



**Chairman's Summary**  
**“Operationalizing the African Union Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy in the Sahel Region: Charting the Way Forward”**  
**15–16 October 2018**  
**Cairo, Egypt**

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## **Introduction**

- 1- Addressing the needs of countries and communities emerging from conflict, through post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) and peacebuilding efforts, continues to be amongst the most complex challenges facing Africa. Restoring/building state authority and its ability to perform its basic functions, building trust in the new political order and governance structures, and addressing the root causes of conflict are complex and long-term processes that require comprehensive, integrated and inclusive politics and policies, sustained funding and engagement, and coordination among a wide array of local, national, regional and international actors.
- 2- To assist African countries in their efforts to prevent the relapse to conflict, the African Union (AU) developed its Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (AU-PCRD policy) in 2006, as the normative framework for the wide array of peacebuilding initiatives and interventions. The development of the policy was guided by the AU's Executive Council decision EX.CL/191 (VII) of July 2005, which among other things, called for the development of operational guidelines, and strengthening African capacities, including that of civil society, to address post-conflict issues.
- 3- Notwithstanding the existence of this comprehensive policy framework, effective implementation continues to lag behind. This could not be truer than in the Sahel region. For more than a decade, countries of the region have been struggling with the devastating consequences of protracted conflicts, terrorism, transnational organized crime, human trafficking, as well as extreme poverty and climate change. The complex, multidimensional and regional nature of today's peace and security challenges in the Sahel further complicates the task of converting short-term stability into long-term peace and development.
- 4- In recognition of the above, the African Union (AU) developed its Strategy for the Sahel in 2014. The strategy identified key priority areas centered around governance, security, and development. It underscored the importance of an integrated and cross-border approach to addressing peacebuilding challenges. Other key actors, including the United Nations and the European Union, have developed their own strategies in support of PCRD efforts in the Sahel. The



multiplicity of actors, however, raises questions about coordination and policy coherence. In that regard, the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) and its Support Plan are a major step forward towards streamlining the multiple strategies in the region and increasing cooperation between actors on the ground to achieve the African Union Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

- 5- As part of Egypt's commitment to strengthen the AU PCRDR framework and implementation, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA) and the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development (EAPD), organized a two-day expert workshop, titled: *“Operationalizing the African Union Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy in the Sahel: Charting the Way Forward”* on 15-16 October 2018 in Cairo, Egypt.
- 6- Organized as part of Egypt's preparation for assuming the chairmanship of the African Union (AU) in 2019 and to host the newly-established African Union Centre for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (AUC-PCRDR)<sup>1</sup>, the workshop brought together representatives of the governments of the G5 Sahel, the AU Commission, African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the World Bank, as well as key bilateral partners to the countries of the Sahel participated in the workshop. Major African think tanks, research centers and peacebuilding practitioners contributed to the discussions (Attachment 2 - List of Participants).
- 7- The workshop provided a platform for national, regional and international actors engaged in PCRDR and peacebuilding efforts in the Sahel to deliberate on practical ways and means to refocus PCRDR efforts on more comprehensive and long-term strategies that address the root causes of conflict and instability, instead of quick-fix solutions (Attachment 1 - Workshop Agenda). Specifically, the workshop aimed to:
  - Reach a common understanding of the emerging security and developmental challenges and opportunities in the Sahel region;
  - Take stock of international and regional PCRDR initiatives in the region, with a view to identifying implementation gaps, as well as good practices, lessons learned and new and innovative approaches to peacebuilding;
  - Suggest improvements to the AU PCRDR policies and structures, based on the practical needs of the field (using the Sahel region as a case study),

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<sup>1</sup> Following the decision of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Nouakchott, Mauritania in July 2018)



- including the future role of the African Union Center for Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (AUC-PCRD), to be hosted in Cairo, Egypt;
- Develop ideas for enhanced policy coherence and cooperation and partnership between and among key stakeholders (i.e. AU-RECs/RMs, AU-UN, and AU with other international partners).

