



“TAKING STOCK OF PAST EXPERIENCES TOWARDS FURTHER STRENGTHENING COORDINATION”

REPORT OF THE A3 RETREAT



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE AFRICAN
UNION TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

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Introduction and opening:

1. The African Union Permanent Observer mission to the United Nations (AUPOM) organized the retreat of the African members (A3) of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), on 08 February 2023, at the AUPOM's premises. The retreat, held under the theme "*Taking stock of past experiences towards further strengthening coordination*", was attended by Amb. Michel Xavier Biang, Permanent Representative of Gabon, Amb. Harold Adlai Agyeman, Permanent Representative of Ghana, Amb. Pedro Comisário, Permanent Representative of Mozambique, Amb. Martin Kimani, Permanent Representative of Kenya, and Amb. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, AU Permanent Observer to the UN.
2. Amb. Adeoye Bankole, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security also joined virtually. (The integral list of participants is attached as Annex to this report).
3. This year's A3 retreat was held as per the practice established since 2020 and in line with the AUPOM's role to support the A3 in terms of strengthening their coordination and ensuring the continuity of this crucial mechanism (A3). Additionally, the annual retreat provided an opportunity for the newly elected member, Mozambique, to learn from the experience of the outgoing and incumbent A3 members, characterized by frank and constructive discussions.
4. The mini retreat was also an occasion to exchange views on contemporary peace and security issues on the Continent as they relate to the agenda of the UN Security Council and the nexus between Peace, Security, and Development within the context of emerging Security threats. It also discussed opportunities and challenges for the A3 with respect to discharging its African mandate and explore avenues to promote greater continuity between incoming and outgoing elected African Member States to the UN Security Council, including through lessons learned and best practices
5. Furthermore, the coordination between the A3 and Addis-Ababa represented an important part of the discussions by considering best ways and means of strengthening this coordination under the spirit of the high-level Seminar on peace and security in Africa "Oran process", held annually in Oran (Algeria) at the Ministerial level.

Opening Session

6. In his opening remarks, the PR of Gabon, current A3 Coordinator, commended the efforts deployed by Commissioner Adeoye Bankole to enhance the coordination between the A3 in New York and the AU, particularly through the AU PSC. He also praised the continued support provided by Amb. Fatima Kyari Mohammed and her team to the A3 in all aspects and reiterated the need to strengthen the AU Observer Mission, in order to be more equipped to carry out its secretariat role to the A3 as well as the wider African Group.
7. He indicated that the A3 should not be reduced to a reservoir of votes and subjected to the international agenda but should rather be able to shape it according to Africa's strategic interests and its peoples' aspirations for security, dignity and prosperity.

Session 1: Outcomes of the A3 Retreat 2022: Review and Discussions:

8. The discussions during this Session focused on recommendations made from the last A3 retreat, held in March 2022, with an emphasis on reviewing commitments, strengthening coordination of the group, and ensuring continuity building on current achievements to date. It also provided an opportunity to discuss ways and means to reinforce A3 institutional memory with the support of the AU Permanent Observer Mission as well as expectations of the A3 members.
9. Amb. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, AU Permanent Observer to the UN, presented the outcomes of the aforementioned retreat. In her presentation, the AU Permanent Observer recalled that the previous retreat was marked by the participation of the delegations of Niger and Tunisia as outgoing members and Kenya, Gabon and Ghana as incumbents, Saint Vincent and Grenadines (SVG) as A3+1, as well as briefers from the UN Security Council Affairs Division DPPA/SCAD. The AU was represented during the previous retreat by H.E Amb. Adeoye Bankole, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and the Special Representative of the AUC Chairperson for Mali and Sahel (MISAHEL), H.E Mr. Maman Sambo Sidikou. The discussions were held around three (03) sessions and focused on the following elements:
 10. First, the progress in terms of coordination within the A3 group as well as the coordination with other members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) was noted. The same retreat underlined the importance of the ad hoc working group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, particularly, in term of coordination with the AUPSC.
 11. Second, the A3 have been proactive on multiple topics such as the UNSC reform, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and silencing the Guns. The role of the A3 could be further strengthened through trainings as they join the Council.
 12. Third, Penholdership and co-penholdership on African files and thematic issues has been encouraged by the participants to the A3 retreat. They further encouraged A3 chairing the subsidiary organs of the UNSC including sanction committees and thematic Committees.
 13. The success of the idea of “A3+” was further noted while underlining the need to explore new opportunities for alliances with members among the E10. They noted that the future of “A3+” lies with new mechanisms within the Security Council and should be bolstered outside the Council in order to advocate for African Solutions to African Challenges. Also, the last year’s meeting stressed on the importance of joint field missions between the AUPSC and the UNSC while emphasizing that any other approach than including all PSC members is not feasible.
 14. On the AU-UN partnership, the previous retreat noted with satisfaction the progress made on this chapter as demonstrated through the sustainability of PSC-UNSC Annual Consultative meetings. The institutional level of this partnership is also essential in coordinating policies and approaches on the ground while noting that this institutional partnership can be influenced by Member States positions and operational gaps between the AU and the UN missions deployed throughout the continent.

