

## **ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)**

**Press Release No:** 051/2023

**Date:** October 12th, 2023

**Venue:** Sandton, South Africa

### **ECOSOCC co-hosts roundtable discussion on the role of the European Union APSA IV Program**

The African Union (AU) Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) is hosting a discussion in collaboration with the AUC's Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department (PAPs) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) on the role of the European Union Fourth African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA IV) Program in promoting peace and security in Africa.

In February 2020, the EU APSA IV was signed. The EU committed 40.5 million euros to APSA-IV over a four-year period (2020-2024) to support the AUC, Regional RECs and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) to further strengthen the capacity and coordination of APSA components to adapt to emerging security challenges.

The purpose of the dialogue is to undertake a retrospective review of the program in order to inform the development of future EU APSA Programmes. The meeting will highlight efforts of AU, ECOSOCC, Regional Economic Communities, EU and Civil Society Organisations in promoting peace and security in Africa.

The meeting will also raise awareness on the role of APSA in promoting peace and security in Africa; create a platform where AUC, ECOSOCC, RECs/RMs, EU and CSOs can undertake a review of APSA and provide recommendations and contribute to research on the APSA through the preparation of working papers.

The discussion will further, enhance understanding of the achievements and challenges related to the EU APSA IV Programme; gain consensus on the recommendations for future EU APSA programs and the broader APSA Continental Programmes and, further identify best practices to inform the APSA Continental Framework.

Opening the meeting, ECOSOCC Presiding Officer, Mr. Khalid Boudali said the role of CSOs in peace and security in Africa was multi-faceted. He urged the meeting participants that as they reflected on APSA and the EU APSA IV Programme, they ought to also to look ahead, noting that the visibility of APSA was crucial for its continued success.

"In light of the EU APSA IV Programme nearing its conclusion, it is essential that we engage in panel discussions on its strategic objectives to allow us assess achievements, identify challenges and formulate recommendations for future EU APSA Programmes.

AUC PAPS Team Lead, Mr. Josephat Barugahare, representing Director of Conflict

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Management Directorate, Dr. Sarjoh Bah noted that when the APSA was established, special attention was given to building the capacities of African institutions to effectively address the security challenges of the time including intra and inter-state conflicts, genocide and regional disputes.

“However, recently, conflict has evolved from typical civil wars and outright genocide to a more complex mix of radicalization, organized crime, political crises, deficits in governance structures and climate-induced conflict,” he said. “This calls for increased reliance on the strength of our partnerships and our collective commitment to build a more prosperous future. The partnerships between the AU and RECs/RMs, and more recently, the incremental involvement of civil society through ECOSOCC – is one of the evident wins of the EU APSA support.”

Mr. Thomas Huyghebaert, Head of Policy and Cooperation at the European Union Delegation to African Union reiterated the EU’s commitment to supporting African initiatives.

“As we review where we stand, we should be honest on what didn’t work but also propose solutions on what can work,” he said. “As we finalize the program by end of 2024, we have a commitment to exploring what is beyond. We are happy to see ECOSOCC involved as well and taking leadership in this as the role of civil society is very pertinent in peace and security.”

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Head of Governance, Peace and Security, Ms. Elizabeth Mutunga said prevailing trends like Unconstitutional Changes of Government and democratic related issues; climate change and diminishing resources-based conflict etc, should be factored in the future planning for the next program.

Southern African Development Community (SADC) APSA Project Coordinator, Baboloki Koloi also urged the meeting participants to take note of current and prevailing trends in Africa, for the future programs, including climate change and migration, as they reflected on the APSA IV Program.

The EU APSA IV program has been supporting activities of the AUC, RECs and RMs in achieving the following strategic objectives: Conflict cycle management, with a focus on Early Warning Systems and the African Standby Force, Effective coordination and partnership at all levels within the APSA (including with Civil Society Organizations) and Engagement with and inclusiveness of youth and children in APSA.



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### **About ECOSOCC**

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was established in July 2004 as an Advisory Organ composed of different social and professional groups of AU Member States. The mandate of ECOSOCC is to contribute, through advice, to the effective translation of the objectives, principles and policies of the African Union into concrete programmes, as well as the evaluation of these programmes.

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