## Key Messages

- 8- The primary responsibility of post-conflict reconstruction and development and peacebuilding is that of national governments, which must identify priorities, formulate strategies and implement programs and activities aiming to provide the conditions necessary for sustaining peace. To support these efforts, external assistance should prioritize strengthening national institutions and capacities, both governmental and societal, in critical security, socio-economic development and governance sectors. Moreover, countries of the region as a whole, need to develop their own voice and become the primary stakeholder in the discussion.
- 9- Building viable state institutions across the Sahel region is a long-term process, that must be predicated on active engagement of the society and local communities. A “people-centered” approach that is inclusive of all communities and regions, and empowers women and youth in particular, is key to advancing peacebuilding and to ensuring that the needs of all segments of society, are taken into consideration.
- 10- Participants emphasized the central role of the African Union and reaffirmed the critical importance of a regional approach to post-conflict reconstruction and development and peacebuilding. To this end, updating, but more importantly operationalizing, the AU PCRD is a critical step in the right direction, that should set the stage for a more structured and tangible AU contribution to efforts aimed at preventing conflict and sustaining peace in the Sahel.
- 11- The G5, and other relevant sub-regional groupings and regional economic communities, can and should play an important role in assisting the countries of the region to address the threats, risks and challenges to peace, security and development, most notably cross-border challenges, such as terrorism, transnational organized crime, illegal trafficking, and exploitation of natural resources. Such challenges must be addressed through a long-term, comprehensive and integrated strategy for sustaining peace and development. Moreover, humanitarian assistance must not come at the expense of - or be a



- substitute to - structural and capacity development-oriented engagement with the countries of the region.
- 12- A key challenge undermining the effectiveness of international assistance to the Sahel is the multiplicity of actors and initiatives addressing the region, often not pulling in the same direction. There is, therefore, an urgent need for a coherent and coordinated approach by all actors involved, aimed at addressing the long-term needs and priorities identified by countries of the region. The newly-launched UN Support Plan for the Sahel region is the platform for aligning regional and international engagements with the actual needs of the Sahel.
  - 13- Programmatic engagements and resources must be anchored in a long-term reconstruction and development strategy for the Sahel. Participants recognized the imperative for mobilizing and channeling predictable and sustainable resources to implement peacebuilding and PCRCD programs. They also highlighted the opportunities that present themselves with the recent operationalization of the AU Peace Fund. There is a need to explore ways for PCRCD and inter-African support programs to the Sahel region to access the Peace Fund.
  - 14- The newly-established AUC PCRCD can play an important role in the operationalization of the AU PCRCD, and act as a pillar around which partners' support can be organized and extended.

## Summary of Discussions

### **A. An Evolving Security Environment: Challenges & Opportunities for Peacebuilding in the Sahel**

- 15- Participants identified key security and developmental challenges in the Sahel region, including protracted conflict, terrorism, porous borders, forced migration and internal displacement, organized crime, poverty, food insecurity, illiteracy, unemployment and environmental degradation. The problem is aggravated by population growth exerting enormous pressure on natural resources and basic services, as well as by poor governance and “ungoverned space”.
- 16- Noting the complexity of threats, risks and challenges to peace, security and development in the Sahel region, an area the size of Europe, it was argued that no single country or organization can shoulder the responsibility of PCRCD and peacebuilding in the Sahel alone. Cooperation between countries of the region, bilateral and regional development partners, international and financial institutions, is a must. All such efforts, however, must be anchored in a clear medium to long-term vision, developed by the Sahel countries themselves.



- 17- While noting that military and security measures are necessary to address some of the challenges facing the region, and acknowledging the important role played in that regard by the G5 Joint Force, there was a consensus that those measures are not enough. They must be complemented by mid to long-term peacebuilding and development efforts that address the root causes and drivers of conflict, and respond to developmental needs, to boost economies, create jobs, develop societies and support regional integration.
- 18- Despite the above challenges, the Sahel region show very positive trends, with democratic advances and regional organizations, such as ECOWAS, developing strong institutional frameworks. The region is also a land of opportunities, including through private investment and public-private partnerships, in agriculture, power generation (solar and wind), and utilizing untapped natural resources. To capitalize on these opportunities, participants emphasized the importance of risk mitigation to attract foreign direct investment, as well as utilizing free movement across borders to catalyze economies. Related to the above, participants also highlighted the urgent need to shift the narrative on the Sahel to one that highlights opportunities, while being informed of the incredible resilience of the local communities, who continue to lead normal lives.

