EASF, Head of Civilian Component

Speech at the opening session of the National Focal Point Meeting in Seychelles

20th Feb 2017

Salutations:

* Minister Mitzy Larue - Minister for Home Affairs
* Deputy Chief of Defense Forces
* Commissioner of Police
* Ambassador Morel
* National Focal Points from Member States
* EASF Staff
* Chairperson of Citizens Engagement Platform (CEPS)
* Chairpersons of NGOS
* Chairpersons of NGOs
* Distinguished Guests
* The Media
* Ladies and Gentlemen

I would first of all like to welcome the honored guests to this opening session, the National Focal Points from the 10 member states and my Secretariat colleagues to this National Focal Point Meeting in Seychelles. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Focal Points for being appointed by the Member States to perform this role, and welcome the 3 newly appointed.

EASF is also grateful to the Government Of Seychelles for accepting to host this meeting, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for facilitating various important items and SPDF for the elaborate logistics.

The maritime component of EASF last week welcomed a Major of the SPDF to Nairobi who has replaced a Captain. I had the opportunity on Friday to meet the Commissioner of Police, who has indicated that there is an Officer who has been identified for secondment to the Police Component of EASF. Seychelles will therefore have seconded officers in all three components.

The combined sea and land territory of Seychelles with its Exclusive Economic Zone is about 1.3 million square kilometres. With tourism being the main industry, peace and security in the region is of strategic importance to the country. EASF is reassured by the Government of Seychelles for the strategic importance it places on its membership with EASF, especially where it concerns maritime security.

The seat of Head Of Civilian Component was occupied by Seychelles in October 2016, taking over from Somalia based on the rotational system of EASF. The civilian component works together with other military and police components to provide the integrated force which may be called upon to intervene in a conflict in the region.

This meeting is an opportunity to bring the National Focal Points together to enhance the cooperation between member states, through the Focal Points and the Secretariat of EASF, and also for the Focal Points to be briefed about what is happening at EASF, especially so, this year will be another Field Exercise (FTX) year, and it is expected to be held in Sudan. Last week EASF conducted a Conceptual Development Conference at the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) in Nairobi. There were two civilian member state’s representatives that contributed to the initial planning for the FTX. This time around, the civilian component intends to ensure that the FTX gets adequate initial inputs so that the FTX in Sudan is truly one which reflects the integrated nature of EASF. We will welcome suggestion from the member states on the FTX planning.

This meeting will also discuss on setting up in each member state, an alumni of experts that have been trained. The alumni would go beyond the process of rostering, to activities that may perhaps contribute to the sharing of knowledge and experience with others at a national level. Many individuals have been trained already and that capacity needs to be sustained. Hopefully a structure such as an alumni would be useful to increase the level of interaction between those that have been trained, the military and police components and especially with EASF Secretariat. We will need to decide for example if an alumni should be one which is integrated and has a military and police element or should it be purely civilian. I hope that this meeting will also come up with some practical recommendations that will be submitted for consideration.

Member States at the Policy Organ Meeting has demanded that EASF prepare a 2-year plan to facilitate budgetary processes. This meeting will also be an opportunity to discuss activities and training courses for the next two years.

Understandably, funding remains a significant challenge and this year, some of the activities of the civilian component will be funded by member states. The civilian component was previously supported by GIZ, but the German Government ceased funding in 2016 and this affected some of the activities which had been scheduled. In December 2016, EASF approached the Finish Government and currently negotiations are being held to explore areas of support for the civilian component.

EASF will also be having changes at the top level of the organization, where the current Director Ambassador Issimail Chanfi who is from Comoros, will be replaced by one from Djibouti. The current Joint Chief of Staff who is from Kenya will be replaced by one from Rwanda. The professional staff members of the CC will also be rotating. Mr. Joshua Kariuki from Kenya who is the Rostering and Coordination Officer and Mr. Severin Mbarubukeye, the Training and Evaluation Officer from Burundi will be leaving EASF in May 2017. I wish to take this opportunity (as this will be their last NFP meeting they attend as staff members), to thank them for their dedicated and professional work for the organization and for the region. We have had an enjoyable and cordial working relationship during the past 5 months that I have been with EASF.

The aim for the civilian component for the next 2 years is to increase the population of the civilian experts in the roster, so that EASF has more qualified and trained people to choose from in case of deployment. This will also increase the probability to deploy ratio.

In response to EASF being appointed by the African Union as the standby force for the continent from Jan-June 2017, the component took steps to strengthen collaboration with the centers of excellence such as IPSTC to bolster recruitment of civilian experts trained in the institution. Already the component has started to escalate coordination with training institutions in Kenya so that there is a straighter alignment between recruitment, training and deployment. The civilian component also intends to do the same with training institutions in Rwanda, Uganda and Ethiopia amongst others.

The strengthening of EASF’s relationship with the parent organization, the African Union and the other components of APSA are focus areas for the next 2 years. A meeting is to be held in Botwana at the beginning of March to address this subject.

Training remains a key priority for the component and this year we have scheduled three foundation courses which are purely for civilians. There will also be other courses, and many of those will be integrated courses conducted for all three components. The training calendar has been finalized, and the training officer will share it with you.

EASF will continue to evaluate its training needs as per requirements for rostering, so that new courses can be conducted to address capacity gaps in the roster and the emerging needs for peace support operations.

With the recognition that conflicts involve various actors working alongside the main actors involved in peace operations, EASF Civilian Component partnered with **Save The Children Organisation** to develop the Child protection curriculum course, which will be cascaded to member states.

This year, the CC will merge the National Focal Point Meeting with it’s Roster Verification exercise in Seychelles. This exercise consists of elaborate interviews with the civilian experts to check on their suitability, availability and thereafter to formalize the process of admitting them into the ASC Roster. Currently Seychelles is not in the population of the ASC. We hope that the recruitment exercise will address this gap. This exercise will take place from 23rd to 24th February at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. EASF will be visiting other countries to complete roster verifications. The next country will be Burundi in March.

Finally, I hope that Seychelles will inspire you all and that perhaps you will come again for a holiday with your family – therefore try to eat some breadfruit. There will be an opportunity, provided by the SPDF to visit the Island of Mahe on Wednesday.

Thank You very much.