15. Regarding the state of African peace and security files on the UNSC Agenda, the meeting noted the responsibility of the UNSC in ensuring access to UN assessed contributions for AU led Peace support operations and investing in the protection of civilians, peacebuilding and peacemaking in Africa.
16. The crisis in Ukraine was also emphasized noting its potential for massive consequences on the African files within the Council and the risk of priorities shifting. On sanctions, the meeting pointed the need to avoid unintended humanitarian and socio-economic impacts on sovereign countries.
17. During the wrap-up session, an emphasis was put on the need for the A3 to improve their relations with the UN secretariat. Also, the role of the African Group in New York as a support to the A3 and the AUPSC-UNSC was underlined.

Session 2: Strengthening the coordination with Addis-Ababa:

18. The interactions under this session were preceded by a presentation made remotely by H.E Commissioner Bankole Adeoye, through which he set the tone for the discussions by underscoring the ensuing elements:
19. The critical need for the A3 to maintain their unity and to keep working towards scaling up their coordination level in view of elevating Africa's voice within the UNSC. The AU has always backed all projects aiming to strengthen A3's unity as translated through the Oran Process.
20. The A3 are encouraged to intensify their engagements with other Council members for the promotion of African positions by taking as a reference, the UNSC resolution 2457 (2019) supporting AU's initiative for Silencing the Guns in Africa. These engagements need also to defend the AU's position regarding the conduct of joint field missions with the UNSC to include all PSC members.
21. To this end, a coordination mechanism will be put in place in order to lay the foundations for a constant and fluid coordination between the AU PSC and the A3. The experts of the AUPSC and the A3 are expected to meet in March 2023 to consider the document.
22. Furthermore, the A3 are called to take into consideration the following core issues during the year 2023:

First : The AU would finalize a consensus paper on predictable, Adequate and sustainable financing for AU Peace and Security Activities. This document has been already endorsed by the PSC and should be adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State during its upcoming ordinary session.

The paper outlines three (03) financial models for the AU Led PSOs financing, namely :

- UN Assessed contribution through the UN Support Office (Full)
- UN Assessed contributions for the hybrid mission model (Hybrid)
- UN Assessed contributions in support of sub-regional Peace Support Operations

Second : there is a need to negotiate and to keep exploring options in view of finding a solution to the financing issue for ATMIS in Somalia. In this connection, Commissioner Bankole informed the

meeting that he is planning for a mission to New York and Washington D.C to hold jointly with USG-DPPA Rosemary Di Carlo the second round of the roadshow for raising funds for ATMIS.

The resolution 2670 (2022) addressed the issue of troops draw-down after the extension of the phase 1 of the ATMIS CONOPs. However, the issue of resources still pending, complicates the ATMIS mission on the ground, given that troops deployed on the ground have not been paid for a long period of time, thus making the implementation of resolution 2670 an impossible task.

