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SOUTHERN AFRICA PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE PREVENTION OF CONFLICT (SAPPC) PRESENTATION OF THE STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE SADC REGION AT THE INAUGURAL ANNUAL MEETING BETWEEN THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL AND AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS, 14TH OF SEPTEMBER 2022

STANDING ON PREVIOUSLY OBSERVED PROTOCOLS

Chairperson.

Excellencies, here present.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Indeed, our beloved Africa, like the rest of the world faces persistent new and emerging social, political and economic challenges, which threaten our peace and security and the SADC Region is not exempted.

As a diverse collective of Civil Society Organisations spread across the 16 SADC member states, we have taken a progressive and clear position against unconstitutional changes of government as articulated by the Accra, Malabo and the recent Lusaka meeting. It is without a doubt that the role of CSOs is indispensable if we are to attain sustainable peace and development in Africa.

And today, 14TH OF SEPTEMBER 2022 we are here to affirm our dedication and willingness to partner the AU, RECs and Regional mechanisms to co create the peaceful and prosperous Africa that We all Want.

In the SADC Region, the prevalent peace and security threats, amongst many others are:

- (1) The rise and spread of Violent Extremism, Terrorism and Radicalisation of our youth.
- (2) Increased State fragilities underpinned by shrinking civic and political space
- (3) The threat of violent political transitions of Government especially around electoral processes
- (4) Climate induced insecurities and public health challenges
- (5) Effective Conflict Early Warning Systems which are not supported by Early Response mechanisms

(1) Violent Extremism and the Radicalisation of our youth are perpetuated by:

Poor resource governance and management systems which fail to bring any meaningful local community beneficiation which creates a conducive environment for Violent extremism and the subsequent ripple effects to thrive.

- (1) **Increased State fragilities** which have been exacerbated by global economic and climate insecurity challenges and the COVID pandemic have been key threat multipliers across all sectors and have strained the ability of states to provide adequate social safety nets in the face of these new and emerging threats.
- (2) **Member state Governments continue to alter national constitutions**, against the will of the people, to consolidate and stay in power and they are simultaneously passing laws that are aimed at shrinking the civic space and muzzling citizen voices. This has led to an increase in negative peace, violent protests and mass migration across borders leading to xenophobic and afro phobic attacks.
- (3) The very effective CSO led Conflict Early Warning Systems are poorly funded and not reciprocated by swift and decisive Early Responses from relevant authorities

Due to some of the reasons mentioned above our RECS are failing to maximise our vast network of member CSOs especially in the Conflict Early Warning and Early response sectors which are already directly feeding into other regional and continental bodies and key continental peace building mechanisms such as the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), UN Agencies and other Development partners. This CEWS system produces vital conflict data and stakeholder knowledge material such as periodic situation analysis reports, conflict analysis and reporting to relevant stakeholders.

In line with the Livingstone formula SADC CSOs are also actively supporting the African Standby Force through their technical skills as trainers, by training and capacity building both civilian and security sector members prior to peace support operations deployment in the regional training centres of excellence such as the SADC RPTC.

AS we conclude allow us to briefly re-emphasise these key challenges and recommendations

Despite an abundance of timely and reliable Early Warning mechanisms there is lack of effective early response action from the relevant peace and security stakeholders.

Member states see the value of CSOs in peace and security but the over securitization of the state makes them unable to fully benefit from the sector, as they are forced to mainly use ad hoc and informal channels to access CSO CEWS data

Lack of support and funding to CSOs CEWS despite them having real time and context specific data from the affected communities coupled with the ad hoc partnerships hinders conflict prevention and early response.

Lack of support and prioritization of the roles Youth and Women in effective peace and security infrastructures when engaged as equal stakeholders and not beneficiaries are a cause for serious concern.

Lastly the continuous alteration of constitutions and introduction of laws and policies seemingly aimed at consolidating state power but shrinking civic space is polarizing states and its citizens.

Our recommendations are:

1. There is urgent need for de securitization of peace and security matters to ensure seamless partnerships and collaboration with non-state actors,
2. There is urgent need to review the current peace and security normative frameworks to address the root and structural challenges that hinder effective and timely responses to the new and emerging peace and security threats.
3. We must collectively develop clear and measurable CSO engagement strategies to ensure effective partnerships and collaborations especially on conflict prevention and early response mechanisms.
4. Consistent and long-term funding and technical support to CSOs CEWS systems and in countering and preventing violent extremism initiatives is needed,
5. The mainstreaming of Youth and Women in peace and security processes through the development and implementation of National Action Plans is a must to ensure inclusive and durable peace and development.

6. Urgent investment and support to cutting edge research on the nexus between Climate Change and Conflict and proffering community informed responses and solutions should be prioritised
7. Lastly, the immediate cessation of the altering of constitutions and changing of laws to consolidate power and shrink civic space must be stopped.

Africa leaders should collectively have genuine political will to timeously and effectively address the structural drivers of these new and emerging peace and security challenges, through robust policy reforms and domestication and implementation of relevant normative frameworks in collaboration with CSO`s for effective conflict prevention and sustainable peace building.

Chairperson.

Excellencies, here present.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank you for your time.