## **B. Aligning Policies and Structures to Peacebuilding Priorities and Needs of the Sahel**

- 19- The adoption of the AU PCRCD policy in 2006 represented a major milestone in AU efforts to coordinate and support peacebuilding efforts, that address the causes and drivers of conflict in the continent. The policy itself was meant to be comprehensive and inclusive. It called on the AU to exercise strategic leadership and coordination at the continental levels, and on Regional Economic Communities and Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) to supervise, monitor and support national governments, which had the primary responsibility to implement PCRCD and peacebuilding projects.
- 20- Participants took stock of the AU's efforts to operationalize the AU PCRCD policy, including most notably the establishment of an interdepartmental task force on PCRCD in the AU Peace and Security Department (AU PSD), and the deployment of multidimensional assessment missions to countries emerging of conflict to devise joint action plans. Moreover, a five-year Results-Based Framework on PCRCD was finalized in 2016, as a well as a Guideline Note on PCRCD implementation. Participants also took note of the ongoing institutional reform of the AU Commission, with the aim of improving its efficiency and responsiveness to African citizens.



- 21- Despite these efforts, the implementation of the AU PCRDR policy has been hampered by the lack of human and financial resources and continues to be dependent on the political will and buy-in of Member States. It continues to suffer from the weak interface between the AUC and the RECs/RMs. As a result, the AUC is sometimes forced to cherry-pick which PCRDR initiatives it can work on, and to continue to depend sometimes on the choices made by development partners.
- 22- Similarly, participants took note of UN efforts to recalibrate its Strategy for Sahel (UNISS) and to align it to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063 in response to the priorities and needs of the Sahelian people. The complementary Support Plan is not meant as a new strategy, rather as an instrument to foster coherence and coordination for greater efficiency and delivery of results, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2391. The Plan aims to mobilize resources and trigger investments around six key priority areas, namely cross-border cooperation, prevention and sustaining peace, inclusive growth, climate action, renewable energy, and women and youth empowerment. The focus is on promoting an integrated approach to address the security-humanitarian-development nexus. Equally important, is the ever-evolving partnership between the AU and the UN, through recent strategic cooperation frameworks, as well as aligning their efforts to respond to the multifaceted challenges in the Sahel.
- 23- Participants highlighted the critical role that can be played by the newly-established AUC PCRDR in support of the implementation of existing strategies and policies and translating them into programs and projects. The Center can also contribute to situation analysis and needs assessments, provide technical expertise, evidence-based and policy-oriented research, support institutional reforms and carry out capacity building activities. It can also play an important role in ensuring vertical and horizontal coordination, and monitoring policy and program implementation.

### **C. Building State-Society Relations: Engaging Local Communities in Sahel**

- 24- National ownership and inclusivity are keys to the success of PCRDR and peacebuilding efforts. The goal should be to build inclusive national government, build trust with local communities, while addressing the root causes of conflict and instability in the region. This in return will help create conditions that enable Sahelian states to sustain development, strengthen their own capacity, ensure control over territories, stabilize societies and secure their people.



