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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

1097<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

4 AUGUST 2022

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1097.1 (2022)

**COMMUNIQUE**



## **COMMUNIQUE**

**Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1097<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 4 August 2022, on Emerging Technologies and New Media: Impact on Democratic Governance, Peace and Security in Africa.**

The Peace and Security Council,

***Recalling*** the entire Preamble of the AU Constitutive Act and the provisions of Article 3 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union;

***Also recalling*** Decision [[Assembly/AU/Dec.529\(XXIII\)](#)] of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in June 2014 which adopted the African Union Convention on Cyberspace Security and Protection of Personal Data; as well as Executive Council Decision [EX.CL/Dec.1074 (XXXVI)] on the Report of the Third Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committees on Communication and ICT that endorsed the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (DTS) and Decision with reference [EX.CL/Dec.1144 (XL)] on the report of Fourth Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committees on Communication and ICT that endorsed the AU Data Policy Framework and Interoperability framework for Digital identity document (ID);

***Acknowledging*** the dual use and multifaceted benefits of emerging technologies and new media in the promotion of democratic and good governance, as well as peace, security and sustainable development in Africa, as well as the general well-being of African people;

***Deeply concerned*** about the misuse and abuse of emerging technologies and new media for malicious intents and purposes, including cyber-attacks, propagation of fake news, extremist ideologies and hate speech, which threaten democratic and good governance, peace and security in Africa; and ***reiterating*** the right of the State to regulate the use of emerging technologies and new media;

***Also noting*** the increasing influence of Big Tech Companies that rely on Business Models based on massive collection and processing of data, which may affect national economies, peace and security in the Member States;

***Recognizing the urgent need*** for Africa to develop the necessary digital infrastructure and data governance systems to ensure ethical and responsible use of data being generated by Government institutions, industries and citizens;

***Committed*** to creating conducive conditions for harnessing the transformative potential of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (4IR) for the realization of the AU Vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena; as well as the AU Agenda 2063 Aspirations and its Ten-Year Implementation Plan;

***Noting*** the opening statement by H.E. Ambassador Jainaba Jagne, Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the AU as the PSC Chairperson for the month of August 2022 and the statement by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security; ***also noting*** the presentations by Professor Edward Maloka, Chief Executive Officer, African Peer Review Mechanism; Ms. Souhila Amazouz, Senior Policy Officer/Information Society Division, AU Department of Energy and Infrastructure; Dr. Thompson Chengeta- Associate Professor of International Law and Ethics of Artificial Intelligence at the Centre for Human Rights, University of

Pretoria; and by Ms. Bitania Tadesse, Director of Programmes, AMANI Africa Media and Research Services; and

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council,

1. ***Underlines the need*** for emerging technologies and new media to be developed and used in full compliance with national and international law, both in the physical and virtual space, and in accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolution A/76/136 adopted on 22 December 2018, AU Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention), the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030), the AU Data Policy Framework and the AU Interoperability Framework for Digital ID;
2. ***Reiterates the call on*** the AU Commission to work towards increasing preparedness and awareness of AU Member States on security issues surrounding the use of emerging technologies and new media, while underscoring the essence for the AU Commission and the Member States to develop a strategic approach to implement the UN norms on responsible state behaviour in cyberspace at regional and continental levels, in order to ensure the security and sustainability of Africa digital space;
3. ***Re-emphasizes the importance*** of mainstreaming cybersecurity in all AU peace and security mechanisms, as well as of strengthening cooperation at technical, policy and operational levels among the Member States, in order to mitigate against the risks of malicious use of emerging technologies and new media;
4. ***Encourages*** all Member States, which have not yet done so, to expedite the signature and ratification of the Malabo Convention, as well as to develop a common approach to regulating digital platforms and a comprehensive Continental and forward-looking Cybersecurity Strategy that considers emerging technologies and new media with the participation of all concerned parties;
5. ***Reaffirms the imperative*** for the AU Commission to develop necessary frameworks for common values, standards and codes, and union-wide mechanisms focusing on the four domains, as they relate to technology and democratic governance, namely;
  - i) Promotion of information exchange on available technological capabilities for enhancing good democratic governance;
  - ii) Facilitation of multisectoral and transnational governance arrangements necessary for promoting technology transfers among the Member States;
  - iii) Development of mechanisms for tracking governance of regional and continental technology infrastructure and platforms; and

- iv) Reviewing the impact and implications of emerging technologies on democratic governance particularly in contexts of e-Governance and e-Government;

6. **Highlights the need** for the AU Commission to comprehensively and systematically address the immediate issues that arise from emerging technologies and new media, including the use of such emerging technologies and new media by actors engaged in terrorism and organized crime, the misuse of social media for propagation of hate, and the use of such technologies for surveillance, repression, censorship, online harassment and orchestrating cyber-attacks;

7. **Requests** the AU Commission, working in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), to effectively harness the advantages of emerging technologies and new media for enhancing the effectiveness of mediation, peacemaking and peace support operations; and in the same context, **encourages** the African Governance Platform to also harness the benefits of emerging technologies and the new media in promoting democratic governance and constitutionalism in Africa, including in early warning and in monitoring elections;

8. **Further requests** the AU Commission in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to undertake a comprehensive study on Emerging Technologies and New Media: Impact on Democratic Governance, Peace and Security in Africa, and the policy options available for harnessing the advantages and for effectively addressing the security threats associated with the use of these technologies and new media in Africa, based on available resources and to report back to Council;

9. **Urges** Member States to embrace a systematic integration and adaptation approach for optimal use of emerging technologies and new media in AU activities to promote democratic governance and the African peace and security agenda and **encourages** Member States to develop necessary systems and capabilities to mitigate and counter the negative impacts of misuse of emerging technologies and the new media;

10. **Also underscores the need** for continuous research on the interface between peace, security and democracy and emerging technologies to be carried out in an interdisciplinary manner, in order to ensure quick knowledge transfer among the academia, governments, and other sectors, including the telecommunications and media industries;

11. **Calls upon** Member States to adapt to the digital era by enacting necessary legislations for ensuring compliance of international law and international humanitarian law in the use of emerging technologies and the new media;

12. While noting the benefits of broad multi-stakeholder approach, **calls for** greater collaboration between member states, RECs/RMs, AUC and the private sector in promoting

the development and responsible use of emerging technologies and media, through capacity building and harmonization of laws and regulations; and

13. ***Decides*** to remain actively seized of the matter.