



Governance, Peace & Security

Newsletter

Introduction

In accordance with Article 3d of the COMESA Treaty, the GPS Unit continued to make progress towards promoting peace, security and stability in the region. This newsletter provides an overview and documents a series of implemented activities in the third (Q3) quarter of 2024 and the accompanying achievements. The following thematic areas are discussed:

1. **Children Affected by Armed Conflict**
2. **Climate Change, Peace and Security**
3. **Early Warning**
4. **Governance and Democracy**
5. **Partnership and Collaboration**
6. **Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development**
7. **Transnational Organised Crimes**

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CAAC SENSITISATION WORKSHOP:

29th JULY – 1th AUGUST 2024

As part of its efforts to raise awareness on the Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda in the region, COMESA in collaboration with Save the Children ESARO convened a sensitisation workshop for the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) and Civil Society Actors. The workshop was held in Kampala, Uganda. It brought together 47 participants drawn from the Eastern and Northern Africa regions. The objective of the workshop was threefold :

- i. Exchanging experiences on how civil society actors and National Human Rights Institutions contribute towards ensuring the protection of children affected by armed conflict in the COMESA region.
- ii. Discussing challenges and opportunities in

holding states accountable to their human rights obligations of protecting, respecting and fulfilling children's rights in conflict situations.

- iii. Discussing opportunities for engagement among CSOs, NHRIs, and COMESA in mainstreaming the CAAC agenda in the region and cooperation with regional human rights mechanisms such as the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC).

To encapsulate the outcome of the workshop, the following recommendations were submitted;



Improving the youths' level of understanding of NDCs, as well as including youth and children representatives at the centre of climate change consultations.



Embedding issues of the environment in the educational curriculum.



Developing a formal structure to ensure youth and children participation in climate-related forums.



Revision of national climate plans by policymakers to ensure ambitious yet realistic objectives are captured and support for youth-led solutions is given.

REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF YOUTH (RCOY) ON CLIMATE CHANGE, SOUTHERN AFRICA:



As part of its efforts to galvanize youth engagement in the climate change discourse, COMESA_GPS, in collaboration with a consortium of institutions from the Southern Africa region, UNICEF, UNDP and WWF, convened a Regional Conference of Youth on Climate Change for the Southern Africa from 24 – 26 September 2024 in Lusaka, Zambia. The conference was attended by 350 participants including youth-led CSOs, government officials and representatives from Southern Africa civil society organisations. The conference was held in response to the 18th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held on 6th June 2023, which urged COMESA Member States to hasten their efforts towards strengthening their national disaster response and mitigation structures, as well as encouraged COMESA to continue supporting Member States in enhancing their preparedness and resilience to climate change induced disasters. The conference aimed to achieve the following objectives:-

- i. Facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity-building among youth on various thematic areas including innovation, climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- ii. Foster collaboration and partnerships among youth and build synergy and collective action towards youth innovation and shared climate goals.
- iii. Advocate for youth inclusion in policy formulation and decision-making processes at various levels.
- iv. Develop a roadmap for youth collective action that will galvanize youth efforts in the region.

A key outcome of the conference was a call for action by the youth that was highlighted in a final communique. Additional recommendations that will be presented in COP29 were also highlighted as follows:



Improving the youths' level of understanding of NDCs, as well as including youth and children representatives at the centre of climate change consultations.



Embedding issues of the environment in the educational curriculum.



Developing a formal structure to ensure youth and children participation in climate-related forums.



Revision of national climate plans by policymakers to ensure ambitious yet realistic objectives are captured and support for youth-led solutions is given.



TRAINING OF COMWARN ANALYSTS TO INCLUDE UTILISATION OF GEO-SPATIAL ANALYSIS ON EARLY WARNING

As part of the COMESA_GPS' efforts to reinforce and interconnect with the existing continental and regional Early Warning Systems (EWS), two conflict analysts from COMESA participated in a training on Humanitarian Early Warning Analysis in Cape Town, South Africa, with the objective of enhancing the capacity of the Analysts on political and humanitarian early warning analysis.

The training course, delivered in the form of lectures and group work, was oriented towards the following goals:

- i. The development of meta-cognitive skills.
- ii. Drawing progressing Afrocentric insights from concrete data which is normally summarized as critical thinking.

The topics covered included - the processes of thinking, cognitive bias development and thinking conceptually; integrating big-data into humanitarian security analysis; principles of, and approaches to Early Warning analysis; developing early warning systems; locating analysis within the international peacekeeping and humanitarian system and decision-making process; analytic methods including red teaming, indicator analysis and hypothesis development, complex-analytic scenarios. The next frontier is the incorporation of AI in early warning.



Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) Planning Meeting for the Republic of Malawi

COUNTRY STRUCTURAL VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT (CSVRA) PLANNING MEETING FOR THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

In the same quarter, the Governance Peace and Security Unit prioritized supporting countries in their journey towards understanding and mitigating vulnerabilities and leveraging on their resilience factors, Malawi volunteered to undergo the Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilient Assessment (CSVRA) process becoming the second country in the COMESA region and the fourth in

Africa. To support the Malawi CSVRA process, COMESA held a planning meeting from 16th – 18th September 2024 in Lilongwe, Malawi with the objective to brief the stakeholders on the key stages of the CSVRA process and the development of a comprehensive roadmap with timelines for implementation. The workshop was attended by members of the Malawi SVA Bureau.

TRAINING OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS IN THE EAST AFRICA AND THE HORN OF AFRICA REGIONS ON EARLY WARNING TOOLS:

1ST – 2ND AUGUST 2024



The Training of Civil Society Actors in the East Africa and the Horn of Africa Regions on Early Warning Tools

COMESA in collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) organised a training workshop for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from the East and Horn of Africa regions, on the COMESA and African Union (AU) early warning tools and methodologies. The meeting was held from 1st to 2nd August 2024 in Kampala, Uganda and attended by 28 participants from CSOs and National Human Rights Institutes (NHRIs) from Burundi, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda. The training sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Strengthen COMWARN's customised utility and versatility on structural and operational early warning in different operational environments.
- ii. Build capacities of CSOs and National Human Rights Institute (NHRIs) on conflict analysis, report-writing and early warning including production of knowledge products to enhance sustainability.
- iii. Deliberate on strategies for CSOs to enhance their role in early warning particularly in structural conflict prevention at both regional and national levels.

Two major outcomes emerged as a result of this training:



1. Key areas of commonality for programme implementation were identified.



2. The network of CSOs in the COMESA region was strengthened. This was evidenced by the CSOs forming a WhatsApp group.



The Joint AU-COMESA Election Observation Team deployed to the Rwanda Elections

JOINT AU-COMESA ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION TO THE 2024 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

In the spirit of promoting good governance, democracy, peace and security in its Member States, COMESA in partnership with the African Union conducted a joint AU-COMESA Election Observer Mission (EOM) to observe the Republic of Rwanda’s General Elections. This followed an invitation by the Government of Rwanda. For more context, the AU-COMESA EOM derived its mandate from the principles and standards for conducting democratic elections in Africa, which are enshrined in the 2007 Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. The AU-COMESA EOM was led by is Excellency Jorge Carlos

De Almeida the Former President of Cabo Verde and deputised by Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda and a member of the COMESA Committee of Elders. The joint mission deployed 48 Short Term Observers drawn from the AU, Pan-African Parliament, Election Management Bodies, and CSOs from 17 African states.

The joint AU-COMESA EOM made several crucial findings including the following:

<p>11 political parties registered for the elections and the approved candidates included Paul Kagame, Frank Habineza and Philippe Mpayimana.</p>	<p>9,071,157 voters registeted to vote. 53% were female, 47% were male, and 42% were youth. Over 99% of the registered voters turned out to cast their vote.</p>	<p>A Constitutional review process undertaken prior to the election provides for a simple majority voting system and a presidential election term of five years, renewable once.</p>	<p>2,591 polling stations were set up, including in hospitals and medical centres. 160 polling stations were set up in 70 countrieis to facilitate diaspora voting.</p>
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The Joint Mission’s recommendations included the following:

<p>The Government of Rwanda should make provisions for early voting for NEC staff, media and security personnel working on election day.</p>	<p>The NEC should provide election-related information in a timely manner in all official languages to stakeholders and international observers.</p>
<p>Political parties should train and deploy party agents to cover more polling centres nationwide for the purpose of enhanced transparency.</p>	<p>e Rwanda Governance Board ought to continue facilitating inclusive dialogue in the electoral and political system.</p>

6TH MID-YEAR COORDINATION MEETING (MYCM) OF THE AU AND RECs



6th Mid-Year Coordination Meeting in Accra, Ghana

The 6th Mid-Year Coordination Meeting was held in Accra, Ghana, from 16th to 21st July 2024. The meeting reviewed modalities of strengthening coordination between the AU and RECs. On the sidelines of the MYCM, the African Governance Architecture and the African Peace and Security Architecture Platform held its meeting and discussed programmatic issues including the next phase of AGA-APSA. Key outcomes included :



A Joint 5-year (2025-2030) roadmap was agreed upon by AGA-APSA Platform Members.



AGA-APSA Platform agreed to deepen engagement with other policy organs of the AU and AU entities such as the AfCFTA and AUCDC.



The Platform agreed on the immediate need to increase the capacity of the AGA-APSA Secretariat to increase effectiveness.

VISIBILITY AND ONLINE PRESENCE

The Governance, Peace, and Security Unit focuses on publicising its initiatives and activities through its social media platforms in a bid to keep the Members States and other stakeholders well-informed. During the third quarter of 2024, the number of Twitter (X) followers grew from 1,026 to over 1,100. This steady growth, reflects the consistency and effectiveness of the outreach and engagement strategies, highlighting the growing public's interest in and support for GPS program activities. The Unit aims to continue leveraging on social media platforms such as (X) to enhance engagement and information sharing with stakeholders.