- 25- PCRD efforts must go beyond the mantra of “community engagement” to “people-centered” approaches that empower communities to play a central role in the planning, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of PCRD and peacebuilding initiatives and activities. This is important for acquiring legitimacy and building trust.
- 26- While Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and Peace Strengthening Projects (PSPs) are crucial instruments to bring “early peace dividends” to communities, they are not enough for the sustainability of these dividends, given their short implementation span, and hence their inability to provide social and economic services for longer periods of time. Therefore, these projects must be anchored in the broader long-term PCRD, recovery, peacebuilding and development strategies of the Sahel.
- 27- QIPs and PSPs must be specific, not only to the national context, but more importantly to the local context in which they are implemented and contribute to building the capacity of the local authorities and communities, especially in non-governed spaces, where the state is either weak or non-existent. They also need to be gender sensitive and should be implemented under the “Do No Harm” approach.
- 28- The newly-established AUC PCRD can have an important role in designing interventions that seek to engage local communities through a people-centered approach.

#### **D. Towards a Comprehensive, Integrated and Effective PCRD Approach in the Sahel: Achieving Strategic, Policy and Operational Coherence**

- 29- Participants reemphasized the importance on aligning donor-funded programs and projects with national and regional priorities and needs, for without strong national and regional engagement, progress in the Sahel region is not possible.
- 30- Another key challenge undermining the effectiveness of international assistance to the Sahel is the multiplicity of actors and initiatives addressing the region, often not pulling in the same direction. To complicate matters further, international and regional initiatives and strategies define the geographic scope of the Sahel differently, which can pose challenges for policy coherence and programmatic interventions.
- 31- As a result, there is an urgent need for a more coherent, integrated and coordinated approach by all actors involved, aimed at addressing the long-term needs and priorities identified by countries of the region. The newly-launched UN Support Plan for the Sahel region provides a good platform for aligning regional and international engagements with the actual needs of the Sahel on the

strategic and policy level. On the programmatic level, participants underscored the importance of achieving an efficient division of labor between the various actors on the ground, based on joint planning and leveraging the comparative advantage of various actors.

- 32- Participants also highlighted the need for flexible tools that respond quickly to the emerging needs on the ground, while addressing the security-development nexus by means of innovative projects. Furthermore, partners should target their interventions to local populations in fragile zones.
- 33- Some participants highlighted that the current levels of donor commitment/availability of funds should not be taken for granted, and casted doubts that future funding will be at the same levels available as today. As a result, the imperative for policy coherence and programmatic coordination will become even pressing.
- 34- While the specific national context varies from one country to another, thus requiring tailored approaches, a regional approach to cross-border challenges should not be confined to military and security cooperation. Coordination must be enhanced among various actors, to avoid duplication of efforts and wasting scarce resources.

## **E. Financing PCRDR Operationalization: Partnerships for Sustaining Peace**

- 35- It is crucial to ensure a paradigm shift in the approach taken towards defining and reporting on the challenges facing the Sahel and the threats posed by the status quo. There is a need to introduce a more positive narrative that seeks to highlight the progress witnessed in the region in democratization, its wealth in natural resources and long-term investment returns in human and economic development. In this connection, engaging national and international private sectors in PCRDR efforts was particularly emphasized.
- 36- There is a critical need to identify and map state/community capacity gaps in order to prioritize resource mobilization efforts to fill these gaps. To this end, it is critical to identify innovative ways to finance PCRDR programs, taking into consideration the absorption capacity of the governments and local communities in the Sahel region. For example, targeted pilot projects could be designed and upscaled as they prove effectiveness, instead of conceiving large projects that require enormous advance investments.
- 37- Future PCRDR funding modalities should reflect lessons learnt from past experiences, including shortage of funds, conditionalities, political/strategic linkages, misleading and non-fulfillment of commitments, fragmentation, overlap and duplication of projects.



- 38- There is an urgent need to mobilize local African resources to meet the challenges of the presumed lack of funds so as to diversify the sources of funding and build greater ownership within the Continent. In this regard, participants stressed the importance of reactivating the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) as a platform to find African solutions for African problems with focus on in-kind contributions, technical support, capacity building, knowledge and best practices sharing, as well as trilateral cooperation involving African-international partnerships in PCRDR projects.
- 39- The AUC PCRDR can contribute to resource mobilization efforts for PCRDR programs by identifying avenues for more predictable and sustainable funding through partnerships, resource mapping exercises and private sector engagement.

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