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**MEETING OF THE OPERATIONAL TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE (OTC) OF THE AU-EU-UN PARTNERSHIP
PROJECT FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE
COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK
FOR AFRICAN UNION PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS
Addis Ababa, 30 June 2023**

**OPENING STATEMENT BY DR. ALHAJI SARJOH BAH, DIRECTOR OF CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT, POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY DEPARTMENT, AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSION**

Excellencies,

Representatives of the United Nations, European Union, and the African Union, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I cordially welcome you to the Operational Technical Committee (OTC) meeting.

Let me start by commending the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) for their long-standing and continuing support of the African Union's (AU) efforts to ensure that its peace support operations (PSOs) are planned and conducted in compliance with international legal obligations, including respect for International Human Rights Law (IHRL), International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and acceptable standard of Conduct and Discipline.

As we confront the global and continental conflicts, it is imperative to entrench multilateral approaches based on close cooperation and coordination, respect for comparative advantages and complementarity in peace and security and burden-sharing based on collective responsibility to respond early, coherently and decisively to prevent, manage, and resolve violent conflict.

On behalf of the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), I reiterate the AU's commitment to strengthening the compliance and accountability regime of its PSOs and the strategic partnership between the three organizations to facilitate the full implementation of the AU-EU-UN Tripartite Partnership Project for the Enhancement of the Compliance and Accountability Framework for AU PSOs.

The capacity support under the Project has enabled the Commission to expedite the development and finalization of several policies and frameworks. In this regard, I congratulate the African Union Compliance Framework (AUCF) Project team on the milestone achieved in the adoption of three key strategic level compliance policy documents by the 15th Ordinary Meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense Safety and Security (STCDSS), held from 9 to 12 May 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The policies are namely:

1. The African Union Strategic Framework for Compliance and Accountability in Peace Support Operations.
2. The African Union Policy on Protection of Civilians in Peace Support Operations and.
3. The African Union Policy on the Selection and Screening of Personnel for Peace Support Operations.

These three policies have added to the growing body of AU policies needed to guide the operations of its PSOs. Meanwhile, their adoption also leaves us with the assignment to, in the first instance, disseminate the policies across the AU Member States and support the PSOs in putting strategies for their implementation in a contextualized manner. The team's efforts in this regard should include the implementation of previously adopted policies such as the African Union Policy on Conduct and Discipline for Peace Support Operations, the African Union Policy on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse for PSOs, the

African Union Policies on Child Protection in AU Peace Support Operations and the African Union Policy on Mainstreaming Child Protection in the African Peace and Security Architecture, amongst others. I have noticed, with approval, that dissemination and advocacy have been mainstreamed into the team's activities for this year. This process should continue.

I have also taken note of the various activities the team plans to undertake in 2023, and I commend the team for its efforts in embodying those activities across multiple areas, including training, policy development, advocacy and dissemination. I am particularly keen for the team to continue its engagements with the AU Member States, troop and police contributing countries (T/PCCs) and Training Centres of Excellence (TCIs) to explore modalities for mainstreaming the AU Compliance and Accountability curriculum into the curricula of the national military and police academies. Such an endeavour will undoubtedly increase Member States' ownership of the curriculum. It will ensure that military and police officers, even at cadet levels, are introduced to the AU Commission doctrine. I also commend the team for building capacities on Compliance and Accountability in the Missions, that is, ATMIS in Somalia, MNJTF in Chad and SAMIM in Mozambique. The conduct of basic training for the Somalia National Force (SNA) is another milestone in capacity building of the SNA and fostering the full transfer of security responsibilities to the SNA by ATMIS. Now that we have put policies in place and have a training strategy, I urge the team to look into putting practical mechanisms in place that will assist the PSOs in implementing these policies.

Let me also reiterate that the Project, although physically situated within the AU Peace Support Operations Division, is part of much larger, Commission-wide, mutually reinforcing efforts on compliance and accountability on AU PSOs. Therefore, several departments and divisions in the Commission have statutory oversight on aspects of the AU Compliance and Accountability architecture, including the PAPS, the Office of Legal Counsel, the Ethics Office, the Office of Internal Oversight, and the Administrative and Human Resources Management Department. The PAPS Department will therefore reach out to all the Project's stakeholders in these departments, divisions, units, cells and offices within the AU Commission to ensure a Commission-wide approach. This will ensure that the Project, during its lifespan, enhances the AU's capacities, as envisaged.

I will conclude by restating the unwavering commitment of the Commission to the continued enhancement of its compliance framework to ensure adherence to international legal obligations and standards in the conduct of AU PSOs.

With these remarks, I declare this OTC open and wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your presence and attention.