Third : On the new Agenda for Peace, the A3 are called to contribute substantively to ensure that Africa's voice will be heard by advocating the African common position regarding the UNSC reform to allocate permanent seats and additional non-permanent seats to Africa. The openness shown by the USA and UK on this file should be seen as an opportunity to advance Africa's agenda.

- 23.** Also, Commissioner Bankole informed the A3 on the designation by the AU Commission Chairperson of Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas as the new AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa and conveyed to them the AU High Representative's readiness to engage regularly with them on different relating to his mandate.
- 24.** During the discussions that followed the presentation made by Commissioner Adeoye Bankole, the meeting noted the critical need for enhancing the coordination between the A3 and Addis-Ababa through the Peace and Security Council (PSC), and the AU Commission, Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), in the objective of strengthening and guiding the A3 coordination.
- 25.** The practice of having regular engagements between the A3 and Commissioner Bankole was welcomed by the meeting with calls for its enhancement to strengthen the coordination with Addis-Ababa on different files in the Council. In this regard, it was recommended that the upcoming visit of Commissioner Bankole to New York to conduct the second round of the Roadshow on ATMIS financing, should be used to brief the A3 on the outcomes of the February 2023 AU Summit.
- 26.** The meeting also underscored the importance of having prior pronouncements and positions by the AU on different files under the consideration of the UNSC in order to contribute to shaping the A3 positions and joint statements. Such an approach would contribute considerably to the promotion of African solutions and would strengthen the A3's work and role vis-à-vis the UNSC membership.
- 27.** Regarding the joint field missions to be undertaken by the UNSC and the AUPSC to African countries affected by conflicts, the meeting reiterated the position to advocate for a full representation of the PSC membership during these missions and to explore other possibilities of field missions that the A3 could undertake jointly with the PSC during the current year.
- 28.** On the same topic, the meeting reaffirmed the importance of deepening reflections on the role of the African Group in New York in supporting the A3 and the UNSC-AUPSC partnership, and promoting the AU positions.

29. The importance of information sharing between the A3 and the AU Commission, represented in New York by the AUPOM, has been underlined during the discussions, in view of avoiding incoherence or inconsistency in terms of positions on African files during interactions with partners. In this regard, the meeting underscored the need of regular engagements between the A3 and the AUPOM to provide updates on different files.
30. Under the same chapter of discussions, the meeting pointed out the necessity of having a common conceptualization of conflict dynamics to determine the perception angle of the conflict and the way forward in terms of its resolution.
31. Concerning the AU flagship project of silencing the guns in 2030, the A3 expressed their full readiness to engage with the newly appointed AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns, Dr Ibn Chambas, in view of promoting the AU efforts on this critical chapter.
32. Regarding the UNSC reform, the meeting stressed on the need to advance the reform agenda as envisioned by the AU by taking profit from the new developments in the IGN at the level of several regional groups and member States, including the P5, who showed support to the African common position.

Session 3: The A3 within the UN Security Council during the year 2022: capturing lessons learned and strategizing:

33. As an outgoing member of the UNSC and the A3, Amb. Martin Kimani, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN, made a presentation on Kenya's experience while recalling that the previous year's retreat took place in the wake of the war in Ukraine.
34. He added that this key development in international affairs influenced directly the work of the Council which convened at least 46 formal meetings on the situation in Ukraine relegating African files to not being the most dominant on the Council's agenda. On this last point, Amb. Kimani brought the interrogation on how the A3 should approach the dominance of African files in the Council.
35. He noted the situation in Ukraine divided the Council and encouraged the creation of alliances, which created new opportunities for the A3 to defend their positions even beyond African files.
36. Summarizing the progress and challenges experienced by the A3 in 2022, he indicated that the A3 provided leadership in seeking robust solutions to conflicts situations in Africa. In this connection, he added that the A3 group was the de facto penholder on several African files by being first consulted before drafting any outcome document.
37. Regarding sanctions, the A3 was able to realize breakthroughs on pushing back on the application of sanctions on African countries. The work of the A3 on this crucial file was informed by positions adopted by the AU and sub-regional organizations.

