Operationalizing Conflict Prevention Under the Revised AU PCRD Framework

Date: 9 November 2026

Time: 3:00 – 5:00PM

Venue: PSC Chamber, Julius Nyerere Building, African Union Compound.

Concept Note

Background

This year marks the 20th anniversary of both the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) policy and the UN Peacebuilding Commission's inaugural session. The anniversaries are commemorated amidst unprecedented global and continental pressures with far-reaching impacts on the general population. Multilateral funding models are shifting, new security realities are emerging, and growing calls for African-led approaches to peace and security. These developments make it particularly important to examine how existing policy frameworks can better support prevention, recovery and the consolidation of peace.

At the centre of these developments is the newly revised AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy, which provides an important framework for addressing the drivers of conflict and supporting recovery in post-conflict contexts. Its relevance to prevention lies not only in responding to the consequences of conflict, but also in addressing structural conditions that increase the risk of renewed violence, including exclusion, institutional fragility and socio-economic marginalisation. The policy's emphasis on implementation, community-level engagement, and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus offers an entry point for connecting recovery efforts, with sustainable recovery and long-term societal resilience. Addressing the structural drivers of violence requires moving beyond short-term interventions toward proactive, sustained commitment at national, subnational, and local levels. Therefore, the discussion should distinguish the prevention of conflict recurrence in post-conflict settings from broader conflict prevention, while recognising the links between them.

Conflict and violence prevention must therefore be understood as a system of efforts designed to tackle multicausal threats and engage diverse stakeholders along a continuous spectrum. Dismantling traditional institutional siloes allows multi-sectoral initiatives to operate as an interconnected architecture. Such a system aligns multi-stakeholder action across all tiers of governance, systematically mitigating the root drivers of conflict to sustain peace over the long term.

A system for prevention is only as effective as its inclusivity. While national and subnational institutions provide a policy environment, genuine peace can only be sustained if it is built from the ground up through meaningful, inclusive participation. Inclusive governance ensures that risk and protective factors are accurately identified at subnational and local levels, fostering local

ownership and social cohesion. By grounding state-led architectures in inclusive participation, governments and partners can turn political commitments into operational, community-driven prevention mechanisms.

Community-led prevention and peacebuilding practices have demonstrated effectiveness. Many operate under active threat, with shrinking operational space and without reliable funding. Yet they remain systematically disconnected from national prevention systems and continental policy processes that could institutionalise and resource them. The revised PCRD Policy acknowledges the centrality of local actors and offers structural entry points. The mechanisms to carry community practice and community-identified risks into national and continental policy, however, remain underdeveloped.

This 20th anniversary creates a rare strategic opportunity to reflect on lessons from the past two decades, harmonise multilateral commitments with African peacebuilding innovations, and demonstrate the tangible value of structural prevention.

Questions

- What institutional, political and financial arrangements are needed to translate early warning and conflict-risk assessments into timely preventive action, and how can the revised AU PCRD Policy support this process?
- Member states take varying approaches to prevention—whether through standalone National Prevention Strategies or existing sectoral policies. What coordination mechanisms have proven most effective at aligning these diverse sectoral efforts into a unified, national prevention system? What role can the AU and RECs/RMs play in supporting these efforts?
- Structural violence is multicausal, requiring responses that go beyond traditional security measures. How can governments and regional partners incentivize non-traditional actors—such as private enterprise, youth organizations, and local development agencies—to collaborate within a shared prevention architecture?
- Top-down policies often fail to reach local peace architectures where vulnerabilities are felt most acutely. What are concrete examples of mechanisms that ensure community-identified risk and protective factors directly inform national-level policy decisions?