

Concept-note

Post AU Seminar

36th AU Summit: Confronting Africa's security challenges?

**Hybrid Seminar: Sheraton Hotel, Addis Ababa and online
Thursday 23 February 2023 | 10h30 to 12h30 (East African Time)**

Background

As African leaders prepare for deliberations at the Thirty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, from 18 to 19 February 2023, a number of issues compete for their attention. The first comprise of global matters with enormous impacts on Africa's well-being such as the Russian-Ukraine crisis, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the global economic downturn, which has affected many developing economies, They are also grappling with insecurity in Africa following the outbreak of clashes in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and a generally precarious security landscape across the various regions of the continent, which is expected to occupy policy attention in 2023. Also crucial are key continental policy issues such as the financing of peace support operations, contestations around the chairship of the Union in 2023, challenges with the reform of the African Union and governance challenges, among others.

While not all the issues will make it onto the agenda of the Summit, the Summit is expected to consider reports and make deliberations on the Reform of the UN Security Council; Africa's response to the COVID-19 pandemic; Evaluation of the first 10 years of the AU's Agenda 2063; status of AU Reforms; the State of peace and security in Africa; and the theme of the year for 2023. As a result of these major issues, though the Summit is not expected to make any phenomenal decisions, the outcomes of the various deliberations will shape the nature and direction of Africa's response to challenges.

Aim of this Seminar

This seminar aims to discuss major outcomes of the Summit and their implications on Africa's policy response in 2023. Deliberations will centre on three aspects of the Summit's many deliberations – the theme of the year for 2023, the Chairship of the Union in 2023 and overview of decisions from the Summit. Given the theme of the year for 2023, "*Acceleration of AfCFTA Implementation*," the seminar will also reflect on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and what is expected in a year dedicated to its acceleration.

The seminar will, therefore, see to find answers to the following key questions:

- What are the priorities of Comoros as the AU chair in 2023?
- What are the key decisions and issues emerging from the AU Summit?
- What is the status of AU reforms and the impact functioning and effectiveness?
- What are the progress and challenges facing the implementation of the AfCFTA?

Target Audience

This seminar, being organised by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in collaboration with the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), will bring together participants made up of government officials, representatives from the African Union, ambassadors and embassy officials from various African countries, international agencies, policymakers, researchers, academia and civil society organisations to reflect on the issues above. Its outcome is to facilitate policy understanding and deliberations of the summit's outcomes.

Proposed Speakers:

1. H.E. Amb. Assoumani Youssouf Mondoha, Ambassador of the Union of Comoros to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union (TBC)
2. Joseph Atta-Mensah, Principal Policy Adviser, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Addis Ababa
3. Liesl Louw-Vaudran, Senior Adviser, International Crisis Group
4. Désiré Assogbavi, Francophone Africa Director, ONE Campaign.

Chair: Dr Andrews Atta-Asamoah, Head, African Peace and Security Governance Programme, Institute for Security Studies, Addis Ababa

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Agenda

10:00 – 10:30	Tea & Coffee
10:30 –10:35	Welcoming and opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dr. Fana Gebresenbet, Interim Director, Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)
10:35 –10:40	Introduction of speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dr Andrews Atta-Asamoah – Head, African Peace and Security Governance Programme, Institute for Security Studies, Addis Ababa
10:40 –10:55	Priorities of the Comoros as the chair of the African Union in 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ H.E. Amb. Assoumani Youssouf Mondoha, Ambassador of the Union of Comoros to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union (TBC)
10:55 – 11:05	Overview of AU Summit Decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Liesl Louw-Vaudran, Senior Adviser, International Crisis Group
11:05 – 11:15	Overview of AU Reforms and its effectiveness in tackling continental challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Désiré Assogbavi, Francophone Africa Director, ONE Campaign.
11:15 – 11:25	Achieving the Goals of the AfCFTA: Progress, Challenges and Way forward. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Joseph Atta-Mensah, Principal Policy Adviser, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Addis Ababa
11:25 – 12:25	Questions & Discussions
12:25 –12:30	Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dr Andrews Atta-Asamoah – Head, African Peace and Security Governance Programme, Institute for Security Studies, Addis Ababa