- 38.** On the chapter of AU-UN Cooperation, the presenter indicated that the A3 contributed to strengthening this partnership, particularly through the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and that the A3 was able to participate positively to the transition from AMISOM to ATMIS and the improvements of UN peacekeeping mandates.
- 39.** On Climate and security Agenda, the PR of Kenya lauded the A3 contribution to sustain the advocacy on this theme while indicating that this file was particularly contentious. He further indicated that in 2022, the A3 infused Peacebuilding language into the Council’s outcome documents and championed peoples of African descent. On this last point, he mentioned that the Haiti file was dealt with as almost an African one while recalling the adoption of Resolution 2653 on Haiti sanctions considering it as a step in the right direction.
- 40.** In the spirit of the lessons learned exercise, the following recommendations to further foster the A3 unity were made:
- Continued capacity building by establishing mechanisms to capitalize the potential of outgoing members in view of building a strong A3 bloc.
 - Preparation of incoming members by developing African training programs for African incoming members of the Council. Also, retaining experts of outgoing members to gain from their experience could be a valid option in addition to building the capacity of the AUPOM.
 - Pronouncing joints statements on African and non-African files and taking joint initiatives inside the Council such as organizing events, informal meetings and making Joint stakeouts and press remarks.
 - Intensifying engagements among the A3 apart from the monthly coordination meetings, and considering the organization of High-level A3 meetings at the level of Ministers and Heads of State and Government.
- 41.** The presentation contributed in shaping the discussions around the 2022 journey within the UNSC and the perspectives for the months to come. In this regard, the meeting underscored that the A3 needed to maintain the momentum created during the recent years on different files in view of the upcoming *rendez-vous*.
- 42.** On this last note, the meeting stressed on the importance of intensifying the exchanges for a more enhanced coordination in view of the discussions regarding the access to UN assessed contributions for the AU led PSOs financing. The meeting noted in this connection that there are many expectations from the A3 to play a leading role on this file, particularly in terms of drafting a Council’s product to reflect Africa’s aspirations and the AU’s position as outlined in the consensus paper that should adopt the AU Assembly.
- 43.** The meeting noted the challenges that the A3 faced in certain situations due to the divergence of their national positions. Thus, the meeting called for a more enhanced coordination with the contribution of the AU to avoid prejudicial differences on the unity of the group.

44. In the same vein, the meeting evoked the matter of Penholdership by calling for a proactive posture of the A3 to demonstrate leadership on African files while noting that Penholdership is directly linked to the resources of the concerned Permanent missions and requires commitments, responsibility and technical capacities from the A3. On the same topic, the meeting encouraged co-penholdership arrangements while mentioning that they could be technically complicated especially in cases where the co-penholders have divergent opinions.
45. On A3 pronouncements in the Council, the meeting welcomed the expansion of the Joint Statements to Syria and Colombia, and recommended to consider an expansion to additional files like Yemen, Lebanon and Afghanistan.
46. With regards to the matter of ensuring A3 continuity, the meeting discussed the need to establish an institutional memory of the A3 with the assistance of the AUPOM by considering to put in place an archiving structure. Such a structure would contribute in ensuring a smooth transition between outgoing and incoming members, the meeting mentioned while adding that the aim of the A3 continuity and establishing an institutional memory would be in fine to reach a stage of having a permanent African representation within the UNSC through the A3.
47. Concerning the “A3+”, the meeting noted that the A3 should capitalize on the positive experience during Saint Vincent and Grenadines (SVG) membership, during which the A3+1 had an impact on the work of the UNSC, and stressed on the necessity to maintain a regular interaction with CARICOM countries. The meeting reiterated the call to keep exploring the avenues towards identifying council members who could join the “A3+”. In this regard, the meeting recommended the formalization of a clear framework for the “A3+” to contribute to the promotion of this mechanism.
48. On the file of UN sanctions imposed on African countries, the meeting welcomed the achievements realized in 2022, notably on CAR and DRC files, and called for maintaining the consultations with the concerned African countries in order to reflect their views and positions on UNSC related products. They also stressed on the importance to adapt the sanctions to the realities and developments on the ground and to avoid their humanitarian effects.
49. In the same vein, the meeting noted the importance of adopting a more realistic and coordinated approach while consulting the African countries under sanctions to preserve the A3 from polarization within the Council.
50. Furthermore, the meeting fully supported the proposal of organizing A3 meetings at the level of heads of State, on the margins of UN General Assembly sessions, AU Summits or in one of the A3 members’ capitals.

