

## Virtual Pre-Tana Regional Multi-Stakeholders' Dialogue Emerging Technologies and their Impact on Peace and Security in Africa 14 September 2021|Virtual Conference (Zoom) Concept Note

### I. Introduction

The 10<sup>th</sup> Tana Forum will be held on the theme “Managing Security Threats: Building Resilience for the Africa We Want” from 25–29 October 2021 in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia. The Institute for Peace and Security Studies/IPSS/ with the Mission of Japan to the African Union is jointly organizing a Joint Virtual Multi stakeholders Pre-Tana forum on the topic: Emerging Technologies and their Impact on Peace and Security in Africa. The virtual session will be held on 14 September 2021.

### II. Background

The emergence of new technologies has created new opportunities in the areas of peace and security especially in conflict prevention, peace operations, peace building. New technologies have made it possible to collect data in crime and conflict enhancing the efficiency of early warning and response. Peace operations can now be implemented in asymmetric threat environment and monitoring and observation can be performed more efficiently as a result of this advancement. Similarly, they foster the peacebuilding efforts down to local level. In addition, changes in technology have always impacted theatres of war and peace. With such advancement comes the engagement of new technologies such as drones and other modern forms of hybrid warfare that introduces their own set of new challenges. They also carry the potential for adverse effects like the danger posed by the militarization of emerging technologies, especially if used in the context of terrorism. Moreover, cell phones and the Internet in addition to enhancing civic participation and empowerment are increasingly being employed to facilitate conflicts by serving as channel of communication, control public belief, raise awareness on new warfare techniques, documenting intelligence, and taking on cyber-attacks by Violent extremists, organized crime and gangs etc.

Just like the rest of the world, emerging technologies are becoming highly influential on the security and stability of African states. Among others, the rapid spread of the internet across the African continent has been heralded as a key driver of prosperity and a sign of the continent's technological coming of age. Nevertheless, the rapid advancement of technology especially that of the internet across Africa has its own downsides. In addition to the afore mentioned benefits and challenges, while 82 percent of the developed countries get access to internet in developed countries the percentage goes to 11 for Africa. Without the necessary infrastructure, gadgets, affordable internet, reliable power and unaffordable costs broadband internet access will remain out of reach for many low-income Africans living in rural areas. Such a digital divide poses its own question on governance. Moreover, the lack of cultural and behavioral changes towards such transformation along with lack of awareness on the impacts of ICT on peace and security and lack of ICT skills and support makes it more challenging.

As the advancement in technologies expand, their benefits and shortcomings foster areas of cooperation at the international level renewing and expanding existing partnerships. Such an opportunity also comes the challenge of African member states and institutions determining and integrating the role of new technologies in their policies, work and interactions with their partners. It is an exceptional illustration of harmony among all African states on the perception that the continents' peace and security boldly depends on the new technologies such as Information Communication Technology (ICTs) since the peace and conflict dynamics changed rapidly. This is indeed indebted a great deal to the commitment of many experts and senior officials in the African Union (AU), RECs/RMs, Member States and partners.

One fact remains crucial, the digital revolution's ultimate legacy will be determined not by technology, but by how it is used. African countries that take advantage of the opportunities and limit the risks inherent in emerging technology may achieve greater peace and stability. Yet many countries could be left behind. As the continent recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, African leaders face a choice between harnessing emerging technology to improve government effectiveness, increase transparency and foster inclusion, or as a tool of repression, division, and conflict.

It is with this background that Tana Forum Secretariat in partnership with the Mission of Japan to the African Union is organizing this multi-stakeholder pre-forum to debate and discuss the impact of technology on peace and security in Africa.

### III. Goals and Objectives

The proposed dialogue seeks to complement current and ongoing initiatives to benefit from current advancement of technologies and also manage threats posed peace and security in the continent governance. It will explore the challenges and opportunities the new technology avails to the African countries in the nexus of peace and security and recommend practical operable recommendations for the AU, Member States, RECs/RMs and other stakeholders working on the topic and related areas.

The specific objectives include:

- To expand the understanding of emerging technologies and to bolster discussion on their development and application.
- To identify practical lessons to be put in place for the maintenance of peace and stability in Africa;
- To recognize the various opportunities it avails and challenges in pauses to maintain peace and order to the AU, Member States and the continent;
- To increase awareness of the impact of technologies on peace and security and examine efforts to prevent and mitigate potential risks caused by their use;

### V. Expected Outputs

These include:

An outcomes document to be shared with peace, security and other stakeholders;  
Video recordings to be shared on IPSS and Tana Forum social media;  
Coverage of the dialogue proceedings on IPSS and Tana social media platforms;  
Virtual dialogue between States, RECs and the AU on the theme;  
Sustainable and practical policy recommendations targeting stakeholders.

## VI. Proposed Approach

The format of the dialogue will comprise of experts, political and technical consultations resulting in practical recommendations and networking opportunities for stakeholders working in the field of peace and security.

## VII. Participants Profile

Participants will include representatives from AU Member States, AUC, RECs/RMs, experts, youth organizations, women's networks, funding partners, development partners, representatives of foreign governments, research organizations, think tanks, academics as well as media.

## VIII. Date and Venue

The Joint Tana-Mission of Japan to the African Union Pre-Tana Multi-stakeholders forum will take place on 14 September 2021 via a virtual platform.

## IX. Resources

- Crisis Group: Africa's Peace and Security: The Pressures of COVID-19: May 6, 2021 available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/africas-peace-and-security-pressures-covid-19>
- Nathaniel Allen: The promises and perils of Africa's digital revolution: 11 March 2021: available at <https://www.brookings.edu/techstream/the-promises-and-perils-of-africas-digital-revolution/>
- Independent Commission on Multilateralism. April 2016. The Impact of New Technologies on Peace, Security and Development available at [https://www.icm2016.org/IMC/pdf/new\\_tech\\_paper.pdf](https://www.icm2016.org/IMC/pdf/new_tech_paper.pdf)
- International Peace Institute. May 2016: Exploring the impact of digital technology on conflict dynamics and peace operations. Available at <https://tech-blog.zif-berlin.org/exploring-impact-digital-technology-conflict-dynamics-and-peace-operations>
- Security Council Report: May 2021: Arria-formula Meeting on the Impact of Emerging Technologies on International Peace and Security available at <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2021/05/arria-formula-meeting-on-the-impact-of-emerging-technologies-on-international-peace-and-security.php>



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