU PSC and the UNSC contributes to the success of Africa's peace and security endeavors on the continent. Whilst progress has been made over the past 2 decades, more needs to be done to optimize the partnership between the two decision-making organs as well as joint work and collaboration between the AU Commission and the UN Secretariat.

### **Excellencies, esteemed guests,**

Taking note of the progress we have made so far through the implementation of PSOs in the past 2 decades, and learning from the experiences so far, this forum offers us that unique opportunity to ascertain:

1. How we can better enhance the role and ability of the AU and RECs/RMs, as first responders to conflicts on the continent, to increase our effectiveness towards achieving peace and security in Africa.
2. How to better address the multiple complex crisis on the continent characterized by intra-state, trans-national and trans-regional conflicts that tend to be asymmetric, with increasing use of insurgency and terrorist tactics that requires adequate and robust response;

3. Why the ASF has not been fully utilized in the implementation of PSOs, noting the preferences of RECs/RMs to undertake own operations within their regions, as well as with Member States facilitating operations using coalitions of the willing to pursue objectives the ASF was established to conduct.
4. The role the AU should play, in support of RECs/RMs when they decide to mandate and deploy a PSO, as well as how consultations should be facilitated with the RECs/RMs when the AU intends to deploy PSOs in any region.
5. How best to reconceptualize the ASF going forward, to make it fit for purpose and for its utilization to be optimal.
6. A workable and practical way forward a roadmap to achieve financing of AU-led PSOs now, in a sustainable and predictable manner to ensure effectiveness of AU and UN PSOs in Africa.

Let me end by reiterating that through this forum, we will be able to generate lots of lessons and good practices as well as achieve common understanding of our comparative advantage as AU and RECs/RMs to collectively ensure enhancement of PSOs in the future. This will be a good opportunity and contribution towards the full operationalization and utilization of the ASF.

Let me once again thank you all for taking the time to participate in this inaugural Lessons Learned Forum and wish us all the best in our deliberations.

**I thank you all.**