Conclusion - Wrap-up session:

51. While concluding the works of this year's retreat, the participants expressed their appreciation for the support provided by the AUPOM in convening the retreat and highlighted the following key recommendations:

- The progress reached in terms of A3 coordination is welcomed and needs to be further sustained and expanded to additional files within the Council.
- The regular consultations between the A3 and the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security should be maintained and held more frequently, particularly on priority files such as the financing of AU led PSOs;
- Timely pronouncements and expression of positions by the AU on African files examined by the UNSC are highly encouraged to guide the A3's action within the Council;
- The A3 must advocate, within the UNSC, the organization of UNSC-PSC joint field missions with the participation of the full PSC membership;
- Developing African Capacity building programs for A3 experts has to be among the priorities of the AUC and current and future African members in the Council in view of taking the lead on African files and expanding Africa's influence in the Council by holding the pen and undertaking joint initiatives;
- The A3 and the AUPOM have to maintain regular consultations at different levels and prioritize information sharing to ensure coherent positions and pronouncements in different events and meetings in which they participate.
- The A3 and the AUPOM should continue their efforts towards establishing an institutional memory of the group and develop a structure for archiving A3 Documents and handing over between incoming and outgoing members;
- The A3 should continue monitoring the trends within the Council to identify potential "A3+" members while maintaining the interaction with CARICOM members to build on the positive experience with SVG.
- The A3 should have regular consultations with the African Group members in New York to garner their support, particularly on the file of UNSC reform to advance the African Agenda on the matter.
- The A3 should enhance the practice of consulting the African countries concerned by an agenda item under the consideration of the Council in order to reflect their views and positions.
- The A3 should establish the practice of holding meetings at the level of heads of state on the margins of multilateral events or in one of the A3 members' capital.

Annex

A3 Retreat

“Taking stock of past experiences towards further strengthening coordination”

08 February 2023, 10 :00am – 02:00pm

List of Participants

| Participants | Delegation |
|--|---|
| 1. Amb. Michel Xavier Biang (PR) | Gabon |
| 2. Mrs. Lilly Stella Ngyema Ndong (DPR / PC) | |
| 3. Mrs. Rita Barreau | |
| 4. Mrs Lia Bouanga | |
| 5. Amb. Harold Adlai Agyeman (PR) | Ghana |
| 6. Mrs Carolyn Oppong-Ntri (DPR) | |
| 7. Mr Felix Boateng (PC) | |
| 8. Mrs Nana Akua Barnor | |
| 9. Amb. Pedro Commisario (PR) | Mozambique |
| 10. Dr. Martins Kumanga (DPR) | |
| 11. Mr Antonio Bambissa (PC) | |
| 12. Ms Paulina Abdala (DPC) | |
| 13. Amb. Martin Kimani (PR) | Kenya |
| 14. Mr Gideon Kinuthia (DPC) | |
| 15. Eva Nthoki | |
| 16. Commissioner Bankole Adeoye | AU / PAPS (Remotely) |
| 17. Amb. Fatima Kyari Mohammed (PR) | AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN |
| 18. Mr Mohammed Walid ALEM | = |
| 19. Mr Salem Matug | = |
| 20. Mrs Fatou Sombie | = |
| 21. Mr Mohammed Abubakar Bagobiri | = |
| 22. Mrs Oumou Daou Koumoue | = |
| 23. Mrs Haneefah Adamu | = |
| 24. Mrs Nadia Baye | = |
| 25. Mirriam Omala Gauvin | = |
| 26. Antoine Zoundi | Interpreter |